



CENTERSTATE
CORPORATION FOR
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



Empire State
Development

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GENIUS NY Announces Sixteen Semi-Finalists *Companies to Compete for Investments totaling \$3 Million*

More than 250 high-quality applications from around the world submitted for program's second round

Syracuse – GENIUS NY, a business accelerator program at CenterState CEO's Tech Garden, announced sixteen teams are semi-finalists in the competition's second round. The companies, which are developing innovations in the unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) industry, were selected from a highly-competitive pool of more than 250 submissions to compete for \$3 million in investments. Of the sixteen semi-finalists, three are international teams representing Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Additionally, three teams were co-founded by women.

The semi-finalists are:

AgriSense, New York
AndroMeta-X, New York
BioCarbon Engineering, United Kingdom
Dropcopter, California
Dronetechuav, Texas
Fovea Aero Systems LLC, New Jersey
Kinaptic, Maine
Precision Vision, New Mexico
OneSky, Switzerland
Fotokite, Switzerland
Quantify, New York
USDRobotics, Florida
Kairos Weather Corporation, New York
Systems Technology Solutions, New Mexico
SU Applicant (New Company), New York
SkyTubeLive, New York

"We are excited to welcome these forward-thinking entrepreneurs to Central New York for round two of the GENIUS NY competition," said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky. "This unique contest supports UAS startups in developing the next-generation technologies that are helping Central New York, and its burgeoning drone industry, to rise."

The sixteen teams now have three weeks to complete a video presentation on why their company would be the best fit for GENIUS NY. A panel of local judges will review the presentations and select the six finalists participating in GENIUS NY 2.0. Judges will be looking for companies that: will stay in the CNY region and utilize the ecosystem; will scale and be successful; represent diversity of technology focus and team makeup.

“The teams we have selected represent the very best of an incredibly competitive application pool,” said Rick Clonan, vice president of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at CenterState CEO. “These high-quality teams will benefit from the success of the program’s first round and will have the necessary resources to accelerate the growth of their businesses while contributing to the region’s leading expertise and advancement of the UAS industry.”

The program, which is funded by Empire State Development in a model similar to Buffalo’s highly successful 43North program, will invest more than \$3 million in six companies over the course of the year-long competition – making it the largest business accelerator competition for the UAS industry in the world. The advancement of the GENIUS NY program builds on the progress of *CNY Rising*, the region’s award-winning strategic plan to generate robust economic growth and community development.

The grand prizes will be announced at an event in April, where teams will compete live by pitching their technologies to a panel of judges. Three grand prize investments - \$1 million, \$600,000 and \$400,000 - will be awarded. The remaining runner-up teams will each receive a \$250,000 investment.

“The GENIUS NY program provides proven support to help our region grow innovative next-generation technology companies in the unmanned systems industry,” said Rob Simpson, president of CenterState CEO. “We are excited to welcome these teams to our community and connect them with the ecosystem of support we have developed including our nationally recognized corridor for testing beyond visual line of sight. Only in Central New York will these companies be able to conduct this kind high level research and development while receiving investments and mentoring.”

Beyond the grand prize investments, participants will have access to some of the region's premier startup programming, including business planning, industry specific mentorship, and access to vetted service providers offering startup friendly terms. As part of this effort, participants will be integrated into the larger regional effort to grow unmanned aerial systems in Central New York and the Mohawk Valley and will have access to world-leading infrastructure and testing assets when they come online. Participants also receive stipends for operating capital and subsidized rent, and will also have opportunities to connect with investors for follow on funding.

To learn more about GENIUS NY visit www.geniusny.com or contact Jonathan Parry, director of GENIUS NY at jparry@thetechgarden.com or by calling 315-345-2448.

About CenterState CEO

CenterState CEO is an independent and forward thinking economic development strategist, business leadership organization and chamber of commerce; dedicated to the success of its members and the prosperity of the region. We serve as an advocate and resource for smart business, catalyze and facilitate regional growth, and promote community prosperity through results-driven partnerships, planning and problem-solving. www.centerstateceo.com

About GENIUS NY

GENIUS NY is an in-residence business accelerator program at The Tech Garden in Central New York that goes beyond substantial direct investment. In addition to three grand prizes of up to \$1 million, \$600,000 and \$400,000, the program also offers company stipends, housing, resources, programming, and connections, making it among the largest competitions of its kind across the globe. The program is made possible by \$5 million in funding support provided by Empire State Development, New York State’s chief economic development agency.

Accelerating CNY Rising

Today's announcement complements "CNY Rising," the region's comprehensive blueprint to generate robust economic growth and community development. The State has already invested more than \$4.7 billion in the region since 2012 to lay the groundwork for the plan – capitalizing on global market opportunities, strengthening entrepreneurship and creating an inclusive economy. Today, unemployment is down to the lowest levels since before the Great Recession; personal and corporate income taxes are down; and businesses are choosing places like Syracuse, Oswego and Auburn as a destination to grow and invest in.

Now, the region is accelerating CNY Rising with a \$500 million State investment through the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, announced by Governor Cuomo in December 2015. The State's \$500 million investment will incentivize private business to invest well over \$2.5 billion – and the region's plan, as submitted, projects up to 5,900 new jobs. More information is available [here](#).

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