

RFA # 20705 / SFS # FLOW72026

**New York State Department of Health
and the
New York State Spinal Cord Injury Research Board**

Request for Applications (RFA)

**Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research
(Round 7)**

KEY DATES

RFA Release Date:	10/30/2025
Letter of Intent Due:	11/13/25
Applicant Conference Registration Deadline:	11/11/2025
Applicant Conference:	11/12/2025
Questions Due:	11/19/2025 by 4:00 PM
Questions & Answers Published (on or about):	11/26/2025
RFA Applications Due in SFS:	12/18/2025 by 4:00 PM

Department of Health Contact Name & Address:

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I. Introduction

“The New York State Department of Health” (herein referred to as the Department), Wadsworth Center, Extramural Grants Administration Program, announces the availability of a total of \$1.5 million in New York State funds to provide approximately six (6) to ten (10) training awards to predoctoral or postdoctoral fellows.

A. Background

Approximately 1,100 New York residents suffer a traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI) each year, joining the estimated six million people in the United States who are living with paralysis and other effects of SCI. The personal and economic costs to these persons, their families and to society are immense. Since 1998, the New York State Spinal Cord Injury Research Board (SCIRB) advises the New York State Department of Health , Extramural Grants Administration Program (Program) regarding research focused on cures for SCI and SCI- induced paralysis.

The SCIRB’s mission and goal is to:

1. Seek major advances toward a cure and not simply incremental research gains or incremental improvements for SCI patients.
2. Support research that tests novel hypotheses and/or advances innovative research approaches that could move the field of SCI research significantly toward discovering a cure for SCI.

The SCIRB’s mission is to stimulate high-quality, innovative SCI research that will help promote treatment and cure for SCI, including methods for reversing paralysis or restoring function caused by injury, or for minimizing or preventing damage occurring during acute phases of injury. To achieve this mission, the Program offers a portfolio of competitive research awards to support the New York State scientists and their collaborators from a variety of biomedical disciplines in initiating and pursuing such efforts. Information about the SCIRB can be found at: <https://www.wadsworth.org/extramural/spinalcord>.

B. Purpose of Funds

The SCIRB wishes to stimulate the growth of SCI research and to accelerate the pace with which basic (preclinical) findings are translated into clinical benefits for spinal cord-injured persons. In addition, SCIRB wishes to fill fundamental gaps in knowledge that are barriers to scientific advances in SCI research.

This Request for Applications (RFA) provides funding for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships that will enable New York State to attract and retain the most promising and exceptionally-talented predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows. The intent of this initiative is to support the continued training of researchers with extraordinary potential for making significant contributions to the fields of SCI research.

C. Available Funds

Projects will be supported by the Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust Fund (New York State funds). Approximately \$1.5 million will be available under this RFA to fund approximately six (6) to ten (10) training (pre- or post- doctoral) awards. The amount of funds awarded will be contingent upon the quality of applications submitted. In determining final awards, the Department reserves the right to allocate funds between the two (2) funding mechanisms offered within this RFA as it deems appropriate.

The two funding mechanisms are as follows:

1. **Predoctoral fellowships** will be a two-year award with total direct costs of up to \$51,000 per year (see RFA **Attachment 1- Application Checklist and Instructions**). Applicants may budget for Fellow Stipends, Institutional Allowance, and Tuition and Fees. Non-personnel costs up to \$21,000 per year (\$5,000 maximum for Institutional Allowance and \$16,000 maximum for Tuition and Fees) may be budgeted in addition to the Fellow Stipend provided the total direct costs do not exceed \$51,000 per year. It is expected that the Principal Investigator (PI) (Sponsor) will make available necessary general office equipment and supplies; however, funds for travel, meeting costs, speaker fees, publication costs and additional supplies can be budgeted. Facilities and Administrative costs are allowed up to 20% total modified direct costs for a maximum award of \$122,400 over two years. See RFA **Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions** for allowable expenses.
2. **Postdoctoral fellowships** will be a two-year award with total direct costs of up to \$80,000 per year (see RFA **Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions**). Applicants may budget for Fellow Stipends, Institutional Allowance, and Tuition and Fees. Non-personnel costs up to \$20,000 per year (\$15,000 maximum for Institutional Allowance and \$5,000 maximum for Tuition and Fees) may be budgeted in addition to the Fellow Stipend provided the total costs do not exceed \$80,000 per. It is expected that the PI (Sponsor) will make available necessary general office equipment and supplies; however, funds for travel, meeting costs, speaker fees, publication costs and additional supplies can be budgeted. Facilities and Administrative costs are allowed up to 20% total modified direct costs for a maximum award of \$192,000 over two years. See RFA **Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions** for allowable expenses.

II. Who May Apply

An eligible Principal Investigator (PI) is designated by the applicant organization, has the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed Work Plan, and is not a postdoctoral fellow or other dependent research staff. It is necessary to identify the financial resources to cover the costs of the proposed Work Plan (refer to the Instructions for **Attachments 14 –Work Plan & Attachment 15 Work Plan Narrative** in the **Attachment 1 -**

Application Checklist and Instructions of the RFA).

An eligible applicant organization is not limited to the number of applications it can submit in response to this RFA provided that each application is scientifically distinct. However, the eligible PI may submit only one (1) application per funding mechanism, one (1) pre-doctoral fellow and one (1) postdoctoral fellow, in response to this RFA, regardless of the organization under which they submit the applications. **If an eligible PI submits more than one (1) application per funding mechanism, all applications for the particular funding mechanism(s) from that PI will be disqualified and will not be forwarded to peer review.**

Applicants must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements:

1. Eligible applicants must be prequalified in the New York State Statewide Financial System (SFS), if not exempt, on the date and time Applications in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) are due as specified in the “Key Dates” set forth on the Cover Page of this RFA.
2. The applicant must be a not-for-profit organization or governmental organization in New York State.
3. The PI/Sponsor serves in that role for only one (1) application per funding mechanism in response to this RFA.
4. The eligible PI/Sponsor is not a postdoctoral fellow or other dependent research staff and is not restricted from receiving Public Health Service (PHS) funding or debarred by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or any other federal or New York State government entity.
5. The Fellow is not restricted from receiving Public Health Service (PHS) funding or debarred by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or any other federal or New York State government entity.
6. The Fellow is committed to a minimum of 75% funded effort commensurate with salary/stipend amounts requested, unless otherwise defined by organizational policies provided in the application, directly associated with the training career/development plan described in the application.
7. The Fellow’s record of research productivity must demonstrate their potential to become an outstanding, successful and independent researcher; thus, an attestation from the PI (Sponsor) acknowledging such research or justifying the fellow’s delayed publishing is required. The attestation from the PI as noted above must be submitted using RFA **Attachment 12 – Minimum Eligibility Attestation**
8. The Work Plan Narrative, the Training-Career Development Plan Narrative, and

Mentor Plan Narrative must not exceed the state page limits below. Applications will not be reviewed if specified page limits are exceeded by a ½ page or more.

- Attachment 15 – Work Plan Narrative (7 pages for A-D)
- Attachment 16 – Training/ Career Development Narrative (2 pages)
- Attachment 17 – Mentor Plan Narrative (2 pages)

9. For **predoctoral** fellowship applications, the applicant organization is a degree-granting institution.
10. The **predoctoral** fellow has a baccalaureate degree and is currently enrolled in a PhD or equivalent research degree program (this is not applicable to postdoctoral fellow applications).
11. The **postdoctoral** fellow has earned a PhD or equivalent (this is not applicable to predoctoral fellow applications).
12. The **postdoctoral** fellow will have no more than two (2) years of prior postdoctoral training under the current sponsor's supervision by the expected start date of the award (this is not applicable to predoctoral fellow applications).
13. The **postdoctoral** fellow will have no more than three (3) years total fellowship experience under any mentor(s) by the expected start date of the award (is not applicable to predoctoral fellow applications).

III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

The purpose of these awards is to support promising fellows during their mentored training and research period under the guidance of outstanding faculty PI/sponsors. This award is not designed to fund the proposed research. The integrated program of research and training should enhance a fellow's potential to develop into a productive, independent researcher. The training plan should document the need for, and the anticipated value of, the proposed mentored training in relationship to the proposed SCI research career goals. The training plan should also facilitate a fellow's transition to the next stage of their career.

It is expected that the mentored training experience will provide:

- A strong foundation in research design, methods, and analytic techniques appropriate to the proposed SCI research;
- The enhancement of a fellow's ability to conceptualize and think through research problems with increasing independence;
- Experience conducting research using appropriate, state-of-the-art methods, as well as presenting and publishing the research findings as first author;
- The opportunity to interact with members of the scientific community at appropriate scientific meetings and workshops;
- The skills needed to transition to the next stage of a fellow's research career; and

- The opportunity to enhance a fellow's understanding of SCI-related sciences and the relationship of his/her research to spinal cord health, injury and disease.

There are no citizenship restrictions on fellows. Each must commit a minimum of 75% funded effort directly associated with the fellowship research training program described in the application, commensurate with salary/stipend requested. Additional program policies, consistent with the requirements of this RFA, are expected to be developed by the applicant organization and detailed in the application.

Substitution of the named fellows could be granted by the NYSDOH; therefore, it is important to design a training program for a fellow that may be substituted if need be. No salary support shall be made available to the PI/sponsor or mentor(s).

An Applicant may subcontract components of the Work Plan to be performed by Applicant pursuant to the terms of its Application. If known, the Applicant is expected to state in their Application the specific components to be performed through subcontracts well as the names of the subcontractors. Grantees will need to name subcontractors prior to reimbursement. Applicants should note that the lead organization (that is, the successful Applicant, as Contractor) will have overall responsibility for all Contract activities, including those performed by subcontractors, and will be the primary contact for the Department. All subcontractors and subcontracts will be required to be approved by the Department.

Subcontracting and collaborating organizations may include public, not-for-profit and for-profit entities within or outside of New York State.

If recommended for funding, Grantees will be expected to monitor the use of funds, maintain individual accounts and fulfill other fiscal management criteria.

A. Individual Predoctoral Fellowships

i. Predoctoral Fellowships

The predoctoral fellow must have a baccalaureate degree and be currently enrolled in a PhD or equivalent research degree program at the time of application. The predoctoral fellow must be at the dissertation research stage of training at the time of award and must show evidence of high academic performance and a commitment to a career as an independent research scientist. The PI/sponsor must develop a SCI-focused mentored research and training plan included in the application for a predoctoral fellow.

ii. PI/sponsor and Mentor(s)

The PI/sponsor should have a track record of funded research related to the selected SCI research topic and experience as a supervisor and mentor. To encourage novel SCI research, the PI/sponsor could be from a primary field

outside of SCI research provided the research project will directly contribute directly to the SCI research field.

More than one mentor may be selected to enhance the training experience, but a primary PI/sponsor of record must be established for the application. As part of the application, the PI/sponsor will provide an outline of the individualized training that will be provided to a fellow and include the amount of time that the PI/sponsor will devote to working with a fellow. The PI/sponsor should have sufficient research support to support the costs of the proposed research project and any other costs that are in excess of the allowable costs of this award.

An advisory committee may be formed to assist with the development of a program of study or to monitor a predoctoral fellow's progress through the career development program. The mentor(s) will demonstrate a commitment to training, mentorship and career development for a predoctoral fellow.

B. Individual Postdoctoral Fellowships

i. Postdoctoral Fellows

The postdoctoral fellow must have earned a doctoral-level degree at the time of application and must have no more than two years of prior postdoctoral training under the current PI/sponsor's supervision by the expected start date of the award. Candidates with more than three years total fellowship experience under any mentor(s) by the expected start date of the award will not be considered. The PI/sponsor must develop a SCI-focused mentored research and training plan included in the application, so a postdoctoral fellow can focus on a specific well-defined SCI research project.

ii. PI/sponsor and Mentor(s)

The PI/sponsor should have a track record of funded research related to the selected SCI research topic and experience as a supervisor and mentor. To encourage novel SCI research, the PI/sponsor could be from a primary field outside of SCI research provided the research project will contribute directly to the SCI research field.

More than one mentor may be selected to enhance the training experience, but a primary PI/sponsor of record must be established for the application. As part of the application, the PI/sponsor will provide an outline of the training that will be provided to a fellow and include the amount of time that the PI/sponsor will devote to working with a fellow. The PI/sponsor should have sufficient research support to cover the costs of the proposed research project that are in excess of the allowable costs of this award.

An advisory committee may be formed to assist with the development of a program of study or to monitor a postdoctoral fellow's progress through the career development program. The mentor(s) will demonstrate a commitment to training, mentorship and career development for a postdoctoral fellow.

IV. Administrative Requirements

A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the Department, Wadsworth Center, Extramural Grants Administration. The Department is responsible for the requirements specified herein and for the evaluation of all Applications (refer to Section V.C. Review and Award Process).

B. Question and Answer Phase

All substantive questions by Applicants with respect to any aspect of the RFA must be submitted in writing to David Googins, New York State Department of Health, Extramural Grants Administration, at the following email address: scirb@health.ny.gov. This includes Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Requirements questions and related forms. Refer to Section IV.K. Minority and Woman Owned Business Enterprise Requirements. Questions of a technical nature related to formatting or other minor details related to preparation of an Application may also be addressed in writing to the email address noted above. Questions are of a technical nature if they are limited to how to prepare your Application (e.g., formatting) rather than relating to the substance of the Application.

To the degree possible, each question submitted by a potential Applicant pursuant to the terms of this RFA should cite the RFA section and paragraph to which it refers. Written questions will be accepted until the date posted on the Cover Page of this RFA.

Some helpful links for questions of a technical nature are below. Questions regarding specific opportunities or Applications should be directed to the Department contact listed on the cover of this RFA.

- On-Demand Statewide Financial System Training Videos: On-demand training focused on using the new grants management features in SFS is available by logging in to the SFS Vendor Portal and clicking the SFS Coach icon available on the homepage. Additional questions? Contact the SFS Help Desk listed below:
- Statewide Financial System Technical Support Help Desk
Phone: 1-877-737-4185 toll-free / 518-457-7737
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 8pm
Email: helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov

Prospective Applicants must submit all requests for clarifications of, or exceptions or changes to, the terms, conditions or provisions of this RFA or the State of New York Contract for Grants during the Question and Answer Phase, which will end on the “Questions Due” date specified on the Cover Page of this RFA. An Applicant must clearly indicate the clarification, exception or change in the RFA or the State of New York Contract for Grants the Applicant is requesting. All questions, answers, and requests for clarification, exception or change will be published by the Department at [SFS Public Portal Homepage](#) to ensure equal access and knowledge by all prospective Applicants, on or about the date specified on the Cover Page of this RFA.

This RFA has been posted on the NYS Statewide Financial System website at: [SFS Public Portal Homepage](#) and additionally, via a link provided on the Department's public website at: <https://www.health.ny.gov/funding/>.

Questions and answers, as well as any updates, addendums to, and/or other modifications of this RFA, will be posted on these websites. All such questions and answers, updates addendums to, and other modifications to this RFA will be posted by the date identified on the Cover Page of this RFA under “Key Dates”.

All Questions must be received by the date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA, under “Key Dates”, opposite the heading “Questions Due”.

All questions submitted by email should state the RFA Title and Number set forth on the Cover Page (*RFA 20705, Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 7)*) in the subject line of the email.

C. Letter of Intent

Prospective Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete and submit a letter of intent (refer to **Attachment 2 – Letter of Intent**). The peer review panel's supplemental (ad hoc) members will be identified based on the Letters of Intent. Prospective Applicants who submit a Letter of Intent by the date specified on the Cover Page of this RFA may receive email notifications when updates to and modifications of this RFA are posted, including responses to written questions. Letters of Intent must be submitted to scirb@health.ny.gov. Please ensure that the RFA number and title (***RFA 20705, Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 7)***) is noted in the subject line and Letters of Intent are submitted by the date posted on the Cover Page of the RFA.

Submission of a Letter of Intent is not a requirement of this RFA, nor does the submission of a Letter of Intent by a prospective Applicant impose any obligation upon the Applicant to submit an Application in response to this RFA. To be clear, an Application may be submitted without first having submitted a Letter of Intent.

D. Applicant Conference

An Applicant Conference **will** be held for this project. The conference will be held via Webex on the date and time posted on the Cover Page of this RFA. The Department requires that potential Applicants register for this conference by completing the survey found here: <https://meetny-gov.webex.com/weblink/register/r17f4ec23c5d20f7a6cd96db1ac15c8f2> to ensure that adequate accommodations be made for the number of prospective attendees. The Registration Deadline for the Applicant Conference is posted on the Cover Page of this RFA. The failure of any potential Applicant to attend the Applicant Conference will not preclude the submission of an Application by that Applicant.

E. How to File an Application

Applications must be submitted online via the Statewide Financial System by the date and time posted on the Cover Page of this RFA under “Key Dates”.

Reference materials and videos are available for Applicants to funding opportunities on the NYS Statewide Financial System. Please visit the Statewide Financial System website at the following web address: [SFS Public Portal Homepage](#) and click the “Search for Grant Opportunities” tile. There is also a more detailed “Statewide Financial System: Vendor User Guide” available in the documents section under Training & Guidance; For Grant Applicants located in SFS Coach. Training webinars are also provided by the Grants Management Team. Dates and times for webinar instruction can be located at the following web address: [Live Webinars | Grants Management \(ny.gov\)](#)

To submit an Application an Applicant must:

1. Log into the [Statewide Financial System Vendor Portal](#).
2. Click the Grant Management Tile. Next, Click the Bid Event Search tile.
3. Enter the applicable search criteria in the Search Criteria Fields. Locate an opportunity; search by Funding Agency (DOH01) or enter the Grant Opportunity name into the Search by Grant Opportunity field: **FLL0W72026**. You can also filter search by Status such as “available” which filters to include only the bid events that are published and open for potential bid response.
4. Click on “Search” button to initiate the search.
5. Click on Event ID link to initiate a bid response.
6. Please review the Grantee User Manual found in SFS Coach for additional steps on how to respond to various types of Bid Events.

Once the Application is complete, a prospective Applicant is **strongly encouraged** to submit their Application at least **48 hours prior to the** Application’s due date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA. This will allow sufficient opportunity for the Applicant to obtain assistance and take corrective action should there be a technical issue with the submission process. **Failure to leave adequate time to address issues identified during this process may**

jeopardize an Applicant's ability to submit their Application. SFS staff are available to answer an Applicant's technical questions and provide technical assistance prior to the Application due date and time. Contact information for the SFS Help Desk is available under Section IV.B. Question and Answer Phase of this RFA.

PLEASE NOTE: Although the Department and SFS Help desk staff will do their best to address concerns that are identified less than 48 hours prior to the due date and time for the submission of an Application, there is no guarantee that they will be resolved in time for the Application to be submitted on time and, therefore, considered for funding.

During the Application process, please pay particular attention to the following:

- Not-for-profit Applicants must be prequalified, if not exempt, on the date and time Applications in response to this Request for Applications are due as specified in the "Key Dates" set forth on the Cover Page of this RFA. Be sure to maintain prequalification status between funding opportunities. **NOTE:** Three of a not-for-profit's essential financial documents - the IRS990, its Financial Statement, and its Charities Bureau filing - expire on an annual basis. If these documents are allowed to expire, the not-for-profit's prequalification status expires as well, and it will not be eligible for State grant funding until its documentation is updated and approved, and prequalified status is reinstated.
- Only individuals with the role of "Bid Response Submitter" can submit an Application on behalf of an Applicant.
- Prior to submission, the Statewide Financial System will automatically initiate a global error checking process to protect against an incomplete Application. An Applicant may need to attend to certain parts of the Application prior to being able to submit the Application successfully. An Applicant must be sure to allow time after pressing the submit button to clean up any global errors that may arise. (Vendor User Guide).
- Applicants should use numbers, letters, and underscores when naming their uploaded files. There cannot be any special characters in the uploaded file name. Also, be aware of the restriction on file size (20 MB) when uploading documents. Applicants should ensure that any attachments uploaded with their application are not "protected" or "pass-worded" documents.

The Applicant's Delegated Administrator is able to assign, modify, and remove roles for the Applicant in SFS. Please see SFS Vendor Portal Access Reference Guide, [SFS Vendor Portal Access Reference Guide.pdf \(ny.gov\)](#), for additional information on roles. **Bid Response Initiator** and **Bid Response Submitter** are the **necessary roles for applying to a Bid Event in SFS**. If you are a not-for-profit you will also need Prequalification Processor for Prequalification purposes.

PLEASE NOTE: Waiting until the last several days to complete your Application online can be risky, as you may have technical questions or issues that will take time to

resolve. Beginning the process of applying as soon as possible will produce the best results.

Applications will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, paper copy, or hand delivery.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

F. Department of Health's Reserved Rights

The Department of Health reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all Applications received in response to this RFA.
2. Withdraw the RFA at any time, at the Department's sole discretion.
3. Make an award under the RFA in whole or in part.
4. Disqualify any Applicant whose conduct and/or Application fails to conform to the requirements of the RFA.
5. Seek clarifications and revisions of Applications, in the Department's sole discretion.
6. Use Application information obtained through site visits, management interviews, and the State's investigation of an Applicant's qualifications, experience, ability, or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the Applicant in response to the Department's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFA.
7. Prior to Application opening, amend the RFA specifications to correct errors or oversights, or to supply additional information, as it becomes available.
8. Prior to Application opening, direct Applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFA amendments.
9. Change any of the scheduled dates.
10. Waive any requirements that are not material.
11. Award more than one contract resulting from this RFA.
12. Negotiate with successful Applicants within the scope of the RFA in the best interests of the State.
13. Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible Applicant, should the Department be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected Applicant.

14. Utilize any and all ideas submitted with the Applications received, at the Department's sole discretion.
15. Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, every offer in an Applicant's Application is firm and not revocable for a period of 60 days from the Application opening.
16. Waive or modify minor irregularities in Applications received after prior notification to the Applicant.
17. Require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an Applicant's Application and/or to determine an Applicant's compliance with the requirements of the RFA.
18. Eliminate any term of this RFA that can be complied with by none of the Applicants.
19. Award grants based on geographic or regional considerations to serve the best interests of the State.

G. Term of Contract

Any Contract resulting from this RFA will be effective only upon approval by the New York State Office of the Comptroller.

It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period: September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2028.

Continued funding throughout this two (2) year period is contingent upon availability of funding and state budget appropriations and the Grantee's continued satisfactory performance of its obligations under the Contract. The Department also reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

A sample State of New York Contract for Grants can be found at:

https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2025/01/mcg_tandc_january_2025.pdf

To view the following Department of Health specific State of New York Contract for Grants documents, follow the instructions in Section VI. Attachments.

- Attachment A-1, Agency Specific Terms and Conditions;
- Attachment A-2, Program Specific Terms and Conditions (if applicable);
- Attachment M, Participation by Minority Group Members and Women With Respect to State Contracts: Requirements and Procedures

H. Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardee(s)

1. No advances will be allowed for contracts resulting from this procurement.

2. The Grantee will be required to submit invoices and required reports of expenditures based upon the terms for payment set forth in Attachment A-1 to its Grant Contract to the State's designated payment office (below) or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System:

Wadsworth Center
Extramural Grants Administration
New York State Department of Health
Empire State Plaza, Room C345
Albany, NY 12237

A Grantee must provide complete and accurate billing invoices in order to receive payment of the grant funding provided for under the terms of its Grant Contract. Invoices submitted to the Department must contain all information and supporting documentation required by the Contract, the Department, and the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). Payment for invoices submitted by the Grantee shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner of Health, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with OSC's procedures and practices to authorize electronic payments. Authorization forms are available at OSC's website at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm>, by email at: epayments@osc.state.ny.us or by telephone at 855-233-8363. Each Grantee acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any claims for reimbursement submitted under its Grant Contract if it does not comply with OSC's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

Payment of claims for reimbursement by the State (Department) shall be made in accordance with Article XI-A of the New York State Finance Law. Payment terms will be:

- The contractor will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred as allowed in the Contract Budget and Work plan.
- All claims for payment submitted by the contractor pursuant to the Master Contract for Grants shall be submitted to the State no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter for which reimbursement is being claimed.
- Quarterly claims for payment will not be paid until all required progress reports for that period are submitted and deemed acceptable by Extramural Grants Administration staff.
- The final claim for payment will be paid following the acceptance and approval of the final progress report.

- In no event shall the amount received by the contractor exceed the amount approved by the State.
3. The Grantee will be required to submit the following reports to the Department at the address above or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System:
- Written progress reports in accordance with the forms and formats provided by the Extramural Grants Administration, no later than 30 days after the end of each reporting period.
 - A final cumulative progress report in accordance with the forms and formats provided by the Extramural Grants Administration, no later than 60 days after the end of the contract term.

All payment and reporting requirements will be detailed in “Attachment D: Payment and Reporting Schedule”, of the final State of New York Contract For Grants.

I. Procurement Requirements

1. General Requirements

The Grantee may procure various goods and services in connection with the grant-funded project ranging from routinely purchased goods or services to those that involve substantive programmatic work. The procurement of such goods or services, however, must be conducted in an equitable and competitive manner to promote equal treatment, efficiency, and economy in grant-funded activities.

Any Grantee that is a State entity (i.e., a State agency or political subdivision of the State) must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its general funds. All other Grantees (private companies, not-for-profit-organizations, etc.) must have a sufficient and documented procurement process that maintains records to detail the history of procurements associated with any awarded grant project. These records shall include, but are not limited to, rationale for the method of procurement (e.g., micro-purchase, small purchases, sealed bids, request for proposals, noncompetitive/sole source), the selection of a contract type, contractor selection and/or rejection, and the basis of a contract price.

The Grantee’s documented procurement process must conform with any applicable federal, State and local laws and regulations. As part of the required procurement procedures, a Grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflict of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations by officers, employees or agents of the Grantee. Such standards shall provide, at a minimum, that no employee, officer, or agent of the Grantee will participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by grant funds if a conflict of interest, real or actual, is involved. Such conflicts may arise when:

- The employee, officer, or agent, or
- Any member of such individual's immediate family, or
- Such individual's partner, or
- Any organization which employs, or is about to employ the selected contractor, has a financial or other interest in or receives or stands to receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm being considered for a contract.

The standards of conduct shall also cover organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest arise where an entity is or appears to be unable to conduct an impartial procurement action due to relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization.

2. Bid Protest Procedures

Any contractor, subcontractor, or aggrieved party has the right to protest actions before or after the award of a contract utilizing grant funds. The Grantee alone will be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgement, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurement contract solicitations and awards.

Grantees shall have written protest procedures, which may be analagous to those set forth in Part 24 of Title 2 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulatons, in order for effective due process to be achieved. A Grantee's specific protest procedures shall be outlined in all bid requests, request for proposals, request for applications, etc. issued by or on behalf of the Grantee concerning any grant-funded projects. In summary, Grantees are responsible for handling all contract activity protests. Except in matters of direct State or possibly Federal concern (in cases involving federally funded grants), the Department will not substitute its judgement for that of the Grantee.

3. Procurement Contract Language

Any contract concerning a grant-funded project must be a written agreement between the Grantee a the third party providing specific goods and/or services. Whether with a contractor, subcontractor, consultant or vendor, the contract must as appropriate state the activities to be performed; the time schedule; the policies and requirements that apply to the contractor, subcontractor consultant or vendor, including the above procurement requirements; and any other terms and conditions of the grant and the New York State Contract for Grants .

J. Assurances of No Conflicts of Interest and/or Other Detrimental Effects

The Grantee as well as any subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors or consultants engaged by the Grantee to provide goods or services in connection with the grant-funded project shall attest that their performance of any contracted services does not and will not create a conflict

of interest with nor position the Grantee to breach any other contract it currently has in force with the State of New York.

The Grantee as well as any subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors or consultants engaged by the Grantee to provide goods or services in connection with the grant-funded project shall disclose any existing or contemplated relationship with any other person or entity, including relationships with any member, shareholder of 5% or more, parent, subsidiary, or affiliate organization, which would constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, relating to other clients/customers/agents of the Grantee, subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or former officers and employees of the State and its affiliates, in connection with the providing of goods or rendering of services related to the grant-funded project. The Grantee shall have procedures in place for alerting the State of any such actual or potential conflicts as well as procedures to resolve the same.

K. Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, the Department recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of New York State-certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of Department contracts.

In 2006, the State of New York commissioned a disparity study to evaluate whether Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises had a full and fair opportunity to participate in state contracting. The findings of the study were published on April 29, 2010, under the title "The State of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises: Evidence from New York" ("Disparity Study"). The report found evidence of statistically significant disparities between the level of participation of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises in state procurement contracting versus the number of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises that were ready, willing and able to participate in state procurements. As a result of these findings, the Disparity Study made recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the statewide certified

Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises program. The recommendations from the Disparity Study culminated in the enactment and the implementation of New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, which requires, among other things, that the Department establish goals for maximum feasible participation of New York State Certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises ("MWBE") and the employment of minority groups members and women in the performance of New York State contracts.

Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

For purposes of this solicitation, the Department hereby establishes a goal of **0%** as follows:

- 1) For Not-for-Profit Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include any subcontracted labor or services, equipment, materials, or any combined purchase of the foregoing under a contract awarded from this solicitation.

- 2) For-Profit and Municipality Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include the value of the total amount of the Budget provided for the Work Plan in the Grant Contract entered into pursuant to this RFA.

The goal on the Eligible Expenditures portion of a Grant Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will be **0%** for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (“MBE”) participation and **0%** for Women-Owned Business Enterprises (“WBE”) participation (based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs and outreach efforts to certified MWBE firms). A Grantee awarded a Grant Contract pursuant to this RFA must document good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by MWBEs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Grant Contract and Grantee will agree under the terms of its Grant Contract that the Department may withhold payment pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation required by the Department or the OSC. For guidance on how the Department will determine “good faith efforts,” refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8.

The directory of New York State Certified MWBEs can be viewed at: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. The directory is found on this page under “NYS Directory of Certified Firms” and accessed by clicking on the link entitled “Search the Directory”. Engaging with firms found in the directory with like product(s) and/or service(s) is strongly encouraged and all communication efforts and responses should be well documented by a Grantee to evidence its good faith efforts to encourage MWBE participation in the performance of its obligations under its Grant Contract.

This RFA does not establish minimum goals for participation of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises. Therefore, completion of the MWBE Utilization Plan, and Forms 2 and 3 are not required. However, Forms 4 and 5 are required for all Applications regardless of goal. Refer to the appropriate **Attachment 23**. Grantees are encouraged to engage with firms found in the directory for the acquisition of required product(s) and/or service(s) associated with this grant.

L. Vendor Identification Number

Effective January 1, 2012, in order to do business with New York State, you must have a vendor identification number. As part of the Statewide Financial System (SFS), the Office of the State Comptroller's Bureau of State Expenditures has created a centralized vendor repository called the New York State Vendor File. In the event of an award of a grant to a successful Applicant pursuant to the terms of this RFA and in order to initiate a Grant Contract with the Department, a Grantee must be registered in the New York State Vendor File and have a valid New York State Vendor ID.

If already enrolled in the Vendor File, the Applicant should include the Vendor Identification number in your organization information. If not enrolled, to request assignment of a Vendor Identification number, an Applicant should please submit a New York State Office of the State Comptroller Substitute Form W-9, which can be found on-line at:

<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/vendors/2017-11/vendor-form-ac3237s-fe.pdf>

Additional information concerning the New York State Vendor File can be obtained on-line at: http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor_management/index.htm, by contacting the SFS Help Desk at 855-233-8363 or by emailing at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

M. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

The Department strongly encourages each Applicant to file the required Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire online via the New York State VendRep System. The Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire must be updated and certified every six (6) months. To enroll in and use the New York State VendRep System, see the VendRep System Instructions available at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/file-your-vendor-responsibility-questionnaire> or go directly to the VendRep system online at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/vendrep-system>.

An Applicant must provide their New York State Vendor Identification Number when enrolling. To request assignment of a Vendor ID or for VendRep System assistance, contact the Office of the State Comptroller's Help Desk at 866-370-4672 or 518-408-4672 or by email at itservicedesk@osc.ny.gov.

Applicants opting to complete online should complete and upload the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (**Attachment 24**) of the RFA. The Attestation is located under the SFS Attachments Section and once completed should be uploaded to the applicable PSQ/Bid Factor.

Applicants opting to complete and submit a paper questionnaire can obtain the appropriate questionnaire from the VendRep website, www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep, and upload it with their Application in response to the applicable PSQ/Bid Factor.

N. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits

Each not-for-profit Applicant subject to prequalification is required to prequalify prior to having the ability to submit an Application in the NYS Statewide Financial System.

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated July 16, 2014, and revised on December 9, 2023, the new Prequalification Policy became effective as of January 16, 2024. The updated policy requires that not-for-profit organizations register and prequalify in the SFS using the updated Prequalification Application. The updated Prequalification Application and New York State Prequalification Manual for Grantees can be found on the Grants Management website at: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/get-prequalified>.

An Application cannot be submitted/received from a not-for-profit Applicant that (a) has not Registered in the NYS Statewide Financial System and (b) has not Prequalified in the Statewide Financial System by the Application's due date specified on the Cover

Page of this RFA.

Below is a summary of the steps that must be completed to meet registration and prequalification requirements. The Vendor User Manual within the Statewide Financial System Website details the requirements and job aids walk users through the process.

1) Register for the Statewide Financial System

- Applicants will first need to be registered in SFS and the Grants Management portion of the system. Applicants that need to register their organization should submit the required form(s) found at the following link: [Register Your Organization in SFS | Grants Management](#). Any questions related to current and previously existing SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).
- If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please email helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov. If you do not know your Password, please click the “I Forgot My Password” link from the main log-in page and follow the prompts.

2) Complete your Prequalification Application

- Log in to the Statewide Financial System.
- Applicants will first need to create an account in SFS. Applicants that need to create an account should do so at the following link: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-vendors/portal/enroll-vendor-self-service-portal>. Any questions related to SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).
- Instructions for SFS Prequalification can be found on Page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual entitled, “! Grantee Processing in SFS”. This user manual is accessible to organizations with an SFS account under the SFS Coach Tile/Button in the SFS Vendor Portal. Select “Handbook: User Manual with Screenshots” from the Training Type drop down to locate the manual. If you have any problems accessing the manual please contact HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov. Please see the section entitled, “Enter and Submit a Prequalification Application”, located on page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual, for complete instructions on how to complete and submit an SFS Prequalification in the NYS Statewide Financial System.
- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your primary New York State agency representative. The representative specific to the NYS Department of Health can be reached at: vendorresponsibility@health.ny.gov.

3) Add SFS Roles to Submit a Bid and to Add a signatory or “Grant Contract Approver” to your Account

- **To start, review, and submit an Application to this Bid Event in SFS, Applicants will need to acquire the following SFS Security Roles:**

SFS Security Role Name	Description	Access Provided
NY_GM_VENDOR_EVENT_INITIATE	Bid Response Initiator	Allows the vendor user to initiate a bid response to a bid event but not submit the bid response to the agency.
NY_GM_VENDOR_EVENT_INQUIRY	Bid Event Inquiry	Allows a vendor user the ability to review bid events. This is a view-only role.
NY_GM_VENDOR_EVENT_SUBMIT	Bid Response Submitter	Allows a vendor user to both initiate a bid response and submit a bid response to the agency.

- In order to have your designated signatory (known in SFS as Grant Contract Approver) sign a contract and have their name appear on the contract agreement you have to add the Grant Contract Approver's name to your SFS Vendor Profile. The Delegated Administrator for your organization can add the Signatory's Name by following the instructions found on page 17-20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual entitled, "Grant Processing in SFS". This user manual is accessible to organizations with an SFS account under the SFS Coach Tile/Button in the SFS Vendor Portal. Select "Handbook: User Manual with Screenshots" from the Training Type drop down to locate the manual. If you have any problems accessing the manual please contact HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov.

All potential Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin Statewide Financial System Registration and Prequalification process as soon as possible in order to participate in this opportunity.

O. General Specifications

1. By submitting the "Application Form" each Applicant attests to its express authority to sign on behalf of the Applicant.
2. Grantees will possess, at no cost to the State, all qualifications, licenses and permits to engage in the required business as may be required within the jurisdiction where the work specified is to be performed. Workers to be employed in the performance of any Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will possess the qualifications, training, licenses, and permits as may be required within such jurisdiction.

3. Submission of an Application indicates the Applicant's acceptance of all terms and conditions contained in this RFA, including the terms and conditions of the State of New York Contract for Grants. Any exceptions the Applicant would like considered by the Department relating to the terms and conditions of this RFA and/or State of New York Contract for Grants must have been raised during the Question and Answer Phase of this RFA (See, Section IV.B.).
4. An Applicant may be disqualified from receiving an award if such Applicant or any subsidiary, affiliate, partner, officer, agent, or principal thereof, or anyone in its employ, has previously failed to perform satisfactorily in connection with public bidding or contracts, in the State of New York or otherwise.
5. Provisions Upon Default
 - a. The services to be performed by [the][a] successful Applicant pursuant to the terms of the Grant Contract entered into with the Department shall at all times be subject to the direction and control of the Department.
 - b. In the event that the Grantee, through any cause, fails to perform any of the terms, covenants, or promises of any Contract resulting from this RFA, the Department acting for and on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate the Contract by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Grantee.
 - c. If, in the judgment of the Department, the Grantee acts in any way which is detrimental to, or does or is in any way likely to impair or prejudice, the interests of the State, the Department may terminate the Grant Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA. In such case, the Grantee may receive equitable compensation for all services as shall, in the judgment of the State Comptroller, have been satisfactorily performed by the Grantee up to the date of the termination of the Contract.

V. Completing the Application

A. Application Format/Content

Please refer to the Statewide Financial System: Vendor User Guide for assistance in applying for this procurement through the NYS Statewide Financial System. This guide is available by logging into the Statewide Financial System and searching under SFS Coach.

Please respond to each of the sections described below and in **Attachment 1 – Checklist and Instructions** when completing the Statewide Financial System online Application. Your responses comprise your Application. Please respond to all items within each section. When

responding to the statements and questions, be mindful that Application reviewers may not be familiar with your agency and its services. Your answers should be specific, succinct, and responsive to the statements and questions as outlined. Please be aware that the value assigned to each section described below indicates the relative weight that will be given to each section of your Application when scoring your Application.

ALL APPLICATIONS SHOULD CONFORM TO THE FORMAT/CONTENT PRESCRIBED IN ATTACHMENT 1 – APPLICATION CHECKLIST AND INSTRUCTIONS. PENALTIES WILL BE ASSESSED TO APPLICATIONS WHICH DEVIATE FROM THE PRESCRIBED FORMAT.

It is each Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials included in its Application have been properly prepared and submitted. Applications must be submitted via the Statewide Financial System by the Application deadline date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA.

IMPORTANT: Any material added to a Bid Factor "Add Comments" box in SFS will not be reviewed as part of a submitted application. Applicants are instructed to use the "Response" box for narrative responses unless otherwise instructed within this RFA.

Please note there is a 2,000-character limit for each response.

Please provide any requested attachments as specified within this RFA. Applicants are instructed to upload attachments in response to any request for an attachment.

Applications should only include information/documentation requested in this RFA. Extraneous or additional information or materials beyond what is requested in this RFA **will not** be considered part of an application and **will not** be reviewed or evaluated by the Department or SCIRB.

See the Event Comments and Attachments link at the bottom of the Bid Event page in SFS for required attachments to be completed in response to corresponding bid factor questions, as well as informational only attachments.

Program Specific Questions(PSQ)/Bid Factors

Attachments to this RFA are not included in the RFA document, but can be accessed on the "Event Page" for this RFA/Bid Event located in the [Statewide Financial System \(SFS\) Vendor Portal](#) or once an Application has been started, under the "Event Comments and Attachments Section" of the online Application.

Program Specific Questions(PSQ)/Bid Factors

- Q1. Applicants are instructed to indicate if they sent an optional **Attachment 2 – Letter of Intent** via email to scirb@health.ny.gov by selecting Yes or No in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor.
- Q2. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 3 – Applicant Face**

- Page** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q3. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 4 – Sub-Applicant Face Page**, if applicable, in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS. Attachment 4 is optional.
- Q4. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 5 – Staff, Collaborators, Consultants, and Contributors** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q5. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 6 – Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in Application** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q6. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 7 – Lay Abstract** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q7. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 8 – Scientific Abstract** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q8. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 9 – Applicant Budget** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q9. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 10 – Sub-contractor Budget(s)**, if applicable, in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS. Attachment 10 is optional.
- Q10. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 11 – Biographical Sketch(es)** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q11. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 12 – Minimum Eligibility Attestation** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q12. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 13 – Facilities and Resources** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q13. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 14 – Work Plan** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q14. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 15 – Work Plan Narrative** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q15. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 16 – Training-Career Development Plan Narrative** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q16. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 17 – Mentor Plan Narrative** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q17. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 18 – Human Subjects** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q18. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 19 – Vertebrae Animals** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q19. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 20 – Other Support** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q20. Applicants are instructed to indicate if they sent an optional **Attachment 21 – Conflict of Interest Form** via email to scirb@health.ny.gov by selecting Yes or No in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor.

- Q21. Applicants have the option to give Program additional information following the instructions in Attachment 1 Checklist and Instructions. If completed, applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 22 – Appendices Document** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q22. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload the appropriate version of **Attachment 23 – Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
- Q23. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 24 – Vendor Responsibility Attestation** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.

Funding provided under this RFA may only be used to expand existing activities or create new activities pursuant to this RFA. These funds may not be used to supplant funds for currently existing staff activities.

Any ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items.

B. Freedom of Information Law

All Applications may be disclosed or used by the Department to the extent permitted by law. The Department may disclose an Application to any person for the purpose of assisting in evaluating the Application or for any other lawful purpose. All Applications will become State agency records, and will be available to the public in accordance with the New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). **Any portion of an Application that an Applicant believes constitutes proprietary information entitled to confidential handling, as an exception to the general rule regarding the availability to the public of State agency records under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Law, must be clearly and specifically designated in the Application.** If the Department agrees with the Applicant's claim regarding the proprietary nature of any portion of an Application, the designated portion of the Application will be withheld from public disclosure. Blanket assertions of proprietary material will not be accepted, and failure to specifically designate proprietary material may be deemed a waiver of any right to confidential handling of such material.

C. Review & Award Process

Applications will first be examined against mandatory Pass/Fail requirements by Program staff (see Section II. Who May Apply of this RFA and **Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions**). Applications that do not meet the mandatory eligibility requirements will not be considered for review, and the applicant organization will be notified.

The Department contracts with an independent peer review organization (Peer Review Contractor) to develop and coordinate the review and scoring of applications. Each eligible application will be evaluated by an Independent Peer Review Panel (the Review Panel)

assigned by the Peer Review Contractor. The Review Panel members will be selected from among non-New York State experts in the fields appropriate to the nature of the applications received. The Peer Review Contractor has established a standing Review Panel to which expertise is added to evaluate the merit of actual applications submitted in response to the RFA.

The Review Panel will be assigned based on the category of research being conducted. All applications must include the category of research being conducted as “Rehabilitation” (Rehabilitation) or “Cellular Regeneration & Therapeutics” (Cellular Regeneration). This information will be requested on **Attachment 7 – Lay Abstract**.

Applications will be reviewed based on the criteria specified in RFA Section V.F. Review Criteria. Initially, a subcommittee of the applicable Review Panel consisting of three peer reviewers will consider each application. At least two members of each subcommittee, including the primary reviewer, shall be considered senior review scientists. For purposes of this RFA, a senior review scientist is a researcher who has been a primary investigator or co-primary investigator on more than one scientific research project, which has been previously funded in the field of spinal cord injury. The subcommittee of the Review Panel will use an established combination of processes to evaluate each application:

1. pre-meeting review with adjectival scoring (see table below)
2. on-line conferral among assigned reviewers
3. panel meeting discussion via teleconference, videoconference or in-person (review method chosen at the discretion of the Department) with numerical scoring (see table below).

The primary reviewers of each panel will prepare a written evaluation of each assigned application that is to be discussed by the Review Panel. Additionally, secondary and tertiary reviewers will provide a written critique for each of their assigned applications based on established evaluation criteria.

Thereafter, the entire Review Panel will meet via teleconference, videoconference or in person (review method chosen at the discretion of the Department) to discuss and score each of the applications. Each member of the Review Panel will provide a confidential numerical score for each application they are eligible to review.

Applications will receive numerical scores from each participating panel member for each evaluation criterion using an integer scale that equates to adjectival scores, where 1 equates to highest merit and 9 equates to lowest merit. The numerical score given each criterion will be multiplied by that criterion’s weight to arrive at a weighted score. Each panel member’s weighted scores for each criterion will be added together to give their individual total score. Review Panel members’ individual total scores will be added together and divided by the number of Review Panel members who scored the application to give an overall panel score for the application.

	Numerical Score	Adjectival Score	Guidance
HIGH	1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor ^a weaknesses
MEDIUM	4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
	5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate ^b weakness
	6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
LOW	7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major ^c weakness
	8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
	9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

^aMinor weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen merit and/or the expected successful completion of the overall project

^bModerate weakness: A weakness that lessens merit and/or the expected successful completion of the overall project

^cMajor weakness: A weakness that severely limits merit and/or the expected successful completion of the overall project

The Review Panel will comment on the responsiveness of the application to the funding mechanism as described in Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes. The Review Panel will identify potential overlap with other resources. Additionally, the Review Panel will comment on the application with regard to the Contract Policy Statements and Conditions (NYS Master Grant Contract Attachment A-2). The Review Panel may recommend administrative review and resolution prior to contract execution. Award recommendations made by the SCIRB may be contingent upon the applicant's acceptance of reductions or required revisions.

At the conclusion of the Review Panel discussions, the primary reviewer of each application that is discussed will prepare a written overall evaluation, which is a synopsis of the panel discussion of the application.

D. Conflicts of Interest and Reviewer Exclusions

The SCIRB aims to conduct a review process that is rigorous and impartial. All participants in a review (including scientific reviewers, Department staff members and members of the SCIRB) are required to disclose financial interests and declare all conflicts that meet relevant SCIRB and State of New York conflict of interest regulations.

In addition, the SCIRB understands that even strict policies may not account for every

perceived conflict. Therefore, all applicants seeking funding may identify up to three individuals (excluding SCIRB member and Department employees) and/or for-profit organizations that such applicant believes could be biased whether for personal, professional, or competitive reasons (e.g., a company that is a direct competitor with respect to the applicant's proposed research or product). Individuals, and current employees, board members, and consultants (working on potentially competing research or product) of companies, identified by applicants pursuant to this screening mechanism will not be permitted to participate in the review of such applicant's application. Applicants who wish to submit a Conflict of Interest Form (**Attachment 21**), must do so as part of the Letter of Intent (see Section IV.C. Letter of Intent) by the deadline stated on the cover of this RFA. Applicants may use **Attachment 21** to identify perceived conflicts with up to 3 individuals and/or for-profit organizations excluding SCIRB members and Department employees. The Department will take this information into account when working with the Peer Review Contractor to assemble review panels.

E. Application Format, Penalties and Summary Statements

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials to be included in the application have been properly prepared and submitted. **ALL APPLICATIONS SHOULD CONFORM TO THE FORMAT/CONTENT PRESCRIBED IN the RFA ATTACHMENT 1 - APPLICATION CHECKLIST AND INSTRUCTIONS.** The Peer Review Contractor will assess a penalty of 0.1 point for any application that deviates from the instructions (see **Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions**).

The Peer Review Contractor will calculate final scores for the research project and compile a Summary Statement for each application for SCIRB. The Summary Statements will document the merit evaluation and serve as the primary basis for the panel recommendation for the applications.

F. Review Criteria

The Review Panel will score each application based on the following review criteria. The value assigned to each section is an indication of the respective weight that will be given when scoring an application.

1. Training/Career Development Plan Narrative (30%)

- To what extent does the application provide evidence to suggest that the PI has the potential to create an independent SCI research program for a fellow?
- Does the PI/sponsor provide strong evidence that they will be able to provide a development plan so that a fellow has a high potential to become an independent investigator and an important contributor to the field?
- Is the training program designed to allow for a fellow to be substituted if need be?
- Are the content and duration of the proposed didactic and research components of the training/career development plan appropriate for professional development?

- To what extent does the plan fulfill the NIH requirements for instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)?
- Predoctoral fellows: Is the proposed training/career development plan likely to contribute substantially to the scientific and professional development of a fellow?
- Postdoctoral fellows: Is the proposed career development plan likely to contribute substantially to the scientific and professional development of a fellow, including his/her successful transition to independence?
- To what extent is the training/career development plan well-integrated with the research plan?
- To what extent are the plans for evaluating a fellow's progress adequate and appropriate for guiding the fellow toward a successful transition to independence?

2. Mentor Plan Narrative and Environment (25%)

PI/sponsor, Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s):

- Does the PI/sponsor have a strong track record in training future independent researchers?
- Are the PI/sponsor and mentor(s) research qualifications and experience, scientific stature and mentoring track record appropriate for a fellow's training/career development needs?
- Does the PI/sponsor adequately address the above review criteria including plans for assessing a fellow's strengths and areas needing improvement?
- Is the proposed supervision that will occur during the award adequate and is the commitment of the mentor(s) to a fellow's continued training/career development appropriate?
- Is there evidence of adequate research funds to support a fellow's research training for the duration of the fellowship?
- Does the PI/sponsor present a comprehensive plan to support the proposed training/career development and research plans?
- If applicable, are the consultants'/collaborators' research and/or mentoring qualifications appropriate for their roles on the award?

Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Fellow:

- To what extent are the research facilities and educational opportunities, including collaborating faculty, adequate and appropriate for a fellow's research, training, and career development goals?
- To what extent does the institution provide a high quality environment for a fellow's development?
- What evidence is provided that the institution is strongly committed to fostering a fellow's development and transition to independence?
- Is there adequate assurance that the required effort of a fellow will be devoted directly to the research training, career development, and research activities described in the proposed training and career development plans?
- Postdoctoral fellows: Is the proposed research project sufficiently distinct from the

PI/sponsor's funded research for a fellow to forge independence?

3. Work Plan (25%)

- Are the scientific and technical merits of the research question, experimental design and methodology appropriate for a fellow's level of training, an appropriate vehicle for developing the research skills described in the Training/Career Development Plan Narrative and appropriate for developing a highly successful independent research program?
- Does the sponsor have the experience and technical skill for this project?
- Does the sponsor have the mentoring skills to supervise a fellow?
- Are the proposed research plan aims/objectives feasible to complete during the award?
- To what extent is the proposed research significant and to what extent is the proposed research likely to accelerate major advances towards a cure for SCI?
- Does the project address an innovative hypothesis or challenge existing paradigms?
- Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies?
- Postdoctoral fellows: Is the proposed research project sufficiently distinct from the PI/sponsor's funded research for a fellow to forge independence?

4. Budget (20%)

- Are the items for each budget line explained?
- Are budget line items adequately justified as necessary for completion of the project?
- Are the budgeted amounts reasonable, cost effective and appropriate to accomplish the training program?
- Are there specific excessive or unnecessary budget items?
- Is there evidence of adequate research funds to support a fellow's research training for the duration of the fellowship?
- Does the budget reflect understanding of the human, material and financial resources needed, and the timeframes in which they are needed, for successful completion of the project within the contract term?

(Note: The entire Review Panel will review and comment on the Budget section. Numeric scores for the Budget criterion will be provided only by the assigned reviewers).

G. Spinal Cord Injury Research Board Review

The SCIRB will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of all applications, administrative and budget recommendations as outlined in the reports of the Review Panel. When making funding recommendations, the SCIRB will consider Review Panel Scores and recommendations, responsiveness to the mission of the SCIRB and responsiveness to the RFA, programmatic balance and availability of funds. The SCIRB may vote in favor or against any application submitted for funding. Scoring ties will be resolved on the basis of the above and with consideration of the score for "Training/Career Development Plan Narrative" among

those applications involved in the tie.

The SCIRB will vote on each application in compliance with SCIRB bylaws as well as applicable laws and regulations. If an application for which there are available funds is not recommended for funding, the SCIRB will fully justify in writing why the application was not approved.

The SCIRB may elect, at its discretion, to continue making recommendations for possible funding of proposals beyond what is available for the funding mechanism and the RFA. These applications will be given the status “Approved but not funded due to limited resources.” “Approved but not funded due to limited resources” applications may be funded should additional funds become available.

The SCIRB will make recommendations for funding to the Commissioner of Health.

H. Award Decisions and Pre-Funding Requirements

Grant award contracts are entered into between New York State applicant organizations and the New York State Department of Health. Funding is contingent upon full execution of a contract between the applicant organization and the New York State Department of Health and approval by the Commissioner of Health, State Attorney General and State Comptroller.

Following the Commissioner’s approval of awards, PIs and their applicant organizations will receive formal notification in writing.

Prior to contract execution, program administrators will require resolution/submission/confirmation of the following items, as relevant to each application:

- Revisions to Work Plan, project duration or budget
- Overlap
- Areas of possible concern with regard to Contract Policy Statements and Conditions (NYS Master Grant Contract Attachment A-2)
- Approved Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate

Applications with minor issues (for example, an Application missing information that is not essential to timely review and would not impact review scores) **may** be processed and evaluated, at the discretion of the State, but any issues with an Application which are identified by the Department **must** be resolved prior to time of award. An Application with unresolved issues at the time award recommendations are made will be determined to be non-responsive and will be disqualified.

If changes in funding amounts are necessary for this initiative or if additional funding becomes available, funding will be modified and awarded in the same manner as outlined in the award process described above.

Applicants will be deemed to fall into one of three categories: 1) not approved, 2) not funded due to limited resources, and 3) approved and funded. Not funded Applications may be awarded should additional funds become available.

Once awards have been made pursuant to the terms of this RFA, an Applicant may request a debriefing of their own Application (whether their Application was funded or not funded). The debriefing will be limited only to the strengths and weaknesses of the Application submitted by the Applicant requesting a debriefing and will not include any discussion of ANY OTHER Applications. Requests for a debriefing must be received by the Department, Extramural Grants Administration no later than fifteen (15) Calendar Days from date of the award or non-award announcement to the Applicant requesting a debriefing.

To request a debriefing, please send an email to *David Googins* at scirb@health.ny.gov. In the subject line, please write: *Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 7)*. Unsuccessful Applicants who wish to protest the award(s) resulting from this RFA on legal and/or factual grounds, should follow the protest procedures established by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). These procedures can be found on the OSC website at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-agencies/gfo/chapter-xi/xi17-protest-procedures> (Section XI. 17.)

VI. Attachments

- Please note that Attachments to this RFA are not included in the RFA document, but can be accessed on the "**Event Page**" for this RFA/Bid Event located in the [Statewide Financial System \(SFS\) Vendor Portal](#) or once an Application has been started, under the "**Event Comments and Attachments Section**" of the online Application. To access the Event Page and online Application/Bid Event, including required documents such as the Attachments, a prospective Applicant must be registered and logged into the NYS Statewide Financial System Vendor Portal. Once logged into the Vendor Portal, prospective Applicants can locate the "Events Page" for this Bid Event by selecting the "Grants Management – State" tile, selecting the "Bid Event Search" tile, searching for this Bid Event, and then selecting the "View Event Package". Attachments that are requested to be uploaded as part of an Application/Bid Event response will be requested in individual corresponding Bid Factors in the online application (See Section V.A., "Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors").

Note: Any updates to the RFA/attachments will be addressed in an Addendum to the RFA. **Addendums, as well as questions and answers, will be posted to the [SFS Public Portal Homepage](#) under the Grant Opportunity for this Bid Event, not in the application itself.** To access these documents in SFS, Applicants must go to the Grant Opportunity and select "View Grant Opportunity" **which can ONLY be viewed when logged out of the SFS Vendor Portal.** Any updated Attachments will be posted on the NYS Department of Health Funding Opportunity website:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/funding/>.

- **ALL Applicants are instructed to verify each required attachment that has been uploaded to the application.** To check attachments, Applicants are instructed to click "View" in the SFS application for each uploaded attachment to ensure that the attachment and all of its applicable information/data is viewable in its final format.
- **PDF Attachments – due to system constraints, PDF attachments cannot be uploaded with annotations, editable fields, or JAVA/active controls. Please submit PDFs that are read-only.**

Attachment 1: Checklist and Instructions (Informational only)

Attachment 2: Letter of Intent (Optional)

Attachment 3: Applicant Face Page (Required)

Attachment 4: Sub-Applicant Face Page (Optional)

Attachment 5: Staff, Collaborators, Consultants, and Contributors (Required)

Attachment 6: Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in Application (Required)

Attachment 7: Lay Abstract (Required)

Attachment 8: Scientific Abstract (Required)

Attachment 9: Applicant Budget (Required)

Attachment 10: Sub-contractor Budget(s) (Optional)

Attachment 11: Biographical Sketch(es) (Required)

Attachment 12: Minimum Eligibility Attestation (Required)

Attachment 13: Facilities and Resources (Required)

Attachment 14: Work Plan (Required)

Attachment 15: Work Plan Narrative (Required)

Attachment 16: Training-Career Development Plan Narrative (Required)

Attachment 17: Mentor Plan Narrative (Required)

Attachment 18: Human Subjects (Required)

Attachment 19: Vertebrae Animals (Required)

Attachment 20: Other Support (Required)

Attachment 21: Conflict of Interest Form (Optional)

Attachment 22: Appendices Document (Optional)

Attachment 23 a or b: Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms (Required)*Note: Governmental entities must submit 23a and not-for-profit organizations must submit 23b.

Attachment 24: Vendor Responsibility Attestation (Required)

Attachment 25: Attachment A-1, Agency Specific Terms and Conditions;

Attachment 26: Attachment A-2, Program Specific Terms and Conditions (if applicable);

Attachment 27: Attachment M, Participation by Minority Group Members and Women With Respect to State Contracts: Requirements and Procedures