

**New York State Department of Health
AIDS Institute
Center for Program Development, Implementation, Research and Evaluation**

Questions and Answers

**Research and Evaluation Grants
RFA #20721 / Internal Program #24-0005**

This is a procurement which encompasses two (2) Components:

Component A: Research and Evaluation Mini Grants

Component B: Inform and Scale-up Intervention to Increase HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Uptake

SFS #s: REGA2026 (Component A); REGB2026 (Component B)

SFS Event Names:

RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants – CompA (Component A)

RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants - CompB (Component B)

Questions below were received by the deadline announced in the Request for Applications. New York State Department of Health is not responsible for any errors or misinterpretation of any questions received.

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions posted by potential bidders and are hereby incorporated into the **RFA #20721**. In the event of any conflict between the Request for Applications and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

Application Submission In the Statewide Financial System (SFS)

Question 1A: Where can I access the RFA?

Question 1B: I was unable to download the RFA for component B of RFA# 20721 Can you send it to us please?

Question 1C: I will be putting in an application for Component B of this RFA. I currently in the process of getting access to the grants portal which may take some time. Is it possible for me to get a copy of the Attachment #2: Intervention Eligibility Criteria - Component B only?

Answer 1 A-C: This opportunity has been posted on the Statewide Financial System (SFS) website.

New York State has transitioned grants management activities from the Grants Gateway to the Statewide Financial System (SFS). State agencies who were using the Grants Gateway have transitioned to using SFS for those grant programs and business functions they were previously performing in the Grants Gateway. Not-for-Profits (known as Vendors in SFS) now use SFS to create and submit prequalification applications and may also use SFS to support other business functions (e.g., searching for bid opportunities (known as Bid Events in SFS), responding to bid events, approving grant contracts, submitting claims), depending on the work they are doing with agencies.

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.

Please note that ALL Attachments to this RFA are accessed under the “**Attachments Section**” of the Statewide Financial System online Application/Bid Event and are not included in the RFA document. In order to access the online Application/Bid Event and other required documents such as the Attachments, a prospective Applicant must be registered and logged into the NYS Statewide Financial System. Refer to Section VI. Attachments in the Request for Applications for more detail.

Questions? Contact the SFS Help Desk:
helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov | 877-737-4185 toll-free | 518-457-7737.

Question 2: How do I apply in SFS?

Answer 2: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, E. How to File an Application in the Request for Applications.

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: **RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants - CompA** (for Component A) or **RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants - CompB** (for Component B). 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.

Additionally, you can search using the SFS #s in the Event ID field as follows:

REGA2026 (Component A)

REGB2026 (Component B)

You can 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.

Question 3: What if I try to submit my application and it is past the due date/time of the RFA?

Answer 3: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, E. How to File an Application in the Request for Applications.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Applications must be submitted online via the Statewide Financial System (SFS) by the date and time posted on the Cover Page of this Request for Applications under the heading “Key Dates”.

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 Request for Applications. 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.**

Question 4: How do I determine if my agency is pre-qualified?

Answer 4: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, N. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits in the Request for Applications.

An Application cannot be submitted/received from a not-for-profit Applicant that:

- (a) has not Registered in the New York State Statewide Financial System; or
- (b) has not Prequalified in the Statewide Financial System by the Application’s due date specified on the Cover Page of the Request for Applications.

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.

Question 5: Can an agency apply if they are not prequalified?

Answer 5: Applicants **must** be prequalified in SFS (if not exempt) by the date and time applications are due.

Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, N. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits in the Request for Applications.

An Application cannot be submitted/received from a not-for-profit Applicant that:

- (a) has not Registered in the New York State Statewide Financial System; or
- (b) has not Prequalified in the Statewide Financial System by the Application’s due date specified on the Cover Page of this Request for Applications.

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>.

Question 6: What does the asterisk * mean in the SFS on-line application?

Answer 6: The asterisk* alerts applicants that a response is mandatory. Applicants will not be allowed to submit their application without completing all mandatory questions and uploading all mandatory attachments.

Application Format

Question 7: How do I submit my application in SFS?

Answer 7: Please refer to Section V. Completing the Application in the RFA for guidance.

Applicants are instructed to respond to each of the following statements and questions under “Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors.” Your responses comprise your application. Number/letter your narrative to correspond to each statement and question in the order presented. 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.

An **Application Checklist (Attachment 15)** has been included to help ensure that submission requirements have been met. Applicants should refer to this Attachment before and after writing the application. In assembling your application, please follow the outline provided in the **Application Checklist: Attachment 15**.

IMPORTANT: Please upload the full Application and all required Attachments as one (1) complete PDF document no larger than 20MB in response to Bid Factor Question 01. **Please ensure that uploaded files are not fillable PDFs or “secure” or “password protected” or your document will not upload properly.**

Any material added to a Bid Factor “Add Comments” box in SFS will not be reviewed as part of a submitted application.

Applicants should use numbers, letters, and underscores when naming their uploaded files. There cannot be any special characters in the uploaded file name.

Question 8: What do I enter for the Work Plan Project Summary in SFS?

Answer 8: Please review the instructions given in the RFA for the Work Plan section (Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, 6. Work Plan) for the Component for which you are applying.

Question 9: When will announcement of grant awardees be made?

Answer 9: The estimated award announcement date is July 1, 2026.

Question 10: When do you anticipate that the contract will begin for the project funded under the RFA?

Answer 10: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, G. Term of Contract in the Request for Applications.

It is anticipated contracts will have a start date of November 1, 2026.

Question 11: In the RFA, Section "K" Page 20, Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements it states, "By submitting an Application, each Applicant and potential Grantee agrees to complete an M/WBE Utilization plan as directed in Attachment 10 of this RFA." Kindly clarify whether the Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Forms - Attachment 10 is incorporated as a reference OR must be completed and submitted with the RFA application in order for the application to be considered complete.

Answer 11: The **Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Forms: Attachment 10** must be completed and submitted with the Application for the Application to be considered complete. Instructions for completing **Attachment 10** can be found on the first page of the document.

Question 12: Should the M/WBE Utilization Plan be reflective of just the first-year budget or all three years? Will there be a possibility of applying for a waiver from the MBE and WBE requirements? Is this form required?

Answer 12: The M/WBE Utilization plan (Form #1 of **Attachment 10**) should be based on the life of the contract, which is three (3) years. Eligible M/WBE expenditures include any subcontracted labor or services, equipment, materials, or any combined purchase of the foregoing under a contract awarded from this solicitation.

Please refer to the instructions on **Attachment 10**, Guide to New York State DOH M/WBE RFA NFP Required Forms, Form #2: M/WBE Utilization Waiver Request for instructions on applying for a waiver. If the M/WBE Utilization Plan is incomplete, and the applicant is selected for funding, the resulting award will be held pending completion of the required documentation. All Applicants must complete Form # 3 (Online Compliance System Payment Submission Confirmation), Form #4 (M/WBE Staffing Plan), and Form #5 (EEO and M/WBE Policy Statement) in addition to the forms noted above.

Program

Question 13: I'm email regarding getting more information on Grant ID REGA2026 NYS DOH AIDS Institute (AIDS Institute), Center for Program Development, Implementation, Research and Evaluation. Our site works with patients on PrEP (sites) and would be interested in implementation research i.e. scaling up use of long acting injectable PrEP including minority/marginalized populations. Can you tell me more details re; grant funding/priorities, intent?

Answer 13: All potential applicants should review the Request for Applications in its entirety for specific details on the intent, scope and funding available for this procurement opportunity.

Question 14: We are writing with the following questions in response to RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants – Component A: The RFP mentions that grants are awarded per region. Can you describe how the regions are defined?

Answer 14: Please refer to Section I. Introduction, B. Available Funding in the Request for Applications. Funding will be allocated as stated in the charts found in this section which describe the New York State Department of Health Region for both Component A and Component B as Statewide.

Question 15A: We are writing with the following questions in response to RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants – Component A: Can we include references in an appendix (excluded from the 10-page limit)?

Question 15B: We are writing with the following questions in response to RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants – Component A: Can we include hyperlinks in the submission?

Answer 15 A-B: Any materials submitted as part of the narrative, including references, cannot exceed ten (10) double-spaced pages. Referencing additional information via hyperlink will not be considered or reviewed. If an applicant feels information is relevant/important, it should be included in the ten (10) double-spaced pages narrative response.

Please refer to Section V. A. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content in the Request for Applications for more details.

Question 16: I have the following question regarding RFA #20721 - Research and Evaluation Grants - Component A: Will the applicant propose a research question for year 1 based on the questions posed in the AI Research Agenda, or will a question be assigned to the grantee upon award?

Answer 16: Please refer to Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, A. Program Model Description for Component A: Research and Evaluation Mini Grants in the Request for Applications. The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute will identify one-year research and evaluation projects under selected annual focus areas which will be addressed by selected contractors.

Question 17: Component A: Does the proposal need to reference a specific Research Agenda question number, or is conceptual alignment sufficient? (Page 8 – Program Model Description)

Answer 17: Please refer to Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, A. Program Model Description for Component A: Research and Evaluation Mini Grants in the Request for Applications. The proposal does not need to reference a specific Research Agenda question number. Proposals should conceptually align with tasks described in **Attachment 3: Component A Work Plan**. The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute will identify one-year research and evaluation projects under selected annual focus areas which will be addressed by selected contractors.

Question 18: Component A: For projects evaluating PrEP offer and uptake in ED and ambulatory settings, does NYSDOH have specific preferred definitions for “PrEP offer,” “PrEP referral,” or “PrEP initiation” to ensure consistency across funded evaluations? (Page 26 – Program Abstract)

Answer 18: Please refer to Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, A. Program Model Description for Component A: Research and Evaluation Mini Grants in the Request for Applications. The proposal does not need to reference a specific Research Agenda question number. Proposals should conceptually align with tasks described in **Attachment 3: Component A Work Plan**. The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute will identify one-year research and evaluation projects under selected annual focus areas which will be addressed by selected contractors. Contractors will then work with New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute staff to develop the study design and conduct the research or evaluation needed to answer the assigned research or evaluation question, including the operationalization of relevant definitions. New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute will work with the funded contractors to develop the study design and would address specific definition preferences at that time.

Question 19: Component A: When coding ED and clinic visits for IVDU-related conditions, does NYSDOH have a recommended approach to identifying injection-related infections, overdose visits, or opioid use disorder, or may applicants define their own ICD-10 groupings? (Page 26 – Program Abstract)

Answer 19: Please refer to Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, A. Program Model Description for Component A: Research and Evaluation Mini Grants in the Request for Applications. The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute will identify one-year research and evaluation projects under selected annual focus areas which will be addressed by selected contractors. Contractors will then work with New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute staff to develop the study design and conduct the research or evaluation needed to answer the assigned research or evaluation question, including the operationalization of relevant definitions. New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute will work with the funded contractors to develop the study design and would address specific definition preferences or ICD-10 groupings at that time.

Question 20: I also have the following question regarding RFA #20721 - Research and Evaluation Grants - Component B: In reviewing the evidence-based/evidence-informed interventions in Attachment 2, is it possible to select one as a foundational intervention but to adapt/enhance it with an aspect of another listed intervention?

Answer 20: Please refer to Section II. Who May Apply, B. Component B Minimum Eligibility Requirements AND Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, A. Program Model Description for Component B: Inform and Scale-up Intervention to Increase HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Uptake in the Request for Applications. Applicants are instructed to ensure the proposed intervention meets required eligibility criteria by submitting a completed Attachment 2 AND to select one of the evidence-based interventions described in **Attachment 2 – Intervention Eligibility Criteria- Component B** or describe an alternative evidence-based intervention for proposed scale-up. Alternative evidence-based interventions must meet the criteria outlined in **Attachment 2 – Intervention Eligibility Criteria - Component B** and should include a description of the existing evidence base and rationale for selection of this intervention to increase HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis uptake among Black and Brown communities in New York State.

Key study design elements and intervention effects from the original intervention must be maintained. Any significant deviations from the original design should be clearly described in Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, Component B. Program Specific Question (PSQ) 4d of the application.

Question 21: Component A: Where should question 5d be answered since there is no page count assigned to Budgets and Justifications? (Page 28 – Budget and Justifications)

Answer 21: Applicants are instructed to enter their proposed budget into the Statewide Financial System (SFS). Per **Attachment 14: SFS Expenditure Budget Instructions**, for questions and instructions about entering an application in SFS, please go to [Resources for Grant Applicants | Grants Management \(ny.gov\)](#) for more training and guidance resources.

Question 22: Component A: I am wondering if the above RFA has the attachment that includes the allowable/nonallowable expenses? If so, can you please provide me a copy of it?

Answer 22: Per Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, Component B and Component B, 5. Budgets and Justifications, ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. Ineligible items are those items determined by the NYSDOH AIDS Institute

to be inadequately justified in relation to the proposed Work Plan or not fundable under existing federal guidance (Uniform Guidance).

Please refer to Section VI. Attachments in the Request for Applications for the full list of attachments.

Question 23: We are writing with the following questions in response to RFA #20721: Research and Evaluation Grants – Component A: What budget assumptions should we make regarding OTPS? E.g., travel to in-person meetings, incentives for data collection, transcription

Answer 23: Per Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, A. Program Model Description, Component A: Research and Evaluation Mini Grants in the Request for Applications, the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute will identify one-year research and evaluation projects under selected annual focus areas which will be addressed by selected contractors. Contractors will then work with New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute staff to develop the study design and conduct the research or evaluation needed to answer the research or evaluation question based on the tasks in **Attachment 3: Component A Work Plan**.

OTPS costs may include items such as participant incentives, transcription, travel to in-person meetings, and other eligible costs based on the selected annual focus area identified upon award. Selected contractors will work with the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute to finalize budgets prior to contracting. When developing the budget, all costs should be related to the proposed activities, as described in the application narrative and Work Plan. Refer to Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, Component A, 5. Budgets and Justifications in the Request for Applications for more detail.