

RFA #20733 / SFS # NIA12027

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

Request for Applications (RFA)

New Investigator Award in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 1)

KEY DATES

RFA Release Date:	3/18/2026
Letter of Interest Due:	4/1/2026
Applicant Conference Registration Deadline:	4/14/2026
Applicant Conference:	4/15/2026
Questions Due:	4/22/2026 by 4:00 PM
Questions & Answers Published (on or about):	4/29/2026
RFA Applications Due in SFS:	6/10/2026 by 4:00 PM

Department of Health Contact Name & Address:

David Googins, Extramural Grants Administration
New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center, Empire State Plaza, Room C345, Albany, NY 12237, (518) 474-7002, scirb@health.ny.gov

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	3
A.	Background.....	3
B.	Purpose of the Funds.....	4
II.	Who May Apply.....	4
III.	Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes.....	5
IV.	Administrative Requirements.....	6
A.	Issuing Agency.....	6
B.	Question and Answer Phase.....	6
C.	Letter of Intent.....	7
D.	Applicant Conference.....	8
E.	How to File an Application.....	8
F.	Department of Health’s Reserved Rights.....	10
G.	Term of Contract.....	11
H.	Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardee(s).....	11
I.	Procurement Requirements.....	13
J.	Assurances of No Conflicts of Interest and/or Other Detrimental Effects.....	14
K.	Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements.....	15
L.	Vendor Identification Number.....	16
M.	Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire.....	16
N.	Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits.....	17
O.	General Specifications.....	19
V.	Completing the Application.....	20
A.	Application Format/Content.....	20
B.	Freedom of Information Law.....	22
C.	Review & Award Process.....	22
VI.	Attachments.....	29

I. Introduction

The New York State Department of Health (herein referred to as the Department), Extramural Grants Administration of Wadsworth Center announces the availability \$2.16 million in New York State funds to support one to three (1-3) awards to provide services to attract new Investigators's to its SCIRB program.

Eligible institutions are invited to submit applications for the following funding mechanism:

New Investigator Award (NIA)

- Contract term will be up to three years; and
- Annual direct costs are capped at \$200,000 plus Facilities and Administrative costs up to 20% total modified direct costs; and
- Total contract value over the life of the contract is capped at \$720,000.

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.

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 (NYSDOH), Extramural Grants Administration (EGA) regarding research focused on cures for SCI and SCI-induced paralysis.

The SCIRB's mission and goal is to:

- Seek major advances toward a cure and not simply incremental research gains or incremental improvements for SCI patients
- 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 a 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 Program and SCIRB can be found at: <https://www.wadsworth.org/extramural/spinalcord>.

B. Purpose of the 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. The goal is to expend \$8.5 million for SCI research every State fiscal year.

The Request for Applications (RFA) supports investigators new to the field of SCI research at different stages of career development. This award enables such investigators to compete for funding separately from investigators with established programs of SCI research. The intent of this initiative is to increase the pool of outstanding basic and clinical researchers actively studying SCI in New York State and thereby accelerate our progress toward the goals of the SCIRB mission. As such, **The New Investigator Award** aligns with the central goals of the SCIRB mission. Previous experience in SCI research is allowed, but not required. However, applications naming a Principal Investigator (PI) with limited background in SCI research are strongly encouraged to include collaboration with investigators who are experienced in SCI research and/or possess other relevant expertise to strengthen the application.

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 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 15 – Work Plan Summary & Attachment 16 - Work Plan Narrative** in the **Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions** of the RFA).

An eligible organization is not limited to the number of applications it can submit in response to this RFA. However, an eligible PI may be named on only one (1) application in response to this RFA, regardless of the organization under which the application is submitted. The eligible Principal Investigator (PI) is designated by the applicant organization, has the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed Work Plan with the freedom to pursue independent research goals without formal mentorship.

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 investigator named by the organization as the PI on the application meets one of the following three (3) eligibility categories. These eligibility criteria pertain as of the application submission deadline:
 - Transitioning Postdoctoral Fellow: Current senior postdoctoral fellows who have completed at least 3 years of postdoctoral training.

- Early-Career Investigator: Independent investigators who are within 5 years of their last training position.
 - New SCI Researcher: Independent investigators at all academic levels (or equivalent) who have received less than \$300,000 in SCIRB funded, non-mentored funding for SCI research.
3. The Applicant is a not-for-profit organization eligible to do business in New York State or governmental organization in New York State.
 4. The application does not propose support for a research center, a Phase III clinical trial; nor does the application propose expansion of enrollment for an ongoing clinical trial.
 5. The eligible PI is not dependent research staff nor are they 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 eligible PI must not have received a New Investigator Award or similar career development award from NIH or other Federal source nor this SCIRB program from NYS.
 7. **Attachment 16 - Work Plan Narrative** does not exceed the page limits stated in Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions. Applications that exceed the specified limits will not be reviewed.

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

III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

Research Scope: The intent of the NIA award is to promote new ideas in SCI research and establish proof of principle for further development in future studies. It is expected that this research will foster the translation of results from basic (preclinical) research into the next research phase. NIA awards are expected to contribute to rapid movement of findings to potential therapeutic applications or treatment strategies.

The mechanism is designed to investigate a research hypothesis focusing on cures for SCI paralysis or the prevention of paralysis following trauma. Proposed projects should be cohesive and sharply focused. Translational aspects of the study may involve either animal or human studies. The research may be applied or may integrate fundamental and applied approaches. Applications that seek to apply knowledge gleaned from lower order mammals to appropriate non-human primate models are also eligible. The application will include at least one translational aim/goal, and should explicitly state how results will inform and enable the next research stage, (e.g., preclinical or clinical research).

Preliminary Data: Applications should include preliminary data where appropriate. These data are not required to have come from the SCI research field but should demonstrate feasibility in models of SCI. Applications not supported by preliminary data should be based on sound scientific rationale and may reflect clinical observations or discoveries made in other illnesses with symptomology relevant to SCI (e.g. traumatic brain injury or TBI).

Applications considered non-responsive to this RFA include those lacking a specific and attainable translational or clinical goal (i.e., completion of the Work Plan cannot lead to another basic research grant application).

The SCIRB seeks to fund research projects in which there is a high likelihood that the results will yield the opportunity to apply for future funding from other sources.

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 as 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.

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#20733, New Investigator Award (Round 1)) 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**) 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 should be submitted scirb@health.ny.gov. Please ensure that the RFA number and title (RFA#20733, New Investigator Award (Round 1)) 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 requests that potential Applicants register for this conference by following this link <https://meetny.gov.webex.com/weblink/register/r5e8abe39b1fa8f519fb71551762aee36>. 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: **NIA12027** . 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: 10/01/27 – 09/30/30.

Continued funding throughout this three (3) 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:

New York State Department of Health
Wadsworth Center

RFA 20733, RFA New Investigator Award (Round 1)

Extramural Grants Administration
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 this agreement 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 and 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 **30%** 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 **15%** for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises ("MBE") participation and **15%** 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.

By submitting an Application, each Applicant and potential Grantee agrees to complete an MWBE Utilization plan as directed in **Attachment 21** of this RFA. The Department will review the MWBE Utilization Plan submitted by each Grantee. If a Grantee’s MWBE Utilization Plan is not accepted, the Department may issue a Notice of Deficiency. If a Notice of Deficiency is issued, Grantee agrees that it shall respond to the Notice of Deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt. The Department may disqualify a Grantee as being **non-responsive** under the following circumstances:

- a) If a Grantee fails to submit a completed MWBE Utilization Plan;
- b) If a Grantee fails to submit a written remedy to a Notice of Deficiency;
- c) If a Grantee fails to submit a request for waiver (if applicable); or
- d) If the Department determines that the Grantee has failed to document good-faith efforts to meet the established MWBE participation goals for the procurement.

In addition, Grantees will be required to certify they have an acceptable Equal Employment Opportunity policy statement.

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.

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, “! 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.

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.

6. Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification

New York State Finance Law [§139-M](#) requires Applicants on competitive state procurements to certify that they have a written policy addressing gender-based violence and the workplace and that such policy meets the minimum requirements outlined on **Attachment 22**. Applicants should review, sign, date and include as part of their submission **Attachment 22**.

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 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 - 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 one (1) attachment in response to any request for an attachment. If more than one (1) version of an attachment is uploaded, the final version uploaded will be the version considered for review.

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

1. Applicants are instructed to indicate if they sent the optional **Attachment 02 – Letter of Intent** via email to scirb@health.ny.gov by selecting Yes or No in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor.
2. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 03 – Applicant Face Page** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
3. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 04 – Sub-Applicant Face Page**, if applicable, in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS. Attachment 4 should only be completed and uploaded if sub-applicants are proposed by the applicant.
4. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 05 – Staff, Collaborators, Consultants, and Contributors** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
5. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 06 – Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in Application** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
6. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 07 – Lay Abstract** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
7. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 08 – Scientific Abstract** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
8. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 09 – Applicant Budget** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
9. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 10 – Sub-Applicant Budget**, if applicable, in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS. Attachment 10 should only be completed and uploaded if sub-applicants are proposed by the applicant.
10. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 11 – Minimum Eligibility Attestation** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
11. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 12 – Biographical Sketch(es)** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
12. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 13 – Facilities and Resources** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
13. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 14 – Work Plan Summary** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
14. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 15 – Work Plan Narrative** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
15. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 16 – Human Subjects** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
16. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 17 – Vertebrae Animals** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.

17. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 18 – Other Support** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
18. Applicants are instructed to indicate if they sent the optional **Attachment 19 – Conflict of Interest Form** via email to scirb@health.ny.gov along with Attachment 2 – Letter of Intent by selecting Yes or No in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor.
19. 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 20 – Appendices Document** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS
20. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload the appropriate version of **Attachment 21 (a or b) – Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.
21. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 22 – Gender Based Violence Attestation** in response to this Program Specific Question/Bid Factor Question in SFS.

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.** Applicants are instructed to clearly and specifically identify all proprietary/confidential information from the application on a separate MS Word document and upload the document to the full PDF of the Application. Label the attachment as “Proprietary/Confidential Information” and include the following sentence in the document, “Subject to Public Officers Law the following materials are considered trade secrets, proprietary, and/or confidential commercial information.” Please refer to **Attachment 1: Checklist and Instructions** for the noting confidential information in **Attachments 7 & 8 the Lay and Scientific Abstracts**. 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

An Application which meets the Minimum Eligibility Requirements will be reviewed and evaluated competitively by the the Department, Extramural Grants Administration. An

Application that does not meet the minimum criteria (PASS/FAIL) will not be evaluated. An Application that does not provide all required information will be omitted from consideration.

The Department contracts with an independent peer review organization 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 in **Attachment 7 – Lay Abstract**.

Applications will be reviewed based on the criteria specified. 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 consist of 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:

- i. pre-meeting review with adjectival scoring (see table below)
- ii. on-line conferral among assigned reviewers
- iii. triage based on adjectival scores of assigned reviewers for one criterion
- iv. 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 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 that are not triaged prior to panel meeting discussion 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. 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

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

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

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

Applications that are triaged (receive an adjectival score of Good or worse from each assigned reviewer for the criterion identified in Section V.E) will receive only the adjectival scores of the assigned reviewers. No integers or weighting will be applied, and the application will not be further reviewed for compliance penalties.

The Review Panel will comment on the responsiveness of the application to the funding mechanism as described in Section III above. 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-1 Part B). 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.

D. Conflicts of Interest and Reviewer Exclusions

The SCIRB aims to conduct a review process that is scientifically rigorous and impartial. All participants in a review (including scientific reviewers, Department 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 members and 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, including 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 20, should do so as part of the Letter of Intent (see RFA Section IV.C. – Letter of Intent) by the deadline stated on the cover of this RFA. Applicants may use Attachment 19 to identify perceived conflicts with up to 3 individuals excluding SCIRB members and Department employees. The Conflict of Interest form will only be considered if submitted with a letter of Intent by the due date on the cover page of this RFA. 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 Attachment 1 - Application Checklist and Instructions.** The Peer Review Contractor will assess penalties of up to 1.0 point for any application that is not triaged, scores between 1.0 and 4.9 and deviates from the instructions found in (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 applications 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 the application:

New Investigator Award

Research Plan (50%) – triage criterion

- The likelihood that the proposed research will have high impact in achieving a cure for SCI;
 - The originality of the research question(s) and the approach taken in its investigation through a research effort;
 - The importance of the research questions and their basis in the scientific literature;
 - The suitability of research design and methods to achieve the application's SCI- related aims;
 - The likelihood of successful completion of the study based on the research design, methods, background and experience of the investigators, the research environment and the availability of time and resources; and
 - The appropriate use of human subjects and vertebrate animals to accomplish the overall goals of the project.
-
- Funded Applicants will be held to the Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures as listed in **Attachment 14 – Work Plan Summary and Attachment 15 – Work Plan Narrative** and may be required to enter the performance measures into SFS if funding is awarded.

Translational/Clinical Potential (10%)

- The potential for the proposed work to contribute to therapeutic applications or treatment strategies and cures for SCI-induced paralysis or to prevent paralysis following acute injury.

Impact (10%)

- The extent to which the project, if successfully completed, would make an original and important contribution to treatments and cures for SCI-induced paralysis or to prevent paralysis following acute injury (high-risk/high-reward); and
- The likelihood the project will lead to further funding or be translated into practice.

Investigators and Environment (10%)

- How well the PI's record of accomplishments demonstrates their potential for contributing to the field of SCI research and completing the proposed work;
- If applicable, how well the proposed contributions of collaborators will complement the PI's ability to perform the proposed work;
- The degree to which the levels of effort by the PI and other key personnel are appropriate to ensure success of the project;
- How appropriate the PI and research team's background and expertise are with regard to their ability to accomplish the proposed work. Does the PI/co-Is have the experience and technical skill for this project;
- Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements; and
- Are the scientific resources, equipment and organizational support available to the investigators adequate for the proposed project and do they contribute to the probability of success?

Budget (20%)

- The need for each budget item is explained;
- Each budget line is justified as necessary for completion of the project;
- Budgeted amounts are reasonable, cost-effective, and appropriate to accomplish the research aims; and
- There are no excessive or unnecessary budget items.

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

Applicants are instructed to prepare an annual budget based on the maximum award as indicated in Section I of this RFA, and for the region in which they are applying, if applicable. The budget for year one 10/01/2027-09/30/2028 must be entered into the Statewide Financial System (SFS). Refer to **Attachment 1: Checklist and Instructions for more detail**. All budget lines should be calculated as whole dollar amounts. All costs should be related to the proposed activities, as described in the application narrative and work plan, and should be justified in detail. All costs should be reasonable and cost-effective. Contracts established resulting from the Request for Application will be cost reimbursable. Once the budget in SFS is completed, Applicants are required to also enter the total grant funds being requested in the Unit Bid Price field at the bottom of the page. The total grant funds and Unit Bid Price must match in order for the application to submit successfully.

All costs must be related to the provision of New Investigator Award as well as be consistent with the scope of services, reasonable and cost effective. Justification for each cost should be submitted in narrative form. For all existing staff, the Budget narrative must delineate how the percentage of time devoted to this initiative has been determined.

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.

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 'Research Plan' 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 will make recommendations for funding to the Commissioner of Health.

H. Award Decisions & 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.

After award announcements are made, and 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

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: Debriefing Request: RFA#20733, New Investigator Award (Round 1).

Unsuccessful Applicants who wish to protest the award(s) resulting from this RFA on legal RFA 20733, RFA New Investigator Award (Round 1)

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.
- All attachments must be uploaded in the file format in which they were originally downloaded.
- 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 Name and Title	Upload/email
Attachment 1 - Checklist and Instructions (<i>for Applicant use only</i>)	information only
Attachment 2 - Letter of Intent (optional but recommended)	email
Attachment 3 - Applicant Face Page	Upload

Attachment 4 - Sub-Applicant Face Page (<i>if applicable</i>)	Upload
Attachment 5 - Staff, Collaborators, Consultants, ...	Upload
Attachment 6 - Acronyms and Abbreviations	Upload
Attachment 7 - Lay Abstract	Upload
Attachment 8 - Scientific Abstract	Upload
Attachment 9 – Applicant Budget	Upload
Attachment 10 – Sub-Applicant Budget (<i>if applicable</i>)	Upload
Attachment 11 – Minimum Eligibility Attestation	Upload
Attachment 12 - Biographical Sketch(es)	Upload
Attachment 13 - Facilities and Resources	Upload
Attachment 14 - Work Plan Summary	Upload
Attachment 15 - Work Plan Narrative	Upload
Attachment 16 - Human Subjects	Upload
Attachment 17 - Vertebrate Animals	Upload
Attachment 18 - Other Support	Upload
Attachment 19 - Conflict of Interest Form (<i>optional</i>)	email
Attachment 20 - Appendices Document (<i>optional</i>)	Upload
Attachment 21 - Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Forms	Upload
Attachment 22 - Gender Based Violence Attestation	Upload
Attachment 23 - A-1 (<i>informational use only</i>)	information only
Attachment 24 - A-2 (<i>informational use only</i>)	information only
Attachment 25 - M (<i>informational use only</i>)	information only