

**New York State Department of Health
AIDS Institute**
*Division of HIV & Hepatitis Health Care
Bureau of Community Support Services*

**Request for Applications (RFA)
SFS ID: CLSPLH2026**

SFS Event Name: RFA #20781 Legal Services for People with HIV/AIDS

RFA #20781/Internal Program #25-0001

Comprehensive Legal Services for People Living with HIV/AIDS

Applicants may submit no more than one (1) application in response to this Request for Applications.

In order to apply for this Request for Applications, eligible applicants must be prequalified in the Statewide Financial System (known as SFS) and must submit an application via the Statewide Financial System (SFS)

KEY DATES

Release Date:	April 27, 2026
Questions Due:	May 11, 2026, by 4:00 PM ET
Questions, Answers and Updates Posted: (on or about)	May 27, 2026
Applications Due:	June 11, 2026, by 4:00 PM ET

IMPORTANT – PLEASE NOTE: Applications MUST be submitted in the Statewide Financial System as one (1) complete PDF document including the Application and all required Attachments in response to Bid Factor Question 01.

DOH Contact Name & Address:

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I. Introduction

The New York State Department of Health (herein referred to as the Department) AIDS Institute, Division of HIV and Hepatitis Health Care, Bureau of Community Support Services announces the availability of New York State funds to support the provision of comprehensive legal services to people living with HIV/AIDS.

The intent of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to **allocate \$2,750,000 annually for five (5) years for a total of \$13,750,000 in New York State funds.** Up to \$315,000 annually is available to providers in New York City, Long Island, and Hudson Valley. Up to \$215,000 annually is available to providers in the rest of the state (Central New York, Finger Lakes, Northeastern New York, and Western New York).

A. Background/Intent

HIV is closely tied to social and economic inequalities. Retention in medical care and adherence to antiretroviral therapy are essential for achieving sustained viral load suppression. However, many individuals with HIV face significant challenges in maintaining this viral suppression. For instance, in New York State (NYS) 52% of people with HIV live in households at or below the poverty level, and a significant number experience homelessness, confront issues such as HIV stigma, depression, addiction, and food insecurity. Black/Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who are already disproportionately impacted by the HIV epidemic, are also more likely to be impacted by health harming legal needs.

To eliminate disparities in health outcomes, there is a need to understand and address the relationship between unmet legal needs and social determinants of health (SDOH) that may impact People Living With HIV/AIDS' (PLWHA) ability to achieve and maintain viral load suppression and affect health outcomes. Research show that these and other SDOH contribute to approximately 60% of a person's health outcomes and significantly impact a person living with HIV's ability to manage their illness and preserve their health. These entrenched and formidable SDOH barriers cannot be addressed through medical treatment alone.¹ Though many of these barriers can be addressed and eliminated through legal advocacy, most patients and their medical providers are unaware that these barriers to healthcare are related to legal rights violations or can be prevented with proactive legal representation. Improved availability and access to comprehensive legal services can help PLWHA overcome these barriers and improve access to care and health outcomes.²

To ensure legal services are aligned with the needs of these populations and identify emergent legal needs and service gaps across different regions of New York State, the Department of Health AIDS Institute implemented provider surveys, conducted literature reviews, and coordinated meetings with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The information gathered was crucial in identifying the emergent legal needs in New York State and played a vital role in the design of the legal services model identified in the RFA.

¹ Medical-Legal partnerships: An integrated approach to advance health equity and improve health outcomes for people with HIV. Omar Martinez, et al., *Frontiers in Reproductive Health*, August 2022

² Health Harming Legal Needs Identified by people with HIV: Data from a medical legal Partnership Study to improve HIV care Continuum Outcomes. Samantha J. Morton et al., *The Journal of Medicine, Law and Public Health*, Jan. 30, 2025

In New York State, the HIV epidemic disproportionately affects Black/Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), especially among young people, non-Hispanic Black/African American women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, including gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming individuals, as well as men who have sex with men (MSM). In 2025, Black individuals made up 39% of new HIV diagnoses, even though they represent only 14.7% of the state's population. While 77% were connected to healthcare, only 54% achieved viral suppression, compared to 77% of white individuals.³ Consistent medical care is key to achieving viral load suppression and lowering transmission risk. On average, low-income individuals face two (2) to three (3) unmet civil legal needs that can greatly impact their food security, access to stable and affordable housing, benefit stability, and overall safety. Addressing these issues for people living with HIV can greatly enhance their ability to stay engaged in their healthcare.⁴

This RFA seeks to support innovative and comprehensive legal services that address the SDOH affecting the health outcomes of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), prioritizing the most disproportionately impacted populations such as BIPOC. Such legal services cover a wide variety of civil legal issues including but not limited to benefits, income maintenance, housing, individual rights, education, employment, health, advance directives and family matters. This model promotes an integrated approach that fosters collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations, law schools, medical providers, and federally qualified health centers. Such collaboration will effectively address the unmet legal needs of PLWHA and their families.

NOTE: Legal services funded under this RFA are restricted to civil, non-criminal matters.

Addressing Health Equity and the Social Determinants of Health

The Department of Health AIDS Institute is committed to ensuring funded programs and partners are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and expertise to adequately address health equity and the social determinants of health. Health equity means everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy, where no one is limited in achieving optimal health because of who they are or where they live. In a world where health equity is the norm, everyone has fair and just access to these conditions, and therefore, has a fair and just opportunity to achieve optimal health. The social determinants of health include socioeconomic status, education, employment, housing, transportation, food/nutrition, health literacy, social supports, and stigma/discrimination.

The Department of Health AIDS Institute is committed to the implementation of new and tailored approaches to address the challenges faced by communities with a disproportionate burden of disease, including people who use drugs and the LGBTQ+ community, Black/Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and all people impacted by HIV, Hepatitis C, and sexually transmitted infections. Programs are expected to deliver services in accordance with the following health equity principles:

- Be explicit when identifying targeted communities and populations facing inequities.
- Identify evidence-based, tailored solutions and approaches.
- Create an internal organization-wide culture of equity.
- Respect and involve impacted communities.
- Measure and evaluate progress in reducing health disparities.

³ NYS [ETE Dashboard Ending the AIDS Epidemic](#)

⁴ Framing Legal Care as Health Care Messaging guide, January 2015.

Please see **Attachment 1 for Health Equity Definitions and Examples** of social and structural determinants of health.

Ending the AIDS Epidemic (ETE) & Eliminating Hepatitis C in New York State

In June 2014, New York State announced a three-point plan to end the AIDS epidemic in NYS. This plan provided a roadmap to significantly reduce HIV infections to a historic low by the end of 2020, with the goal of achieving the first ever decrease in HIV prevalence. The plan also aimed to improve the health of all HIV positive New Yorkers and was the first jurisdictional effort of its kind in the U.S. The ETE Blueprint (BP) continues to guide all ETE efforts. The ETE Addendum Report is a written report that provides an overview of the past five (5) years of New York State's ETE initiatives, as well as a summary of the community feedback sessions that were conducted in 2020 to assist in identifying areas of focus for ETE beyond 2020.

The ETE Blueprint and the ETE Addendum report are available on the Department of Health website at: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending_the_epidemic/

In November 2021, NYS released its https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/hepatitis/hepatitis_c/docs/hepatitis_c_elimination_plan.pdf as a public health problem in NYS by 2030. To achieve the goal of hepatitis C elimination, concerted efforts are needed to ensure access to timely diagnosis, care, and treatment for all people with hepatitis C. This RFA specifically addresses eliminating hepatitis C by addressing the social determinants of health. Additional relevant resources include the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) and the NYS Prevention Agenda. The NHAS is a five-year plan that details principles, priorities, and actions to guide our collective national response to the HIV epidemic. The NHAS is available at: [National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States 2022–2025](#).

The NYS Prevention Agenda is the blueprint for state and local action to improve the health of New Yorkers in five (5) priority areas. A key focus of the Prevention Agenda is reducing health disparities. To achieve this, the Prevention Agenda prioritizes evidence-informed interventions that address disparities and inequities across racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic, and other characteristics. The NYS Prevention Agenda is available at: health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2025-2030.

B. Available Funding

Up to \$2,750,000 annually is available to support programs funded through this RFA.

Funding will be allocated as shown in the chart below (Table 1). For purposes of this RFA, the Department of Health Regions are also defined as in the chart below.

- **For the Central New York, Finger Lakes, Northeastern New York, and Western New York regions**, annual awards will **not** exceed \$215,000.
- **For the Hudson Valley, Long Island, and New York City regions**, annual awards will **not** exceed \$315,000.

Table 1 – Annual Award Amount & Number of Awards by New York State Department of Health Region

New York State Department of Health Region	Annual Award Amount	Number of Awards
Central New York: Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties	\$215,000	0-1
Finger Lakes: Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates Counties	\$215,000	0-1
Hudson Valley: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester Counties	\$315,000	0-1
Long Island: Nassau and Suffolk Counties	\$315,000	0-1
New York City: Boroughs of Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island	\$315,000	0-4
Northeastern New York: Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, and Washington Counties	\$215,000	0-1
Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties	\$215,000	0-1

New York State Department of Health Region

Applicants are requested to select their primary region of service on **Application Cover Page: Attachment 2**. The Department of Health region selected should be the location where the largest number of clients will be served. This does not preclude an applicant from proposing to serve one (1) or more counties outside a defined service region.

If an applicant fails to indicate a primary service region, it will be assigned a primary service region based on the location where the largest number of clients is proposed to be served.

- Applicants may submit no more than one (1) application in response to this RFA. If more than one (1) application is submitted in response to this RFA, the last application that is received will be reviewed and considered for funding. All other applications will be rejected.
- Should an applicant submit an application in error before the deadline, please contact sfs.sm.helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov to submit a corrected application, as long as it is received prior to the deadline for when applications are due. The last application that is received will be considered.
- Awards will be made to the highest scoring applicants in each region, up to the number of awards indicated for that region. Remaining funding will be awarded to the next highest acceptable scoring applicant(s) from any region until the remaining funding is exhausted, or awards have been made to all acceptable scoring applicants.

- If there is an insufficient number of acceptable applications (scoring 70 or above) received from any region, the Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to:
 - Fund an application scoring in the range of 60-69 from a region and/or
 - Apply unawarded funding to the next highest scoring applicant(s) in other region(s) until the maximum number of awards per region is met.
- If there is an insufficient number of fundable applications in a region, the maximum number of awards may not be met for that region. The Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to re-solicit any region where there are an insufficient number of fundable applications.
- If funding remains available after the maximum number of acceptable scoring applications is awarded to each region, the Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to exceed the maximum number of awards.
- The Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to revise the award amounts as necessary due to changes in availability of funding.

Should additional funding become available, the Department of Health AIDS Institute may select an organization from the pool of applicants deemed not funded, due to limited resources. If it is determined that the needed expertise/services are not available among these organizations, the Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to establish additional competitive solicitations.

Current Contractors: If you choose to not apply for funding, the Department of Health AIDS Institute highly recommends notifying your community partners of your intent. This will ensure community members and providers are aware of the discontinuation of the program and services.

Applicants should submit **Attachment 3: Statement of Assurances** signed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Designee to certify the organization meets all criteria listed on **Attachment 3**.

II. Who May Apply

A. Minimum Eligibility Requirements

All applicants must meet the following Minimum Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicant must:
 - Be prequalified in the New York 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 Request for Applications.
 - Be a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) community-based provider; **OR** be an entity pursuant to Article 28 of the New York State Public Health Law that has a **Linkage Agreement** or **Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment 4)** with one (1) or more legal services organizations, law schools, law school clinics, or community-based organizations with legal capacity. The agency’s **Operating Certificate pursuant to Article 28 of the Public Health Law** must be submitted as

Attachment 5 and the **Linkage Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding** must be submitted as **Attachment 4** as instructed in **Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors, PSQ 1h and PSQ 1i.**

- Have a minimum of three (3) years of experience providing comprehensive legal services to people living with HIV/AIDS, HIV-affected families, and populations most impacted by HIV/AIDS including Black/Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) as documented in **Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors, PSQ 1a.**
- Be located in and conducts business in the Department of Health region they propose to serve.

III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

A. Program Model Description

Programs funded through this RFA must deliver services as outlined below and in accordance with the **Work Plan: Attachment 6**. Funded applicants are expected to create a comprehensive model of legal services that address a wide range of civil legal issues affecting PLWHA, effectively removing legal barriers that impact social determinants of health, which will ultimately enhance access to care.

The applicant should demonstrate that the proposed program model is based on a recent assessment of the unique legal needs of people living with HIV/AIDS, HIV-affected families, and populations most impacted by HIV/AIDS including Black/Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) within the Department of Health region selected. Applicants should evaluate the HIV-related legal needs of the community, available resources, assets, and funding streams to determine the most appropriate staffing structure and program design.

The program model requires a comprehensive individualized assessment of legal needs and development of a tailored legal service plan that responds to PLWHA's identified needs. Ongoing re-assessment of legal needs annually will identify any new and emerging needs and inform updates to the legal service plan.

In addition to having a comprehensive legal needs assessment, it is expected that every enrolled client will be assessed for Social Determinants of Health needs and barriers using the AIDS Institute Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Assessment, a standardized tool in the AIDS Institute Reporting System (AIRS). This tool covers the following Social Determinants of Health domains: housing, food/nutrition, transportation, financial assistance, employment, health literacy, social isolation and supports, stigma, and disabilities. A new SDOH Assessment must be completed every six (6) months and any time a new need is identified. Funded providers will provide appropriate referrals to clients with unmet SDOH needs through partnerships with community providers. Applicants will leverage existing partnerships and develop new partnerships to establish a network of partners that is responsive to the spectrum of SDOH needs that contribute to health inequities.

NOTE: The legal needs assessment does not replace the SDOH assessment. Both assessments are required.

Providers will establish partnerships with and linkages to community-based organizations, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), law schools, and medical providers to maximize access to and availability of legal services among PLWHA, including the most disproportionately impacted and underserved communities. Within the first year of program implementation, applicants are expected to establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with community-based HIV service providers to conduct legal clinics for people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, applicants will conduct in-service trainings to community-based HIV providers on identifying legal needs and how to proactively refer clients to legal services.

An integrated approach to care that includes legal, social, and medical services is essential for addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The integration of these services has been recognized as a method to develop more effective care models and improve patient outcomes⁵. Providers are encouraged to develop innovative, integrated models that increase accessibility and improve early identification of legal needs as clients engage in HIV care. For example, an applicant may establish a Medical Legal Partnership (MLP) or expand an existing Medical Legal Partnership to service PLWHA, where clients with legal needs are identified through a thorough legal screening during clinical intake, leading to a comprehensive service plan and referrals for legal assistance.

Funded applicants will:

- Develop policies and procedures that align with the goals of the RFA.
- Provide comprehensive, civil legal services to PLWHA as described in Section III. Project Narrative/ Work Plan Outcomes, A. Program Model Description of this RFA.
- Conduct comprehensive legal needs assessments for all clients at enrollment to identify unmet legal needs and re-assessments minimally every year after initial intake/assessment, or more frequently, to identify any new or emerging legal issues.
- Create an individualized legal service plan based on identified legal needs and update it annually in conjunction with the re-assessment, or more frequently as new legal needs arise.
- Develop and implement a Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) assessment, using the AIDS Institute Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Assessment every six (6) months or more frequently as a new need is identified.
- Develop and maintain a streamlined referral process and network of community partners to appropriately provide referrals for other identified non-legal needs such as supportive services or health care.
- Develop, in collaboration with community-based partners, a comprehensive legal screening tool designed to assess a client or patient's health harming legal needs to facilitate referrals.
- Establish two (2) or more partnerships with community-based HIV service providers via Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to conduct legal clinics.
- Conduct legal clinics at least monthly with community-based HIV service providers for a minimum of twelve (12) legal clinics annually.
- Conduct a minimum of six (6) in-service trainings annually to community-based HIV providers on identifying legal needs and how to proactively refer clients to legal services.

⁵ Medical-legal partnerships integrated approach to advance health equity and improve outcomes for people living with HIV, Omar Martinez, et.al. College of Medicine, University of Central Florida, Journal of Frontiers in Reproductive Health, August 2022.

B. Client Eligibility

All clients are expected to meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be an individual living with HIV/AIDS; **OR** be a parent living with HIV/AIDS with dependent children and/or adolescents in the household; **OR** be an identified guardian or caregiver of a family member living with or affected by HIV; **AND**
- Be a New York State resident.

C. Program Outcomes

1. Increased engagement of communities disproportionately impacted by HIV including Black/Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in comprehensive legal services;
2. Improved identification of unmet Social Determinant of Health needs (SDOH) using the AIDS Institute SDOH Assessment and improved responses to identified SDOH needs through referrals to community providers and resources;
3. Improved knowledge and awareness among community members of comprehensive legal services; and
4. Enhanced capacity of community-based HIV providers to identify unmet legal needs using a comprehensive assessment tool that proactively identifies needs during the intake process and facilitates referrals to legal service providers.

D. Program Staffing

Applicants should provide a sound rationale for the proposed staffing structure and clearly demonstrate how it supports the proposed model of comprehensive legal services. It is expected that staff have the credentials, skills, and experience to offer high quality services and meet the needs of the priority population. Applicants are strongly encouraged to determine appropriate qualifications for each position, and to propose salaries that are commensurate with these qualifications.

The RFA is not requiring specific Full Time Equivalents (FTE) for required positions. The applicant should determine the most appropriate FTE allocation for the staff structure, based on the community needs assessment, position responsibilities, program structure, and available funding.

The staffing structure of Funded Applicants is expected to include:

- **Attorney:** Responsible for providing direct legal services to clients. The Attorney must (i) a graduate of a fully-accredited United States law school, (ii) a duly-licensed member of the Bar of the State of New York, duly-admitted to practice in at least one of the Appellate Divisions of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, and (iii) duly-registered and in good standing in the Office of Court Administration of the State of New York.
- **Paralegal/Client Services Support:** Responsible for helping clients navigate the legal process, collecting/maintaining client eligibility documentation, assisting with legal needs assessments, conducting Social Determinant of Health (SDOH) assessments using the AIDS Institute-approved tool, providing and tracking referrals, providing community education, and assisting the attorney with document preparation. For Medical Legal Partnership models, this staff person may conduct legal screenings.
- **Data Entry and Evaluation:** Responsible for entering data on all program services in

the AIDS Institute Reporting System (AIRS), submitting required reports to the AIDS Institute, and conducting program evaluation.

Additional staff to be considered include:

- **Program Director:** Responsible for overseeing administrative aspects of the program.

Please note, additional responsibilities beyond those listed above can be included in position descriptions.

E. Program Requirements

Funded Applicants will be expected to:

1. **Adhere to the Work Plan: Attachment 6.**
2. **Serve a cross-section of clients who are representative of the overall Black/Brown, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) population demographics** within the selected community. Applicants are instructed to complete **Attachment 7: Proposed Clients to be Served and Legal Cases** that includes BIPOC clients.
3. **Participate in a collaborative process with the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute** to assess program outcomes and **provide monthly narrative reports describing the progress of the program** with respect to: 1) implementation, 2) client recruitment, 3) success in meeting the **Comprehensive Legal Services Program Model Outcomes, as outlined in Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, C: Program Outcomes**, 4) significant accomplishments achieved, and 5) barriers encountered and plans to address noted problems.
4. **Submit statistical reports on clients served, legal case activity, and other data using the AIDS Institute Reporting System (AIRS).** Funded applicants will collect and report all required data using AIRS. AIRS is a data reporting system that is used by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute to report client demographic information as well as program activities. New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute requires maintenance and reporting of unduplicated client level data, including demographics and service histories, in accordance with applicable federal and/or state reporting requirements. New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute provides and supports the software to enable providers to meet data submission requirements. Details on this software product may be obtained by accessing the following Internet address, airsny.org.
5. **Conduct Quality Management and Consumer Involvement Activities.** All programs must participate in quality management activities as established by the AIDS Institute. This includes, but not limited to, the collection and reporting of data for use in measuring performance and identifying quality improvement projects. Consumer involvement in program development enhances services and contributes to the quality of care. Consumer advisory groups, focus groups, and quality improvement committees are mechanisms to obtain consumer input.
6. **Demonstrate Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity.** Program models should reflect the intrinsic differences derived from preferred language, culture, race/ethnicity, health literacy, religion, and developmental characteristics. The provision of [culturally and linguistically appropriate services \(CLAS\)](#) is a way to improve the quality of services provided to all individuals, which will ultimately help reduce health disparities and achieve health equity. Program models and services provided ensure accordance with current [National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care](#).

7. Adhere to [Health Literacy Universal Precautions](#).

IV. Administrative Requirements

A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the Department of Health AIDS Institute, Division of HIV and Hepatitis Health Care, Bureau of Community Support Services. The Department of Health is responsible for the requirements specified herein and for the evaluation of all Applications. See, 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 Deborah Hanna, Department of Health Bureau of Community Support Services at the following email address: BCSS.RFA@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 (M/WBE). 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 (SFS) 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: 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 #20781, Comprehensive Legal Services for People Living with HIV/AIDS in the subject line of the email.

C. Letter of Interest

A Letter of Interest is not requested for this project.

D. Applicant Conference

An Applicant Conference **will not** be held for this project.

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: **RFA #20781 Legal Services for People with HIV/AIDS**. 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 "passworded" 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: January 1, 2027 - December 31, 2031.

Continued funding throughout this five-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:

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.

All funded contracts will be held to the following contract language:

- Attachment A-1: Agency Specific Terms and Conditions (**RFA Attachment 8**)
- Attachment A-2: Program Specific Terms and Conditions (HIV/AIDS Clause) (**RFA Attachment 9**)
- Attachment E-1: AIDS Institute Policy on Personal Health Related Information (**RFA Attachment 10**)
- Attachment M: Participation by Minority Group Members and Women with Respect to State Contracts: Requirements and Procedures (**RFA Attachment 11**)

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

1. The Department may, at its discretion, make an advance payment to a successful not-for-profit grant Applicant under this RFA (a "Grantee") in an amount not to exceed 25 percent of the annual grant provided for under the Grantee's Contract.
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:

Bureau of Community Support Services
AIDS Institute

New York State Department of Health
AIDS.Institute.Admin@health.ny.gov

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: 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:

Grantee will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred as allowed in the Contract Budget and Workplan.

3. The Grantee will be required to submit the following reports to the Department of Health at the address above or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System:
 - A monthly narrative addressing program implementation, barriers and accomplishments.
 - Monthly client service and outcome data entry through the AIDS Institute Reporting System (AIRS). airsny.org

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 analogous to those set forth in Part 24 of Title 2 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, 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 Women-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 of Health 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: 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 the **MWBE Utilization Plan** as directed in **Attachment 12** 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: 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: 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 osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/file-your-vendor-responsibility-questionnaire or go directly to the VendRep system online at osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/vendrep-system.

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

Applicants opting to complete online should complete and upload the **Vendor Responsibility Attestation: Attachment 13** of the RFA. The Attestation is located under the SFS Attachments Section and once completed should be uploaded as part of the full application submission.

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

N. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits

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

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated July 16, 2014, and revised on December 9, 2023, the new Prequalification Policy became effective as of January 16, 2024. The updated policy requires that not-for-profit organizations register and prequalify in the SFS using the updated Prequalification Application. The updated Prequalification Application and New York State Prequalification Manual for Grantees can be found on the Grants Management website at: 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: osc.ny.gov/state-vendors/portal/enroll-vendor-self-service-portal. Any questions related to SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).
- Instructions for SFS Prequalification can be found on Page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual entitled, “! Grantee Processing in SFS”. This user manual is accessible to organizations with an SFS account under the SFS Coach Tile/Button in the SFS Vendor Portal. Select “Handbook: User Manual with Screenshots” from the Training Type drop down to locate the manual. If you have any problems accessing the manual please contact HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov. Please see the section entitled, “Enter and Submit a Prequalification Application”, located on page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual, for complete instructions on how to complete and submit an SFS Prequalification in the NYS Statewide Financial System.
- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your primary New York State agency representative. The representative specific to the NYS Department of Health can be reached at: vendorresponsibility@health.ny.gov.

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

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

SFS Security Role Name	Description	Access Provided
NY_GM_VENDOR_EVENT_INITIATE	Bid Response Initiator	Allows the vendor user to initiate a bid response to a bid event but not submit the bid response to the agency.
NY_GM_VENDOR_EVENT_INQUIRY	Bid Event Inquiry	Allows a vendor user the ability to review bid

		events. This is a view-only role.
NY_GM_VENDOR_EVENT_SUBMIT	Bid Response Submitter	Allows a vendor user to both initiate a bid response and submit a bid response to the agency.

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

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

O. General Specifications

1. By submitting the "Application Form" each Applicant attests to its express authority to sign on behalf of the Applicant.
2. Grantees will possess, at no cost to the State, all qualifications, licenses and permits to engage in the required business as may be required within the jurisdiction where the work specified is to be performed. Workers to be employed in the performance of any Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will possess the qualifications, training, licenses, and permits as may be required within such jurisdiction.
3. Submission of an Application indicates the Applicant's acceptance of all terms and conditions contained in this RFA, including the terms and conditions of the State of New York Contract for Grants. Any exceptions the Applicant would like considered by the Department relating to the terms and conditions of this RFA and/or State of New York Contract for Grants must have been raised during the Question and Answer Phase of this RFA (See, Section IV.B.).
4. An Applicant may be disqualified from receiving an award if such Applicant or any subsidiary, affiliate, partner, officer, agent, or principal thereof, or anyone in its employ, has previously failed to perform satisfactorily in connection with public bidding or contracts, in the State of New York or otherwise.
5. Provisions Upon Default
 - a. The services to be performed by 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 14**. Applicants should review, sign, date and include as part of their submission **Attachment 14: Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification**.

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.

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 below. 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**.

The Application Narrative, including the Program Abstract, should not exceed twelve (12) double-spaced pages, using an 11-point Arial font with one-inch margins on all sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively. All Attachments should be labeled with the Attachment name and corresponding attachment number. The twelve (12) double-spaced page limitation is specific to the Application Narrative and does **not** include all required Attachments. Please submit only the requested information in the attachments and **do not add attachments or information that are not requested**. Any additional attachments or narrative exceeding the twelve (12) double-spaced page limitation will not be scored or considered by reviewers.

Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a deduction of up to ten (10) points.

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: 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.

See the Event Comments and Attachments link at the bottom of the Bid Event page in SFS for required Attachments to be completed and uploaded with the full Application PDF.

Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors

Application Format

1. Program Abstract	Not Scored	
2. Community and Agency Description	Maximum Score:	15 points
3. Health Equity	Maximum Score:	15 points
4. Program Design and Implementation	Maximum Score:	50 points
5. Budget and Justification	Maximum Score:	<u>20 points</u> 100 points

1. Program Abstract

**Not Scored
Maximum 1 Page**

Q01) Applicants are instructed to upload the full Application and **all** required Attachments as one (1) complete PDF document no larger than 20MB in response to this Bid Factor Question. **Please review the full instructions in Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content to ensure your Application is submitted successfully.**

Applicant should provide a Program Abstract with the following information:

- 1a) How many years of experience does your organization have providing comprehensive legal services to people living with HIV/AIDS, HIV-affected families, and populations most impacted by HIV/AIDS including Black/Brown, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)?
- 1b) Describe the program goals and objectives.
- 1c) Describe the geographic region to be served.
- 1d) Describe the priority population and indicate the anticipated total number of clients and legal caseload to be served annually.

- 1e) Describe how program outcomes and success will be measured?
- 1f) Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 2: Application Cover Page** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1g) Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 3: Statement of Assurances** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1h) Applicants are instructed to upload the **Linkage Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding** as **Attachment 4** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1i) Applicants are instructed to upload the agency's **Operating Certificate pursuant to Article 28 of the Public Health Law** as **Attachment 5** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1j) Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 12: Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1k) Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 13: Vendor Responsibility Attestation** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1l) Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 14: Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1m) Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Attachment 15: Application Checklist** as part of your full Application submission.

2. Community and Agency Description

**Total 15 Points
Maximum 2 Pages**

- 2a) Describe why your organization is qualified to implement the proposed program model.
- 2b) Applicants are instructed to submit their **Agency Organizational Chart** as **Attachment 16: Agency Organizational Chart**, and to submit their **Program Organizational Chart** as **Attachment 17: Program Organizational Chart** as part of your full Application submission. The names of all proposed program staff (including any in-kind staff) should be reflected to demonstrate how the proposed program will be integrated into the organization and meet RFA requirements. Both organizational charts should clearly indicate the relationship of staff to each other and include the management and supervisory structure for the proposed program. Organizational charts should be included as a PDF document as part of your full Application submission.
- 2c) Describe the region your organization proposes to serve, including your agency's most recent assessment of the legal needs of people living with HIV. Include both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address this question.
- 2d) What other programs and agencies in your region relate to your proposed legal services program? Describe how your organization will work with these programs to address the

needs of people living with HIV in your region without supplanting other resources.

- 2e) Describe any prior grants your organization has received from the Department of Health AIDS Institute that are relevant to this proposal. Include the results of the program and successes of those grants. OR, if your organization has not received funding from the Department of Health AIDS Institute, describe any similar types of programs that your organization has undertaken in the past, including the identified results of the program and the successes in achieving those results. Applicants are instructed to complete and include **Attachment 18: Funding History for HIV Legal Services** as part of your full Application submission.

3. Health Equity

**Total 15 Points
Maximum 2 Pages**

- 3a) Describe how your organization will show commitment to health equity and racial justice.
- 3b) Which SDOH barriers will your organization address with the priority population served by this funding? Please provide the most current data that used to identify the SDOH barriers affecting the population served by the funding.
- 3c) Describe how will you monitor and evaluate the immediate impact of your organization's efforts to address the SDOH? For example, if you provided a legal service to a client facing eviction and they indicate housing stability as a factor in improving adherence to treatment.
- 3d) What is your organization's policy for addressing social determinants of health (SDOH)? How does the agency's capacity, such as staff knowledge, training, collaboration, and evaluation, support this effort?
- 3e) How does the organization's leadership reflect the population served?

4. Program Design and Implementation

**Total 50 Points
Maximum 7 Pages**

- 4a) Describe the communities your organization will serve with this funding, including details about the priority population, the geographic area to be served, the service location(s) within that area, and how access to these services will be maximized for the priority population. Explain how you selected the proposed community-based HIV service providers to conduct legal clinics. Applicants are instructed to complete and include **Attachment 7: Proposed Clients to be Served and Legal Cases** and **Attachment 19: Service Delivery Site(s) Chart** as part of your full Application submission. **Attachment 19** should include any legal clinics.
- 4b) Describe the design and structure of your organization's proposed legal services program. Highlight any innovative strategies you plan to use in implementing your program model, along with the rationale or evidence supporting these strategies.
- 4c) Describe how your organization will recruit, identify, and reach the clients you will serve through this funding. Describe how client access and entry into the proposed program model will be approached and facilitated.

- 4d) Describe enrollment procedures, identification of legal needs, case opening, legal service delivery, providing referrals for non-legal needs and follow-up, and case closure.
- 4e) Describe how your organization will conduct assessment/re-assessments of social determinants of health needs.
- 4f) Describe essential community partnerships and linkages needed for the successful implementation of the proposed program and explain how your agency will coordinate legal services screening and referrals from community partners including the development of your program's legal services screening tool Applicants are instructed to complete and include **Attachment 20: Referral Services Linkages Chart** as part of your full application submission.
- 4g) Describe your organization's plan for community education including description of intended audience(s), setting and possible topics to facilitate identification of legal issues and concerns.
- 4h) Describe your organization's outreach and education strategies to support community-based providers in early assessment of legal needs and appropriate referrals for the priority populations.
- 4i) Explain the process of data flow from the point of service delivery to its entry into AIRS. Include details on how your organization will gather, analyze, and report client-level and programmatic data. If using an electronic record, describe how data is extracted from it for AIRS. Include how data will be reviewed to ensure it is a complete, correct and timely submission for all clients, collaterals and services in AIRS.
- 4j) Explain your organization's proposed staffing plan and how it meets the program model's minimum requirements. Include each position's roles, responsibilities, qualifications, education, licenses, in **Attachment 21: Agency Capacity and Staffing Information**. Detail staff roles for AIRS activities, such as system administration, data entry, data quality control, and AIDS Institute reporting. If applicable, include in-kind staff in your staffing details. **Attachment 21: Agency Capacity and Staffing Information** should be completed and included as part of your full Application submission.
- 4k) Outline the plan for initial and ongoing staff training and support.
- 4l) Describe how the agency will ensure that the services provided are culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate.
- 4m) Describe people living with HIV/AIDS will be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of program services.

5. Budgets and Justifications

Total 20 Points

Applicants are instructed to:

- ***Respond to question 5d below as part of your full application submission; and***
- ***Complete and submit a budget in SFS according to the following guidelines:***

5a) 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 (1), January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027, must be entered into the Statewide Financial System (SFS). Entering a budget for years two (2) – five (5) is not required. Refer to **Attachment 22: SFS Expenditure Budget Instructions for guidance**. 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 must be related to the provision of Comprehensive Legal Services for People Living with HIV/AIDS, as well as be consistent with the scope of services, 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.

5b) For staff listed in the Personal services (Salary and Fringe) section of the budget, include a breakdown of the total salary needs for staff. Indicate how the positions relate to program implementation. Applicants are instructed to include a justification for each of the requested FTE's and for the fringe benefits requested.

5c) For each item listed under Non-Personal services, describe how it is necessary for program implementation. Non-Personal services include: Contractual, Travel, Equipment, Space/Property & Utilities, Operating Expenses and Other costs.

5d) Describe the specific internal controls your agency uses to comply with the Federal Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200).

5e) Funding requests must adhere to the following guidelines:

- An indirect cost rate of up to 15% of modified total direct costs can be requested. If your organization has a federally approved rate, contractors may request up to 20% of the federally approved rate. If your agency has a federally approved rate of less than 20%, the maximum indirect rate that can be requested is the federally approved rate.
- Funding may only be used to expand existing activities or create new activities pursuant to this RFA. Funds may **not** be used to supplant funds for currently existing staff and activities. Agencies currently funded by the Department of Health AIDS Institute to provide program services identified in this RFA must apply for continuation of funding.
- Ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. Ineligible items are those items determined by Department of Health to be inadequately justified in relation to the proposed Work Plan or not fundable under existing federal guidance (Uniform Guidance). The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items.

6. Work Plan

Not Scored

For the **SFS Work Plan Project Summary**, Applicants are instructed to insert the Project Summary as it is listed in **Attachment 6: Work Plan**. Any additional Project Summary language entered in the Project Summary area **will not** be considered or scored by reviewers of your application.

Applicants are **not** required to enter Objectives, Tasks or Performances Measures in the SFS Work Plan at the time of application.

Funded Applicants will be held to the Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures as listed in **Work Plan: Attachment 6**.

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." 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 Department of Health AIDS Institute. An Application that does not meet the minimum criteria (PASS/FAIL) will not be evaluated. An Application that does not provide all required information may be omitted from consideration.

Applications will be evaluated on a 100-point scale as follows:

Program Abstract	Not Scored
Community and Agency Description	15 Points
Health Equity	15 Points
Program Design and Implementation	50 Points
Budget	20 Points

Work Plan	Not Scored
Total	100 Points

In the event of a tie score, the applicant with the highest score for Section 3. Health Equity – will receive the award. Should there still be a tie score, the applicant with the highest score in Section 4. Program Design and Implementation will receive the award.

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

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

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

Once awards have been made pursuant to the terms of this RFA, an Applicant may request a debriefing of their own Application (whether their Application was funded or not funded). The debriefing will be limited only to the strengths and weaknesses of the Application submitted by the Applicant requesting a debriefing and will not include any discussion of ANY OTHER Applications. Requests for a debriefing must be received by the AIDS Institute 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 Deborah Hanna at BCSS.RFA@health.ny.gov. In the subject line, please write: Debriefing Request: Comprehensive Legal Services for People Living with HIV/AIDS.

Unsuccessful Applicants who wish to protest the award(s) resulting from this RFA on legal and/or factual grounds, should follow the protest procedures established by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). These procedures can be found on the OSC website at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-agencies/gfo/chapter-xi/xi17-protest-procedures> (Section XI. 17.)

VI. Attachments

Please note that Attachments to this RFA are not included in the RFA document but can be accessed on the **"Event Page" for this RFA/Bid Event** located in the [Statewide Financial System \(SFS\) Vendor Portal](#) or once an Application has been started, under the **"Event Comments and Attachments Section"** of the online Application. To access the Event Page and online Application/Bid Event, including required documents such as the Attachments, a prospective Applicant must be registered and logged into the NYS Statewide Financial System Vendor Portal. Once logged into the Vendor Portal, prospective Applicants can locate the "Events Page" for this Bid Event by selecting the "Grants Management – State" tile, selecting

the “Bid Event Search” tile, searching for this Bid Event, and then selecting the “View Event Package”. Attachments that are requested to be uploaded as part of an Application/Bid Event response should be included as part of your full Application submission (See Section V.A., “Application Format/Content”).

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 has been included with the full Application submission. Use the **Application Checklist: Attachment 15** to verify that you are including all required attachments with your full application submission. To check attachments in SFS, Applicants are instructed to click "View" in the SFS application for each uploaded attachment to ensure that the attachment and all of its applicable information/data is viewable in its final format.

PDF Attachments – due to system constraints, PDF attachments cannot be uploaded with annotations, editable fields, or JAVA/active controls. Please submit PDFs that are read- only.

Attachment 1: Health Equity Definitions and Examples**

Attachment 2: Application Cover Page*

Attachment 3: Statement of Assurances*

Attachment 4: Linkage Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding*

Attachment 5: Operating Certificate pursuant to Article 28 of the Public Health Law*

Attachment 6: Work Plan**

Attachment 7: Proposed Clients to be Served and Legal Cases*

Attachment 8: Agency Specific Terms and Conditions (Attachment A-1)**

Attachment 9: Program Specific Terms and Conditions (HIV/AIDS Clause) (Attachment A-2)**

Attachment 10: AIDS Institute Policy on Personal Health Related Information (Attachment E-1)**

Attachment 11: Participation by Minority Group Members and Women with Respect to State Contracts: Requirements and Procedures (Attachment M)**

Attachment 12: Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms*

Attachment 13: Vendor Responsibility Attestation*

Attachment 14: Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification*

Attachment 15: Application Checklist*

Attachment 16: Agency Organizational Chart*

Attachment 17: Program Organizational Chart*

Attachment 18: Funding History for HIV Legal Services*

Attachment 19: Service Delivery Site(s) Chart*

Attachment 20: Referral Services Linkages Chart*

Attachment 21: Agency Capacity and Staffing Information*

Attachment 22: SFS Expenditure Budget Instructions**

*These attachments **must** be uploaded as part of your agency’s Statewide Financial System (SFS) full online Application submission. Attachments to be downloaded and completed are located in 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 Statewide Financial System online Application/Bid Event.

These attachments do not need to be completed and are for Applicant information only. *They should not be uploaded with your full application submission.* These Attachments may be accessed in 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 Statewide Financial System online Application/Bid Event.