

RFA #20818/Internal Program #26-0003

SFS ID: AICGP2027

SFS Event Name: RFA #20818 AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Prog

**New York State Department of Health
AIDS Institute
Office of the Medical Director
And
Health Research, Inc.**

Request for Applications (RFA)

AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program

In order to apply for this Request for Applications, eligible applicants must be prequalified in the Statewide Financial System.

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

KEY DATES

RFA Release Date:	September 3, 2026
Questions Due:	September 22, 2026, by 4:00 PM ET
Questions, Answers and Updates Posted: (on or about):	October 6, 2026
Applications Due:	October 22, 2026, by 4:00 PM ET

IMPORTANT – PLEASE NOTE: Applications must be submitted by completing the online questions in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) AND by submitting an application with all required information to AIGPU@health.ny.gov by the date and time posted above. Please see Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content for complete submission instructions. BOTH the SFS submission and PDF submission to AIGPU@health.ny.gov are required to be completed, or an application will *not* be reviewed.

Department of Health Contact Name & Address:

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I. Introduction

The New York State Department of Health (herein referred to as the Department), AIDS Institute, Office of the Medical Director (OMD) and Health Research, Inc. (HRI) announce the availability of New York State and federal funds to provide a wide range of professional processes and activities associated with the development, dissemination, implementation, and evaluation of clinical practice guidelines. The intent of the Request for Applications (RFA) is to fund \$795,000 annually for five (5) years (\$3,975,000 total).

A. Background/Intent

The intent of this RFA is to identify an organization:

- with the capacity, experience, and expertise to manage the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program to ensure that the mission of promoting equitable, patient-centered, quality medical care is met; and
- to foster the program's unwavering commitment to reducing health disparities and health inequities by providing evidence-based guidance that supports compassionate and inclusive clinical care and upholds the fundamental dignity of all people.

The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program began in the 1980s in response to the clinical management challenges of HIV/AIDS. In recent years, the guidelines program has broadened its scope to meet the needs of the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute's expanded mission to "end preventable syndemics, achieve equity, fight stigma, promote health". The guidelines program serves as a core component of the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute by providing clinical recommendations and expert opinion upon which other AIDS Institute programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated.

The mission of the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program is to develop and disseminate practical, evidence-based clinical guidelines that promote equitable, quality medical care for people in New York State (NYS) who are living with or are at risk of acquiring HIV, Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), or developing substance use disorders. The program aims to inform primary care providers who do not specialize in these topic areas but who are providing care to people affected by them within NYS. This is accomplished through a guideline development methodology which incorporates current research and evidence as well as the breadth of experience of committee members who specialize in HIV, HCV, STI, and substance use and who know the realities of providing clinical care throughout NYS and in a broad array of clinical settings. The program is committed to publishing guidelines that are used in the real world by busy care providers, who find them to be useful and readily accessible tools with immediate application in daily practice.

The AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program strives to adhere to the Institute of Medicine's standards for developing trustworthy clinical practice guidelines. This includes establishing and maintaining transparency by explicitly detailing the process by which a guideline was developed, who was involved, their clinical experience, and disclosure of potential financial and intellectual conflicts of interest. This allows guidelines users to have confidence that the guidelines are largely free from bias and therefore trustworthy.

In June 2014, NYS announced a three-point plan to end the AIDS epidemic in NYS.¹ This plan provided a roadmap to significantly reduce HIV infections to a historic low by the end of 2020,

¹ https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending_the_epidemic/index.htm

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 three (3) points highlighted in the plan are:

- 1) Identify persons with HIV who remain undiagnosed and get them linked to care;
- 2) Link and retain persons diagnosed with HIV in health care to maximize viral suppression; and
- 3) Increase access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for persons who are HIV negative.

NYS has been laying the groundwork for ending the AIDS epidemic since the disease emerged in the early 1980s. NYS's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic has involved the development of comprehensive service delivery systems that evolved over time in sync with the evolution of AIDS from a terminal illness to a manageable chronic disease. This strategy enabled the state to implement new technologies as they were introduced, including new treatments, new diagnostic tests and, more recently, PrEP. By building upon each individual success and relying on a strong administrative infrastructure, the state was able to roll out innovative programs quickly to achieve the greatest impact. Ending the epidemic in NYS is within reach, thanks to aggressive and systematic public health initiatives that have made it possible to drive down rates of new infections. The State's Ending the Epidemic (ETE) initiative was launched with visionary leadership and extensive stakeholder leadership and participation.

The RFA specifically addresses these ETE Blueprint (BP) recommendations:

- Identify persons with HIV who remain undiagnosed and link them to health care;
- Link and retain persons diagnosed with HIV in care to maximize virus suppression so they remain healthy and prevent further transmission;
- Provide access to PrEP for high-risk persons to keep them HIV-negative; and
- Recommendations in support of decreasing new infections and disease progression.

The ETE BP continues to guide all ETE efforts. The ETE Addendum Report is a written report that provides an overview of the past five 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 BP and the ETE Addendum report are available on the New York State Department of Health website at: www.health.ny.gov/endingtheepidemic

In November 2021, NYS released its [plan](#) to eliminate hepatitis C 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 the hepatitis C. NYS plans to eliminate hepatitis C by:

- Enhancing hepatitis C prevention, testing and linkage to care services for people who inject drugs, people who are incarcerated, men who have sex with men, and other populations disproportionately impacted by HCV infection;
- Expanding hepatitis C screening and testing to identify people living with hepatitis C who are unaware of their status and link them to care;
- Providing access to clinically appropriate medical care and affordable hepatitis C treatment without restrictions and ensure the availability of necessary supportive services for all New Yorkers living with hepatitis C;

- Enhancing NYS hepatitis C surveillance, set and track hepatitis C elimination targets, and make this information available to the public; and
- Addressing social determinants of health.

The Prevention Agenda is New York's State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). It is a six-year initiative aimed at improving the health status of individuals in New York and reducing health disparities through a strong emphasis on prevention. The Prevention Agenda outlines key health priorities and how these priorities will be addressed to improve the health and wellbeing of all individuals in New York. The Prevention Agenda is a framework for local public health agencies, hospitals, government agencies, community-based organizations, health care providers, advocates, educators, policymakers, and other critical partners to promote action, maximize resources, and prioritize strategies that advance health.

The NYS Prevention Agenda 2025-2030 can be found on the following website:

https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2025-2030/

B. Available Funding

Up to \$795,000 annually in New York State and HRI funding is available to support **one (1) statewide award** through this RFA. The contract resulting from this RFA will be funded by a combination of funding from New York State (NYS) and from Health Research, Inc. (HRI). Due to the different sources of funding, the funded applicant will receive one (1) NYS contract and one (1) HRI Contract.

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 Request for Applications, the first application that is submitted will be reviewed and considered for funding. All other applications will be rejected.

- One (1) award will be made to the highest scoring applicant.
- If there is not an acceptable application (scoring 70 or above) received, HRI/the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to fund an application scoring in the range of (60-69).
- If there is not a fundable application HRI/the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to re-solicit.
- HRI/the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in availability of funding.

Applicants should complete and submit **Attachment 1: Application Cover Page** and **Attachment 2: Statement of Assurances** signed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Designee to certify the organization meets all criteria listed on **Attachment 2. Both documents should be** included as part of the full application submission.

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.
- Applicant must be a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization.
- Applicant must demonstrate three (3) years of proven experience and the necessary methodological expertise to develop clinical guidelines by submitting **Attachment 3: Three-year Inventory of Evidence-based Published Clinical Guidelines** as instructed in **Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors, PSQ 1f.**
- Applicant must demonstrate three (3) years of experience in website content design and management by submitting **Attachment 4: Website Design for Clinical Content** as instructed in **Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors, PSQ 1g.**

III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

A. Program Model Description

The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program encompasses a wide range of professional processes and administrative activities associated with the development and maintenance, dissemination, implementation, and evaluation of clinical practice guidelines for the medical management and treatment needs of individuals with or at risk of HIV infection, HCV, and STIs. The program also promotes drug user and LGBTQ+ health.

The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute Office of the Medical Director oversees the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program and ensures the activities within the following components are completed. Applicants should demonstrate their ability in:

1. Guideline Development and Maintenance

The clinical guidelines are developed on a consensus basis using committees of distinguished clinicians from throughout NYS with extensive experience in the topic areas of the program. These committees are composed of representative experts in HIV, HCV, STI, substance use, and LGBTQ+ care; each has a chair and vice-chair, and function according to committee by-laws. Guidelines committees meet to develop new guidelines as identified by the AIDS Institute Office of the Medical Director, review and update existing guidelines as necessary to keep information current, address emerging clinical and research developments, and advise the AIDS Institute on topics for inclusion in guideline content. All guidelines undergo both peer and consumer review.

The management of the peer and consumer reviews and the guidelines committees is the responsibility of the funded applicant. Guidelines committee membership, the workflow of each committee, support of the authors, contact with committee chairs and members as well as guidelines conference calls and meetings, are arranged by the funded applicant with approval by the AIDS Institute. The committees rely on evidence in formulating guidelines recommendations; therefore, for each guideline that is developed, the funded applicant coordinates and ensures the provision of:

- a systematic literature search;
- a systematic evidence review;
- compilation of evidence related to decision points;
- facilitation of ratings to recommendations; and

- an open and transparent methodology which includes peer, liaison, consumer, and public health reviews.

As guidelines are developed and/or updated every three (3) years and as needed, the funded applicant will work with the AIDS Institute, authors, and committees to consider each important factor that determines a decision and to provide a concise summary of the best available research evidence to inform judgements. Those involved in developing guidelines use their expertise to evaluate the quality of evidence leading to recommendations, balancing between benefits, harms, and burdens, with the views, values and preferences of patients, as well as resource use, feasibility, and acceptability. The funded applicant will work with the committees to address such issues to achieve a thorough model of evidence-based decision making. The funded applicant will ensure that the content of each guideline is rigorously developed using a transparent process that combines scientific evidence, clinical expert knowledge, patient values, health equity principles, and excludes biases from political and commercial entities.

The funded applicant will provide professional editing of all guidelines and manages all editorial and version control processes by which guideline documents are written, reviewed, rated, and translated into electronic media. Applicants should have the demonstrated experience and the necessary methodological expertise to develop clinical guidelines, as well as the capability to manage and direct guidelines committees and subcommittees in activities related to identifying and developing pertinent guidelines topics. Applicants should have experience in project management with groups of medical professionals, capacity to oversee multiple projects simultaneously, and the ability to use subcontractors and specialized consultants as needed to augment internal capacity.

The funded applicant will ensure:

- all medical editorial staff keep abreast of developments in the field of HIV, HCV, STIs, substance use, LGBTQ+ health, and health equity and these developments are reflected in guidelines documents;
- optimized information design and formatting to ensure logical flow and ease of use;
- fidelity across existing related guidelines as new guidelines are developed; and
- archival of all draft versions.

In addition, the funded applicant will work with the AIDS Institute to advance and refine processes through which evidence is identified, reviewed, and applied to guidelines development.

2. Guidelines Dissemination

Once a guideline is approved by the AIDS Institute, it is published on the program's website www.hivguidelines.org along with any companion materials. It is the funded applicant's responsibility to manage and enhance this website. The guidelines produced by the program are designed to be useful and readily accessible tools with immediate application in daily practice; therefore, the website design and function must support this level of ease of use. It is the funded applicant's responsibility, with oversight and approval from the AIDS Institute, to ensure that the content on www.hivguidelines.org is published in a user-friendly, mobile-friendly format which is visually engaging and up-to-date.

The funded applicant will be responsible for proposing and coordinating activities relating to additional dissemination channels, including growing the program's social media presence and newsletter audience, submitting guidelines to the National Library of Medicine Literature Archive, the creation of podcasts, complimentary materials, and other mechanisms to increase the visibility, accessibility, and credibility of the clinical guidelines.

3. Guideline Implementation

The funded applicant will be a key participant in a collaborative effort among AIDS Institute programs to foster the implementation of the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines. Partnering programs include the AIDS Institute Clinical Education Initiative (CEI) which develops and provides clinical trainings based on the clinical guidelines; and the Quality of Care program which develops clinical performance measures derived from the guidelines. The funded applicant will participate in collaborative meetings with these programmatic partners to identify methods to improve clinical care and outcomes.

The funded applicant will be responsible for conducting research and feasibility studies exploring additional mechanisms to aid implementation of the guidelines, such as artificial intelligence-guided user tools and showcasing implementation strategies within the guidelines as appropriate.

4. Guideline and Program Evaluation

The funded applicant will be responsible for developing, obtaining AIDS Institute approval of, and coordinating the implementation of plans to gather feedback from clinicians and/or professional clinical societies in NYS on their use and views of the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines.

In addition, the funded applicant must propose, and the AIDS Institute approve, an evaluation plan to ensure that all goals of the program are being met. Key components of this plan will include analysis and reporting of website utilization and citation tracking data to evaluate success.

5. Administrative and Operational Activities

The funded applicant will be responsible for a wide range of administrative and operational duties to ensure the success of the program, including:

- Schedule, host, facilitate, and document the results of all related (standing or ad-hoc) conference calls and virtual or in-person meetings for each of the activities within the components described above;
- Collect, track, and archive disclosures of relevant financial relationships and confidentiality agreements of program staff, members, authors, liaisons, reviewers, and all other participants in the program;
- Ensure the stipulations outlined in the **AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program Bylaws: Attachment 5** are followed. This includes developing systems and generating reports to track committee leaders' and members' terms of service, participation, and payment of honoraria;
- Orient guideline committee members, authors, and reviewers to the program and guide them through all development and review processes and procedures;
- Manage development processes and procedures, including developing committee work plans and editorial timetables for guideline completion;
- Schedule, manage logistics and payment for, and facilitate routine Strategic Planning, Steering Committee, and Collaborative Partner meetings;

- Ensure the ongoing management of www.hivguidelines.org website, including content management system upgrades as needed. Applicants should have substantial experience in website design and management, which includes technological expertise and familiarity with using electronic media effectively, as well as the ability to generate and analyze utilization data; and
- Coordinate and ensure the completion of special projects, including procurement and payment for clinical award plaques; and planning, hosting, and documenting results of program meetings relating to scientific conferences.

Applicants should include qualified staff in their proposed staffing structures, including those to serve as:

- Principal Investigator
- Project Director
- Medical Editors
- Fiscal Support
- Administrative Support
- Graphic Designer (able to subcontract)
- Web Developer (able to subcontract)

An overarching goal of the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program is to develop and disseminate evidence-based, state-of-the-art clinical practice guidelines that establish a uniform standard of clinical care for all people living with HIV, HCV, STI, and substance use, regardless of the practice or geographic setting in which they receive care. The AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program also supports the NYS ETE Initiative with strong recommendations for increased testing and linkage to care, immediate initiation of antiretroviral therapy, increased awareness of acute HIV infection, and dedicated efforts to maintain HIV viral load suppression.

The funded applicant is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- An electronically published suite of current, evidence-based, user-friendly clinical guidelines which reflect the priority areas of the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute.
- Increased reach, visibility, accessibility, and credibility of the guidelines.
- Optimized www.hivguidelines.org site design and navigation, combining ease of use with functionality.

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.

Please see **Attachment 6** for **Health Equity Definitions and Examples** of social and structural determinants of health.

Applicants may subcontract components of the scope of work up to 50% of the total contract. For those applicants that propose subcontracting, it is preferable to identify subcontracting agencies during the application process. Applicants that plan to subcontract are expected to state in the application the specific components of the scope of work to be performed through subcontracts. Applicants should note that the lead organization (funded applicant) will have overall responsibility for all contract activities, including those performed by subcontractors, and will be the primary contact for the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute. All subcontractors should be approved by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute.

B. Requirements for the Program

The Applicant selected for funding will be expected to:

1. Adhere to Health Literacy Universal Precautions (<https://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/index.html>);
2. Adhere to all Objectives, Tasks and Performance Measures as listed in **Work Plan: Attachment 7**; and
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) success in meeting the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program Work Plan, 3) significant accomplishments achieved, and 5) barriers encountered and plans to address noted problems.

IV. Administrative Requirements

A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the Department, AIDS Institute, Office of the Medical Director and Health Research, Inc. The Department is responsible for the requirements specified herein and for the evaluation of all Applications (refer to Section V.C. Review and Award Process).

B. Question and Answer Phase

All substantive questions by Applicants with respect to any aspect of the RFA must be submitted in writing to Laura Russell, New York State Department of Health, AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program, at the following email address: AIGPU@health.ny.gov This includes Minority and Woman Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Requirements questions and related forms. Refer to Section IV.K. Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise

Requirements. Questions of a technical nature related to formatting or other minor details related to preparation of an Application may also be addressed in writing to the email address noted above. Questions are of a technical nature if they are limited to how to prepare your Application (e.g., formatting) rather than relating to the substance of the Application.

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

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

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

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

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

The RFA is also posted on HRI's public website at: <http://www.healthresearch.org/funding-opportunities>.

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 #20818: AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program* 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 AND by emailing a PDF of the application and all required attachments to AIGPU@health.ny.gov 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: **SFS #AICGP2027**. 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 Grants Management Staff and SFS 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, paper copy, or hand delivery.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

F. Department of Health’s and HRI’s Reserved Rights

The Department of Health and HRI reserve 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 or HRI’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 or HRI’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 or HRI'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 and HRI.
13. Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible Applicant, should the Department or HRI be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected Applicant.
14. Utilize any and all ideas submitted with the Applications received, at the Department's or HRI'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 and HRI.

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. Any HRI contract resulting from this RFA will be effective only upon approval by HRI. **Refer to Attachment 8: General Terms and Conditions – Health Research Incorporated Contracts.**

It is expected that State contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following multi-year time period: 7/1/2027 – 6/30/2032.

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:

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

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

- Attachment A-1: Agency-specific Terms and Conditions (**RFA Attachment 9**)
- Attachment A-2: Program-specific Terms and Conditions (HIV/AIDS Clause) (**RFA Attachment 10**)
- Attachment E-1: AIDS Institute Policy on Personal Health Related Information (**RFA Attachment 11**)
- Attachment M: Participation by Minority Group Members and Women with Respect to State Contracts: requirements and Procedures (**RFA Attachment 12**)

HRI-funded contracts resulting from this RFA will be for twelve (12)-month terms. The anticipated start date of HRI contracts is 7/1/2027. However, depending on the funding source, the initial contract term could be for a shorter time period. HRI awards may be renewed for up to four (4) additional annual contract periods based on satisfactory performance and availability of funds. HRI reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

H. Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardees

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. **Due to requirements of the federal funder, no advance payments will be allowed for HRI contracts resulting from this procurement.**
2. The Grantee will be required to submit invoices and required reports of expenditures based upon the terms for payment set forth in Attachment A-1 to its Grant Contract to the State's designated payment office (below) or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System:

AIDS Institute
New York State Department of Health
Empire State Plaza
Corning Tower Room 259
Albany, NY 12237
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: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm>, by email at: epayments@osc.state.ny.us or by telephone at 855-233-8363. Each Grantee acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any claims for reimbursement submitted under its Grant Contract if it does not comply with OSC's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

Payment of claims for reimbursement by the State (Department) shall be made in accordance with Article XI-A of the New York State Finance Law. Payment terms will be: 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.
 - For HRI contracts, contractors will be expected to submit voucher claims and reports of expenditures in the manner that HRI requires. Required forms will be provided with the contract package.

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. For HRI Contracts, payments and reporting requirements will be detailed in Exhibit "C" of the final contract.

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 & Women-Owned Business Enterprises

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

In 2006, the State of New York commissioned a disparity study to evaluate whether Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises had a full and fair opportunity to participate in state contracting. The findings of the study were published on April 29, 2010, under the title "The State of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises: Evidence from New York" ("Disparity Study"). The report found evidence of statistically significant disparities between the level of participation of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises in state procurement contracting versus the number of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises that were ready, willing and able to participate in state procurements. As a result of these findings, the Disparity Study made recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the statewide certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises program. The recommendations from the Disparity Study culminated in the enactment and the implementation of New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, which requires, among other things, that the Department establish goals for maximum feasible participation of New York State Certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises ("MWBE") and the employment of minority groups members and women in the performance of New York State contracts.

Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

For purposes of this solicitation, the Department hereby establishes a goal of **30%** as follows:

- 1) For Not-for-Profit Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include any subcontracted labor or services, equipment, materials, or any combined purchase of the foregoing under a contract awarded from this solicitation.
- 2) For-Profit and Municipality Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include the value of the total amount of the Budget provided for the Work Plan in the Grant Contract entered into pursuant to this RFA.

The goal on the Eligible Expenditures portion of a Grant Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will be **15%** for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises ("MBE") participation and **15%** for Women-Owned Business Enterprises ("WBE") participation (based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs and outreach efforts to certified MWBE firms). A Grantee awarded a Grant Contract pursuant to this RFA must document good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by MWBEs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Grant Contract and Grantee will agree under the terms of its Grant Contract that the Department may withhold

payment pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation required by the Department or the OSC. For guidance on how the Department will determine “good faith efforts,” refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8.

The directory of New York State Certified MWBEs can be viewed at:

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

By submitting an Application, each Applicant and potential Grantee agrees to complete an **MWBE Utilization Plan** as directed in **Attachment 13** of this RFA. The Department will review the **MWBE Utilization Plan** submitted by each Grantee. If a Grantee’s MWBE Utilization Plan is not accepted, the Department may issue a Notice of Deficiency. If a Notice of Deficiency is issued, Grantee agrees that it shall respond to the Notice of Deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt. The Department may disqualify a Grantee as being non-responsive under the following circumstances:

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

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

L. Vendor Identification Number

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

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

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

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

M. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

The Department strongly encourages each Applicant to file the required Vendor Responsibility

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

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

Applicants opting to complete and submit a paper questionnaire can obtain the appropriate questionnaire from the VendRep website, www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep, and submit it with their Application as part of the full application submission.

N. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits

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

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

New York State reserves 5-10 business days from the receipt of complete Prequalification applications to conduct its review. If supplementary information or updates are required, review times will be longer. Due to the length of time this process could take to complete, it is advised that nonprofits Prequalify as soon as possible. Failure to successfully complete the Prequalification process early enough may result in a grant application being disqualified.

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 a Self Service portal account in SFS and should do so at the following link: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-vendors/portal/enroll-vendor-self-service-portal>. Any questions related to SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).
- Instructions for SFS Prequalification can be found on Page 22 of the “SFS Handbook: Grantee Processing in SFS (Grantee User Manual)”. 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 22 of the Manual, for complete instructions on how to complete and submit an SFS Prequalification in the NYS Statewide Financial System.
- Specific guidance on review questions and/ or documents within the application can be found in the New York State Prequalification Manual For Grantees located here: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/12/january-2024-grantee-prequalification-manual.pdf>. If you need further assistance, contact your primary New York State agency representative. The representative specific to the NYS Department of Health can be reached at: vendorresponsibility@health.ny.gov.

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

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

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

- In order to have your designated signatory (known in SFS as Grant Contract Approver) sign a contract and have their name appear on the contract agreement you have to add the Grant Contract Approver’s name to your SFS Vendor Profile. The Delegated Administrator

for your organization can add the Signatory's Name by following the instructions found on page 17-20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual entitled, "Grantee Processing in SFS". This user manual is accessible to organizations with an SFS account under the SFS Coach Tile/Button in the SFS Vendor Portal. Select "Handbook: User Manual with Screenshots" from the Training Type drop down to locate the manual. If you have any problems accessing the manual please contact HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov.

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

O. General Specifications

1. By submitting the "Application Form" each Applicant attests to its express authority to sign on behalf of the Applicant.
2. Grantees will possess, at no cost to the State, all qualifications, licenses and permits to engage in the required business as may be required within the jurisdiction where the work specified is to be performed. Workers to be employed in the performance of any Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will possess the qualifications, training, licenses, and permits as may be required within such jurisdiction.
3. Submission of an Application indicates the Applicant's acceptance of all terms and conditions contained in this RFA, including the terms and conditions of the State of New York Contract for Grants. Any exceptions the Applicant would like considered by the Department relating to the terms and conditions of this RFA and/or State of New York Contract for Grants must have been raised during the Question and Answer Phase of this RFA (See, Section IV.B.).
4. An Applicant may be disqualified from receiving an award if such Applicant or any subsidiary, affiliate, partner, officer, agent, or principal thereof, or anyone in its employ, has previously failed to perform satisfactorily in connection with public bidding or contracts, in the State of New York or otherwise.
5. Provisions Upon Default
 - a. The services to be performed by [the][a] successful Applicant pursuant to the terms of the Grant Contract entered into with the Department shall at all times be subject to the direction and control of the Department.
 - b. In the event that the Grantee, through any cause, fails to perform any of the terms, covenants, or promises of any Contract resulting from this RFA, the Department acting for and on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate the Contract by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Grantee.
 - c. If, in the judgment of the Department, the Grantee acts in any way which is detrimental to, or does or is in any way likely to impair or prejudice, the interests of the State, the Department may terminate the Grant Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA. In such case, the Grantee may receive equitable compensation for all services as shall, in the judgment of the State Comptroller, have been satisfactorily performed by the Grantee up to the date of the termination of the Contract.

6. Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification

New York State Finance Law [§139-M](#) requires Applicants on competitive state procurements to certify that they have a written policy addressing gender-based violence and the workplace and that such policy meets the minimum requirements outlined on **Attachment 14**. Applicants should review, sign, date and include as part of their full application submission the **Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification** as **Attachment 14**.

7. Applicant must maintain an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) at SAM.gov, have no exclusions or delinquent federal debt.

V. Completing the Application

A. Application Format and Content

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

Please respond to each of the sections described below when completing your Application. Your responses comprise your Application. Please respond to all items within each section. **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**.

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

The Application Narrative, including the Program Abstract, should not exceed ten (10) 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 ten (10) double-spaced page limitation is specific to the Application Narrative and does **not** include all required Attachments and the response to Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors, 5. Budgets and Justifications, **Question 5d**. 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 ten (10) 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

IMPORTANT: Applications must be submitted by completing the online questions in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) AND by submitting an application as one (1) PDF complete with all required information and attachments to AIGPU@health.ny.gov by the date and time as specified in the “Key Dates” set forth on the Cover page of this RFA. Both the SFS questions AND the PDF submission to AIGPU@health.ny.gov are required to be completed, or an application will *not* be reviewed. The subject line of the email should be as follows: *RFA #20818: AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program*. Only one (1) email with the one (1) attached PDF is allowed.

Applicants are instructed to respond to each of the following statements and questions under “Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors and include as the Application Narrative of their PDF application, including any required, completed attachments. The SFS submission portion of the application only includes general questions with yes/no responses and entering a line bid response. The line bid response is the total grant funds being requested as the Unit Bid Price (see Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Format/Content, 5. Budget) for further instructions.

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:	6 points
3. Health Equity	Maximum Score:	15 points
4. Program Design and Implementation	Maximum Score:	59 points
5. Budget and Justification	Maximum Score:	<u>20 points</u>
6. Work Plan	Not Scored	
		100 points

1. Program Abstract	Not Scored
	Maximum 1 Page

Applicants should provide a Program Abstract with the following information:

- 1a) Summarize the proposed program, including the major activities that will be undertaken to meet the goals of this initiative.
- 1b) What are the Project goals and objectives?
- 1c) What types of outcomes does your organization expect to achieve?
- 1d) Applicants are instructed to complete and submit **Attachment 1: Application Cover Page** as part of your full Application submission.

- 1e) Applicants are instructed to complete and submit **Attachment 2: Statement of Assurances** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1f) Applicants are instructed to complete and submit **Attachment 3: Three-year Inventory of Evidence-based Published Clinical Guidelines** demonstrating three (3) years of proven experience and the necessary methodological expertise to develop clinical guidelines as part of your full Application submission.
- 1g) Applicants are instructed to complete and submit **Attachment 4: Website Design for Clinical Content** demonstrating three (3) years of experience in website content design and management as part of your full Application submission.
- 1h) Applicants are instructed to complete and submit **Attachment 13: M/WBE Utilization Plan** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1i) Applicants are instructed to complete and submit **Attachment 14: Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification** as part of your full Application submission.
- 1j) Applicants are instructed to complete and submit **Attachment 15: Application Checklist** as part of your full Application submission.

2. Community and Agency Description

**Total 6 Points
Maximum 1 Page**

- 2a) Describe your organization's qualifications, strengths, partnerships, and experience related to the proposed program model.
- 2b) Describe the outcomes achieved as a result of any prior grants for clinical guideline development that your organization has received.

3. Health Equity

**Total 15 Points
Maximum 2 Pages**

- 3a) Describe the institution-wide commitment to health equity and racial justice within your organization and outline concrete steps that have been taken to advance health equity and racial justice in its operations.
- 3b) Describe how the specific program will support inclusion and diverse representation among AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program staff, authors, reviewers, and committee members.
- 3c) How will your program ensure that guideline content is free of bias in terms of both content and language?
- 3d) Describe how your program will promote [Health Equity Competencies for Health Care Providers](#) throughout its content.
- 3e) Describe how your program will support clinicians in delivering equitable, evidence-based care to marginalized populations in accordance with the program's [Commitment to Inclusive Care](#).

4. Program Design and Implementation

Total 59 Points
Maximum 6 Pages

4a) Referring to Section III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes and the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program **Work Plan: Attachment 7**, describe how your organization will implement a program that meets each of the Program and Staffing Requirements of this RFA. Please be sure to specifically address how your organization will implement the tasks outlined in each objective of the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program **Work Plan: Attachment 7**, including an outline of the processes involved, the resources needed, who is involved, and their area of expertise:

Objective 1: Develop new clinical guidelines relevant to the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute topic areas

Objective 2: Ensure that existing guidelines are kept up to date

Objective 3: Widely disseminate guideline content to clinical audiences in NYS and beyond

Objective 4: Foster implementation of New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines

Objective 5: Evaluate Guidelines usage

Objective 6: Evaluate performance of the program

4b) Describe any innovative activities or strategies you will utilize to implement your program.

4c) What are your programs indicators for success? How will you increase reach, visibility, accessibility, and credibility of the guidelines to ensure success?

4d) Describe your organization's readiness to undertake program activities.

4e) What challenges do you anticipate encountering with meeting the program requirements outlined in the AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program **Work Plan: Attachment 7** and how will you address them?

4f) Describe the methodology your program would utilize in the development and updating of trustworthy clinical guidelines.

4g) How will your program ensure that the website design and function support a high level of ease of use and will present the guidelines as visually engaging, readily accessible, up-to-date tools with immediate application in daily practice?

4h) Describe the plan for program evaluation and how your program will ensure that all goals of the program are being met.

5. Budgets and Justifications

Total 20 Points

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

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

Applicants are instructed to:

- ***Respond to question 5d below as part of your full application submission; and***
- ***Complete and submit a budget using the Expenditure Budget forms (Attachment 16) according to the following guidelines:***

5a) Applicants are instructed to prepare an annual budget based on the maximum award as indicated in **Section I. Introduction, B. Available Funding** of this RFA. The budget for year one (1), 7/1/2027 – 6/30/2028 must be entered into **Attachment 16: Expenditure Budget Forms** and submitted as part of your full Application submission. Refer to **Attachment 17: Expenditure Budget Instructions** for completion of the budget forms. All budget lines should be calculated as whole dollar amounts. All costs should be related to the proposed activities, as described in the application narrative and work plan, and should be justified in detail. All costs should be reasonable and cost-effective. Contracts established resulting from the Request for Application will be cost reimbursable. In SFS, applicants are required to also enter the total grant funds being requested for Year 1 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.
- Agencies currently funded by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute to provide program services in accordance with the requirements of 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 the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute 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

Applicants are **not** required to enter the Performance Measures for each Work Plan Objective in the SFS Work Plan at the time of application. Applicants should review the Performance Measures as they are listed in **Work Plan: Attachment 7**.

Funded Applicants will be held to the Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures as listed in **Work Plan: Attachment 7** and will be required to enter the Performance Measures into SFS if funding is awarded.

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 submit the document as part of 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

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 Request for Applications, the first application that is submitted will be reviewed and considered for funding. All other applications will be rejected.

An Application which meets the Minimum Eligibility Requirements will be reviewed and evaluated competitively by the New York State 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 will be omitted from consideration.

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

Program Abstract	Not Scored
Community and Agency Description	6 Points
Health Equity	15 Points
Program Design and Implementation	59 Points
Budget	20 Points
Work Plan	Not Scored
Total	100 Points

- One (1) award will be made to the highest scoring applicant.

- If there is not an acceptable application (scoring 70 or above) received, HRI/the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to fund an application scoring in the range of (60-69).
- If there is not a fundable application HRI/the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to re-solicit.
- HRI/the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in availability of funding.

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 **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.

Once an award has been made pursuant to the terms of this RFA, an Applicant may request a debriefing of their own Application (whether their Application was funded or not funded). The debriefing will be limited only to the strengths and weaknesses of the Application submitted by the Applicant requesting a debriefing and will not include any discussion of ANY OTHER Applications. Requests for a debriefing must be received by the Department, 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 Laura Russell, Program Director at Alguidelines@health.ny.gov. In the subject line, please write: Debriefing Request AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program.

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/> and on HRI’s public website at: <http://www.healthresearch.org/funding-opportunities>.

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.

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: Application Cover Page*

Attachment 2: Statement of Assurances*

Attachment 3: Three-year Inventory of Evidence-based Published Clinical Guidelines*

Attachment 4: Website Design for Clinical Content*

Attachment 5: AIDS Institute Clinical Guidelines Program Bylaws**

Attachment 6: Health Equity Definitions and Examples**

Attachment 7: Work Plan**

Attachment 8: General Terms and Conditions – Health Research Incorporated Contracts**

Attachment 9: Attachment A-1: Agency-specific Terms and Conditions**

Attachment 10: Attachment A-2: Program-specific Terms and Conditions (HIV/AIDS Clause)**

Attachment 11: Attachment E-1: AIDS Institute Policy on Personal Health Related Information**

Attachment 12: Attachment M: Participation by Minority Group Members and Women with
Respect to State Contracts: Requirements and Procedures**

Attachment 13: M/WBE Utilization Plan*

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

Attachment 15: Application Checklist*

Attachment 16: Expenditure Budget Forms*

Attachment 17: SFS Expenditure Budget Instructions**

*These attachments **must** be included in your Application submission to AIGPU@health.ny.gov. Attachments to be downloaded and completed are located in 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. These Attachments may be accessed in the **“Event Comments and Attachments Section” of the Statewide Financial System online Application/Bid Event.