



Department of Health

Request for Proposals

RFP # - C041222

Merit Peer Review Services for Scientific and Education Research Applications

Issued: July 30, 2025

DESIGNATED CONTACT:

Pursuant to State Finance Law §§ 139-j and 139-k, the New York State Department of Health (hereinafter referred to as the “**Department**”) identifies the following designated person to whom all communications attempting to influence the Department’s conduct or decision regarding this procurement must be made.

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PERMISSIBLE SUBJECT MATTER CONTACT:

Pursuant to State Finance Law § 139-j(3)(a), the Department identifies the following allowable person to contact for communications related to the submission of written bids, written questions, pre-bid questions, and debriefings.

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1.0 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

RFP C041222 – MERIT PEER REVIEW SERVICES FOR SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATION RESEARCH APPLICATIONS	
<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Issuance of Request for Proposals	July 30, 2025
Deadline for Submission of Written Questions	August 13, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. ET
Responses to Written Questions Posted by the Department	On or About: August 22, 2025
Deadline for Submission of Proposals	September 24, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. ET
<i><u>Anticipated</u></i> Contract Start Date	4/1/2026

2.0 OVERVIEW

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the New York State Department of Health (the “Department”) is seeking competitive proposals from qualified bidders for the purpose of conducting independent scientific and technical merit peer review of applications for funding through the Department. The successful bidder for this RFP will provide peer review services for breast cancer scientific and education research projects; spinal cord injury scientific research projects; and services as further detailed in Section 4.0 (Scope of Work). It is the Department’s intent to award one (1) contract from this procurement.

2.1 Introductory Background

Health Research Science Board (HRSB)

The HRSB is authorized to make recommendations for funding for creative and innovative biomedical research and education research projects in the field of breast cancer. The Department administers breast cancer research funding, based on recommendations and advice from the HRSB. In conjunction with the Department, the HRSB solicits, reviews, and makes funding recommendations for creative and innovative biomedical or health-related research or education projects to be supported by the Breast Cancer Research and Education Fund.

Information about the HRSB and its past Requests for Applications (RFAs) and awards can be found at: <https://www.wadsworth.org/extramural/breastcancer/research-support>.

Spinal Cord Injury Research Board (SCIRB)

The SCIRB is authorized to make recommendations for funding for biomedical projects in the field of spinal cord injury. The Department administers spinal cord injury research funding, based on recommendations and advice from the SCIRB. In conjunction with the Department, the SCIRB solicits, reviews, and makes funding recommendations for such projects to be supported by the Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund.

Information about the SCIRB and its past Requests for Applications (RFAs) and awards can be found at: <https://www.wadsworth.org/extramural/spinalcord>.

2.2 Important Information

The Bidder **must** review, and is requested to have its legal counsel review, [Attachment 8](#), the DOH Agreement (Standard Contract), as the successful Bidder must be willing to enter into the Contract awarded pursuant to this RFP in the terms of [Attachment 8](#), **subject only to any amendments to the Standard Contract agreed by the Department during the Question and Answer Phase of this RFP** (see, [Section 5.2](#)). Please note that this RFP and the awarded Bidder's Bid will become part of the Contract as Appendix B and C, respectively.

It should be noted that Appendix A of [Attachment 8](#), "Standard Clauses for New York State Contracts", contains important information, terms and conditions related to the Contract to be entered into as a result of this RFP and **will be incorporated, without change or amendment**, into the Contract entered into between the Department and the successful Bidder. By submitting a response to this RFP, the Bidder agrees to comply with all the provisions of the Contract, including all of the provisions of Appendix A.

Note, [Attachment 7](#), the Bidder's Certified Statements, **must** be submitted by each Bidder and includes a statement that the Bidder accepts, **without any added conditions, qualifications or exceptions**, the contract terms and conditions contained in this RFP including any exhibits and attachments, including, without limitation, [Attachment 8](#). It also includes a statement that the Bidder acknowledges that, should any alternative proposals or extraneous terms be submitted with its Bid, such alternate proposals or extraneous terms will not be evaluated by the Department.

Any qualifications or exceptions proposed by a Bidder to this RFP should be submitted in writing using the process set forth in [Section 5.2](#) (Questions) prior to the deadline for submission of written questions indicated in [Section 1](#), (Calendar of Events). Any such qualifications or exceptions that are not proposed prior to the deadline for the submission of written questions will not be considered by the Department after contract award. Any amendments the Department makes to the RFP as a result of questions and answers will be publicized on the Department's web site and will be available and applicable to all Bidders equally.

2.3 Term of the Agreement

The term of the Contract that will be entered into pursuant to this RFP between the Department and the successful Bidder is expected to be for a period of five (5) years commencing on the date shown on the Calendar of Events in [Section 1](#), subject to the availability of sufficient funding, successful Contractor performance, and approvals from the New York State Attorney General (AG) and the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC).

3.0 BIDDERS' QUALIFICATIONS TO PROPOSE

3.1 Minimum Qualifications

The Department will only accept bid proposals from bidders who meet all minimum requirements.

The vendor must have a minimum of three (3) years of experience coordinating and conducting all aspects of independent scientific and technical merit peer review of research proposals. Experience must include the following activities:

- recruitment of highly qualified, skilled, educated, and credentialed individuals to fulfill the various roles described herein, including panel members, management of the peer review process, Scientific Review Administrators (SRAs), panel chairpersons, and subject matter experts (SMEs),
- verification of credentials and relevant experience,
- meeting planning and facilitation,
- coordination of communications, travel, lodging and other logistics,
- group facilitation,
- evaluating, scoring and report writing as described herein.

Experience acquired concurrently is considered acceptable.

For the purposes of this RFP, a “prime contractor” is defined as one who has the contract with the owner of a project or job and has full responsibility for its completion. A prime contractor undertakes to perform a complete contract and may employ (and manage) one or more subcontractors to carry out specific parts of the contract.

Failure to meet these Minimum Qualifications will result in a proposal being found non-responsive and eliminated from consideration.

4.0 SCOPE OF WORK

This Section describes the Scientific Peer Review services that are required to be provided by the selected bidder. The selected bidder must be able to provide all of these services throughout the contract term.

PLEASE NOTE: Bidders will be requested to provide responses that address all of the requirements of this RFP as part of its Technical Proposal.

The terms “bidders”, “vendors” and “proposers” are also used interchangeably. For purposes of this RFP, the use of the terms “shall”, “must” and “will” are used interchangeably when describing the Contractor’s/Bidder’s duties.

There are a variety of factors that influence the schedule of RFA release; therefore, the contractor will coordinate independent peer review services as needed by the Department. Prospective bidders should note that the Department may release up to eight (8) RFAs each year – four (4) scientific research RFAs, two (2) education research RFAs, and two (2) training RFAs which results in eight (8) Peer Review Cycles per year (the review of applications resulting from a single RFA constitutes a Peer Review Cycle). Based on current estimates, investigators from approximately 40 institutions may be eligible to apply for funding. The number of applications received in response to each RFA will vary; to date, this figure has ranged from 1 to 60 (HRSB), 1 - 40 (SCIRB) and 1-275 (ESSCB). The number of applications submitted varies by type of RFA. An anticipated list of RFAs proposed for issuance in the coming years is provided in Table 1 (based on historical data).

Table 1. Currently Proposed RFAs/Anticipated Funding Mechanisms

Board	Mechanism	Estimated number of Applications*	Similar Model
HRSB	Peter T. Rowley Breast Cancer Scientific Research Projects (Innovative, Developmental or Exploratory Research Activities)	17	NIH R21
HRSB	Patricia S. Brown Breast Cancer Risk Reduction Education Research Projects	3	N/A
HRSB	Healthcare Practitioner Breast Cancer Education Research Projects	3	N/A
SCIRB	Projects to Accelerate Research Translation (PART) and Innovative, Developmental or Exploratory Activities (IDEA) in Spinal Cord Injury	24	NIH R21 and R01
SCIRB	Individual Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research	10	NIH F31 and F32
SCIRB	Translational Research Projects (TRP) in Spinal Cord Injury	3	NIH Translational Program Project (P01t)

*Data in table is based upon historical figures

4.1 Tasks/Deliverables

Regardless of the specific method used during the contract term, the contractor will be required to provide consistent, high-quality services through processes that are generally recognized by the scientific community to be credible, objective, and comprehensive. The successful contractor will:

- a. Receive confidential applications and screen for compliance with established criteria set forth in the RFA and other application requirements and standards, including, but not limited to, requirements for human subject's research, vertebrate animal research, human stem cell research, and/or use of recombinant DNA. A simple checklist or spreadsheet can be created by the contractor and used to document compliance with various criteria required by the RFA's application instructions (to be established in discussion with the Department).
- b. Recruit highly qualified individuals to serve on merit peer review panels and identify and manage any conflicts of interest among them. Peer reviewers will be from outside New York State and will have appropriate experience and expertise for the types of applications that are anticipated.
- c. Coordinate, manage and provide support for independent scientific and technical merit peer review of applications for research and education funding.
- d. Design and implement procedures that establish a systematic process of reviewing applications based on scientific merit and to ensure compliance with Department terms and conditions.
- e. Provide thorough written reports and summaries of each application received.
- f. Provide administrative support services such as meeting management, travel coordination and reimbursement of peer reviewers.

4.2 Staffing

For each of the research boards, the contractor will identify and designate an experienced staff member as an overall manager of this contract who will dedicate as much time as needed to ensure the final deliverable is received, reviewed and approved by the Department in the timeframes specified. A single person may be identified and made responsible for the work associated with more than one (1) board or the Contractor may utilize more than one staff member.

This/these individual(s) will have:

- a. the authority to manage decisions and staffing on behalf of the contractor and to act as liaison with

- DOH staff to ensure completion of all tasks required;
- b. appropriate scientific credentials/expertise in biomedical or health-related research and have examples of scientific excellence through his/her own research publications. To include a minimum of three years of professional experience overseeing all aspects of independent scientific and technical merit peer review;
 - c. a record of academic publications; and;
 - d. prior experience in peer review procedures and health sciences administration.

The vendor will employ Scientific Review Administrators (SRAs) that will play a critical leadership role in the peer review process and have the overall responsibility to ensure that the peer review panel proceedings are accurately recorded, and the integrity of the review process is maintained. The SRAs must be highly skilled professionals who possess experience in peer review procedures, as well as in administration related to biomedical and/or health-related research.

The vendor must also ensure the availability of necessary contractor staff, over the duration of the contract, who collectively have expertise in all aspects of peer review administration and to fulfill the tasks of the project (and as many as 30 applications per Peer Review Cycle). The vendor will identify experienced scientists, physicians and others as appropriate to serve as the panel chairperson, subject matter experts (SMEs) and potential review panel members. The vendor will be responsible for recruitment and all communications with review panel members. The Department will have final approval on the selection of peer review panel members and may request the vendor to recruit additional peer reviewers with specific expertise.

Specifically, assigned staff will be skilled and experienced in:

- a. information technology;
- b. database management;
- c. computer programming;
- d. reviewer recruitment, identification, solicitation, coordination and retention, assessment and evaluation;
- e. reviewer liaising;
- f. conflict of interest identification and management;
- g. travel and meeting coordination;
- h. scientific meeting planning, writing, and editing;
- i. contract management;
- j. recording and reporting;
- k. fiscal operations;
- l. managing independent scientific and technical merit peer review processes including but not limited to:
 - critical evaluation and scoring of applications including workplans, budgets and timelines;
 - assessment of compliance issues such as publications and intellectual property,
 - human subjects research,
 - vertebrate animal research,
 - human pluripotent stem cell research,
 - and use of recombinant DNA in accordance with stated program policies and conditions.

Within thirty (30) days of notification of contract award, but prior to commencement of work on this contract, the Contractor will be required to submit the names, resumes, relevant qualifications, accomplishments, and other

supporting documentation demonstrating relevant experience for all the proposed staff to the Department for review and approval. Any change to any staff position must have the prior approval of Department program staff. Changes in staff assignments are allowable if personnel replacements have substantially comparable or better qualifications and experience than original personnel. Any subcontractors must be approved by the Department prior to commencement of work; however, the contractor is responsible for ensuring that all deliverables are completed to the satisfaction of the Department. Final award is contingent upon the Department's review and approval of the staff proposed. The Department reserves the right to approve or disapprove the Contractor's proposed staffing at any time during the contract.

The contractor will be expected to assume full costs and responsibilities for the services offered in the proposal for the duration of the contract term, including but not limited to recording necessary data, preparing and producing written products, and managing costs associated with convening of the panels. Department staff will be designated as the primary contact for the vendor for each of the boards. Department staff will communicate final approval of all plans and acceptance of deliverables and will work closely with the vendor throughout the contract term.

4.3 Pre-Meeting Activities

The Department will notify the vendor of upcoming peer review cycles and provide draft copies of the RFA, application forms, merit review instructions and evaluation plan. The vendor will provide technical assistance and consultation regarding possible changes to these drafts to facilitate the peer review process. Further, the vendor will convene a conference call(s) with the Department to discuss the specific timeline and final requirements for the peer review cycle. This discussion(s) will facilitate proper peer review panel assembly, finalize required post-meeting report contents, and review other details as necessary. Prior to the issuance of each RFA, the Department will provide the vendor with necessary information to design reviewer instructions and forms for the peer review process including, but not limited to the final RFA, merit review instructions, evaluation plan, and budget guidance. At least two (2) weeks in advance of each RFA's application due date and prior to distribution to the peer review panel members, the vendor will submit the reviewer instructions and forms for Department review and approval.

At least two (2) weeks in advance of each RFA's application due date, the Department will provide submitted Letters of Intent to the vendor, as well as historical data from prior RFAs, so that specific panel recruitment efforts can begin. The vendor will identify experienced scientists, physicians, SMEs and others as appropriate to the subject of the RFA to serve as potential review panel members. The vendor will be responsible for recruitment and all communications with review panel members. The Department will have final approval on the selection of peer review panel members and may request the vendor to recruit additional peer reviewers with specific expertise. Researchers and physicians will be identified and recruited by the vendor based on their possession of the appropriate credentials in the areas necessary to review the applications received; a record of academic publications within the pertinent application disciplines; and specific experience in their field. Further, the majority of review panel members will have experience in scientific peer review and in leading competitive, federally funded or state-funded research projects. Some RFAs may require that the vendor identify other types of specific reviewer expertise. Although the vendor, subcontractors and its staff may or may not be located in New York State, all reviewers must work outside of the State.

The Department will decide how the panel will convene and will attend both videoconference and in-person meetings. See below for meeting guidelines. The number of primary, secondary and tertiary reviewers needed for each application will vary based on board. A reviewer may sit on many panels however, to ensure the best quality review, the maximum number of applications per primary, secondary or tertiary reviewer that the Department will accept, across all boards, is six (6). Vendors may present an approach that results in fewer assignments per reviewer.

Videoconference meetings:

- panel sizes should not exceed 10 people, including the chair;
- the number of applications reviewed by each panel should be limited to 20.

In-person meetings:

- panel sizes should not exceed 20 people, including the chair;
- the number of applications reviewed by each panel should be limited to 40.

Applications responding to the RFAs will be submitted to the Department through the New York State Statewide Financial System (SFS). Those which meet the mandatory administrative requirements (Pass/Fail) will be forwarded to the contractor electronically in Microsoft Word Document (.doc or .docx), Portable Document File (PDF) and/or Excel (.xls or .xlsx) formats. The contractor staff will assess each forwarded application's compliance with additional mandatory scientific requirements and penalties as specified in the RFA, such as page limitations, omission of required forms, etc. The Department will make final determinations with respect to compliance issues identified by the contractor.

Upon access to the applications, the contractor will assess and manage conflicts of interest among potential review panel members. The contractor will assemble high quality peer review panels and organize panel assignment. However, the Department will have final approval on the selection of peer review panel members and retains the right to reject panel members and/or to require the addition of subject matter experts to ensure quality of review. In such instances, the timeframes, found in Section 4.6, between application due date, date of distribution to panel members, and date of panel meeting will not be extended. The contractor will assign compliant applications to selected and approved review panel members (the number of reviewers per application will be determined by the Department for each RFA but will not be less than two). At least four (4) weeks before the peer review panel meetings the contractor will provide the applications, reviewer critique templates, and reviewer instructions to the review panel members for review and critique of the applications. Instructions will include the use of tools provided by the contractor (e.g., web portals and software) to accurately document application evaluations and scores. Written critiques will contain an overall summary of the application, a summary of the discussion of the application, and a critique of the application based on the established evaluation criteria. All assigned reviewers will be required to submit their draft critiques and preliminary adjectival scores in writing to the contractor prior to the peer review meeting.

4.4 Peer Review Panel Administration

Each review panel will be administered by a Scientific Review Administrator (SRA) and comprised of a Chairperson and peer reviewers. The number of peer reviewers will depend on the Board issuing the RFA and number of applications received.

The Chairperson will be selected by the contractor based on their standing in the scientific community, prior peer review experience, experience leading a research program, and expertise in the area(s) related to the subject matter of the applications to be reviewed. The Chairperson is a scoring member of the review panel who works closely with the SRA, presides at the meeting, provides leadership in moderating and guiding panel members in their deliberations, and ensures that each application receives a fair review based on merit. As a reviewing member of the team, the Chairperson must live outside of NYS.

4.5 Peer Review Panel Composition Requirements

Recruit highly-qualified individuals to serve on merit peer review panels, and identify and manage any conflicts of interest among them. Peer reviewers will be in good standing in the scientific community, have experience leading a research program, expertise in the area(s) related to the subject matter of the applications to be reviewed, must be from outside New York State and a majority will have prior peer review experience.

A. The Health Research Science Board

For each HRSB RFA peer review, each application will be reviewed by a primary, secondary and a breast cancer survivor or advocate who are identified and recruited based on their understanding of basic scientific or education research. The secondary reviewer for each application will have the responsibility to provide a detailed review of each application's budget.

B. The Spinal Cord Injury Research Board

For each SCIRB RFA peer review, there must be two panels that fall into the research subject categories of "Cellular Regeneration and Therapeutics" and "Rehabilitation" (unless all applications received for a given RFA fall into a single research category). Each application will be reviewed by a primary, secondary and tertiary reviewer. Two (2) of the primary, secondary and tertiary reviewers must be a "senior scientist", which is defined as a scientific researcher who has been a primary investigator or co-primary investigator on more than one scientific research project which has been previously funded. Further, the tertiary reviewer for each application will have the responsibility to provide a detailed review of each application's budget.

4.6 Meeting Activities

The review panel will convene by video conference to discuss the assigned applications within eight (8) weeks after the application due date (unless otherwise agreed upon by the Department and the contractor). Should the number of applications submitted for review reach 40, the contractor may choose to change the meeting to in person with the appropriate change in fee structure for that meeting. Prior to the start of the review panel meeting, the contractor and Department staff will conduct an orientation session that will allow the reviewers to ask specific questions regarding the RFA and/or the process for review. Training, orientation or separate material developed for reviewers should be described in the contractor's approach.

Peer reviewers must agree to abide by the merit-based peer review guidelines established by the bylaws adopted by the associated board and any additional instructions provided by Department staff to the contractor to ensure compliance with the program terms and conditions, high-quality research, and reasonableness of cost.

According to the evaluation method established by the Department for an RFA, each application will be presented by the assigned reviewers to the remainder of the panel members, and a panel discussion will ensue. All panel members will then be required to complete a scoring sheet for the application. Peer reviewers will provide adequate explanation based on their scores, and each reviewer's scores must be consistent with their written critiques. The contractor will be responsible for ensuring the proper conduct of the meeting and will provide technical assistance and support as necessary throughout the meeting.

Usually two (2) Department staff will oversee panel discussions to ensure that the process remains consistent with procurement rules and to offer technical assistance to the contractor where needed. The number of Department staff may vary based on the number of panels convening simultaneously.

Review panel members are responsible for thoroughly reviewing and providing written evaluations of their assigned applications prior to the convened meeting, as well as orally presenting their evaluations to the review panel at the meeting and actively participating in the assessment, discussion, and scoring of all applications reviewed by the panel, and for editing their written critique as necessary based upon the discussion.

The vendor will be responsible for recruitment and engagement of, payment to, and all communications with, peer review panel members, to include chairperson, SME(s), and peer reviewers. The vendor will provide honoraria/payment to the review panel members at the rate of \$1,200 per in-person review panel day for each scheduled meeting day and \$500 per additional travel day, or \$200 per teleconference hour; the Chairperson will receive \$1,500 per in-person review panel day and \$500 per additional travel day or \$250 per teleconference hour. The length of a full review panel day will be established by the panel meeting agenda. In the event of an in-person peer review panel meeting, the vendor will also be responsible for activities and costs associated with arrangements for the in-person meeting. The vendor will also arrange and pay for the travel, meals, and lodging for its staff and review panel members.

All related costs must be included in the contractor's bid price except for reimbursement of the following allowable pass-through expenditures:

- **review panel members honoraria, travel, lodging and per diem;**
- **meeting space rental including refreshments, audio visual and internet technology charges.**

Additional charges will not be reimbursed.

Administrative and logistics planning of the peer review meeting occur simultaneously. The vendor will obtain and provide Department staff with three (3) quotes for all meeting space expenses. The Department staff will then select the meeting venue. The vendor will make travel and hotel arrangements for meeting attendees, limited by New York State per diem rates (for applicable per diem rates, see the [NYS OSC Travel Manual](#)), and prepare meeting materials.

4.7 Post-Meeting Activities and Reporting Requirements

Upon completion of peer review, scores will be received by the SRA and calculated for each application. The contractor staff will assess each application that receives a calculated score eligible to be considered by the Department per the RFA evaluation plan. The Department will make final determinations with respect to any issues identified by the contractor. Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of peer review meeting (unless otherwise agreed upon), the Contractor will provide the Department with the following digital reports:

1. Cumulative score reports in Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx) and Portable Document Format (PDF) files separated by the cutoff score for consideration as established in the RFA (e.g., "The SCIRB will not consider applications that score worse than a 4.0.").
2. Thorough and accurate written evaluation reports in PDF formats, separated by the cutoff score as established in the RFA. Each evaluation report will contain:
 - a. summary page that identifies the application number, applicant institution, Principal Investigator, project title, budget requested and summarizes the evaluation criteria scores, penalty points applied, and final application score and a summary page excluding all scores and penalties;
 - b. detailed, anonymized, score report of the panel for the application;
 - c. lay abstract extracted verbatim from the application;
 - d. overall summary of the panel discussion of each application discussed by the panel;
 - e. evaluative statements (critique) for each RFA-established review criterion from each of the assigned reviewers; and
 - f. documentation of any concerns of the peer review panel members regarding: use of human subjects, vertebrate animals and recombinant DNA; overlap of scientific, budget or commitment; and other items identified in the RFA and/or merit review instructions.

These reports will be used to assist the board members in making award recommendations. The evaluation reports will be shared with the applicants.

4.8 Information Technology

The application and all systems and components supporting it, including, but not limited to, any forms and databases that include Personal Health, Personal Identification or other New York State information, must comply with all NYS security policies and standards listed at <http://its.ny.gov/tables/technologypolicyindex.htm>.

4.9 Security

The selected Contractor shall comply with all privacy and security policies and procedures of the Department (<https://its.ny.gov/policies>) and applicable State and Federal law and administrative guidance with respect to the performance of the Contract. The Contractor is required, if applicable, to execute a number of security and privacy agreements with the Department including a Business Associate Agreement (Appendix H) and a Data Use Agreement ("DUA") at contract signing.

The Contractor is expected to provide secure and confidential backup, storage and transmission for hard copy and electronically stored information. Under no circumstances will any records be released to any person, agency, or organization without specific written permission of the DOH. The Contractor is obligated to ensure any Subcontractor hired by Contractor who stores, processes, analyzes or transmits MCD on behalf of Contractor has the appropriate security requirements in place. Contractor is required to include in all subcontracts and Business Associate Agreements with their Subcontractors language surrounding the security and privacy requirements as well as the language contained in the Confidentiality Language for Third Parties section of the DUA. If any breach or suspected breach of the data or confidentiality occurs, whether the breach occurred with the Contractor or Subcontractor, DOH must be notified immediately.

The Contractor is required to maintain and provide to the Department upon request their data confidentiality plans and procedures for meeting security requirements as they relate to the deliverables and services within this RFP, including all plans as they relate to subcontractor work where applicable. Contractor will develop and maintain adequate fully trained staff to respond to all stakeholder inquiries while protecting confidentiality and maintaining the security and integrity of all systems. Staff must be trained to understand and observe requirements related to confidentiality and operating guidelines for functions included in this RFP.

The Contractor will comply fully with all current and future updates of the security procedures of the DOH as well as with all applicable State and Federal requirements, in performance of the Contract.

4.10 Transition

The transition represents a period when the current contract activities performed by the Contractor must be turned over to the Department, another Department agent or successor Contractor during or at the end of the Contract Term.

The Contractor shall ensure that any transition to the Department, Departmental agency or successor Contractor be done in a way that provides the Department with uninterrupted *[fill in the services]* services. This includes a complete and total transfer of all data, files, reports, and records generated from the inception of the Contract through the end of the Contract to the Department or another Department agent should that be required during or upon expiration of its contract.

The Contractor shall provide technical and business process support as necessary and required by the Department to transition and assume contract requirements to the Department or another Department agent should that be required during or at the end of the Contract.

The Contractor shall manage and maintain the appropriate number of staff to meet all requirements listed in the RFP during the transition. All reporting and record requirements, security standards, and performance standards are still in effect during the transition period.

Contractor is required to develop a work plan and timeline to securely and smoothly transfer any data and records generated from the inception of the Contract through the end of the Contract to the Department or another Department agent should that be required during or upon expiration of its Contract. The plan and documentation must be submitted to the Department no later than twelve (12) months before the last day of its Contract with the Department of Health or upon request of the Department.

4.11 Payment

Payment of invoices and/or vouchers submitted by the successful Bidder pursuant to the terms of the Contract entered into pursuant to this RFP by the Department shall be made in accordance with Article XI-A of the New York State Finance Law. Payment terms will be:

The contractor shall submit invoices as directed below no later than 30 (thirty) days after a scheduled Peer Review Meeting date. The invoice will delineate between and break down pre-meeting (preparation), review meeting, and post-meeting expenses.

The contractor shall submit invoices and/or vouchers to the State's designated payment office:

Preferred Method: Email a .pdf copy of your signed voucher to the BSC at: AccountsPayable@ogs.ny.gov with a subject field as follows:

Subject: <<Unit ID: 3450297>> <<Contract # C041222>>

Alternate Method: Mail vouchers to BSC at the following U.S. postal address:

NYS Department of Health
Unit ID 3450297
c/o NYS OGS BSC Accounts Payable
Building 5, 5th Floor 1220 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12226-1900

Price Adjustment Clause

The pricing for subsequent years two (2) through five (5) of the Contract will be subject to an annual increase not to exceed three percent (3%).

4.12 Subcontracting

Bidders may propose the use of a subcontractor. The Contractor shall obtain prior written approval from NYSDOH before entering into an agreement for services to be provided by a subcontractor. The Contractor is solely responsible for assuring that all the requirements of this RFP is met. All subcontracts shall contain provisions specifying that the work performed by the subcontractor must be in accordance with the terms of the prime contract, and that the subcontractor specifically agrees to be bound by the confidentiality provisions set forth in the agreement between the DOH and the Contractor. DOH reserves the right to request removal of any Bidder's staff or subcontractor's staff if, in DOH's discretion, such staff is not performing in accordance with the Contract.

NOTE: Subcontractors whose contracts are valued at or above \$100,000 will be required to submit the Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire upon selection of the prime Contractor.

4.13 Contract Insurance Requirements

Prior to the start of work under the Contract, the Contractor shall procure, at its sole cost and expense, and shall maintain in force at all times during the term of the Contract, insurance of the types and in the amounts set forth in [Attachment 8](#), the New York State Department of Health Contract, Section IV, Contract Insurance Requirements.

4.14 Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Requirements

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, the Department recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of **certified** minority-and woman-owned business enterprises and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of the Department's contracts.

Business Participation Opportunities for M/WBEs

For purposes of this RFP, the Department hereby establishes an overall goal of 30% for M/WBE participation, 15% for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises ("MBEs") participation and 15% for Women-Owned Business Enterprises ("WBEs"), based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs and outreach efforts to certified M/WBE firms. The successful Bidder who becomes the Contractor under the Contract entered into with the Department pursuant to this RFP must document good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by M/WBEs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Contract consistent with the M/WBE participation goals established for this procurement, and Contractor must agree that the Department may

withhold payment pending receipt of the required M/WBE documentation. For guidance on how the Department will determine “good faith efforts”, refer to 5 NYCRR § 142.8.

The directory of New York State Certified M/WBEs can be viewed at: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. The directory is found in the upper right-hand side of the webpage under “Search for Certified Firms” and accessed by clicking on the link entitled “MWBE Directory”. Engaging with firms found in the directory with like product(s) and/or service(s) is required, and all communication efforts and responses should be well documented to establish Contractor’s “good faith efforts”.

By submitting a Bid in response to this RFP, for contracts with an M/WBE goal above, a Bidder agrees to complete and submit an M/WBE Utilization Plan ([Attachment 5](#), Form #1) prior to award. The Department will review the submitted M/WBE Utilization Plan. If the Plan is not accepted, the Department may issue a notice of deficiency. If a notice of deficiency is issued, Bidder agrees that it shall respond to the notice of deficiency within seven (7) business days after Bidder’s receipt of such notice.

The Department may disqualify a Bidder as being non-responsive to this RFP under the following circumstances:

- a) If a Bidder fails to submit a M/WBE Utilization Plan;
- b) If a Bidder fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
- c) If a Bidder fails to submit a request for waiver (if applicable); or
- d) If the Department determines that the Bidder has failed to document good-faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by M/WBEs under the Contract in accordance with the goals for this RFP established by the Department;

The Contractor will be required to attempt to utilize, in good faith, any MBE or WBE identified in its M/WBE Utilization Plan, during the performance of the Contract. Requests for a partial or total waiver of established goal requirements made subsequent to Contract Award may be made at any time during the term of the Contract to the Department but must be made no later than prior to the submission of a request for final payment on the Contract.

The Contractor will be required to submit a Contractor’s Quarterly M/WBE Contractor Compliance & Payment Report to the Department, by the 10th day following each end of quarter over the term of the Contract documenting the progress made toward achievement of the M/WBE goals of the Contract.

If (a) the Department determines that the Contractor is not in compliance with the M/WBE requirements of the Contract and the Contractor refuses to comply with such requirements, or (b) the Department finds that the Contractor has willfully and intentionally failed to comply with the M/WBE participation goals established in the Contract, the Contractor may be required to pay to the Department liquidated damages and will be considered during future Vendor Responsibility Profile reviews should the bidder bid on future opportunities with the Department

Such liquidated damages shall be calculated as an amount equaling the difference between: (1) all sums identified for payment to M/WBEs had the Contractor achieved the contractual M/WBE goals; and (2) all sums actually paid to M/WBEs for work performed or materials supplied under the Contract.

A New York State certified Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses (M/WBE) may request that their firm’s contact information be included on a list of M/WBE firms interested in serving as a subcontractor for this procurement. The listing will be publicly posted on the Department’s website for reference by the bidding community. A firm requesting inclusion on this list should send contact information and a copy of its NYS M/WBE certification to ega@health.ny.gov before the Deadline for Questions as specified in [Section 1](#). (Calendar of Events). Nothing prohibits an M/WBE Vendor from proposing as a prime Contractor.

Please Note: Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in a finding of non-responsiveness, non-responsibility and/or a breach of the Contract, leading to the withholding of funds, suspension or termination of the Contract or such other actions or enforcement proceedings as allowed by the Contract.)

4.15 Participation Opportunities for NYS Certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses

Article 17-B of the New York State Executive Law provides for more meaningful participation in public procurement by NYS-certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (“SDVOBs”), thereby further integrating such businesses into New York State’s economy. The Department recognizes the need to promote the employment of service-disabled veterans and to ensure that certified service-disabled veteran-owned businesses have opportunities for maximum feasible participation in the performance of the Department’s contracts.

In recognition of the service and sacrifices made by service-disabled veterans and in recognition of their economic activity in doing business in New York State, Bidders/Contractors are strongly encouraged and expected to consider SDVOBs in the fulfillment of the requirements of the Contract. Such participation may be as subcontractors or suppliers, as protégés, or in other partnering or supporting roles.

For purposes of this procurement, the Department conducted a comprehensive search and determined that the Contract does not offer sufficient opportunities to set specific goals for participation by SDVOBs as subcontractors, service providers, and suppliers to Contractor. Nevertheless, Bidder/Contractor is encouraged to make good faith efforts to promote and assist in the participation of SDVOBs on the Contract for the provision of services and materials. The directory of New York State Certified SDVOBs can be viewed at: <https://ogs.ny.gov/veterans/>

Bidders are encouraged to contact the Office of General Services’ Division of Service-Disabled Veteran’s Business Development at 518-474-2015 or VeteransDevelopment@ogs.ny.gov to discuss methods of maximizing participation by SDVOBs on the Contract.

5.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The following administrative information will apply to this RFP. Failure to comply fully with this information may result in disqualification of your proposal.

5.1 Restricted Period

“Restricted period” means the period of time commencing with the earliest written notice, advertisement, or solicitation of a Request for Proposals (“RFP”), Invitation for Bids (“IFB”), or solicitation of proposals, or any other method for soliciting a response from bidders intending to result in a procurement contract with the Department and ending with the final contract award and approval by the Department and, where applicable, final contract approval by the Office of the State Comptroller.

Pursuant to State Finance Law §§ 139-j and 139-k, the Department identifies designated contacts on face page of this RFP to whom all communications attempting to influence this procurement must be made.

This prohibition applies to any oral, written, or electronic communication under circumstances where a reasonable person would infer that the communication was intended to influence this procurement. Violation of any of the requirements described in this Section may be grounds for a determination that the bidder is non-responsible and therefore ineligible for this contract award. Two (2) violations within four (4) years of the rules against impermissible contacts during the “restricted period” may result in the violator being debarred from participating in the Department’s procurements for a period of four (4) years.

5.2 Questions

Potential Bidders may submit written questions and requests for clarification pertaining to this RFP between the issuance of this RFP and the deadline for the submission of written questions specified in [Section 1](#) (Calendar of Events). All questions and requests for clarification of this RFP should cite the relevant RFP, including the RFP number and title (C041222 - Merit Peer Review Services for Scientific and Education

Research Applications), the section and paragraph number of this RFP or of the Attachment to this RFP to which the question relates, where applicable, and must be submitted via email to no later than the Deadline for Submission of Written Questions specified in [Section 1](#). (Calendar of Events). Questions received after the deadline **may not** be answered.

If a potential Bidder discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other apparent error in this RFP, the Bidder shall immediately notify the Department of such error in writing at ega@health.ny.gov and request that the Department clarify or modify the Terms of this RFP. If, prior to the deadline for the Submission of Bids, a Bidder fails to notify the Department of a known error or an error that reasonably should have been known, the Bidder shall assume the risk of bidding notwithstanding such apparent ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission or other error. If awarded the Contract pursuant to the terms of this RFP, the Bidder shall not be entitled to an amendment to the terms of the Contract to correct or clarify any such ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission or other error nor to any additional compensation by reason of the error or its correction.

5.3 Right to Modify RFP

The Department reserves the right to modify any part of this RFP, including but not limited to, the date and time by which proposals must be submitted and received by the Department, at any time prior to the Deadline for Submission of Proposals specified in [Section 1.0](#) (Calendar of Events). Modifications to this RFP shall be made by issuance of amendments and/or addenda.

Prior to the Deadline for Submission of Proposals, any such clarifications or modifications as deemed necessary by the Department will be posted to the Department's website.

If a prospective bidder discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in this RFP, the bidder shall immediately notify the Department of such error in writing at ega@health.ny.gov and request clarification or modification of the RFP.

If, prior to the Deadline for Submission of Proposals, a bidder fails to notify the Department of a known error or an error that reasonably should have been known, the bidder shall assume the risk of proposing. If awarded the Contract, the bidder shall not be entitled to additional compensation by reason of the error or its correction.

5.4 The Department's Reserved Rights

The Department reserves the right to:

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

15. Every offer shall be firm and not revocable for a period of three hundred and sixty-five days (365) from the bid opening, to the extent not inconsistent with section 2-205 of the uniform commercial code. Subsequent to such three hundred and sixty- five (365) days, any bid is subject to withdrawal communicated in a writing signed by the bidder; and,
16. 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 a bidder's proposal and/or to determine a bidder's compliance with the requirements of the solicitation.

5.5 Debriefing

Pursuant to Section 163(9)(c) of the State Finance Law, once an award has been made, any unsuccessful bidder may request a debriefing regarding the reasons that the proposal or bid submitted by the Bidder was not selected for award. The debriefing will be limited solely to the Bidder's own Bid and will not include any discussion of other bids. Requests for a debriefing must be made within fifteen (15) calendar days of release of the written or electronic notice by the Department that the Bid submitted by the Bidder was not selected for award. Requests should be submitted in writing to a designated contact identified in the award/non-award letter.

5.6 Protest Procedures

In the event an unsuccessful Bidder wishes to protest the award resulting from this RFP, the protesting Bidder must follow the protest procedures established by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). These procedures can be found in Chapter XI Section 17 of the OSC's Guide to Financial Operations, which is available on-line at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/guide/MyWebHelp/>

5.7 Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL")

All Bids may be disclosed or used by the Department to the extent permitted by law. The Department may disclose a Bid to any person for the purpose of assisting in evaluating the Bid or for any other lawful purpose. All Bids will become State agency records, which will be available to the public in accordance with the New York State Freedom of Information Law. **Any portion of the Bid that a Bidder believes constitutes proprietary information entitled to confidential handling, as an exception to the Freedom of Information Law, must be clearly and specifically designated in the Bid as specified in Section 6.1.2. of this RFP.** If the Department agrees with the proprietary claim, the designated portion of the Bidder's Bid 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.

5.8 Piggybacking

New York State Finance Law section 163(10)(e) (see also <https://ogs.ny.gov/procurement/piggybacking-using-other-existing-contracts-0>) allows the Commissioner of the NYS Office of General Services to consent to the use of the Contract entered into pursuant to this RFP by other New York State Agencies, and other authorized purchasers, subject to conditions and the Contractor's consent.

6.0 PROPOSAL CONTENT

The following includes the format and information to be provided by each Bidder. Bidders responding to this RFP must satisfy all requirements stated in this RFP. All Bidders are requested to submit complete Administrative and Technical Proposals, and are required to submit a complete Cost Proposal. A proposal that is incomplete in any material respect may be rejected.

To expedite review of the proposals, Bidders are requested to submit proposals in separate Administrative, Technical, and Cost packages inclusive of all materials as summarized in Attachment A, Proposal Documents. This separation of information will facilitate the review of the material requested. No information beyond that specifically requested is required, and Bidders are requested to keep their submissions to the shortest length consistent with making a complete presentation of qualifications. Evaluations of the Administrative, Technical, and Cost Proposals received in response to this RFP will be conducted separately. Bidders are therefore cautioned not to include any Cost Proposal information in the Technical Proposal documents.

The Department will not be responsible for expenses incurred in preparing and submitting the Administrative, Technical, or Cost Proposals.

6.1 Administrative Proposal

The Administrative Proposal should contain all items listed below. An Administrative Proposal that is incomplete in any material respect may be eliminated from consideration. The information requested should be provided in the prescribed format. Responses that do not follow the prescribed format may be eliminated from consideration. All responses to the RFP may be subject to verification for accuracy. Please provide the forms in the same order in which they are requested.

6.1.1 Bidder's Disclosure of Prior Non-Responsibility Determinations

Submit a completed and signed [Attachment 1](#), "Prior Non-Responsibility Determinations."

6.1.2 Freedom of Information Law – Proposal Redactions

Bidders must clearly and specifically identify any portion of their proposal that a Bidder believes constitutes proprietary information entitled to confidential handling as an exception to the Freedom of Information Law. See [Section 5.7](#), (Freedom of Information Law)

6.1.3 Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

Complete, certify, and file a New York State Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire. The Department recommends that bidders file the required Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire online via the New York State VendRep System. To enroll in and use the New York State VendRep System, see the VendRep System Instructions at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/index.htm> or go directly to the VendRep System online at www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep.

Bidders 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 OSC Help Desk at 866-370-4672 or 518-408-4672 or by email at ciohelpdesk@osc.state.ny.us.

Bidders opting to complete and submit a paper questionnaire can obtain the appropriate questionnaire from the VendRep website, www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep, or may contact the Office of the State Comptroller's Help Desk for a copy of the paper form. Bidders should complete and submit the Vendor Responsibility Attestation, [Attachment 3](#).

6.1.4 Vendor Assurance of No Conflict of Interest or Detrimental Effect

Submit [Attachment 4](#), Vendor Assurance of No Conflict of Interest or Detrimental Effect, which includes information regarding the Bidder, members, shareholders, parents, affiliates and subcontractors. [Attachment 4](#) must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually.

6.1.5 M/WBE Forms

Submit completed Form #1 and/or Form #2, Form #4 and Form #5 as directed in [Attachment 5](#), "Guide to New York State DOH M/WBE RFP Required Forms".

6.1.6 Encouraging Use of New York Businesses in Contract Performance

Submit [Attachment 6](#), "Encouraging Use of New York State Businesses in Contract Performance" to indicate the New York Businesses you will use in the performance of the Contract.

6.1.7 Bidder's Certified Statements

Complete, sign and submit Attachment 7, "Bidder's Certified Statements", which includes information regarding the Bidder. Attachment 7 must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually. Please indicate the title or position that the signer holds with the Bidder.

6.1.8 References

Provide references using [Attachment 9](#) (References) for three customers for whom bidder has provided similar services for within the last five (5) years. Provide firm names, addresses, contact names, telephone numbers, and email addresses.

6.1.9 Diversity Practices Questionnaire

The Department has determined, pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, that the assessment of the diversity practices of respondents to this procurement is practical, feasible, and appropriate. Accordingly, respondents to this procurement should include as part of their response to this procurement, [Attachment 10](#), "Diversity Practices Questionnaire". Responses will be formally evaluated and scored.

6.1.10 Executive Order 177 Prohibiting Contracts with Entities that Support Discrimination

Bidder should complete and submit [Attachment 11](#) certifying that it does not have institutional policies or practices that fail to address the harassment and discrimination of individuals on the basis of their age, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, military status, or other protected status under the Human Rights Law.

6.1.11 Executive Order 16 Prohibiting Contracting with Businesses Conducting Business in Russia

Bidder should complete and submit [Attachment 12](#) certifying the status of their business operations in Russia, if any, pursuant to Executive Order 16.

6.1.12 State Finance Law Consultant Disclosure Provisions

In accordance with New York State Finance Law Section 163(4)(g), State agencies must require all Contractors, including subcontractors, that provide consulting services for State purposes pursuant to a contract to submit an annual employment report for each such contract.

The successful bidder for procurements involving consultant services must complete a "State Consultant Services Form A, Contractor's Planned Employment From Contract Start Date through End of Contract Term" in order to be eligible for a contract.

The successful bidder must also agree to complete a "State Consultant Services Form B, Contractor's Annual Employment Report" for each state fiscal year included in the resulting contract. This report must be submitted annually to the Department, the Office of the State Comptroller, and Department of Civil Service.

Submit State Consultant Services Form A: Contractor's Planned Employment and Form B: Contractor's Annual Employment Report, available at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/forms/ac3271s.doc> and <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/forms/ac3272s.doc>.

6.1.13 Sales and Compensating Use Tax Certification (Tax Law, § 5-a)

Section 5-a of the Tax Law, as amended, effective April 26, 2006, requires certain Contractors awarded state contracts for commodities, services and technology valued at more than \$100,000 to certify to the Department of Tax and Finance ("DTF") that they are registered to collect New York State and local sales and compensating use taxes. The law applies to contracts where the total amount of such contractor's sales delivered into New York State are in excess of \$300,000 for the four quarterly periods immediately preceding the quarterly period in which the certification is made, and with respect to any affiliates and subcontractors whose sales delivered into New York State exceeded \$300,000 for the four quarterly periods immediately preceding the quarterly period in which the certification is made.

This law imposes upon certain contractors the obligation to certify whether or not the contractor, its affiliates, and its subcontractors are required to register to collect state sales and compensating use tax and contractors must certify to DTF that each affiliate and subcontractor exceeding such sales threshold is registered with DTF to collect New York State and local sales and compensating use taxes. The law prohibits the State Comptroller, or other approving agencies, from approving a contract awarded to an offeror meeting the registration requirements but who is not so registered in accordance with the law.

The successful Bidder must file a properly completed Form ST-220-CA with the Department and Form ST-220-TD with the DTF. These requirements must be met before a contract may take effect. Further information can be found at the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance's website, available through this link: <http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/publications/sales/pub223.pdf>.

Submit these Forms, available through these links:

ST-220 CA: http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/st/st220ca_fill_in.pdf

ST-220 TD: http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/st/st220td_fill_in.pdf

6.2 Technical Proposal

The purpose of the Technical Proposal is to demonstrate the qualifications, competence, and capacity of the Bidder to perform the services contained in this RFP. The Technical Proposal should demonstrate the qualifications of the Bidder and the staff to be assigned to provide services related to the services included in this RFP.

A Technical Proposal that is incomplete in any material respect may be eliminated from consideration. The following outlines the information requested to be provided by Bidders. The information requested should be provided in the prescribed format. Responses that do not follow the prescribed format may be eliminated from consideration. All responses to the RFP may be subject to verification for accuracy.

While additional data may be presented, the following should be included. Please provide the information in the same order in which it is requested. Your proposal should contain sufficient information to assure the Department of its accuracy. Failure to follow these instructions may result in disqualification.

Pricing information contained in the Cost Proposal cannot be included in the Technical Proposal documents.

6.2.1 Title Page

Submit a Title Page providing the RFP subject and number; the Bidder's name and address, the name, address, telephone number, and email address of the Bidder's contact person; and the date of the Proposal.

6.2.2 Table of Contents

The Table of Contents should clearly identify all material (by section and page number) included in the Bidder's proposal.

6.2.3 Documentation of Bidder's Eligibility Responsive to Section 3.0 of RFP

Bidders must be able to meet all the requirements stated in Section 3.0 of the RFP. The bidder must submit documentation that provides sufficient evidence of meeting the criterion/criteria set forth in Section 3.0. This documentation may be in any format needed to demonstrate how the Bidder meets the minimum qualifications to propose.

The vendor must have a minimum of three (3) years of experience coordinating and conducting all aspects of independent scientific and technical merit peer review of research proposals. Experience must include the following activities:

- recruitment of highly qualified, skilled, educated, and credentialed individuals to fulfill the various roles described herein, including panel members, management of the peer review process, Scientific Review Administrators (SRAs), panel chairpersons, and subject matter experts (SMEs),
- verification of credentials and relevant experience,
- meeting planning and facilitation,
- coordination of communications, travel, lodging and other logistics,
- group facilitation,
- evaluating, scoring and report writing as described herein.

6.2.4 Technical Proposal Narrative

Elements of the Technical Proposal are as follows:

The technical proposal should provide satisfactory evidence of the Bidder's ability to meet, and expressly respond to, each element listed below.

D1. Staffing and Staffing Qualifications (see Staffing Section 4.2)

The bidder should provide a staffing plan for completion of services that includes the following for each:

- a. how the bidder plans to recruit and train an adequate number of staff; (including overall manager, chairperson, SRA, SMEs and peers)
- b. bidder's ability to provide qualified staff to carry out the projected workload and scope of work over the entire contract period;
- c. bidder's ability to provide sufficient additional management and administrative support staff necessary to organize, prepare and carry out all administrative tasks associated with conducting the services;
- d. bidder's process for ensuring all Contractor and subcontractor staff are appropriately trained and how the training protocols provide for consistency among audit staff and the analysis of findings;
- e. how the Bidder intends to maintain the staffing levels and personnel planned;
- f. an organizational chart that delineates the titles of the staff responsible for fulfilling the tasks/deliverables detailed in Section 4.1 Tasks/Deliverables, their lines of communications, and how the organization intends to organize staff and management for this project;
- g. bidders should describe the organization's access to and experience in recruiting and screening sufficient numbers of qualified reviewers, from outside New York State, who have the appropriate experience and expertise for the types of applications that are anticipated (see Section 4.0, Table 1 and DOH past RFAs).

D2. Proposed Approach (see Scope of Work Section 4.1 and 4.3 - 4.8)

Provide a detailed plan describing the specific approaches, tasks, activities, and related operations to be employed in the provision of up to four peer review panel meetings of varying sizes in each year of the contract. Include activity descriptions for each of the following deliverable products:

- 1) Receive applications and screen for compliance with DOH-established criteria and other application requirements
- 2) Recruit qualified individuals as consultants to serve on review panels; identify and manage any conflicts of interest
- 3) Coordinate, manage and provide support for independent merit peer review of research funding applications.
- 4) Design and implement procedures that establish a systematic process of reviewing applications to ensure: compliance with DOH terms and conditions; high-quality research; and reasonableness of cost.
- 5) Provide thorough written reports and summaries of each application received.
- 6) Provide administrative support services such as conference management, travel logistics, coordination and reimbursement of reviewers.

D3. Facilities, Technology, Meeting Environment and Security (see Scope of Work Section 4.1 - 4.8)

- a) Describe the facilities, technology and equipment available to provide the Scope of Work as detailed in the proposed approach section of the bidder's proposal (see above). Also describe the facilities and technology resources available to support all other aspects of the contract, such as tracking expenditures, submitting timely vouchers, reimbursing reviewers and managing costs associated with the contract
- b) Include a description of available information technology, equipment and resources used to communicate with and transmit confidential data between peer reviewers and the DOH throughout each phase of peer review during the contract term (applications, reviewer guidance and materials, development of preliminary critiques and scores, discussion of applications, finalization of critiques and scores, and return of final deliverables to DOH).

D4. Timeline

Provide a timeline representative of specific activities, tasks and related operations to support the provision of one in-person peer review panel meeting using the approach described to review as many as 275 applications and one videoconference peer review panel meeting using the approach described to review as many as twenty (20) applications. Identify time savings that would be realized in review of smaller numbers of applications.

D5. Transition (see Section 4.9)

The bidder should describe its approach for transitioning operational and technical support activities that have been maintained and operated by the Contractor to the Department or designee. The bidder should describe the procedures that it plans to use for an orderly, complete, and controlled transition process.

6.3 Cost Proposal

Submit a completed and signed **Attachment B – Cost Proposal**. The Cost Proposal shall comply with the format and content requirements as detailed in this RFP and in Attachment B. Failure to comply with the format and content requirements may result in disqualification.

The bid price is to cover the cost of furnishing all of the product(s)/ services sought to be procured, including but not limited to travel, materials, equipment, overhead, profit and labor to the satisfaction of the Department and the performance of all work set forth in said specifications.

The pricing for subsequent years two (2) through five (5) of the Contract will be subject to an annual increase of not to exceed three percent (3%).

All related costs must be included in the contractor's prices bid except for reimbursement of the

following allowable pass-through expenditures (see Section 4.6 Meeting Activities):

- review panel members honoraria, travel, lodging and per diem
- meeting space rental including refreshments, audio visual and internet technology charges.

7.0 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

A proposal consists of three distinct parts: (1) the Administrative Proposal, (2) the Technical Proposal, and (3) the Cost Proposal. The table below outlines the requested format and volume for submission of each part. Proposals should be submitted in all formats as prescribed below.

	Electronic Submission
Administrative Proposal	1 email PDF(s) labeled "Administrative Proposal" containing a standard searchable PDF file with copy/read permissions only.
Technical Proposal	1 email PDF(s) labeled "Technical Proposal" containing a standard searchable PDF file with copy/read permissions only.
Cost Proposal	1 email PDF(s) "Cost Proposal" containing standard searchable PDF file(s) with copy/read permissions only.

Email PDF / Electronic Submission Instructions:

1. Submit three (3) separate, searchable, and open and permission password protected, PDF proposals in three (3) separate emails to: ega@health.ny.gov. Use this naming convention for the subject line of each email: <Type of Proposal Submission, Bidder Name, RFP# C041222>.
2. Include, as attachment to each email, the distinct PDF file labeled "Administrative Proposal", "Technical Proposal", or "Cost Proposal" followed by Company name and RFP number. Example: "Technical Proposal Submission, ABC Company, RFP#C041222".
3. All electronic bid submissions should be clear and include page numbers at the bottom of each page.
4. All electronic bid submissions should be in PDF Optical Character Recognition ("OCR") searchable format.
5. The body of the email should also include the password to the file, contact information, and indicate the total number of pages intended, and, where indicated, each subset of pages listed. **Example: Administrative Proposal 14 pages total, Attachment 3 – 1 page.**
6. A font size of eleven (11) points or larger should be used. All submitted documents should contain appropriate header and footer information.
7. In the event an electronic submission cannot be read by the Department, the Department reserves the right to request a hard copy and/or electronic resubmission of any unreadable files. Offeror shall have 2 business days to respond to such requests and must certify the resubmission is identical to the original submission.
8. Where signatures are required, the proposals should have a handwritten signature (wet ink) and be signed in blue ink. A scan of the handwritten (wet ink) signature can be used for electronic submission in the PDF. The Department reserves the right to request hard copy originals of all signature pages at any time.
9. The Department discourages overly lengthy Bids. Therefore, marketing brochures, user manuals or other materials beyond that sufficient to present a complete Bid, are not desired and will not be reviewed or evaluated. Elaborate artwork or expensive paper is not necessary or desired. In order for the Department to evaluate bids fairly and completely, all Bids should follow the format described in this RFP and provide all requested information and no extraneous or additional information or material.
10. Audio and/or videotapes are not allowed. Any submitted audio or videotapes will be ignored by the evaluation teams.

Submission of proposals in a manner other than as described in these instructions (e.g., fax) will not be accepted.

The proposal must be received by the Department, no later than the Deadline for Submission of Proposals specified in [Section 1.0](#) (Calendar of Events). Late bids will not be considered.

7.1 No Bid Form

Bidders choosing not to bid are requested to complete the No-Bid form, [Attachment 2](#). Although not mandatory, such information helps the Department direct solicitations to the correct bidding community.

8.0 METHOD OF AWARD

8.1 General Information

The Department will evaluate each proposal based on the “Best Value” concept. This means that the proposal that best “optimizes quality, cost, and efficiency among responsive and responsible offerors” shall be selected for award (State Finance Law, Article 11, § 163(1)(j)).

The Department, at its sole discretion, will determine which proposal(s) best satisfies its requirements. The Department reserves all rights with respect to the award. All proposals deemed to be responsive to the requirements of this procurement will be evaluated and scored for technical qualities and cost. Proposals failing to meet the requirements of this RFP may be eliminated from consideration. The evaluation process will include separate technical and cost evaluations, and the result of each evaluation shall remain confidential until evaluations have been completed and a selection of the winning proposal is made.

The evaluation process will be conducted in a comprehensive and impartial manner, as set forth herein, by an Evaluation Committee. The Technical Proposal and compliance with other RFP requirements (other than the Cost Proposal) will be weighted **70%** of a proposal’s total score and the information contained in the Cost Proposal will be weighted **30%** of a proposal’s total score.

Bidders may be requested by the Department to clarify the contents of their proposals. Other than to provide such information as may be requested by the Department, no Bidder will be allowed to alter its proposal or add information after the Deadline for Submission of Proposals listed in [Section 1.0](#) (Calendar of Events).

In the event of a tie, the determining factors for award, in descending order, will be:

- (1) lowest cost and
- (2) proposed percentage of M/WBE participation.

8.2 Submission Review

The Department will examine all proposals that are received in a proper and timely manner to determine if they meet the proposal submission requirements, as described in [Section 6.0](#) (Proposal Content) and [Section 7.0](#) (Proposal Submission), including documentation requested for the Administrative Proposal, as stated in this RFP. Proposals that are materially deficient in meeting the submission requirements or have omitted material documents, in the sole opinion of the Department, may be rejected.

8.3 Technical Evaluation

The evaluation process will be conducted in a comprehensive and impartial manner. A Technical Evaluation Committee comprised of Program Staff of Department will review and evaluate all proposals.

Proposals will undergo a preliminary evaluation to verify Minimum Qualifications to Propose (Section 3.0).

The Technical Evaluation Committee members will independently score each Technical Proposal that meets the submission requirements of this RFP. The individual Committee Member scores will be averaged to calculate the Technical Score for each responsive Bidder.

The scores will be normalized by using the following formulas:

$Z = (X/Y) * 70\%$ where:

X is the average raw technical score of the proposal being scores;

Y is the average raw technical score of the highest raw Technical Proposal; and

Z is the Total Technical Score.

The Technical Proposal evaluation is **70% (up to 70 points)** of the final score.

8.4 Cost Evaluation

The Cost Evaluation Committee will examine the Cost Proposal documents. The Cost Proposals will be opened and reviewed for responsiveness to cost requirements. If a cost proposal is found to be non-responsive, that proposal may not receive a cost score and may be eliminated from consideration.

The Cost Proposals will be scored based on a maximum cost score of XX points. The maximum cost score will be allocated to the Cost Proposal with the lowest all-inclusive not-to-exceed maximum price. All other responsive proposals will receive a proportionate score based on the relation of their Cost Proposal to the Cost Proposal(s) offered at the lowest final cost, using this formula:

$C = (A/B) * 30\%$

A is Total price of lowest Cost Proposal;

B is Total price of Cost Proposal being scored; and

C is the Cost score.

The Cost Proposal evaluation is **30% (up to 30 points)** of the final score.

8.5 Composite Score

A composite score will be calculated by the Department by adding the Technical Proposal points and the Cost Proposal points awarded. Finalists will be determined based on composite scores.

8.6 Best and Final Offers

The Department reserves the right to request best and final offers. In the event the Department exercises this right, all Bidders that submitted a proposal that are susceptible to award will be asked to provide a best and final offer. Bidders will be informed that should they choose not to submit a best and final offer, the offer submitted with their proposal will be construed as their best and final offer.

8.7 Reference Checks

The Bidder should submit references using [Attachment 9](#) (References). At the discretion of the Evaluation Committee, references may be checked at any point during the process to verify Bidder's qualifications to propose (Section 3.0).

8.8 Award Recommendation

The Evaluation Committee will submit a recommendation for award to the Bidder(s) with the highest composite score(s) whose experience and qualifications have been verified.

The Department will notify the awarded Bidder(s) and Bidders not awarded. The awarded Bidder(s) will enter into a Contract substantially in accordance with the terms of Attachment 8, DOH Agreement, to provide the required product(s) or services as specified in this RFP. The resultant Contract shall not be binding until fully executed and approved by the New York State Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the State Comptroller.

9.0 ATTACHMENTS

The following attachments are included in this RFP and are available via hyperlink or can be found at: <https://www.health.ny.gov/funding/forms/>.

1. [Bidder's Disclosure of Prior Non-Responsibility Determinations](#)
2. [No-Bid Form](#)
3. [Vendor Responsibility Attestation](#)
4. [Vendor Assurance of No Conflict of Interest or Detrimental Effect](#)
5. [Guide to New York State DOH M/WBE Required Forms & Forms](#)
6. [Encouraging Use of New York Businesses in Contract Performance](#)
7. [Bidder's Certified Statements](#)
8. [DOH Agreement](#) (Standard Contract)
9. [References](#)
10. [Diversity Practices Questionnaire](#)
11. [Executive Order 177 Prohibiting Contracts with Entities that Support Discrimination](#)
12. [Executive Order 16 Prohibiting Contracting with Business Conducting Business in Russia](#)

The following attachments are attached and included in this RFP:

- A. Proposal Document Checklist
- B. Cost Proposal

**ATTACHMENT A
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT CHECKLIST**

Please reference Section 7.0 for the appropriate format and quantities for each proposal submission.

RFP C041222 – Merit Peer Review Services for Scientific and Education Research Applications		
FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROPOSAL		
RFP §	SUBMISSION	INCLUDED
§ 6.1.1	Attachment 1 - Bidder's Disclosure of Prior Non-Responsibility Determinations	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.2	Freedom of Information Law – Proposal Redactions (If Applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.3	Attachment 3 - Vendor Responsibility Attestation	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.4	Attachment 4 - Vendor Assurance of No Conflict of Interest or Detrimental Effect	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.5	M/WBE Participation Requirements:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Attachment 5 - Form 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Attachment 5 - Form 2 (If Applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Attachment 5 - Form 4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Attachment 5 - Form 5 (If Applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.6	Attachment 6 - Encouraging Use of New York Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.7	Attachment 7 - Bidder's Certified Statements	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.8	Attachment 9 - References	
§ 6.1.9	Attachment 10 - Diversity Practices Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.10	Attachment 11 - EO 177 Prohibiting Contracts with Entities that Support Discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.11	Attachment 12 – EO 16 Contracting with Businesses Conducting Business in Russia	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.12	State Finance Law Consultant Disclosure	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.1.13	Sales and Compensating Use Tax Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>
FOR THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL		
RFP §	SUBMISSION	INCLUDED
§ 6.2.1	Title Page	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.2.2	Table of Contents	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.2.3	Documentation of Bidder's Eligibility (Requirement)	<input type="checkbox"/>
§ 6.2.4	Technical Proposal Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
FOR THE COST PROPOSAL REQUIREMENT		
RFP §	REQUIREMENT	INCLUDED
§ 6.3	Attachment B- Cost Proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>