



Department of Health

RFP # C041222

Merit Peer Review Services for Scientific and Education Research Applications

Questions and Answers Posted August 21, 2025

Question #	Corresponding RFP Section	Question	Answer
1.	General	<p>The RFA below states that it will accept Scientific Education Research grants, so my question is to understand the scope of projects that will be funded.</p> <p>Here is an outline of an educational training grant that I would like to submit:</p> <p>The goal of this educational training grant application is the advancement of neuroscience research by supporting educational activities that encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented minorities groups in the biomedical and behavioral sciences, to pursue further studies or careers in research. With this focus in mind, we have proposed a training program that includes all educational components such as courses for skill development both laboratory skills as well as career</p>	<p>As stated in Section 2.0 Overview of the RFA, "...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)."</p>

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		<p>development skills, career stage specific research experiences and both trainee mentoring and faculty mentoring opportunities. We have proposed an innovative and inclusive annual 8-week intensive neuroscience research workshop which will focus on providing training in key areas of human neuroscience, with a specific focus on neurological diseases such as Spinal cord injury research, using state-of-the-art interventional tools.</p> <p>Please let me know if this concept would be appropriate for this RFA.</p>	
2.	General	<p>I am writing to see if there is a possibility of peer review being conducted by AI agents (who will be unbiased and who will really look at proposals --and provide feedback to improve proposals for future solicitations that is not business-as-usual). We will use the highest level of intelligence from three companies (openai [sic], anthropic and google) --have them argue the merits and issues with each proposal from a variety of different angles (which will be transparent AND forward-looking, including all kinds of FDA and government regulations -- in NY state, Federal and International). The goal will be to enable work (and feedback) that has the highest relevance.</p> <p>At this point in time, AI agents with deep thinking (budget will be used for the thinking budget) are unbiased, do not have day-to-day mood swings, have consistent results that are explainable, will review grants rapidly (and provide feedback to grantees to improve their grants --which will make the process transparent) AND has the capability to improve the [sic]. They are also the top 1st-5th percentile in nearly</p>	The use of AI does not meet the requirements of this RFP.

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		<p>every field (especially biological AND these specific AI's will be based on historical data, including hospital system data --working with MIMIC, FDA drugs and other data-sets [sic] that a single individual or even groups-of-experts cannot provide expertise in). You can set the thinking budget --I will set-up the agent architecture for the government to use as a public service, so, you can work to provide the most human benefits (over a chosen time-scale --you will have to define the budget for each time-scale, i.e. improvements within 6-months, 1 years, 2 years --there is no point to going more than 2 years, the technology inflection is already here).</p> <p>Can I submit a proposal for this under this RFP?</p>	
4.	4.0	Are any of the eight (8) Peer Review Cycles per year concurrent?	It is possible that some review cycles may be concurrent.
5.	4.1a	Does the Department expect compliance criteria and additional mandatory scientific requirements and penalties to be the same for each review cycle?	The criteria, requirements, and penalties should remain largely similar between cycles of each RFA opportunity, but there will likely be differences for each type of RFA.
6.	4.1b	Will the Department provide any recommended reviewers?	No, NYS DOH will not provide a list of individuals that have served on previous merit review panels or recommend reviewers.
7.	4.1e	How many pages does the contractor expect on average per application?	Each RFA has different requirements and the average number of pages from the last few rounds range from 65 to 230.
8.	4.2	Will the Department clarify the role of the SME's discussed in section 4.2? The bidder is uncertain of the SMEs are serving as one of the formal reviewers or are considered separately. "The vendor will identify experienced scientists, physicians and others as appropriate to serve as the panel chairperson, subject	Yes, per RFP Section 4.2, the SME serves as one of the formal reviewers.

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		matter experts (SMEs) and potential review panel members."	
9.	4.2	Though we understand level of effort can be variable, can the Department provide an estimated LOE for the Scientific Review Administrators (SRAs) specifically or identify drivers that might impact our ability to set standard benchmarks for SRA workload?	No. The Department cannot provide an estimated LOE. As noted in the RFP, the SRA will recruit panel members, assign critiques to reviewers, ensure reviewers provide scores for the necessary review criteria, assemble draft and final critiques, etc.
10.	4.3	Are the reviewer critique templates provided by the Department?	No. The successful contractor will be responsible for supplying reviewer critique templates.
11.	4.3	Will the Department clarify how many or which of the panels are likely to be in person and how many or which are likely to be by video conference. Or can you provide a baseline for assumptions and comparing bids? We ask this questions because the labor associated with an in person panel is greater than a video conference (even if the passthrough costs are not to be included in the price.)	<p>As stated in RFA Section 4.3, the Department will decide how the panel will convene. Further, Section 4.3 notes that: videoconference meeting panel sizes should not exceed 10 reviewers, including the chair and applications to be reviewed by each panel should not exceed 20 and in-person meeting panel sizes should not exceed 20 reviewers, including the chair and the number of applications reviewed by each panel should be limited to 40.</p> <p>In recent years, all panels have been conducted via videoconference. However, it should be noted that past structure is not a guarantee of the future and DOH will use their discretion in deciding whether review will be in-person or via videoconference.</p>
12.	4.6	Page 12 says "The vendor will provide honoraria/payment to the review panel members..." but then on Page 13 in bold "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". Can	Review panel member honoraria, travel, lodging and per-diem are all pass-through costs (ie: paid outside of the awarded contract) and would result in no additional expense to the bidder regardless of the number of reviewers.

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		the Department clarify which costs must be included in pricing?	Only the cost of administering the peer review process should be part of the bidder's per application bid price.
13.	4.5	Is a scoring sheet template provided by the Department?	No. The Department will supply scoring guidelines. The successful contractor is responsible for developing the scoring sheet template for review.
14.	4.7	Post-Meeting Activities and Reporting Requirements includes " Thorough and accurate written evaluation reports in PDF formats." Please can you (i) clarify and reference any state or other accessibility or redaction requirements for these deliverables (ii) clarify whether there is a template or style guide for the deliverables and/or (iii) provide an example, template, or template for these deliverables?	<p>The Peer Review process is confidential, and the resulting critiques are confidential. In addition, RFA applications will give the bidders the opportunity to note what information is confidential or proprietary. There is no further expectation of a need to redact.</p> <p>The successful contractor will develop their own templates based on the information as stated in the RFP section 4.7</p>
15.	4.14 and 8.0	Recognizing the importance of the Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) subcontractor requirements, are bidders required to identify a subcontractor M/WBE in the bid and/or is identification of a specific M/WOBE within the scope of the technical evaluation of the bid (other than in the event of a tie as noted on 8.1)?	Bidders should identify proposed MWBE subcontractors via Attachment 5, Form #1 at the time of proposal submission. MWBE utilization is not scored.