NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Department of Health

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Communities Mobilizing for Safety:
A Public Health Approach to Sexual Violence Prevention
Request for Application – CCH-2024-01

Applicant & Non-Applicant Survey: Summary Report

August 9, 2024

Rape Prevention and Education Program
Sexual Violence Prevention Unit

New York State Department of Health
Office of Public Health
Center for Community Health
Division of Family Health
Bureau of Perinatal, Reproductive and Sexual Health
Bureau of Data Analytics, Research and Evaluation

Background

Health Research, Inc. (HRI) and the New York State Department of Health (the Department), Bureau of Perinatal, Reproductive, and Sexual Health released a grant opportunity titled, "*Communities Mobilizing for Safety: A Public Health Approach to Sexual Violence Prevention*." (RFA# CCH-2024-01) in March 2024 for the Rape Prevention and Education Program (RPE). The focus of this grant opportunity was to provide funding to local agencies through a Request for Applications (RFA) to support community/societal-level strategies that aim to reduce and prevent sexual violence across the state. The RFA was announced on the Department website and disseminated electronically through the RPE outreach list.

Purpose

Following the release of the RFA, the RPE program conducted a brief, anonymous survey to gather feedback on the RFA structure and application process from those who applied as well as those who received the RFA but did not apply for funding. Results from the survey will help understand challenges applicants face when applying for funding as well as help inform the Department's preparation and dissemination of future funding opportunities.

Description

The survey consisted of five questions that participants responded to based on whether they applied for funding or not. Through the survey responses, RPE was able to identify how respondents heard about the funding opportunity, determine whether they applied for the funding opportunity, and learn more about their experience with the application.

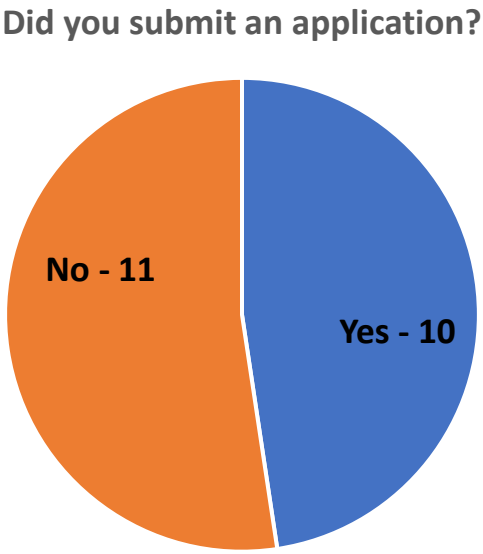
Those who applied for funding were asked to rate various elements of the application including the clarity of the funding announcement and the application process. Participants were asked to rate each element using the four-point Likert Scale for Agreement (Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree).

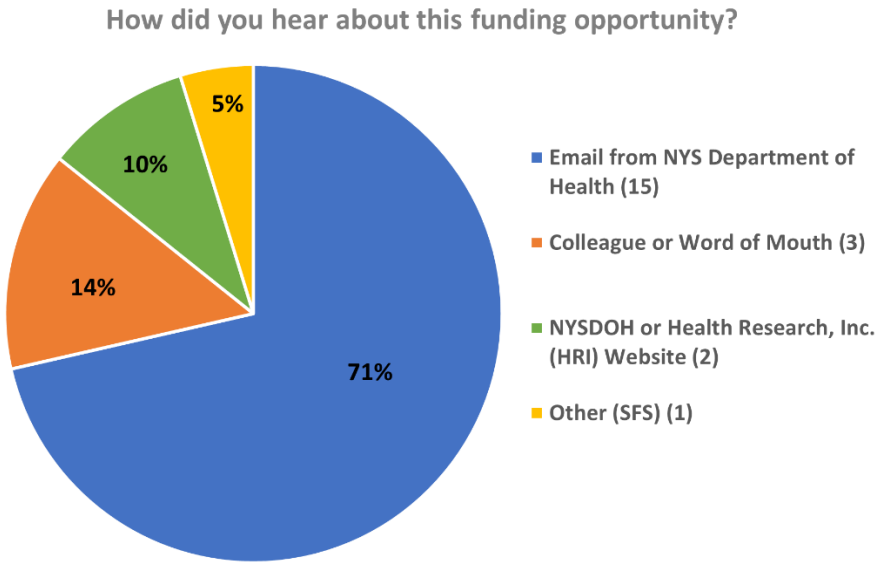
Those who did not apply for funding were redirected to a different series of statements to determine what prevented or discouraged them from applying. They were asked to select all that applied. Both sets of statements were followed up with optional open-ended questions asking for additional feedback on how the Department could improve the application process.

The survey for the RFA applicants and non-applicants was open for a period of one week, from June 25 to July 3, 2024.

Results

The survey was sent to approximately 275 organizations on the RPE Outreach listserv. Twenty-one responses were received in total; 10 respondents had applied for funding and 11 had not.

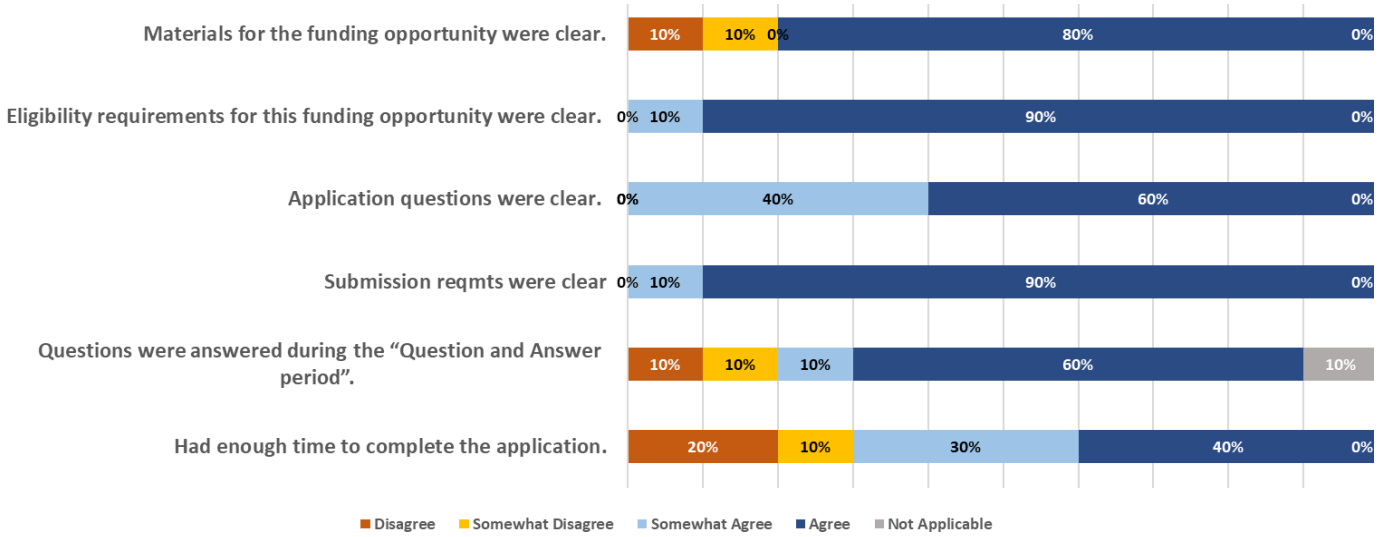




Seven (7) applicants and eight (8) non-applicants heard about the funding opportunity through an email from the Department. Two (2) applicants and none of the non-applicants heard about the funding through the Department or HRI website while one (1) applicant and two (2) non-applicants received the information from a colleague or word of mouth. In addition, one (1) non-applicant received information through the Statewide Financial System (SFS).

Questions Specific to Respondents that DID Apply for the Funding Opportunity

1. *Please rate your agreement with the following statements regarding this funding opportunity.*



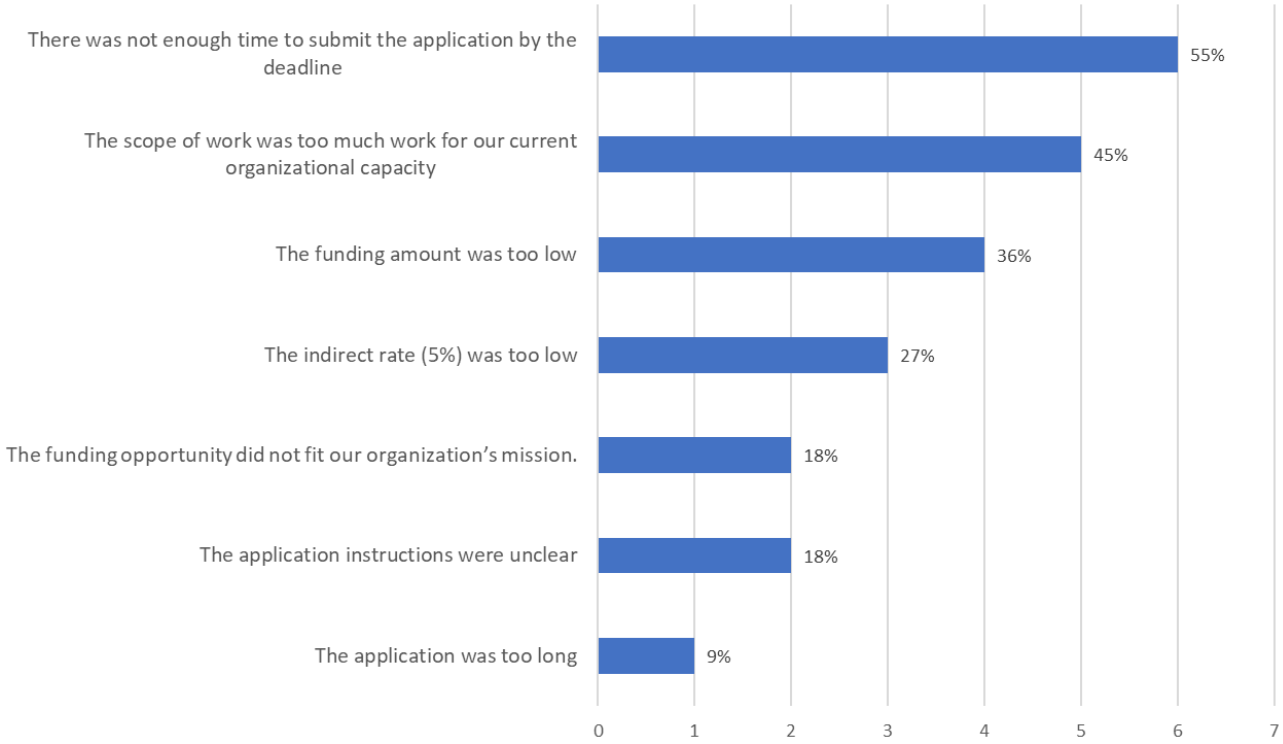
Most respondents (80% to 90%) agreed that the RFA materials, eligibility requirements, and submission requirements were clear. Of the 10 who applied for funding, six (6) agreed that the application questions were clear and six (6) agreed that their questions were answered during "Q&A". For the statement about having enough time to complete the application three (3) respondents who applied either disagreed or somewhat disagreed, and three (3) somewhat agreed with the statement.

2. *Please share any additional feedback about why your organization submitted an application.*
3. *Please share any additional feedback on how to improve future funding opportunities. (Optional & Open Text)*

There were two optional open-ended questions asked to respondents who applied for funding. One question asked respondents to share feedback about why their organization submitted an application and the second question asked respondents to share feedback on how to improve future funding opportunities. Respondents stated that the RFA was clear and with award of funds they could provide services to marginalized communities. Respondents also stated they would like to know about other similar opportunities. The primary feedback regarding how to improve future funding opportunities was related to the timeline. Respondents noted that additional time to prepare the application would have been beneficial. Respondents also stated additional time to get questions answered and additional time from the release date of the question & answer document and submission deadline was needed. Respondents also noted receipt confirmation of the letter of intent, clearer information regarding the priority population requirements, and transparency about the timeline for decision making would have improved the funding opportunity.

Questions Specific to Respondents that DID NOT Apply for the Funding Opportunity

1. *What were your reasons for not submitting an application? (Please select all that apply)*



The results from this question show the top three reasons for not applying were a lack of time, too much work for current organizational capacity, and the funding amount was perceived as too low.

2. *Please share any additional feedback about why your organization did not submit an application.*
3. *Please share any additional feedback on how to improve future funding opportunities. (Optional & Open Text)*

Respondents stated the short application time as the number one area of improvement for future opportunities. Respondents also noted that requirements of the opportunity were too complex for smaller, community-based organizations and do not align with existing programming which made meeting requirements impossible with available funding. Respondents stated the focus on social determinants of health is important, however it does not align with current approaches to sexual violence prevention and existing infrastructure cannot accommodate the change. Respondents noted the need for capacity building across the state to support this type of programming. Respondents also stated the opportunity was too narrow, stated the limited number of awards across the state was insufficient, and the geographic eligibility and award criteria excluded parts of the state. Respondents

also noted the geographic eligibility and award criteria would force partner organizations to compete for awards, as a result some organizations chose not to apply.

Conclusion

The majority of applicants and non-applicants received information regarding the funding opportunity via email from the Department indicating the importance of disseminating the funding opportunity through existing networks. Both applicants and non-applicants felt there was insufficient time to meet application requirements. Required scope of work and level of funding were other major factors that dissuaded respondents from applying for funding. It should be noted that the small response rate impacts generalizability of the results. This could present a nonresponse bias which jeopardizes the validity of this survey.

Suggestions for Future Funding Opportunities:

- Provide additional time for organizations to respond to the opportunity following the question-and-answer period.
- Increase funding award amounts.
- Reduce the scope of work or improve the focus of the funding opportunity.
- Allow multiple awards in a county to allow for collaboration between awardees.
- Avoid releasing similar grant opportunities during April (Sexual Assault Awareness Month).