ADDENDUM # 3

December 16, 2024

RFA # 20529 / SFS # HELP-2025
SFS Event Name: RFA # 20529 – Healthcare Education and Life-skills

New York State Department of Health
Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management
Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development
Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation

Request for Applications

Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program

RFA Modification

The following are official modifications hereby incorporated into RFA # 20529 Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program. Deleted language appears in strikethrough ("~~xxx~~") and added language appears in red text. The information contained in this amendment prevails over the original RFA language. Applicants should review all documents in their entirety to ensure all amended language is incorporated into their applications.

The term of the contract has been updated to reflect the intended five-year timeframe.

The following changes have been made to the RFA:

Section IV. Administrative Requirements, Section G. Term of Contract:

It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period: five-year contracts January 1, 2026-December 31, ~~2031~~2030.

Section V. Completing the Application, Section C. Review & Award Process:

Awards will be based on funding availability. The maximum amount of funding available is $19.5 million annually. It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period: five-year contracts January 1, 2026-December 31, ~~2031~~2030.

The following changes have been made to the Questions and Answers document, under the heading “Funding/Subcontracting”:

Question 11: Are the proposed projects applying for funds on a six-year contract basis? Should proposed project budgets reflect a single year or six years?

Answer 11: Contracts resulting from this Request for Applications will have a five-year contract term with anticipated dates of January 1, 2026 – December 31, ~~2031~~2030. See Section IV. Administrative Requirements, Subsection G. Term of Contract. Applicants should submit a proposed budget for year one into the Statewide Financial System (SFS). See Section V. Completing the Application, Subsection A. Application Format/Content for more instructions on completing and submitting a budget.

ADDENDUM # 2

December 10, 2024

RFA # 20529 / SFS # HELP-2025
SFS Event Name: RFA # 20529 – Healthcare Education and Life-skills

New York State Department of Health
Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management
Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development
Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation

Request for Applications

Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program

RFA Modification

The following is an official modification, which is hereby incorporated into RFA # 20529 Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program. Deleted language appears in strikethrough ("~~xxx~~") and added language appears in red text. The information contained in this amendment prevails over the original RFA language.

The RFA due date has been extended. The following change has been made to the Applications Due date on the Cover Page of the RFA:

Applications Due: ~~**December 20, 2024**~~ **January 15, 2025 by 4:00 PM**

ADDENDUM # 1

October 30, 2024

RFA # 20529/ SFS # HELP-2025
SFS Event Name: RFA # 20529 – Healthcare Education and Life-skills

New York State Department of Health
Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management
Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development
Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation

Request for Applications

Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program

RFA Modification

The following is an official modification, which is hereby incorporated into RFA # 20529 Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program. Deleted language appears in strikethrough ("~~xxx~~") and added language appears in red text. The information contained in this amendment prevails over the original RFA language. Applicants should review all documents in their entirety to ensure all amended language is incorporated into their applications.

The following change has been made to Section I. Introduction, D. Available Funding of the RFA:

Region	**Counties**
Capital	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington
Central	Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
Finger Lakes	Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
Long Island	Nassau, Suffolk
Mid-Hudson	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
Mohawk Valley	Fulton, ~~Hamilton~~, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
New York City	Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond, Queens
North Country	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
Southern Tier	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, ~~Otsego,~~ Steuben, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins
Western	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara

RFA # 20529 / SFS # HELP-2025
SFS Event Name: RFA # 20529 – Healthcare Education and Life-skills

New York State Department of Health
Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management
Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development
Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation

Request for Applications

Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program

KEY DATES:

Release Date:	**October 22, 2024**
Questions Due:	**November 12, 2024**
Questions, Answers and Updates Posted (on or about):	**December 3, 2024**
Applications Due:	**December 20, 2024 by 4:00 PM**
NYSDOH Contact Name & Address:	**Carrie Roseamelia** New York State Department of Health Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation ESP, Corning Tower – Room 1696 Albany, New York 12237 HELP.Services.Grant@health.ny.gov

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I. Introduction

A. Intent

The Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation is situated in the New York State Department of Health's Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development in the Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management. The office was established in 2022 in response to New York's commitment to rebuilding and growing the healthcare workforce. Funding innovative initiatives to increase the workforce and prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals through training and support are key components of the office's mission.

The Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation announces the availability of funds to support the Healthcare Education and Life-Skills Program. The purpose of this funding is to increase the number of students, or trainees, pursuing careers in healthcare by offering wrap around services and support. This initiative seeks to increase the healthcare workforce by:

- Identifying healthcare workforce shortages by region and supporting students/trainees interested in pursuing careers to meet the identified healthcare needs of the region.
- Increasing graduation/completion rates among students/trainees by assessing the barriers to completion, and providing the necessary supports required for success.

B. Healthcare Workforce Challenge

Concerns for the healthcare workforce pipeline stem from workers transferring from healthcare to alternate fields, as demonstrated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and aging out of the healthcare workforce altogether, as the "gray wave" of older workers reaches retirement age. The need for replacement workers, coupled with an anticipated employment growth in the healthcare industry, suggests that approximately 1.8 million healthcare openings each year, on average, will be required to meet demand.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects an increase in the supply of healthcare providers in the next decade. For example, Registered Nurses are projected to increase by 6% from 2022 to 2032; Licensed Practical Nurses will increase by 5% over the same period; and Physician Assistants are estimated to grow by 27%.[1] Sustaining this pool of healthcare workers is challenging, as studies find that current healthcare workers report significant burnout. In one study, nurses reported feeling: emotionally drained (50.8%), used up (56.4%), fatigued (49.7%), burned out (45.1%), or at the end of the rope (29.4%) "a few times a week" or "every day."[2] Patient care is directly impacted by the demand for healthcare workers, and the healthcare industry and communities at-large are impacted by the dissatisfaction among practicing healthcare workers.

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1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook," September 6, 2023. Accessed February 7, 2024. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm.

2 National Council of State Boards of Nursing Press Release, ncsbn.org

A significant threat to sustaining an ample healthcare system is the withdrawal rate among healthcare students and trainees. For example, the number of healthcare graduates fell behind job opening projections by 12,447 among Certified Nursing Assistants; 5,410 among Registered Nurses; and 2,340 among Licensed Practical Nurses.[3]According to an Elsevier Health survey of medical and nursing students across 91 countries, "Overall, 23% of students in the United States said they're considering quitting their studies, which includes 25% of medical students and 21% of nursing students; 16% of students plan to leave healthcare entirely."[4] While this survey does not provide details on whether healthcare trainees are more likely to drop out compared to non-healthcare trainees, results point to examining how healthcare training programs can better support their students.

There are unique challenges in graduating from healthcare programs, as well as progressing in healthcare related pathways. Trainees can feel a disconnect between education and employability, therefore they require job skills that align more closely with career readiness. Contributions to students' decisions to withdrawal from training programs includes financial concerns, academic issues, the quality of clinical placements, workload, the culture of healthcare, and moreover - lack of support. NurseJournal.org identified poor time management skills, overwhelming stress, lack of study habits, and difficulty taking exams as common reasons why students drop out of nursing school.[5] Evidence suggests first-year students are particularly susceptible to dropping out.

The withdrawal rate among students and trainees serves as a significant threat to securing an ample and qualified workforce. Therefore, it is critical healthcare students and trainees receive support to complete their training. The Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program aims to fund healthcare training programs that provide a holistic approach in supporting trainees on their paths to success and increase their self-efficacy to thrive in an evolving healthcare environment.

C. Diversifying the Healthcare Workforce

A racially and ethnically diverse healthcare workforce is important for increasing access to care for underserved populations, improving healthcare system access, improving the cultural competence of the healthcare workforce, and enhancing the educational experience of all healthcare trainees. To outpace the growing need for a sustainable healthcare system, populations historically marginalized and underrepresented in the healthcare field should be recruited into healthcare training programs and supported through graduation.

Evidence suggests patients of marginalized and underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds would benefit from receiving care from healthcare providers understand their health concerns and share their race and/or ethnicity.[6] Data suggest only 23% of Black Americans, 26% of Hispanics, and 39% of

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3 1199SEIU, "Solving the Healthcare Workforce Crisis [internal source]," 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, Albany, 2023.
4 Goodchild, Lucy, Aguilar Calera, Maria, West, Chris, & Mulligan, Adrian "Clinician of the Future 2023 Education Edition". *Elsevier* (October, 2023). Clinician of the Future 2023 Education Edition | Elsevier

5 Morris, Gayle. "Why Students Drop Out of Nursing School." *NurseJournal.org* (March 23, 2023). Why Students Drop Out Of Nursing School - NurseJournal.org
6 Harun, N., Moore, J., & Martiniano, R. (2021). Nurse Practitioner Diversity in New York State.

Asian Americans have a health practitioner that is the same race or ethnicity, compared to 82% of white patients. Reflected in existing literature, the lack of representation in the workforce contributes to health disparities. Facilities may utilize cultural competency and diversity, equity, and inclusion training to bolster health equity.[8] However, such training is often not keeping pace with the variety of needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups including individuals from the LGBTQ+ community, new Americans, low-income and uninsured patients.

As of 2020, demographic trends within the healthcare workforce suggest the field is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. However, upon further examination, data reveal most healthcare workers of color are situated in entry-level positions. This includes home health aides, nursing assistants, and technicians. Such positions offer significantly lower salary ranges and few paid opportunities for career advancement. If health professionals of color are not represented in more attractive positions, including leadership roles, shortages will persist, as students of color desire the supportive mentorship approaches that connect learning with their communities.

The Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program seeks to fund regional programs that provide an innovative response to meet the healthcare workforce demand in New York by preparing and supporting healthcare students/trainees for successful completion of a healthcare educational or training. These programs should consider a recruitment and engagement strategy that accounts for those historically marginalized from the healthcare field and those from underrepresented communities when developing innovative projects.

D. Available Funding

It is anticipated that approximately $19.5 million in State funding will be available to support projects across ten New York State regions per year . The goal of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to fund at least two awards per region. Awards will be made on a competitive basis and will be for a five-year period. Award amounts will be a minimum of $250,000 and a maximum of $1,000,000 per year. Applicants are instructed to propose budgets between $250,000 and $1,000,000 per year.

The regions designated in this RFA are determined using Empire State Development designations. An Applicant's region will be determined by the location of the home campus, or main training location, of the students served by the healthcare training organization.

The table below illustrates the counties included in the regions.

https://www.chwsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NP-Diversity-Brief_2021.pdf

8 Wilbur, K., Snyder, C., Essary, A. C., Reddy, S., & Will, K. K. (2020). Developing Workforce Diversity in the Health Professions: A Social Justice Perspective. Health Professions Education, 6(2), 222–229. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hpe.2020.01.002

Region	Counties
Capital	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington
Central	Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
Finger Lakes	Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
Long Island	Nassau, Suffolk
Mid-Hudson	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
Mohawk Valley	Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Schoharie
New York City	Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond, Queens
North Country	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
Southern Tier	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Steuben, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins
Western	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara

Only one (1) application per organization will be accepted. If multiple applications are received, the first application received will be accepted and scored. Additional applications from the organization will be disqualified and not scored.

Funds under this solicitation are intended to supplement, enhance, and expand, but not replace existing resources and services provided to students or trainees. The Department of Health reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

II. Who May Apply

A. Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Applicant **must** meet **all** the following eligibility requirements stated below.

1. An Eligible Applicant must be prequalified in the New York State Statewide Financial System (SFS), if not exempt, on the date and time Applications in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) are due, as specified in the "Key Dates" set forth on the Cover Page.

2. Applicant must be a legally existing organization located in New York State, capable of entering a Master Grant Contract with the New York State Department of Health.

3. Applicant must be a not-for-profit organization that offers support to students, or trainees, pursuing careers in healthcare. Applicant must attest to the Not-for-Profit organization type on the Attachment 2: Checklist and Commitment form.

   Not-for-Profit organizations eligible to apply for funding may include but are not limited to:

   - Area health education centers
   - Community based organizations

- Community health associations
- Educational institutions
- General hospitals
- Healthcare facilities
- Healthcare worker unions
- Joint labor-management training funds and committees
- Long term care facilities
- Regional health planning organizations
- Regional health networks
- Rural health networks
- Trade associations
- Workforce Investment Organizations

4. Applicant must complete and submit an Attachment 2: Checklist and Commitment Form, signed by the Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer, which attests that the organization meets the conditions for the program, including the minimum eligibility requirements as outlined in the Request for Applications.

Failure to meet the above minimum requirements will result in the application being disqualified and not scored.

III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

Projects funded under this initiative will increase the healthcare workforce in the region by providing support services for those pursuing careers in healthcare. Applications submitted in response to this Request for Applications should demonstrate the applicant's ability to design, implement, and monitor a project to provide targeted and measurable support to healthcare students or trainees. Organizations should also demonstrate the capacity to offer interventions, or wrap around support services, to healthcare students or trainees.

A. Overview

The New York State Department of Health's Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management considers the composition of the next generation of healthcare professionals as vital to achieving health equity in New York State. Participant recruitment strategies should consider students or trainees historically marginalized from the healthcare field and students or trainees that reflect underserved communities in the region. Expanding recruitment efforts will increase the pool of future healthcare providers required to serve the region, and particularly, underserved communities within the region.

Projects should be designed by a healthcare training program, or healthcare academic program, to meet an identified regional, or local, health workforce need. Projects should be designed to identify and document the target healthcare student or trainee population. Projects should be designed to assess and identify barriers to training or degree completion and develop interventions, including wrap around support services, to eliminate those identified barriers for the targeted population. Projects should be designed to monitor and evaluate the impact of the proposed interventions or services on training or degree completion. Finally, projects should be designed to monitor and evaluate the overall project in meeting its objectives and goals.

B. Population Served

Applicants must be a not-for-profit organization that offers support to students, or trainees, pursuing careers in healthcare. The student or trainee target population should be informed by regional or local healthcare workforce needs. Ultimately, applicants should select target population(s) that serves the needs of regional healthcare facilities.

Applications may cover a wide spectrum of student/trainee levels and a wide spectrum of healthcare disciplines. "Healthcare student" is broadly defined as those pursuing an education that prepares them for a career in healthcare delivery. This includes a wide range of programs, from medicine and nursing to physical therapy, public health, and allied health programs. "Healthcare trainee" is broadly defined as those pursuing educational or training courses designed to prepare for a career in the healthcare field. Such programs can range from short-term certificate programs to lengthy degree programs.

Students and trainees may include individuals transitioning into healthcare careers, utilizing non-profit training organizations to enhance their skills or further their education. Trainees may include individuals currently serving in healthcare careers seeking upward mobility or advancement within the field.

Applications should clearly demonstrate that the selected population is informed by the healthcare workforce needs of the local or regional community, including the needs of regional healthcare facilities.

Applications should consider program recruitment of students or trainees from marginalized and/or underrepresented communities, including, but not limited to the following:

- Asylum seekers/New Americans
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
- Formerly incarcerated individuals
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer individuals
- Recipients of public assistance or financially disadvantaged individuals
- Rural individuals
- Veterans
- Other: as determined to meet regional or local community need.

Applications should identify and document the health workforce shortage needs of the local or regional community and describe how the project will improve the healthcare workforce shortage in the identified region. Applications should provide a rationale for the target population served by the project (i.e., type of student/trainee, discipline of focus). Applications should include a description of proposed outreach strategies and activities deemed effective for reaching the population of focus. Applications should describe how the project offers an innovative response to meet the healthcare workforce demand in the region and offer an innovative response to prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals through training and support.

C. Program Services

Assessment Activities

Applicants should describe the project design for assessing the needs of the target population of healthcare students or trainees proposed in the project. This discussion should include the unique

challenges and assets under consideration in designing and implementing the proposed project. Note: An asset-based approach focuses on students' strengths and talents, in contrast with the more common deficit-based approach which focuses on students' inadequacies. Applicants should provide a rationale for how the program design addresses the needs of students or trainees and draws on the assets of the population of focus.

The assessment of needs will vary by region, target population, and individual student or trainee. Therefore, assessment activities should incorporate a holistic approach. A holistic approach takes into consideration: financial, academic, emotional, social support, and other needs as determined by the population of focus. It is recommended that grantees utilize representatives of the target population directly in the assessment of needs, proposal of interventions, and later in the project implementation and evaluation.

Applicants should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of issues related to the barriers of pursuing - and successfully completing - a healthcare training or degree program. Applicants should demonstrate familiarity with the published literature on supporting students or trainees to reduce the system barriers encountered when pursuing careers in healthcare. Applicants should document the plan for continually monitoring and assessing students or trainees throughout the project period.

Interventions, Wrap Around Services

Based on the assessment design (described above), applicants should offer a project design for providing interventions, including wrap around support services, to healthcare students or trainees from the target population. The design should demonstrate how the proposed interventions, or services, will alleviate identified barriers to successful completion of a training or educational program. The design should include any gaps in services that will be eliminated due to the proposed intervention or service. It is recommended that grantees utilize representatives of the target population directly in the program design related to interventions.

Applicants should include culturally and linguistically relevant, age, gender and developmentally appropriate interventions and strategies in the design. Applicants may consider various types of interventions. Examples may include:

- Services directly related to academic, or career mobility, including but not limited to academic advising, tutoring; tuition, books, fees, supplies, lab fees and similar items; parking, transportation, and travel costs; other educational expenses such as the cost of research, conferences, presentations, publication; and such.

- Services indirectly related to academic, or career mobility, including, but not limited to personal support expenses, childcare, financial support for study time, preparation in English for speakers of other languages.

Life-skills Curriculum

Applicants should describe the project design for providing a life-skills curriculum. A key component of the Request for Applications centers on providing instruction, tools, or strategies that build or enhance the target population's skills for the classroom, the clinical setting, and home. Applicants

should provide culturally and linguistically relevant, age, gender, and developmentally appropriate curriculum to build or enhance skills related to managing work, family, relationships, and interrelated life-skills.

Personal growth models may include:

- Goal Setting: Setting, managing, and carrying out plans/goals.
- Focus: Tools for concentrating on what is important at any given time.
- Self-Control: Control how to respond to emotions and stressful situations.
- Self-Awareness: Noticing people and situations; working interdependently.
- Flexibility: Tools for adaptability in changing situations.

Additional examples of life-skills instruction may include, but are not limited to, wellness and stress management, time management and scheduling, financial literacy, and budgeting. Applicants may consider curriculum that connects educational content with career readiness and/or employability with instruction on conflict resolution, building emotional resilience, setting boundaries, and other necessary tools to foster communication skills. Applicants may consider utilizing an apprenticeship, counseling, or life coach model to enhance the life-skills curriculum.

Utilizing a holistic approach, curriculum should include supportive mechanisms appropriate and relevant to the target population. For example, individuals from marginalized and/or underserved communities historically experience greater discrimination impacting their access to, and interaction with, health and human services, and higher education. Programming intended to reduce system barriers should be considered. It is recommended that grantees utilize representatives of the target population directly in the program design related to the life-skills curriculum.

Administrative Structure

Applicants should describe the administrative structure required to support the proposed project in a timely manner. Project design should include a timeline that takes into consideration planning, curriculum development, participant recruitment and selection, and the necessity of adhering to an academic calendar. As stated, project design should include representatives of the population served in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project.

Grantees will be expected to implement the project within a three-month period from the date of contract execution. Grantees will be expected to have appropriately trained staff to carry out the proposed duties, including the following:

- Develop assessments, training, and other functions necessary for the successful implementation of the project.
- Implement, manage, and coordinate the project.
- Meet fiscal and programmatic contract requirements with the Department of Health.
- Monitor and evaluate the program.

Other Requirements

Applicants should describe the administrative structure required to evaluate the program and adhere to

Department of Health reporting requirements.

Grantees will be expected to fully collaborate with Department of Health during contracting, implementation, and program evaluation. Grantees will be expected to have appropriately trained staff to carry out the following proposed duties:

- Participate in Department of Health meetings.
- Comply with Department of Health reporting and vouchering requirements as outlined in the resulting contract.
- Provide relevant presentations on program design, implementation, and evaluation as requested.
- Participate in program evaluation activities. Assessment of the program, target population, and individual student/trainee will be an ongoing and iterative process. Activities may include:
    - Site visits, stakeholder focus groups, and other data collection requirements as outlined in the resulting contract.
    - The provision of quarterly outcome and expenditure reports, and annual reports in a timely manner.
    - The provision of supporting documentation of outcomes and expenditures and other data, as may be necessary to assess the success of the project, and monitor project expectations.
- Comply with funding requirements that collect participant level demographic and program outcome data, as well as data on individual recipient's funding of wrap around services data. Such information is collected quarterly using a specific in-take forms and uploading data into a specific departmental operating system. Staff support must be designated to comply with such reporting requirements, which will be outlined in the work plan expectations in the resulting contract.

An Applicant may subcontract components of the Work Plan to be performed by Applicant pursuant to the terms of its Application. If known, the Applicant is expected to state in their Application the specific components to be performed through subcontracts as well as the names of the subcontractors. Applicants may subcontract up to 25% of the components of the scope of work. The applicant must retain at least 75% of the scope of work within their agency. Grantees will need to name subcontractors prior to reimbursement. Applicants should note that the lead organization (that is, the successful Applicant, as Contractor) will have overall responsibility for all Contract activities, including those performed by subcontractors and will be the primary contact for the NYSDOH. All subcontractors and subcontracts will be required to be approved by the Department of Health.

If utilizing subcontractors, applicants must provide a Statement of Scope of Work along with a Letter of Collaboration and Discussion as Attachment 7: Subcontract Utilization Plan.

Letters of Collaboration should be specific to each proposed partnership in the application. The Scope of Work statement should describe the following:

- Who the partnering organization(s) is/are;
- Why the collaboration is a necessary component of the program;
- What the partnering organization(s) proposes to do (i.e., what the partner will contribute);
- When the collaborative activities will take place; and
- How collaboration will be assessed.

IV. Administrative Requirements

A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the New York State Department of Health (hereinafter referred to as NYSDOH, or the Department), Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management /Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development /Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation. The Department is responsible for the requirements specified herein and for the evaluation of all Applications. *See,* Section V.C. (Review and Award Process).

B. Question and Answer Phase

All substantive questions by Applicants with respect to any aspect of the RFA must be submitted in writing to **Carrie Roseamelia, PhD, NYSDOH, Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation, at the following email address: *HELP.Services.Grant@health.ny.gov***. This includes Minority and Woman Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Requirements questions and related forms. *See,* Section IV.K. (Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements). Questions of a technical nature related to formatting or other minor details related to preparation of an Application may also be addressed in writing to the email address noted above. Questions are of a technical nature if they are limited to how to prepare your Application (e.g., formatting) rather than relating to the substance of the Application.

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

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

- On-Demand Statewide Financial System Training Videos: On-demand training focused on using the new grants management features in SFS is available by logging in to the SFS Vendor Portal and clicking the SFS Coach icon available on the homepage. Additional questions? Contact the SFS Help Desk listed below:

- Statewide Financial System Technical Support Help Desk
  Phone: 1-877-737-4185 toll-free / 518-457-7737
  Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 8pm
  Email: helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov

- Grants Management Team Email: grantsmanagement@its.ny.gov
  Phone: 518-474-5595
  Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 4pm
  (Application Completion, Policy, Prequalification and Registration questions)

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

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

Questions and answers, as well as any updates, addendums to, and/or other modifications of this RFA, will be posted on these websites. All such questions and answers, updates, addendums to, and other modifications to this RFA will be posted by the date identified on the Cover Page of this RFA under "Key Dates".

All Questions must be received by the date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA, under "Key Dates", opposite the heading "Questions Due".

All questions submitted by email should state the RFA Title and Number set forth on the Cover Page (RFA#20529, Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program) in the subject line of the email.

C. Letter of Interest

Letter of Interest is not requested for this project.

D. Applicant Conference

An Applicant Conference will not be held for this project.

E. How to file an Application

Applications must be submitted online via the Statewide Financial System by the date and time posted on the Cover Page of this RFA under the heading "Key Dates".

Reference materials and videos are available for Grantees applying to funding opportunities on the NYS Statewide Financial System. Please visit the Statewide Financial System website at the following web address: SFS Public Portal Homepage and click the "Search for Grant Opportunities" tile. There is also a more detailed "Statewide Financial System: Vendor User Guide" available in the documents section under Training & Guidance; For Grant Applicants located in SFS Coach. Training webinars are also provided by the Grants Management Team. Dates and times for webinar instruction can be located at the following web address: Live Webinars | Grants Management (ny.gov)

To submit an Application an Applicant must:

1. Log into the Statewide Financial System Vendor Portal .
2. Click the Grant Management Tile. Next, Click the Bid Event Search tile.
3. Enter the applicable search criteria in the Search Criteria Fields. Locate an opportunity; search by Funding Agency (DOH01) or enter the Grant Opportunity name into the Search by Grant Opportunity field: **Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program.** You can also filter search by Status such as "available" which filters to include only the bid events that are published and open for potential bid response.
4. Click on "Search" button to initiate the search.
5. Click on Event ID link to initiate a bid response.
6. Please review the Grantee User Manual found in SFS Coach for additional steps on how to respond to various types of Bid Events.

Once the Application is complete, a prospective Applicant is **strongly encouraged** to submit their Application at least **48 hours prior to the** Application's due date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA. This will allow sufficient opportunity for the Applicant to obtain assistance and take corrective action should there be a technical issue with the submission process. **Failure to leave adequate time to address issues identified during this process may jeopardize an Applicant's ability to submit their Application.** Both NYSDOH, SFS, and Grants Management staff are available to answer an Applicant's technical questions and provide technical assistance prior to the Application due date and time. Contact information for the Grants Management Staff and SFS is available under Section IV.B. (Question and Answer Phase) of this RFA.

PLEASE NOTE: Although NYSDOH and the Grants Management staff will do their best to address concerns that are identified less than 48 hours prior to the due date and time for the submission of an Application, there is no guarantee that they will be resolved in time for the Application to be submitted on time and, therefore, considered for funding.

During the Application process, please pay particular attention to the following:

- Not-for-profit Applicants must be prequalified, if not exempt, on the date and time Applications in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) are due as specified in the "Key Dates" set forth on the Cover Page of this RFA. Be sure to maintain prequalification status between funding opportunities. **NOTE:** Three of a not-for-profit's essential financial documents - the IRS990, its Financial Statement, and its Charities Bureau filing - expire on an annual basis. If these documents are allowed to expire, the not-for-profit's prequalification status expires as well, and it will not be eligible for State grant funding until its documentation is updated and approved, and prequalified status is reinstated.
- Only individuals with the role of "Bid Response Submitter" can submit an Application on behalf of an Applicant.
- Prior to submission, the Statewide Financial System will automatically initiate a global error checking process to protect against an incomplete Application. An Applicant may need to attend to certain parts of the Application prior to being able to submit the Application successfully. An Applicant must be sure to allow time after pressing the submit button to clean up any global errors that may arise. (Vendor User Guide).
- Applicants should use numbers, letters, and underscores when naming their uploaded files. There cannot be any special characters in the uploaded file name. Also, be aware of the

restriction on file size (20 MB) when uploading documents. Applicants should ensure that any attachments uploaded with their application are not "protected" or "pass-worded" documents.

The Applicant's Delegated Administrator is able to assign, modify, remove roles for the applicant in SFS. Please see SFS Vendor Portal Access Reference Guide, SFS_Vendor_Portal_Access_Reference_Guide.pdf (ny.gov), for additional information on roles. **Bid Response Initiator** and **Bid Response Submitter** are the **necessary roles for applying to a Bid Event in SFS**. If you are a not-for-profit you will also need Prequalification Processor for Prequalification purposes.

PLEASE NOTE: Waiting until the last several days to complete your Application online can be dangerous, as you may have technical questions. Beginning the process of applying as soon as possible will produce the best results.

Applications will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, paper copy or hand delivery.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

F. Department of Health's Reserved Rights

The Department of Health reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all Applications received in response to this RFA.
2. Withdraw the RFA at any time, at the Department's sole discretion.
3. Make an award under the RFA in whole or in part.
4. Disqualify any Applicant whose conduct and/or Application fails to conform to the requirements of the RFA.
5. Seek clarifications and revisions of Applications, in the Department's sole discretion.
6. Use Application information obtained through site visits, management interviews, and the State's investigation of an Applicant's qualifications, experience, ability, or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the Applicant in response to the Department's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFA.
7. Prior to Application opening, amend the RFA specifications to correct errors or oversights, or to supply additional information, as it becomes available.
8. Prior to Application opening, direct Applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFA amendments.
9. Change any of the scheduled dates.
10. Waive any requirements that are not material.

11. Award more than one contract resulting from this RFA.

12. Negotiate with successful Applicants within the scope of the RFA in the best interests of the State.

13. Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible Applicant, should the Department be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected Applicant.

14. Utilize any and all ideas submitted with the Applications received, at the Department's sole discretion.

15. Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, every offer in an Applicant's Application is firm and not revocable for a period of 60 days from the Application opening.

16. Waive or modify minor irregularities in Applications received after prior notification to the Applicant.

17. Require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an Applicant's Application and/or to determine an Applicant's compliance with the requirements of the RFA.

18. Eliminate any term of this RFA that can be complied with by none of the Applicants.

19. Award grants based on geographic or regional considerations to serve the best interests of the State.

G. Term of Contract

Any Contract resulting from this RFA will be effective only upon approval by the New York State Office of the Comptroller.

It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period: five-year contracts January 1, 2026-December 31, 2031.

Continued funding throughout this five-year period is contingent upon availability of funding and state budget appropriations and the Grantee's continued satisfactory performance of its obligations under the Contract. NYSDOH also reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

A sample New York State Master Contract for Grants can be found at https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/12/january-2024-contract-for-grants.pdf

H. Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardees

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

grant provided for under the Grantee's Contract.

2. The Grantee will be required to submit invoices and required reports of expenditures based upon the terms for payment set forth in Attachment A-1 to its Grant Contract to the State's designated payment office (below) or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System:

Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Room #1696
Albany, NY 12237

A Grantee must provide complete and accurate billing invoices in order to receive payment of the grant funding provided for under the terms of its Grant Contract. Invoices submitted to the Department must contain all information and supporting documentation required by the Contract, the Department, and the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). Payment for invoices submitted by the Grantee shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner of Health, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with OSC's procedures and practices to authorize electronic payments. Authorization forms are available at OSC's website at: http://www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm, by email at: epayments@osc.state.ny.us or by telephone at 855-233-8363. Each Grantee acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any claims for reimbursement submitted under its Grant Contract if it does not comply with OSC's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

Payment of claims for reimbursement by the State (Department) shall be made in accordance with Article XI-A of the New York State Finance Law. Payment terms will be: Grantee will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred as allowed in the Contract Budget and Work plan.

3. The Grantee will be required to submit the following reports to the Department of Health at the address above or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System: Quarterly outcome and expenditure reports along with an annual report will be required. Provision of supporting documentation of outcomes and expenditures and other data, as may be necessary to assess the success of the project, and monitor project expectations, is required. Program evaluation may include Department of Health site visits, focus groups with stakeholders, and other data collection requirements.

All payment and reporting requirements will be detailed in "Attachment D: Payment and Reporting", of the final STATE OF NEW YORK MASTER CONTRACT FOR GRANTS.

I. Procurement Requirements

1. General Requirements

The Grantee may procure various goods and services in connection with the grant-funded project ranging from routinely purchased goods or services to those that involve substantive programmatic

work. The procurement of such goods or services, however, must be conducted in an equitable and competitive manner to promote equal treatment, efficiency, and economy in grant-funded activities.

Any Grantee that is a State entity (i.e., a State agency or political subdivision of the State) must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its general funds. All other Grantees (private companies, not-for-profit-organizations, etc.) must have a sufficient and documented procurement process that maintains records to detail the history of procurements associated with any awarded grant project. These records shall include, but are not limited to, rationale for the method of procurement (e.g., micro-purchase, small purchases, sealed bids, request for proposals, noncompetitive/sole source), the selection of a contract type, contractor selection and/or rejection, and the basis of a contract price.

The Grantee's documented procurement process must conform with any applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations. As part of the required procurement procedures, a Grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflict of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations by officers, employees, or agents of the Grantee. Such standards shall provide, at a minimum, that no employee, officer, or agent of the Grantee will participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by grant funds if a conflict of interest, real or actual, is involved. Such conflicts may arise when:

- The employee, officer, or agent, or
- Any member of such individual's immediate family, or
- Such individual's partner, or
- Any organization which employs, or is about to employ the selected contractor, has a financial or other interest in or receives or stands to receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm being considered for a contract.

The standards of conduct shall also cover organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest arise where an entity is or appears to be unable to conduct an impartial procurement action due to relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization.

2. Bid Protest Procedures

Any contractor, subcontractor, or aggrieved party has the right to protest actions before or after the award of a contract utilizing grant funds. The Grantee alone will be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgement, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurement contract solicitations and awards.

Grantees shall have written protest procedures, which may be analogous to those set forth in Part 24 of Title 2 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, in order for effective due process to be achieved. A Grantee's specific protest procedures shall be outlined in all bid requests, request for proposals, request for applications, etc. issued by or on behalf of the Grantee concerning any grant-funded projects. In summary, Grantees are responsible for handling all contract activity protests. Except in matters of direct State or possibly Federal concern (in cases involving federally funded grants), the Department of Health will not substitute its judgement for that of the Grantee.

3. Procurement Contract Language

Any contract concerning a grant-funded project must be a written agreement between the Grantee and the third party providing specific goods and/or services. Whether with a contractor, subcontractor, consultant or vendor, the contract must as appropriate state the activities to be performed; the time schedule; the policies and requirements that apply to the contractor, subcontractor consultant or vendor, including the above procurement requirements; and any other terms and conditions of the grant and the master grant contract.

J. Assurances of No Conflicts of Interest and/or Other Detrimental Effects

The Grantee as well as any subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors or consultants engaged by the Grantee to provide goods or services in connection with the grant-funded project shall attest that their performance of any contracted services does not and will not create a conflict of interest with nor position the Grantee to breach any other contract it currently has in force with the State of New York.

The Grantee as well as any subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors or consultants engaged by the Grantee to provide goods or services in connection with the grant-funded project shall disclose any existing or contemplated relationship with any other person or entity, including relationships with any member, shareholder of 5% or more, parent, subsidiary, or affiliate organization, which would constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, relating to other clients/customers/agents of the Grantee, subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or former officers and employees of the State and its affiliates, in connection with the providing of goods or rendering of services related to the grant-funded project. The Grantee shall have procedures in place for alerting the State of any such actual or potential conflicts as well as procedures to resolve the same.

K. Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, the Department recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of New York State-certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs) and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of NYSDOH contracts.

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

Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

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

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

The goal on the Eligible Expenditures portion of a Grant Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will be 15% for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises ("MBE") participation and 15% for Women-Owned Business Enterprises ("WBE") participation (based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs and outreach efforts to certified M/WBE firms). A Grantee awarded a Grant Contract pursuant to this RFA must document good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by M/WBEs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Grant Contract and Grantee will agree under the terms of its Grant Contract that NYSDOH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required M/WBE documentation required by the Department or the OSC. For guidance on how NYSDOH 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 on this page under "NYS Directory of Certified Firms" and accessed by clicking on the link entitled "Search the Directory". Engaging with firms found in the directory with like product(s) and/or service(s) is strongly encouraged, and all communication efforts and responses should be well documented by a Grantee to evidence its good faith efforts to encourage M/WBE participation in the performance of its obligations under its Grant Contract.

By submitting an Application, each Applicant and potential Grantee agrees to complete an M/WBE Utilization plan as directed in Attachment 6 of this RFA. NYSDOH will review the M/WBE Utilization Plan submitted be each Grantee. If a Grantee's M/WBE Utilization Plan is not accepted, NYSDOH may issue a Notice of Deficiency. If a Notice of Deficiency is issued, Grantee agrees that it shall respond to the Notice of Deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt. NYSDOH may disqualify a Grantee as being **non-responsive** under the following circumstances:

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

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

L. Vendor Identification Number

Effective January 1, 2012, in order to do business with New York State, you must have a vendor

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

If already enrolled in the Vendor File, the Applicant should include the Vendor Identification number in your organization information. If not enrolled, to request assignment of a Vendor Identification number, an Applicant should please submit a New York State Office of the State Comptroller Substitute Form W-9, which can be found on-line at: https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/vendors/2017-11/vendor-form-ac3237s-fe.pdf

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

M. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

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

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

Applicants opting to complete online should complete and upload the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (Attachment 5) of the RFA. The Attestation is located under the SFS Attachments Section and once completed should be uploaded to the applicable PSQ/Bid Factor.

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

N. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits

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

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated July 16, 2014, and revised on December 9, 2023, the new Prequalification Policy will be effective as of January 16, 2024. The updated policy requires that not-for-profit organizations register and prequalify in the SFS using the

updated Prequalification Application. The updated Prequalification Application and New York State Prequalification Manual for Grantees can be found on the Grants Management website at: https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/get-prequalified.

An Application cannot be submitted/received from a not-for-profit Applicant that (a) has not Registered in the NYS Statewide Financial System or (b) has not Prequalified in the Statewide Financial System by the Application's due date specified on the Cover Page of this RFA.

Below is a summary of the steps that must be completed to meet registration and prequalification requirements. The Vendor User Manual within the Statewide Financial System Website details the requirements and job aid walks users through the process.

1) Register for the Statewide Financial System

- Applicants will first need to create an account in SFS. Applicants that need to create an account should do so at the following link: https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-vendors/portal/enroll-vendor-self-service-portal. Any questions related to SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).

If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please email helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov. If you do not know your Password, please click the "I Forgot My Password" link from the main log-in page and follow the prompts.

2) Complete your Prequalification Application

- Log in to the Statewide Financial System.

- Applicants will first need to create an account in SFS. Applicants that need to create an account should do so at the following link: https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-vendors/portal/enroll-vendor-self-service-portal. Any questions related to SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).

- Instructions for SFS Prequalification can be found on Page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual entitled, "! Grantee Processing in SFS". This user manual is accessible to organizations with an SFS account under the SFS Coach Tile/Button in the SFS Vendor Portal. Select "Handbook: User Manual with Screenshots" from the Training Type drop down to locate the manual. If you have any problems accessing the manual please contact HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov. Please see the section entitled, "Enter and Submit a Prequalification Application", located on page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual, for complete instructions on how to complete and submit an SFS Prequalification in the NYS Statewide Financial System.

- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your primary New York State agency representative (vendor.responsibility@health.ny.gov) or to the Grants Management Team at grantsmanagement@its.ny.gov.

3) Add a signatory or "Grant Contract Approver" to your account

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

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

O. General Specifications

1. By submitting the "Application Form" each Applicant attests to its express authority to sign on behalf of the Applicant.

2. Grantees will possess, at no cost to the State, all qualifications, licenses and permits to engage in the required business as may be required within the jurisdiction where the work specified is to be performed. Workers to be employed in the performance of any Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will possess the qualifications, training, licenses, and permits as may be required within such jurisdiction.

3. Submission of an Application indicates the Applicant's acceptance of all terms and conditions contained in this RFA, including the terms and conditions of the Master Contract for Grants. Any exceptions the Applicant would like considered by the Department relating to the terms and conditions of this RFA and/or Master Contract for Grants must have been raised during the Question and Answer Phase of this RFA (See, Section IV.B.).

4. An Applicant may be disqualified from receiving an award if such Applicant or any subsidiary, affiliate, partner, officer, agent, or principal thereof, or anyone in its employ, has previously failed to perform satisfactorily in connection with public bidding or contracts, in the State of New York or otherwise.

5. Provisions Upon Default

a. If an Applicant is awarded a grant pursuant to this RFA, the services to be performed by the successful Applicant pursuant to the terms of the Grant Contract entered into with the Department shall be at all times subject to the direction and control of the Department as to all matters arising in connection with or relating to the Contract resulting from this RFA.

b. In the event that the Grantee, through any cause, fails to perform any of the terms, covenants, or promises of any Contract resulting from this RFA, the Department acting for and on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate the Contract by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Grantee.

c. If, in the judgement of the Department, the Grantee acts in such a way which is likely to or does impair or prejudice the interests of the State, the Department acting on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate any Contract resulting from this RFA by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Grantee. In such case the Grantee shall receive equitable compensation for such services as shall, in the judgement of the State Comptroller, have been satisfactorily performed by the Grantee up to the date of the termination of the Contract, which such compensation shall not exceed the total cost incurred for the work which the Grantee was engaged in at the time of such termination, subject to audit by the State Comptroller.

V. Completing the Application

A. Application Format/Content

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

Please respond to each of the sections described below when completing the Statewide Financial System online Application. Your responses comprise your Application. Please respond to all items within each section. When responding to the statements and questions, be mindful that Application reviewers may not be familiar with your agency and its services. Your answers should be specific, succinct, and responsive to the statements and questions as outlined. Please be aware that the value assigned to each section described below indicates the relative weight that will be given to each section of your Application when scoring your Application.

It is each Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials included in its Application have been properly prepared and submitted. Applications must be submitted via the Statewide Financial System by the Application deadline date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA.

IMPORTANT: Any material added to a Bid Factor "Add Comments" box in SFS will not be reviewed as part of a submitted application. Please use the "Response" box for narrative responses unless otherwise instructed within this RFA. **Please note there is a 2,000-character limit for each response**.

Please provide any requested attachments as specified within this RFA. Applicants are instructed to upload one (1) attachment in response to any request for an attachment. If more than one (1) version of an attachment is uploaded, the final version uploaded will be the version considered for review.

See the Event Comments and Attachments link at the bottom of the Bid Event page in SFS for required attachments to be completed in response to corresponding bid factor questions, as well as informational only attachments.

Letter of Commitment

By signing off on Attachment 2: Checklist and Commitment Form, the Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer attests that the organization meets the conditions for the program, including the eligibility requirements as outlined in Section II. Who May Apply of this Request for Applications.

Program Specific Questions (PSQ)/Bid Factors

1. Mission Fit **Maximum Score: 20 Points**

1.A1) Identify and document the healthcare worker shortage in the regional or local community.

1.A2) Illustrate how the project will improve the identified healthcare shortage.

1.A3) Describe how the program meets the workforce needs of regional facilities.

1.B1) Identify the target population including their training level and targeted healthcare discipline.

1.B2) Describe how the target population reflects the regional or local community including the underserved communities in the region.

1.B3) Identify and describe the recruitment and engagement strategy for target population.

1.B4) Offer a rationale for why the outreach strategies are effective for reaching the identified target population.

1.B5) Identify if the target population is any of the following marginalized and/or underrepresented communities: Asylum seekers/New Americans; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; Formerly incarcerated individuals; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer individuals; Recipients of public assistance or financially disadvantaged individuals; Rural individuals; Veterans; or Other. If "Other" then please identify the community.

1.C.1 Describe how the project offers an innovative response to meet the demand of the healthcare workforce.

1.C.2 Describe how the project offers an innovative response to prepare students/trainees for success.

2. Project Design **Maximum Score: 40 Points**

2.A1) Describe the project design to assess the target population's barriers to success and need for interventions.

2.A2) Describe how the project design incorporates unique challenges and assets.

2.A3) Describe how the project design identifies and offers a holistic approach to be utilized in the assessment.

2.A4) Describe how students/trainees will be monitored throughout the project period.

2.A5) Describe how the project will utilize target population representatives in the assessment process.

2.A6) Demonstrate knowledge/understanding of barriers with the use of scholarly literature, evidence-based, experiences, etc. for assessment.

2.B1) Describe the project design to provide interventions for the target population.

2.B2) Describe how the project design includes the organization's capabilities of offering culturally and linguistically relevant, age, gender, and developmentally appropriate interventions and strategies to the target population.

2.B3) Describe how the project will determine if interventions are successful in alleviating the barriers to graduation or program completion.

2.B4) Include the proposed direct and/or indirect interventions offered by the organization to support students/trainees.

2.B5) Offer a clear description of the utilization of target population representatives for developing interventions.

2.C1) Describe the organization's capabilities of offering culturally and linguistically relevant, age, gender, and developmentally appropriate curriculum to the target population that focuses on life-skills.

2.C2) Describe how instruction will build or enhance the target population's personal growth, management of work, family, and relationships.

2.C3) Describe how your organization connects educational content with career readiness and/or employability; and/or foster quality communication.

2.C4) Describe the model, approach, or delivery of the curriculum.

2.C5) Offer a clear description of the utilization of target population representatives for developing life skills curriculum.

3. Administrative Capacity **Maximum Score: 10 Points**

3.A1) Describe the organization's administrative capacity in terms of the staffing and resource structure to implement the project. Capacity should include roles, responsibilities, and resources to develop assessment, training and other tools and functions necessary for implementation.

3.A2) Describe the organization's administrative capacity in terms of staffing and resource structure, including roles, responsibilities, and resources to manage and coordinate project objectives including meeting fiscal and contract requirements.

3.A3) Describe the organization's administrative capacity in terms of staffing and resource structure, including roles, responsibilities, and resources to monitor progress and evaluate the project.

3.B1) Describe the organization's capacity to administer the proposed project in a timely manner including timeline for planning, curriculum development, participant recruitment and selection, implementation, evaluation, and reporting responsibilities as required by the Department of Health.

4. Work Plan **Maximum Score: 10 Points**

4.A) Applicants are instructed to define and enter their Work Plan Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures in Attachment 4: Work Plan as found in the "Attachments Section" of the Statewide Financial System (SFS) online Application/Bid Event. Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures proposed by the applicant in the Work Plan should align with the program objectives and activities outlined in this Request for Applications. Attachment 4 should be completed in accordance with the instructions below and must be uploaded in response to this bid factor 4a.

Instructions:

For the "Project Summary" box in the **SFS Work Plan Section**, applicants are instructed to insert the Project Summary as completed on their Attachment 4: Work Plan.

When completing Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures on Attachment 4: Work Plan, applicants are instructed to:

- Identify and document the project's anticipated outcomes utilizing Objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable (SMARTie).
- Identify and document the project's anticipated Tasks or activities associated with each objective.
- Identify and document the project's anticipated Performance Measures for each objective and its corresponding tasks. Performance measures should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet the expected outcomes as identified in the work plan.

For Goal #1, Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures have been established by NYSDOH. Applicants may **not** enter additional tasks or performance measures for Goal #1 in the Attachment 4: Work Plan.

For all other Goals, applicants are instructed to enter Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures of their own choosing on the Attachment 4: Work Plan. For these goals, applicants may enter up to three (3) Tasks for each Objective. At least one (1) Task must be entered; if there is no second or third Task, then enter "N/A" in the corresponding "Task" box of Attachment 4. For these goals, at least one (1) Performance Measure must be entered for each of the corresponding Task; if there is no corresponding second or third Performance Measure, then enter "N/A" in the corresponding "Performance Measure" box of Attachment 4.

When entering Tasks into the Attachment 4: Work Plan, each Task must have a task description of no more than 2,000 characters. In addition, each Task must have a corresponding Performance Measure narrative of no more than 2,000 characters.

The Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures proposed by the applicant will be reviewed and scored for competitiveness, reasonableness, and responsiveness to the intent of the Request for Application.

Applicants will **not** enter any Objectives, Tasks, or Performance Measures into the **SFS Work Plan Section** at the time of application but will complete and upload Attachment 4 to submit this information in response to Bid Factor Question 4a.

If awarded a contract, Grantees will be held to the Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures as listed in the Attachment 4: Work Plan and will be instructed **at that time** to insert Work Plan Objectives and corresponding Tasks and Performance Measures in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) Work Plan.

5. Budget **Maximum Score: 20 Points**

Complete and submit a budget following these instructions:

5.A) Applicants are instructed to prepare an annual budget between $250,000 and $1,000,000 per year as noted in Section I.D. of this RFA. The budget for year one (January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026) must be entered into the Statewide Financial System (SFS). Refer to **Attachment 3: SFS Expenditure Budget Instructions**. The budget for year one will be scored. All budget lines should be calculated as whole dollar amounts. All costs should be related to the proposed activities, as described in the application narrative and work plan, and should be justified in detail. All costs should be reasonable and cost-effective. Contracts established resulting from the Request for Application will be cost reimbursable. Once the budget in SFS is completed, Applicants are required to also enter the total grant funds being requested in the Unit Bid Price field at the bottom of the page. The total grant funds and Unit Bid Price must match in order for the application to submit successfully.

Applicants are instructed to provide a brief budget line narrative justification for each budget line item including annual spending projections. Justification for each cost should be submitted in narrative form.

For staff listed in the Personal services (Salary and Fringe) section of the budget, include a breakdown of the total salary needs for staff. Applicants are instructed to include a justification for each of the requested Full Time Equivalency (FTE) and for the fringe benefits requested. Indicate how the positions relate to program implementation. Indicate whether each position is to be hired (TBH) or existing staff. For all existing staff, the budget justification must delineate how the percentage of time devoted to this initiative has been determined. Applicant should illustrate the percentage of funding allocated to each Personal Services line.

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

Funding may be requested under the administrative cost line to support a portion of the organization's structure to the extent that it allows a funded applicant to implement program activities. This includes funding for administrative and fiscal staff, space, supplies, telephone, and other expenses indirectly associated with program implementation and service delivery. Indirect administrative costs may not exceed 10% of the total direct costs.

All costs must be related to the provision of Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program, as well as be consistent with the scope of services, reasonable and cost effective. Expenditures will not be allowed for the purchase of major pieces of depreciable equipment, although limited computer/printing equipment may be considered.

THIS FUNDING MAY ONLY BE USED TO EXPAND EXISTING ACTIVITIES OR CREATE NEW ACTIVITIES PURSUANT TO THIS RFA. THESE FUNDS MAY NOT BE USED TO REPLACE FUNDS FOR CURRENTLY EXISTING STAFF ACTIVITIES.

Ineligible items are those items determined by New York State Department of Health personnel to be inadequately justified relative to the proposed work plan, or not fundable under existing state guidance. Expenditures will not be allowed for the purchase of major pieces of depreciable equipment or for remodeling or modification of structure. Any ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials to be included in the Application have been properly prepared and submitted. Applications must be submitted via the Statewide Financial System (SFS) by the date and time posted on the cover of this Request for Application. The Maximum Score value assigned to each section is an indication of the relative weight that will be given when scoring applications.

B. Freedom of Information Law

All Applications may be disclosed or used by NYSDOH to the extent permitted by law. NYSDOH may disclose an Application to any person for the purpose of assisting in evaluating the Application or for any other lawful purpose. All Applications will become State agency records, and will be available to the public in accordance with the New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). **Any portion of an Application that an Applicant believes constitutes proprietary information entitled to confidential handling, as an exception to the general rule regarding the availability to the public of State agency records under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Law, must be clearly and specifically designated in the Application.** If NYSDOH agrees with the Applicant's claim regarding the proprietary nature of any portion of an Application, the designated portion of the Application will be withheld from public disclosure. Blanket assertions of proprietary material will not be accepted, and failure to specifically designate proprietary material may be deemed a waiver of any right to confidential handling of such material.

C. Review & Award Process

An Application which meets ALL of the guidelines set forth above will be reviewed and evaluated competitively by the NYSDOH Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management /Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development /Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation. An Application that does not meet the minimum criteria (PASS/FAIL) will not be evaluated. An Application that does not provide all required information will be omitted from consideration.

Only Applications that meet the minimum criteria (PASS/FAIL) and contain all required information will be scored.

Awards will be based on funding availability. The maximum amount of funding available is $19.5 million annually. It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period: five-year contracts January 1, 2026-December 31, 2031.

Proposed budgets must be between $250,000 and $1,000,000 annually. As stated, the goal of the program is to have at least two awards per region. To accomplish this goal, the two highest, passing, scored applications per region will be awarded.

In the unlikely scenario that the total requested dollar amount for all awards across the ten (10) regions exceeds the maximum available funding of $19.5 million per year, funding will be allocated across the ten (10) regions based on score with the lowest scoring application(s) receiving less funding than requested. For example, if each of the ten (10) regions has two (2) applications each, all requesting $1 million in funding annually, then the total amount of requested funding ($20 million) would exceed the available funding by $500,000. 19 of the 20 awardees would receive their requested amount of $1 million in annual funding, however the awardee with the lowest, passing score would only receive $500,000 in annual funding due to the cap.
Based on funding availability, after the initial awards per region are allocated (up to two awards per region), additional awards may be made with the remaining funding; these additional awards will be determined based on score without consideration of region. Applicant(s) with the next highest score(s) across all regions will be awarded until funding is exhausted.

Applications must receive a passing score of 75 to be considered for funding. Applications will be evaluated on a 100-point scale as follows.

Section	**Points**
Mission Fit	20 points
Project Design	40 points
Administrative Capacity	10 points
Work Plan	10 points
Budget	20 points

In the event of a tie score within a region, the application with the highest score in Section 2: Project Design will receive the award, followed by the highest score in Section 1: Mission Fit, if needed for an additional tie breaker.

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

Applications failing to provide all response requirements or failing to follow the prescribed format may be removed from consideration.

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

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

Once awards have been made pursuant to the terms of this RFA, an Applicant may request a debriefing of their own Application (whether their Application was funded or not funded). The debriefing will be limited only to the strengths and weaknesses of the Application submitted by the Applicant requesting a debriefing and will not include any discussion of ANY THER Applications. Requests for a debriefing must be received by the Department of Health's Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation Program no later than fifteen (15) Calendar days from date of the award or non-award announcement to the Applicant requesting a debriefing.

To request a debriefing, please send an email to HELP.Services.Grant@health.ny.gov. In the subject line, please write: Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program.

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

VI. Attachments

- Please note that ALL Attachments to this RFA are accessed under the **"Attachments Section**" of the Statewide Financial System online Application/Bid Event and are not included in the RFA document. In order to access the online Application/Bid Event and other required documents such as the Attachments, a prospective Applicant must be registered and logged into the NYS Statewide Financial System. Attachments that are requested to be uploaded as part of an Application/Bid Event response will be requested in individual corresponding Bid Factors (See Section V.A., "Program Specific Questions(PSQ)/Bid Factors").
- **ALL applicants are instructed to verify each required attachment that has been uploaded to the application.** To check attachments, Applicants are instructed to click "View" in the SFS application for each uploaded attachment to ensure that the attachment and all of its applicable information/data is viewable in its final format.
- **PDF Attachments – due to system constraints, PDF attachments cannot be uploaded with**

annotations, editable fields, or JAVA/active controls. Please submit PDFs that are read-only.

Attachment 1: Application Cover Page
Attachment 2: Checklist and Commitment Form
Attachment 3: SFS Expenditure Budget Instructions
Attachment 4: Work Plan
Attachment 5: Vendor Responsibility Attestation
Attachment 6: Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms
Attachment 7: Subcontract Utilization Plan