

RFA # 1602290912
NYS Grants Gateway # DOH01-FELLOW2-2016

**New York State Department of Health
and the
New York State Spinal Cord Injury Research Board
Request for Applications**

Individual Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships
in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 2)

RELEASE DATE: June 23, 2016

LETTER OF INTENT DUE (Strongly encouraged): July 5, 2016

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DUE (OPTIONAL): July 5, 2016

APPLICANT CONFERENCE REGISTRATION DUE: July 15, 2016

APPLICANT CONFERENCE: July 18, 2016 at 10:30 AM EST
By telephone conference call at:
1-844-633-8697 or 1-866-776-3553
Meeting ID # 641 746 031

QUESTIONS DUE: July 20, 2016

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND UPDATES POSTED: July 22, 2016

APPLICATIONS DUE: August 5, 2016 by 4:00 PM EST

DOH CONTACT NAME AND ADDRESS:

Charles Burns
Extramural Grants Administration
New York State Department of Health
Wadsworth Center
Empire State Plaza, Room C345
PO Box 509, Albany, NY 12201-0509
(518) 474-7002 (phone)
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Staff will be available at the phone number and email address above to answer questions about the submission of on-line applications in response to the RFA during regular business hours and up to 6PM on the application due date.

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I. Introduction

A. Background

Approximately 1,000 New York residents suffer a traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI) each year, joining the estimated 6 million people in the United States who are living with paralysis and other effects of SCI. The personal and economic costs to these persons, their families and to society are immense. Since 1998, the New York State Spinal Cord Injury Research Board (SCIRB) has been advising the New York State Department of Health's Spinal Cord Injury Research Program (Program) regarding research focused on cures for SCI and SCI-induced paralysis.

The SCIRB's mission and goal is to:

1. Seek major advances toward a cure and not simply incremental research gains or incremental improvements for SCI patients
2. Support research that tests novel hypotheses and/or advances innovative research approaches that could move the field of SCI research significantly toward discovering a cure for SCI

To achieve this mission, the Program offers competitive research awards to support the New York State scientists and their collaborators from a variety of biomedical disciplines in initiating and pursuing such efforts including methods for reversing paralysis or restoring function during the chronic phases of injury, or for minimizing or preventing damage occurring during acute phases of injury. Information about the Program and the SCIRB can be found at:

<http://www.wadsworth.org/extramural/spinalcord>

B. Purpose of the Funds

The SCIRB wishes to stimulate SCI research and to accelerate the pace with which basic (preclinical) findings are translated into clinical benefits for spinal cord-injured persons. In addition, SCIRB wishes to fill fundamental gaps in knowledge that are barriers to scientific advances in SCI research.

This Request for Applications (RFA) provides funding for individual predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships (similar to NIH F31 and F32 awards, respectively) that will enable New York State to attract and retain the most promising and exceptionally-talented predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows. The intent of this initiative is to support the continued training of researchers with extraordinary potential for making significant contributions to the fields of SCI research.

C. Available Funds

Projects will be supported by State funds. Approximately \$1.5M will be available throughout the length of the contract for this RFA to fund approximately 6 training (pre- or post- doctoral) awards. The amount of funds awarded will be contingent upon the quality of applications submitted. In determining final awards, the New York State Department of Health (Department) reserves the right to allocate funds between the two funding mechanisms offered within this RFA as it deems appropriate.

Eligible organizations are invited to submit applications for the following funding mechanisms:

1. Predoctoral fellowships will be a three year award with total annual direct costs of up to \$45,200 per year plus Facilities and Administrative Costs.

2. Postdoctoral fellowships will be a three year award with total annual direct costs of up to \$77,350 per year plus Facilities and Administrative Costs.

II. Who May Apply

The applicant must be a not-for-profit or governmental organization in New York State. In addition, applicant organizations for predoctoral fellowships must be degree-granting institutions. Awarded organizations will be expected to monitor the use of funds, maintain individual accounts and fulfill other fiscal management criteria. Subcontracting and collaborating organizations may include public, not-for-profit and for-profit entities within or outside of New York State. There are 3 components in an application:

1. The Applicant not-for-profit or governmental organization
2. The Principal Investigator/Sponsor (PI/Sponsor)
3. Predoctoral or Postdoctoral Fellow

The eligible PI/sponsor will be an outstanding senior PhD or MD designated by the applicant organization who will serve as PI/sponsor for the fellow. No PI/sponsor or fellow who has been restricted or debarred from receiving any federal or New York State funding can be part of a funded award.

The PI/sponsor may not be named as such on more than one application for a Predoctoral Fellowship or more than one application for a Postdoctoral Fellowship. Multiple Predoctoral and/or Postdoctoral applications with the same PI/Sponsor will all be disqualified and will not be forwarded for peer review.

Submission of an application certifies that the applicant organization and the PI/sponsor meet the eligibility criteria stated herein.

III. Project Narrative/Workplan Outcomes

The purpose of these awards is to support promising fellows during their mentored training and research period under the guidance of outstanding faculty PI/sponsors. The integrated program of research and training should enhance the individual's potential to develop into a productive, independent researcher. The training plan should document the need for, and the anticipated value of, the proposed mentored training in relationship to the individual's research career goals. The training plan should also facilitate the fellow's transition to the next stage of his/her career.

It is expected that the mentored training experience will provide:

- A strong foundation in research design, methods, and analytic techniques appropriate to the proposed SCI research;
- The enhancement of the fellow's ability to conceptualize and think through research problems with increasing independence;
- Experience conducting research using appropriate, state-of-the-art methods, as well as presenting and publishing the research findings as first author;
- The opportunity to interact with members of the scientific community at appropriate scientific meetings and workshops;
- Skills needed to transition to the next stage of the fellow's research career; and
- The opportunity to enhance the fellow's understanding of SCI-related sciences and the relationship of his/her research to spinal cord health, injury and disease.

There are no citizenship restrictions on fellows. Each must commit a **full time professional effort** directly associated with the fellowship research training program described in the application. Full time professional effort is expected to be 100% unless otherwise defined by organizational policies provided in the application. Additional program policies, consistent with the requirements of this RFA, are expected to be developed by the applicant organization and detailed in the application.

No salary support shall be made available to the PI/sponsor or mentor(s).

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

A. Individual Predoctoral Fellowships

1. Predoctoral Fellows

The predoctoral fellow must have a baccalaureate degree and be currently enrolled in a PhD or equivalent research degree program at the time of application. The predoctoral fellow must be at the dissertation research stage of training at the time of award and must show evidence of high academic performance and a commitment to a career as an independent research scientist. The fellow must work with the PI/sponsor to develop the SCI-focused mentored research and training plan included in the application.

2. PI/sponsor and Mentor(s)

The predoctoral fellow will identify a PI/sponsor with the appropriate background and experience to support the research and mentored training plan described in the application. The PI/sponsor should have a track record of funded research related to the selected SCI research topic and experience as a supervisor and mentor. To encourage novel SCI research, the PI/sponsor could be from a primary field outside of SCI research provided the research project will directly contribute directly to the SCI research field.

The predoctoral fellow may choose more than one mentor to enhance the training experience, but a primary PI/sponsor of record must be established for the application. As part of the application, the PI/sponsor will provide an outline of the individualized training that will be provided to the fellow and include the amount of time that the PI/sponsor will devote to working with the fellow. The PI/sponsor should have sufficient research support to cover the costs of the proposed research project that are in excess of the allowable costs of this award.

An advisory committee may be formed to assist with the development of a program of study or to monitor the predoctoral fellow's progress through the career development program. The mentor(s) will demonstrate a commitment to training, mentorship and career development of the predoctoral fellow.

B. Individual Postdoctoral Fellowships

1. Postdoctoral Fellows

The postdoctoral fellow must have earned a doctoral-level degree at the time of application and may have no more than two years of prior postdoctoral training under the current PI/sponsor's supervision by the expected start date of the award. Candidates with more than three years total fellowship experience under any mentor(s) by the expected start date of the award will not be considered. The fellow must work with the PI/sponsor to develop the SCI-focused mentored research and training plan included in the application. The postdoctoral fellow must focus on a specific well-defined SCI research project.

2. PI/sponsor and Mentor(s)

The postdoctoral fellow will identify a PI/sponsor with the appropriate background and experience to support the research and mentored career development plan described in the application. The PI/sponsor should have a track record of funded research related to the selected SCI research topic and experience as a supervisor and mentor. To encourage novel SCI research, the PI/sponsor could be from a primary field outside of SCI research provided the research project will contribute directly to the SCI research field.

The postdoctoral fellow may choose more than one mentor to enhance the training experience, but a primary PI/sponsor of record must be established for the application. As part of the application, the PI/sponsor will provide an outline of the individualized training that will be provided to the fellow and include the amount of time that the PI/sponsor will devote to working with the fellow. The PI/sponsor should have sufficient research support to cover the costs of the proposed research project that are in excess of the allowable costs of this award.

An advisory committee may be formed to assist with the development of a program of study or to monitor the postdoctoral fellow's progress through the career development program. The mentor(s) will demonstrate a commitment to training, mentorship and career development of the postdoctoral fellow.

IV. Administrative Requirements

A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the New York State Department of Health (Department), Wadsworth Center, Spinal Cord Injury Research Program. The Department is responsible for the requirements specified herein and for the evaluation of all applications.

B. Question and Answer Phase

All substantive questions must be submitted in writing to:

Charles Burns
Extramural Grants Administration
scirb@health.ny.gov

To the degree possible, each inquiry should cite the RFA section and paragraph to which it refers. Written questions will be accepted until the date posted on the cover of this RFA.

Questions of a technical nature can be addressed in writing or via telephone by calling Charles Burns at (518) 474-7002. **Questions are of a technical nature if they are limited to how to prepare the application (e.g., formatting) rather than relating to the substance of the application.**

Some helpful links for questions of a technical nature are below. Questions regarding specific opportunities or applications should be directed to the DOH contact listed on the cover of this RFA. This includes Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) questions and questions pertaining to the MWBE forms.

- <http://grantsreform.ny.gov/grantees>
- Grants Reform Videos (includes a document vault tutorial and an application tutorial) on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYnWskVc7B3ajjOVfOHL6UA>
<https://grantsgateway.ny.gov>
- Grants Team Email: Grantsreform@its.ny.gov
Phone: 518-474-5595
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 4:30pm
(Application Completion, Policy, and Registration questions)
- Agate Technical Support Help Desk
Phone: 1-800-820-1890
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 8pm
Email: helpdesk@agatesoftware.com
(Technical questions)

Prospective applicants should note that all clarifications and exceptions, including those relating to the terms and conditions of the contract, are to be raised prior to the submission of an application.

This RFA has been posted on the NYS Grants Gateway website at:

https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx and a link provided on the Department's public website at: <http://www.health.ny.gov/funding/>. Questions and answers, as well as any updates and/or modifications, will also be posted on these websites. All such updates will be posted by the date identified on the cover of this RFA.

C. Letter of Intent

The prospective applicant institution is **strongly encouraged** to complete and submit a Letter of Intent (see Attachment 1). This form will be used to develop the review panel in a timely manner. Letters of Intent should be submitted via the Grants Gateway in the Pre-Submission Uploads section of the online application. The file name should include applicant organization and PI/sponsor names. A copy should also be emailed to scirb@health.ny.gov. Please ensure that the RFA number is noted in the e-mail subject line. Submit the Letter of Intent via both formats by the date posted on the cover of the RFA.

Submission of a Letter of Intent is not a requirement unless a Conflict of Interest Form is being submitted (see Section V.E and the related Attachment 8).

D. Applicant Conference

An applicant conference will be held to give potential applicants the opportunity to receive an overview of the RFA and ask specific questions. The conference will be held via telephone conference call only on the date and time posted on the cover of this RFA. The Department requests that potential applicants register for this conference by calling (518) 474-7002 to ensure a sufficient number of conference phone lines. The deadline for reservations is posted on the cover page of this RFA. Failure to attend the applicant conference will not preclude the submission of an application.

E. How to Complete and File an Application

Applications must be submitted online via the Grants Gateway by the date and time posted on the cover of this RFA. Reference materials and videos are available for Grantees applying to funding opportunities on the NYS Grants Gateway. Please visit the Grants Reform website at the following web address: <http://grantsreform.ny.gov/Grantees> and select the “Grantee Quick Start Guide Applications” from the menu on the left. There is also a more detailed “Grantee User Guide” available on this page as well. Training webinars are also provided by the Grants Reform Team. Dates and times for webinar instruction can be located at the following web address: <http://grantsreform.ny.gov/training-calendar>.

To apply for this opportunity:

1. Log into the Grants Gateway as either a “Grantee” or “Grantee Contract Signatory”.
2. Click on the “View Opportunities” button under “View Available Opportunities”.
3. In the Search Criteria, enter the Grant Opportunity name <INSERT NAME> and select the Department of Health as the Funding Agency.
4. Click on “Search” button to initiate the search.
5. Click on the name of the Grant Opportunity from the search results grid and then select the “APPLY FOR GRANT OPPORTUNITY” button located bottom left of the Main page of the Grant Opportunity.

Once the application is complete, prospective grantees are **strongly encouraged** to submit their applications at least 48 hours prior to the due date and time. 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 DOH and Grants Reform staff are available to answer applicant’s technical questions and provide technical assistance prior to the application due date and time. Contact information for the Grants Reform Team is available under Section IV. B. of this RFA.

PLEASE NOTE: Although DOH and the Grants Reform staff will do their best to address concerns that are identified less than 48 hours prior to the due date and time, there is no guarantee that they will be resolved in time for the application to be submitted and, therefore, considered for funding

The Grants Gateway will always notify applicants of successful submission. If a prospective grantee does not get a successful submission message assigning their application a unique ID number, it has not successfully submitted an application. During the application process, please pay particular attention to the following:

- Not-for-profit applicants must be prequalified on the due date for this application submission. Be sure to maintain prequalification status between funding opportunities.

Three of a not-for-profit's essential financial documents - the IRS990, Financial Statement and 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 roles “Grantee Contract Signatory” or “Grantee System Administrator” can submit an application.
- Prior to submission, the system will automatically initiate a global error checking process to protect against incomplete applications. An applicant may need to attend to certain parts of the application prior to being able to submit the application successfully. Be sure to allow time after pressing the submit button to clean up any global errors that may arise. You can also run the global error check at any time in the application process. (see p.66 of the Grantee User Guide).
- Grantees 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 (10 MB) when uploading documents.

The following table will provide a snapshot of which roles are allowed to Initiate, Complete, and Submit the Grant Application(s) in the Grants Gateway.

| Role | Create and Maintain User Roles | Initiate Application | Complete Application | Submit Application | Only View the Application |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Delegated Admin | X | | | | |
| Grantee | | X | X | | |
| Grantee Contract Signatory | | X | X | X | |
| Grantee Payment Signatory | | X | X | | |
| Grantee System Administrator | | X | X | X | |
| Grantee View Only | | | | | X |

Late applications will not be accepted. **Applications will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, hard copy or hand delivery.**

PLEASE NOTE: Waiting until the last several days to complete your application online can be dangerous, as there may be unforeseen technical delays. Beginning the process of applying as soon as possible will produce the best results.

F. Department of Health 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 proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFA.

5. Seek clarifications and revisions of applications.
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 agency'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. Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible applicant, should the Department be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected applicant.
13. Utilize any and all ideas submitted with the applications received.
14. Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, every offer is firm and not revocable for a period of 60 days from the bid opening.
15. Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification to the applicant.
16. Require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an offerer's application and/or to determine an offerer's compliance with the requirements of the RFA.
17. Negotiate with successful applicants within the scope of the RFA in the best interests of the State.
18. Eliminate any mandatory, non-material specifications that cannot be complied with by all applicants.
19. Award grants based on geographic or regional considerations to serve the best interests of the State.

G. Term of Contract

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

It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period: **May 1, 2017 – April 30, 2020** for a term not to exceed three years. Contracts will not be renewable.

Continued funding throughout this period is contingent upon availability of funding and state budget appropriations. The Department also reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

H. Payment and Reporting Requirements

1. No advances will be allowed for contracts resulting from this procurement.
2. The grant contractor will be required to submit quarterly invoices and required reports of expenditures through the Grants Gateway (when this functionality goes live) to the State's designated payment office:

New York State Department of Health
Wadsworth Center
Extramural Grants Administration
Empire State Plaza, Room C345
PO Box 509
Albany, NY 12201-0509

Grant contractors must provide complete and accurate billing invoices to the Department's designated payment office in order to receive payment. Billing 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 CONTRACTOR shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with OSC's procedures and practices. The CONTRACTOR shall comply with the State Comptroller's procedures 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. CONTRACTOR acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any claims for reimbursement submitted under this contract if it does not comply with OSC's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper as set forth above.

Payment of such claims for reimbursement by the State (NYS Department of Health) shall be made in accordance with Article XI-A of the New York State Finance Law.

Payment terms will be:

- The contractor will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred as allowed in the Contract Budget and Workplan.
- All claims for payment submitted by the contractor pursuant to this agreement shall be submitted to the State no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter for which reimbursement is being claimed.

- Quarterly claims for payment will not be paid until all required progress reports for that period are submitted and deemed acceptable by Spinal Cord Injury Research Program staff.
 - The final claim for payment will be paid following the acceptance and approval of the final progress report.
 - In no event shall the amount received by the contractor exceed the amount approved by the State.
3. The grant contractor will be required to submit through the Grants Gateway (when this functionality goes live) the following periodic reports:
- Written progress reports in accordance with the forms and formats provided by the Program, no later than 30 days after the end of each reporting period.
 - A final cumulative progress report in accordance with the forms and formats provided by the Program, no later than 60 days after the end of the contract term.

All payment and reporting requirements will be detailed in Attachment D of the final NYS Master Grant Contract.

I. Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, the New York State Department of Health (“DOH”) recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of DOH 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 DOH establish goals for maximum feasible participation of New York State Certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises (“MWBE”) and the employment of minority groups members and women in the performance of New York State contracts.

Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

For purposes of this solicitation, the New York State Department of Health hereby establishes a goal of **30%** on any subcontracted labor or services, equipment, materials, or any combined purchase of the foregoing greater than \$25,000 under a contract awarded from this solicitation. The goal on the eligible portion of this contract will be **15%** for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (“MBE”) participation and **15%** for Women-Owned Business Enterprises (“WBE”) participation (based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs and outreach

efforts to certified MWBE firms). A contractor (“Contractor”) on the subject contract (“Contract”) must document good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by MWBEs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Contract and Contractor agrees that DOH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. For guidance on how DOH will determine “good faith efforts,” refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8.

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

By submitting an application, a grantee agrees to complete an MWBE Utilization plan as directed in **Attachment 10** of this RFA. DOH will review the submitted MWBE Utilization Plan. If the plan is not accepted, DOH 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. DOH may disqualify a Grantee as being non-responsive under the following circumstances:

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

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

J. Limits on Administrative Expenses and Executive Compensation

On July 1, 2013, limitations on administrative expenses and executive compensation contained within Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order #38 and related regulations published by the Department (Part 1002 to 10 NYCRR – Limits on Administrative Expenses and Executive Compensation) went into effect. Applicants agree that all state funds dispersed under this procurement will, if applicable to them, be bound by the terms, conditions, obligations and regulations promulgated by the Department. To provide assistance with compliance regarding Executive Order #38 and the related regulations, please refer to the Executive Order #38 website at: <http://executiveorder38.ny.gov>.

K. 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 and in order to initiate a contract with the New York State Department of Health, vendors 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, please include the Vendor Identification number on the application cover sheet. If not enrolled, to request assignment of a Vendor Identification number, please submit a New York State Office of the State Comptroller Substitute Form W-9, which can be found on-line at: http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor_management/issues_guidance.htm.

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.

L. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

The New York State Department of Health recommends that vendors file the required Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire online via the New York State VendRep System. To enroll in and use the New York State VendRep System, see the VendRep System Instructions available at http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/vendor_index.htm or go directly to the VendRep system online at <https://portal.osc.state.ny.us>.

Vendors 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 ciohelpdesk@osc.state.ny.us.

Applicants should complete and submit the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (Attachment 9).

M. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits

All not-for-profit vendors subject to prequalification are required to prequalify prior to grant application and execution of contracts.

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated June 7, 2013, New York State has instituted key reform initiatives to the grant contract process which requires not-for-profits to register in the Grants Gateway and complete the Vendor Prequalification process in order for applications to be evaluated. Information on these initiatives can be found on the [Grants Reform Website](#).

Applications received from not-for-profit applicants that have not Registered and are not Prequalified in the Grants Gateway on the application due date listed on the cover of this RFA cannot be evaluated. Such applications will be disqualified from further consideration.

Below is a summary of the steps that must be completed to meet registration and prequalification requirements. The [Vendor Prequalification Manual](#) on the Grants Reform Website details the requirements and an [online tutorial](#) are available to walk users through the process.

1) Register for the Grants Gateway

- On the Grants Reform Website, download a copy of the [Registration Form for Administrator](#). A signed, notarized original form must be sent to the Division of Budget at the address provided in the instructions. You will be provided with a Username and Password allowing you to access the Grants Gateway.

If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please email grantsreform@its.ny.gov. If you do not know your Password, please click the [Forgot Password](#) link from the main log in page and follow the prompts.

2) Complete your Prequalification Application

- Log in to the [Grants Gateway](#). **If this is your first time logging in**, you will be prompted to change your password at the bottom of your Profile page. Enter a new password and click SAVE.
- Click the *Organization(s)* link at the top of the page and complete the required fields including selecting the State agency you have the most grants with. This page should be completed in its entirety before you SAVE. A *Document Vault* link will become available near the top of the page. Click this link to access the main Document Vault page.
- Answer the questions in the *Required Forms* and upload *Required Documents*. This constitutes your Prequalification Application. Optional Documents are not required unless specified in this Request for Application.
- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your agency representative or to the Grants Reform Team at grantsreform@its.ny.gov.

3) Submit Your Prequalification Application

- After completing your Prequalification Application, click the **Submit Document Vault Link** located below the Required Documents section to submit your Prequalification Application for State agency review. Once submitted the status of the Document Vault will change to *In Review*.
- If your Prequalification reviewer has questions or requests changes you will receive email notification from the Gateway system.
- Once your Prequalification Application has been approved, you will receive a Gateway notification that you are now prequalified to do business with New York State.

Vendors are strongly encouraged to begin the process as soon as possible in order to successfully participate in this opportunity.

N. General Specifications

1. By submitting the "Application Form" each applicant attests to its express authority to sign on behalf of the applicant.
2. Contractors 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 this contract 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 conditions and terms contained in this RFA, including the terms and conditions of the contract. Any exceptions allowed by the Department during the Question and Answer Phase (Section IV.B.) must be clearly noted in a cover letter attached to the application.
4. An applicant may be disqualified from receiving awards 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.
5. Provisions Upon Default
 - a. The services to be performed by the Applicant 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 Applicant, 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 Applicant.
 - c. If, in the judgment of the Department, the Applicant 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 Contractor. In such case the Contractor shall receive equitable compensation for such services as shall, in the judgment of the State Comptroller, have been satisfactorily performed by the Contractor up to the date of the termination of this agreement, which such compensation shall not exceed the total cost incurred for the work which the Contractor was engaged in at the time of such termination, subject to audit by the State Comptroller.

V. Application Review and Award Process

A. Application Acceptance

Applications will first be examined against mandatory Pass/Fail requirements by Program staff **(see RFA Attachment 2)**. Applications that do not meet the mandatory requirements will not be considered for review, and the applicant organization and PI/sponsor will be notified.

B. Freedom of Information Law

All applications may be disclosed or used by DOH to the extent permitted by law. DOH 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, which will be available to the public in accordance with the Freedom of Information Law. **Any portion of the application that an applicant believes constitutes proprietary information entitled to confidential handling, as an exception to the Freedom of Information Law, must be clearly and specifically designated in the application.** If DOH agrees with the proprietary claim, 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 and Scoring

The Department contracts with an independent peer review organization to develop and coordinate the review and scoring of applications. Each eligible application will be evaluated by an Independent Peer Review Panel (the Review Panel) assigned by the Peer Review Contractor. The Review Panel members will be selected from among non-New York State experts in the fields appropriate to the nature of the applications received. The Peer Review Contractor has established a standing Review Panel to which expertise is added to evaluate the merit of actual applications submitted in response to the RFA.

The Review Panel will be assigned applications based on the category of research being conducted. All applications must include the category of research being conducted as "Rehabilitation" (Rehabilitation) or "Cellular Regeneration & Therapeutics" (Cellular Regeneration). This information is requested on Form 4 in Attachment 3.

Applications will be reviewed based on the criteria specified in Section V.F. Initially, a subcommittee of the applicable Review Panel consisting of three peer reviewers will consider each application. At least two members of each subcommittee, including the primary reviewer, shall consist of senior review scientists. For purposes of this RFA, a senior review scientist is a researcher who has been a primary investigator or co-primary investigator on more than one scientific research project, which has been previously funded in the field of spinal cord injury. The subcommittee of the Review Panel will use an established combination of processes to evaluate each application:

1. pre-meeting review with adjectival scoring (see table below)
2. on-line conferral among assigned reviewers
3. panel meeting discussion via teleconference, videoconference or in-person (review method chosen at the discretion of the Department) with numerical scoring (see table below).

The primary reviewer of each subcommittee will prepare a written overall evaluation of each assigned application that is to be discussed by the Review Panel. Additionally, each of the assigned reviewers of a particular subcommittee will provide a written critique of the application based on established evaluation criteria.

Thereafter, the entire Review Panel will meet via teleconference, videoconference or in person (review method chosen at the discretion of the Department) to discuss and score each of the applications. Each member of the Review Panel will confidentially provide a confidential numerical score for each application they are eligible to review.

Applications will receive numerical scores from each participating Review Panel member for each evaluation criterion using an integer scale that equates to adjectival scores, where 1 equates to highest merit and 9 equates to lowest merit. The numerical score given each criterion will be multiplied by that criterion's weight. Each Review Panel member's weighted scores for each criterion will be added together to give their individual total score. Review Panel members' individual total scores will be added together and divided by the number of Review Panel members who scored the application to give an overall panel score for the application.

| Numerical Score | Adjectival Score |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Exceptional |
| 2 | Outstanding |
| 3 | Excellent |
| 4 | Very Good |
| 5 | Good |
| 6 | Satisfactory |
| 7 | Fair |
| 8 | Marginal |
| 9 | Poor |

The Review Panel will comment on the responsiveness of the application to the funding mechanism as described in Section III above. The Review Panel will identify potential overlap with other resources. Additionally, the Review Panel will comment on the application with regard to the Contract Policy Statements and Conditions (NYS Master Grant Contract Attachment A-1 Part B). The Review Panel may recommend administrative review and resolution prior to contract execution. In addition, award recommendations made by the SCIRB may be contingent upon the applicant's acceptance of required revisions.

The primary reviewer will prepare a written overall evaluation of each assigned application that is discussed by the Review Panel. Each assigned reviewer will provide a written critique of the application based on the established evaluation criteria.

D. Application Penalties and Summary Statements

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials to be included in the application have been properly prepared and submitted. ALL APPLICATIONS SHOULD CONFORM TO THE FORMAT/CONTENT PRESCRIBED IN RFA **ATTACHMENT 2**. The Peer Review Contractor will assess a total penalty of 0.1 point for any application that deviates from the instructions (**see Checklist, RFA Attachment 2**).

The Peer Review Contractor will calculate final scores and compile a Summary Statement for each application for SCIRB. The Summary Statements will document the merit evaluation and serve as the primary basis for the panel recommendation for the applications.

E. Conflicts of Interest and Review Exclusions

The SCIRB aims to conduct a review process that is rigorous and impartial. All participants in a review (including scientific reviewers, DOH staff members and members of the SCIRB) are required to disclose financial interests and declare all conflicts that meet relevant SCIRB and State New York conflict of interest regulations.

In addition, the SCIRB understands that even strict policies may not account for every perceived conflict. Therefore, all applicants seeking funding may identify up to three individuals (excluding SCIRB members and employees) and/or for-profit organizations that such applicant believes could be biased whether for personal, professional, or competitive reasons (e.g., a company that is a direct competitor with respect to the applicant's proposed research or product). Individuals, and current employees, board members, and consultants (working on potentially competing research or product) of companies, identified by applicants pursuant to this screening mechanism will not be permitted to participate in the review of such applicant's application.

Applicants who wish to submit a Conflict of Interest Form, **must do so as part of the Letter of Intent (see Section IV.C.)** by the deadline stated on the cover of this RFA. Applicants may use RFA Attachment 8 to identify perceived conflicts with up to 3 individuals excluding SCIRB members and Department employees.

1st Exclusion

Type (Individual/Company/Other Entity) (circle or check one)

Name:

2nd Exclusion

Type (Individual/Company/Other Entity) (circle or check one)

Name:

3rd Exclusion

Type (Individual/Company/Other Entity) (circle or check one)

Name:

F. Review Criteria

The Review Panel will score each application based on the following four criteria.

Fellow and Development Plan (30%)

Fellow:

- What is the fellow's record of research productivity, including the quality of peer-reviewed scientific publications?
- What is the quality of the fellow's pre- and/or postdoctoral research training experience, including expertise gained?
- Based on the fellow's experience, track record and prior research training, what is his/her potential to become an outstanding, successful independent investigator who will contribute significantly to SCI research?
- To what extent does the application provide evidence to suggest that the fellow has the potential to develop a creative, independent SCI research program?

- Does the PI/sponsor's letter provide strong evidence that the fellow has a high potential to become an independent investigator and an important contributor to the field?

Training/Career Development Plan:

- Are the content and duration of the proposed didactic and research components of the training/career development plan appropriate for the fellow's current stage of scientific and professional development and proposed research career goals?
- To what extent does the plan fulfill the NIH requirements for instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)?
- Predoctoral fellows: Is the proposed training/career development plan likely to contribute substantially to the scientific and professional development of the fellow?
- Postdoctoral fellows: Is the proposed career development plan likely to contribute substantially to the scientific and professional development of the fellow, including his/her successful transition to independence?
- To what extent is the training/career development plan well-integrated with the research plan?
- To what extent are the plans for evaluating the fellow's progress adequate and appropriate for guiding the fellow toward a successful transition to independence?

Work Plan (25%)

- Are the scientific and technical merits of the research question, experimental design and methodology appropriate for the fellow's level of training, an appropriate vehicle for developing the research skills described in the career development plan and appropriate for developing a highly successful independent research program?
- Does the sponsor have the experience and technical skill for this project?
- Does the sponsor have the mentoring skills to supervise the fellow?
- Are the proposed research plan aims/objectives feasible to complete during the three year award?
- To what extent is the proposed research significant and to what extent is the proposed research likely to accelerate major advances towards a cure for SCI?
- Evaluate the innovation and creativity of the proposed research (i.e., does the project address an innovative hypothesis or challenge existing paradigms)?
- Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies?
- Postdoctoral fellows: Is the proposed research project sufficiently distinct from the PI/sponsor's funded research for the fellow to forge independence?

PI/sponsor, Mentor(s) and Environment (25%)

PI/sponsor, Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s):

- Does the PI/sponsor have a strong track record in training future independent researchers?
- Are the PI/sponsor and mentor(s) research qualifications and experience, scientific stature and mentoring track record appropriate for the fellow's training/career development needs?
- Does PI/sponsor's letter adequately address the above review criteria including the fellow's potential as well as his/her strengths and areas needing improvement?
- Is the proposed supervision that will occur during the award adequate and is the commitment of the mentor(s) to the fellow's continued training/career development appropriate?
- Is there evidence of adequate research funds to support the fellow's research training for the duration of the fellowship?

- Does the PI/sponsor present a comprehensive plan to support the proposed training/career development and research plans?
- If applicable, are the consultants'/collaborators' research and/or mentoring qualifications appropriate for their roles on the award?

Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Fellow:

- To what extent does the institution provide a high quality environment for the fellow's development?
- To what extent are the research facilities and educational opportunities, including collaborating faculty, adequate and appropriate for the fellow's research and training/career development goals?
- What evidence is provided that the sponsoring institution is strongly committed to fostering the fellow's development and transition to independence?
- Is there adequate assurance that the required effort of the fellow will be devoted directly to the research training/career development and research activities described in the proposed training/career development and research plans?

Budget (20%)

- Are the items for each budget line explained?
- Are budget line items adequately justified as necessary for completion of the project?
- Are the budgeted amounts reasonable, cost effective and appropriate to accomplish the training program?
- Are there specific excessive or unnecessary budget items?
- Does the budget reflect understanding of the human, material and financial resources needed, and the timeframes in which they are needed, for successful completion of the project within the contract term?

(Note: The entire Review Panel will review and comment on the Budget section. Numeric scores for the Budget criterion will be provided only by the assigned reviewers).

G. Spinal Cord Injury Research Board Review

The SCIRB will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of all applications, administrative and budget recommendations as outlined in the reports of the Review Panel. When making funding recommendations, the SCIRB will consider Review Panel Scores and recommendations, responsiveness to the mission of the SCIRB and responsiveness to the RFA, programmatic balance and availability of funds. The SCIRB may vote in favor or against any application submitted for funding. Scoring ties will be resolved on the basis of the above and with consideration of the score for 'Fellow and Development Plan' among those applications involved in the tie.

The SCIRB will vote on each application in compliance with SCIRB bylaws as well as applicable laws and regulations. If an application for which there are available funds is not recommended for funding, the SCIRB will fully justify in writing why the application was not approved.

The SCIRB may elect, at its discretion, to continue making recommendations for possible funding of proposals beyond what is available for the funding mechanism and the RFA. These applications will be given the status "Approved but not funded." "Approved but not funded" applications may be funded should additional funds become available.

The SCIRB will make recommendations for funding to the Commissioner of Health.

H. Award Decisions and Pre-Funding Requirements

Following the Commissioner's approval of awards, the PI and their applicant organizations will receive formal notification in writing.

Prior to contract execution, program administrators will require resolution/submission/confirmation of the following items, as relevant to each application:

- Revisions to Workplan, project duration or budget
- Overlap
- Areas of possible concern with regard to Contract Policy Statements and Conditions (NYS Master Grant Contract Attachment A-1 Part B)
- Approved Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate

Once awards have been made, all applicants (whether their application has been approved or disapproved) may request a debriefing of their application. Please note the debriefing will be limited only to the strengths and weaknesses of the subject application and will not include any discussion of other applications. Requests must be received no later than ten (10) business days from date of award or non-award announcement.

In the event unsuccessful applicants wish to protest the award(s) resulting from this RFA, applicants should follow the protest procedures established by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). These procedures can be found on the OSC website at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/guide/MyWebHelp>.

I. Award Announcements

SCIRB makes public in press releases and annual reports to the Governor and Legislature, the project title, the PI(s), the name of the organization, total projects costs and duration. The project abstract and progress report abstracts may also be edited and made public.

VI. Attachments

Please note that attachments can be accessed in the "Pre-Submission Uploads" section of an online application. In order to access the online application and other required documents such as the attachments, prospective applicants must be registered and logged into the NYS Grants Gateway in the user role of either a "Grantee" or a "Grantee Contract Signatory".

Attachment 1: Letter of Intent

Attachment 2: Application Checklist and Instructions

Attachment 3: Application Forms 1-5

Attachment 4: Application Form 1-S

Attachment 5: Application Form 6

Attachment 6: Application Form 6-S

Attachment 7: Application Forms 7-13

Attachment 8: Conflict of Interest (Reviewer Exclusion) Form

Attachment 9: Vendor Responsibility Attestation

Attachment 10: Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms

RFA # 1602290912
Grants Gateway # DOH01-FELLOW2-2016

**Individual Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships
in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 2)**

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

June 23, 2016 – July 20, 2016
Including an applicant conference on July 18, 2016

Letter of Intent (RFA Section IV.C. and Attachment 1)

1. When is the Letter of Intent due?
 - A. The Letter of Intent form (Attachment 1) was due on 7/5/16. The Letter of Intent is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged. See Section IV.C. of the RFA for submission instructions. Letters of Intent will still be accepted after the deadline.
2. Do we need to include any information (e.g., summary of aims) in addition to the Letter of Intent form?
 - A. Submit only the information requested on the form. No additional information will be considered. We rely on title, key words, lay summary paragraph and names to help identify potential peer reviewers.
3. Who should we list on the Letter of Intent form?
 - A. Identify all participants involved in the proposed project, both internal and external to your organization. It is understood that these names may change; they are used only as a preliminary screening for conflict of interest among potential peer reviewers. Sections may be added, if necessary, to list all participants.
4. The box of the Letter of Intent form permits the text to exceed the size of the box. Should we limit the amount of text to that which is visible or can we use the scroll bars to add additional text?
 - A. You can use the scroll bars to add text as much as allowed in the form. The paragraph does not need to be limited to the visible part of the box.
5. To what extent does the Letter of Intent commit the title and research proposed in the application?
 - A. There is no commitment inferred by the submission of a Letter of Intent.

6. How specific does the Letter of Intent have to be?
 - A. It is important to submit a detailed LOI and supply sufficient information so the peer review contractor, AIBS, can recruit experts suitable for your application.

Eligibility (RFA Section II)

7. Can the research be done in other states or only in New York State?
 - A. Applicants must be New York State institutions. However, those institutions are permitted to subcontract with collaborators world-wide. Please note that all research done outside of NYS must be performed in accordance with New York State laws, regulations and applicable contract provisions.
8. Can a Sponsor/PI be on a predoctoral and postdoctoral application?
 - A. Yes, a Sponsor/PI may be named on one predoctoral application and one postdoctoral application, as long as they are separate projects with no overlap in scope. However, if a Sponsor/PI submits an application for more than one predoctoral and/or postdoctoral students those applications will be disqualified.
9. Will an application be disqualified if the Sponsor/PI is currently in contract with RFA No. 1412220226 “Individual Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 1)”?
 - A. Sponsor/PI’s that are currently Sponsor/PI’s from RFA No. 1412220226 “Individual Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 1) can apply for this RFA.
10. Can I be a Sponsor/PI on one application and a mentor on a different application(s)?
 - A. Yes.
11. At our institution, graduate students’ full time professional effort is defined as 50% because they are students the other 50% of the time. Can graduate students with a 50% full time professional effort be funded through this RFA?
 - A. Yes, but you must include official documentation of that policy in the application appendices.
12. I am confused regarding the usage of the term 'mentor'. I completed a fellowship (3 years) in a different State (California), but I would not put my PI in the category as a mentor. The interchange use of those terms, PI and mentor, is somewhat confusing and I am hoping you can clarify? Can a mentor not be categorized as a PI and vice versa? Am I eligible to apply?

A. The Sponsor/PI is the point of contact for all aspects of the contract and will supervise and provide mentorship to the fellow. Additional mentors may be chosen to enhance the training experience and may assist with the program development of the study. Since you have completed a 3 year fellowship you are not eligible to apply. No exceptions can be made to the specifications stated in the RFA. This funding is intended for candidates with no more than three years fellowship experience under any mentor(s) by the expected date of the award (May 1, 2017).

13. Are applications allowed with a shorter (less than 3 year) duration, for example, if a trainee applies for one or two years of training to learn a new method to be applied within the context of spinal cord injury research?

A. Yes, however a shorter training period could adversely impact the score of the application. You should evaluate your proposed application in the context of the “Fellow and Development Plan” review criterion.

Fellows, Sponsors/PIs and Mentors

14. Is joint Co-PI leadership from the same institution allowed?

A. Multiple PIs are not recognized. One individual from the applicant institution must be designated as the PI. If one or more Co-PIs are also designated, those individuals may or may not be from the applicant institution. See instructions (RFA Attachment 2) for Forms 1 and 1-S.

15. I have more than one Co-PI from my institution. How do I list all Co-PI's on the application?

A. Form 1 allows only one Co-PI to be listed. Use Form 2 and the work plan narrative to designate the others.

16. Is there a required percentage of effort for the PI and/or Co-PI?

A. No. See RFA Attachment 2 instructions for completion of the Online Budget and Justification.

17. Do we need to specify who the fellow will be?

A. Yes. Without knowing who the proposed fellow is, the Sponsor/PI and Applicant Fellow cannot prepare the fellow's individualized Training/Career Development Plan as required by the RFA in Attachment 2, Application Checklist and Instructions.

18. Do we need to submit the predoctoral fellows' GRE scores, transcripts, etc.?

A. These documents are not required but are not prohibited. They may be included in various sections, as appropriate. Among those sections might be biographical sketch, appendices, and Training/Career Development Plan.

19. Our doctoral students have a Ph.D. committee that meets regularly with the student. Should I provide supporting documentation of the committee because they are monitoring the progress of the student? Should I provide biographical sketches of the committee members?

A. Yes. These individuals would be considered Mentors who play a specific role in the fellow's development.

Submitting the Application

20. What is to be submitted by the application due date?

A. Refer to RFA Section IV.E. How to Complete and File an Application. Applications may only be submitted through the NYS Grants Gateway; no paper, facsimile or any other type of electronic submissions will be accepted. No other documents will be accepted after the due date. All sections of the online application must be completed prior to submission.

21. What is the application due date and time?

A. The application must be successfully uploaded, found to be error-free and accepted through the New York State Grants Gateway by 4:00 PM EST on August 5, 2016. Please note the Grants Gateway system time will be used, not the time displayed by your local computer.

22. How do I get help using the Grants Gateway?

A. Applicants should access the guides, videos and training opportunities available via the Grants Reform website at: www.grantsreform.ny.gov. Technical questions regarding the forms used in the application should be directed to the DOH contact listed on the cover of the RFA up until the application deadline. Technical issues regarding the NYS Grants Gateway should be directed to the Gateway Help Desk, Monday-Friday from 8am – 8pm at 1-800-820-1890 or helpdesk@agatesoftware.com. Grants Gateway questions regarding application submission, registration and policy should be directed to the Grants Reform Team, Monday-Friday from 8am to 4:30 pm at 1-518-474-5595 or Grantsreform@its.ny.gov. Further, the NYS Grants Reform Team provides ongoing training webinars; the webinar schedule can be found here: <http://grantsreform.ny.gov/training-calendar>

23. Who can submit an application in the NYS Grants Gateway?

A. See RFA Section IV.E for information about “roles.” Roles are assigned by the Grants Gateway Delegated Administrator within your organization. Applicants are strongly

encouraged to consult the training documentation provided on the NYS Grants Gateway and Grants Reform websites.

24. The upload time for forms and documents can be lengthy. How could this impact a timely submission of my application?
- A. Applicants are strongly encouraged to start completing an application in the NYS Grants Gateway no less than seven days before the due date. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals at least 48 hours prior to the due date and time. This will allow sufficient opportunity for the applicant to obtain assistance and take corrective action where needed. Both DOH and Grants Reform Team staff are available to answer applicants' technical questions and provide technical assistance prior to the application deadline. However, please note that although DOH and the Grants Reform Team staff will do their best to address concerns that are identified less than 48 hours prior to the due date and time, there is no guarantee that they will be resolved in time for the application to be submitted and, therefore, considered for funding.
25. If there are multiple errors uploading completed application forms to the NYS Grants Gateway, will the applicant be notified of all errors at once, or only one at a time?
- A. A single list of global errors will be produced. It is highly recommended to use the "Check Global Errors" button repeatedly until no errors are found.
26. Is there a checklist that a PI can use to see whether they have completed everything for application submission?
- A. To ensure that all mandatory pass/fail items and penalty items are adequately addressed, see RFA Attachment 2 page 1. The Grants Gateway requires other forms to be completed and submitted as well. See the instructions provided in Pre-Submission Uploads and Program Specific Questions. If required questions are not answered and/or files not uploaded, you will receive an error message describing what is missing. NOTE: the Grants Gateway does not assess the content of text boxes or uploads, only that questions are answered and files are uploaded successfully.
27. Can we view the concatenated pdf file of our application before submitting the application?
- A. Unfortunately the concatenated file is created after application submission. It can be viewed under "Application Versions" of the Forms Menu. Applicants will need to ensure all of the uploaded pdf documents in their application are legible as they will be used for peer review. The concatenated pdf file of the application will not be used for peer review.

Application Forms

28. The instructions for Form 1 state to provide the information requested for the fellow, but the fellow is not referenced on this form. What should I do?

- A. There is a minor mistake on this form, it should have stated the name and degree of the fellow instead of the Co-PI. Since this information is provided in Form 2 and elsewhere in the application, you do not need to provide this information in Form 1.
29. Why is spell check turned off on some of the application forms and why can't we cut and paste into them?
- A. Forms 1-5 are set up as protected fillable forms so the data can be exported to databases used to facilitate peer review and award processes. Spell checking is disabled in Forms 1-5 only; it is available in other form sets. The cut/paste function will work on Forms 1-5; be sure to insert text inside the gray boxes. Please submit Forms 1-5 as a fillable pdf.
30. We download all the forms from the Pre-submission Uploads section of the Grants Gateway. Where do we upload them?
- A. Most completed application forms will be uploaded in response to Program Specific Questions. Please see the instructions located in the Pre-submission Uploads section of your Grants Gateway application. RFA Attachments 1, 9 and 10 are uploaded in the Pre-submission Uploads section. Please do not upload other forms in the Pre-submission uploads section as this will cause duplicate uploads. Duplicate uploads may result in different versions of the file being uploaded in those two locations. Only the files uploaded in the correct section of the Grants Gateway will be used for peer review. Uploading files in the wrong section in the Grants gateway might adversely impact the score of the application.
31. Where should I include letters of collaboration (not co-PI) and collaborators' biographical sketches?
- A. Letters of collaboration may be included in the appendices (in the same file as Forms 7-13). Biographical sketches of collaborators named in the workplan and budget should be incorporated to the other biographical sketches using Form 7. The biographical sketches of other collaborators may be included in the appendices. See RFA Attachment 2 for further details.
32. Why are there two workplans in the application?
- A. The Workplan Narrative – Form 11, will be used by the peer reviewers to understand the full context and details of the proposed research plan. See RFA Attachment 2 for instructions. The On-line Workplan will be included in a system-generated contract using a standardized format. Both are peer reviewed, so completeness and consistency between the two is important.
33. What are the format specifications of the workplan (font, margins, etc.)?

A. The forms are pre-set with acceptable fonts, margins, etc. Please refer to RFA Attachment 2 for additional details, page limitations and penalties.

34. For the appendices, is there a page limit and what can I submit here?

A. There is no page limit for the appendices. See page 1 of Attachment 2 for appropriate materials that can be placed in the appendices. The appendices may not be used to exceed the page limits for the Workplan Narrative and/or the Training/Career Development Plan.

35. Are there instructions about how to complete the online portions of the application, workplan and budget?

A. Yes. See the Grantee User Guide, videos and training materials on the Grants Reform website at: www.grantsreform.ny.gov and RFA Attachment 2.

36. The link in Form 10 (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm#inst>) does not direct to the IRB exemptions definitions or Part II: Supplemental Instructions for Preparing the Human Subjects Section of the Research Plan. Where can I find this information?

A. You can search for this information using the “search this site” feature on the NIH webpage that this link directs your browser or you can contact your organization’s Institutional Review Board for this information.

Budget

37. Can we budget for less money than the available funds for each mechanism?

A. Yes, you should only request funds appropriate for the cost-effective performance of the proposed program.

38. Can I list someone by title on the budget instead of by name?

A. Detailed budget justifications are required for each budget line. All PIs and Co-PIs should be identified by name. If other positions are yet to be filled, you should specify the title of the position and “to be determined” for the name of the individual for the budget justification.

39. Is overhead allowed? Is it the same as the National Institutes of Health (NIH)?

A. Overhead is allowed but it is not the same as the NIH. Facilities and Administrative Costs are limited to 20% of modified direct costs. See RFA Attachment 2 for details.

40. Does the applicant need to budget/spend the maximum of money for all years?

- A. No. Each annual budget should reflect the true needs of the project (see RFA Attachment 2 and RFA Section V.F., Review Criteria). All aims of the project are expected to be completed prior to the end of the contract. Requests for carry forward of unspent funds and no cost extensions may not be granted.
41. Do we have to submit a budget for the first year or all years? Do we need to have budgets for sub-applicants?
- A. Detailed line item budgets and justifications for applicants and sub-applicants must be submitted for the entire length of the award. The applicant's Year 1 budget is entered directly into the Grants Gateway while subsequent years are entered to an Excel file that also must be printed to a PDF file. The sub-applicant's budgets for the entire length of the contract are entered into an Excel file that also must be printed to a PDF file. Detailed instructions are provided in RFA Attachment 2.
42. How much budget justification is necessary?
- A. Fully justify each budget line for each year. Provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that specific uses and amounts of funding have been carefully considered. Also see RFA Section V.F. for review criteria for budget and other aspects of the application.
43. Is fringe separate? How do we enter information for employees that have different fringe rates?
- A. Fringe rates, including different fringe rates for different personnel, can be detailed in the budget narrative section of the budget forms.
44. Is there guidance for completing the budget?
- A. If you follow the instructions and you still need help, you can seek guidance within your Institution and/or contact the Grants Reform Team help desk (see question no. 22) for information regarding the online year 1 budget. You also can contact scirb@health.ny.gov for technical assistance. If you are in need of assistance, it is recommended you contact the Grants Reform Team or Department of Health as early as possible to ensure there is sufficient time to address your question.
45. The stated limit on "Institutional Allowance" for non-personal services is \$8,850. This is significantly below the typical ~30% fringe rate that is added onto stipends/salaries. Does this mean that we would be responsible for supplementing the typical fringe benefit amount? The RFA states that Institutional Allowance includes F&A, and that "From this total," other expenses such as travel, supplies, human subjects, etc. all come from the same Institutional Allowance amount of \$8,850? Is that correct? We would normally expect to budget separately for those types of costs (up to the total direct cost limit of \$77,350), and then calculate additional F&A based on modified direct costs. Can you please help us clarify this?

- A. Postdoctoral fellowships will be a three year award with total annual direct costs of **up to** \$77,350 per year. Postdoctoral fellows with little experience will have smaller stipends thus reducing the maximum annual budget to less than \$77,350 per year. The stated Institutional Allowance of \$8,850 for postdoctoral fellows is correct. Unfortunately you cannot budget separately for these costs up to \$77,350 per year. The institution is responsible for supplementing expenses such as fringe.

Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements

46. Are Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement forms required to be submitted with the application? Do they have to be submitted if we will not exceed the \$25,000 threshold?
- A. Yes. A completed Form 1 and/or Form 2 must be included in the application submission. See RFA Section IV.I and Attachment 10.
47. We cannot identify MWBE's on the <https://ny.newnycontracts.com> website that we can provide the supplies and equipment we need for our research. Are there any other resources available for identifying MWBE's that we can use?
- A. No. The <https://ny.newnycontracts.com> website that identifies approved MWBE's is always being updated as new vendors are approved so you can periodically check back for new vendors. As part of completing the forms, you must document your efforts to identify MWBE's. **NOTE:** Failure to do due diligence, fill out the forms completely and correctly and attach sufficient documentation in the Pre-submission Uploads section of the application will delay processing for all awarded contracts. If you cannot meet the goal, you must apply for an exemption.

Application Review and Award Process

48. How are the peer reviewers selected?
- A. The Department of Health's peer review contractor, American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), will review the LOI summary paragraph and workplan narratives to recruit experts appropriate to the area of proposed research.