

RFA # 1602260415  
NYS Grants Gateway # DOH01-TRAIN3-2015

**New York State Department of Health  
and the  
Empire State Stem Cell Board  
Request for Applications**

Empire State Institutional Training Programs in Stem Cell Research  
for Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows (Round 3)

<b>RELEASE DATE:</b>	<b>4/19/16</b>
<b>LETTER OF INTENT DUE (Strongly encouraged):</b>	<b>5/13/16</b>
<b>Applicant Conference Registration Due:</b>	<b>5/20/16</b>
<b>APPLICANT CONFERENCE:</b>	<b>5/23/16 at 10:30 AM</b> By telephone conference call at: 1-844-633-8697 or 1-866-776-3553 Meeting ID # 641 575 790
<b>QUESTIONS DUE:</b>	<b>5/26/16</b>
<b>QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND UPDATES POSTED:</b>	<b>6/1/16</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS DUE:</b>	<b>6/9/16 by 6:00 PM</b>

**DOH CONTACT NAME AND ADDRESS:**

Charles Burns  
Extramural Grants Administration  
New York State Department of Health  
Wadsworth Center  
Empire State Plaza, Room C345  
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## I. Introduction

### A. Background

Stem cell science is a rapidly expanding field and trained personnel are in short supply at all career levels. To sustain a strong and innovative stem cell research community, New York State must be able to recruit and retain promising young stem cell investigators in the early stages of their careers. With stable funding, resources and training, new investigators can pursue innovative research projects that will form the basis of a productive career.

NYSTEM, the New York State Stem Cell Science Program, is charged with administering stem cell research funding based on recommendations and advice from the Empire State Stem Cell Board (ESSCB). In conjunction with NYSTEM, the ESSCB solicits, reviews, and makes funding recommendations for creative and innovative projects to be supported by the Empire State Stem Cell Trust Fund. Information about the ESSCB and NYSTEM can be found at <http://stemcell.ny.gov>.

### B. Purpose of the Funds

This RFA provides funding for institution-based training programs (similar to NIH T32 awards) 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 stem cell-related research.

The supported training program and related research efforts may focus on any aspect(s) of stem cell biology (basic, applied, translational, pre-clinical or clinical research) that will lead to a better understanding of the unique properties of stem cells and the development of applications for the diagnosis, prevention or treatment of disease.

### C. Available Funds

All awards will be financed by the Empire State Stem Cell Trust Fund. The number of awards and total funds awarded per application will be contingent on the quality and content of applications received as well as the scale and scope of the proposed programs. Approximately \$7.5 million is available to support approximately four awards from this RFA. This funding is for a period up to five years. No award may exceed \$375,000 in annual direct costs.

## II. Who May Apply

**The applicant must be a not-for-profit or governmental organization in New York State. In addition, applicants for predoctoral training programs must be degree-granting institutions. The applicant may not be a recipient of NYSTEM Institutional Training funds under the previous RFA (1009240111).** Individual fellows may not apply. 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. Subcontracted and collaborating non-degree-granting entities may accept and

monitor predoctoral trainees through this program, provided that policies of the applicant and sub-applicant institutions both allow it, and that the collaboration strategies clearly provide a robust training experience for the predoctoral trainees. No preferences are given in program composition in terms of single institution, multi-institution, in-state or out-of-state collaborations.

The eligible program director (PD) for the application is designated by the applicant institution and must have the scientific background, leadership and administrative capabilities required to coordinate, supervise and direct the proposed research training program described in the Workplan. At the time of application and award acceptance, the PD must not be restricted from receiving Public Health Service (PHS) funding or debarred by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or any other federal or New York State government entity.

An individual may serve as a PD on only one application in response to this RFA and only one application will be accepted from any single institution. **In the event that more than one application is received from a PD or institution, all applications from that PD or institution will be disqualified, will not be considered and will not be forwarded to peer review.**

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

### **III. Project Narrative/Workplan Outcomes**

A successful application will provide evidence of a commitment to stem cell-related research and a proven track record in training and mentoring predoctoral and/or postdoctoral fellows in biomedical and/or stem cell research. It will be consistent with the objectives outlined in Section I.B., Purpose of the Funds. The program will be administered by the applicant institution and the PD will be responsible for meeting the overall program goals and reporting requirements. Additional program policies, consistent with the requirements of this RFA, are expected to be developed by the applicant institution and detailed in the application.

#### **A. The Training Program**

Each application will establish a number of training slots for predoctoral and/or postdoctoral trainees in stem cell-related research at eligible institutions in New York State. The program may be structured so that the number of training slots is different in each year of the expected contract term, provided that stated expense maximums are not exceeded (**see RFA Attachment 2**).

Each training slot will be designated as a full time 12-month commitment at 100% professional effort, though it is expected that trainees may rotate off the program to accept individual fellowships and other opportunities and be replaced by other trainees. Full time professional effort is expected to be 100% unless otherwise defined by organizational policies provided in the application.

## **B. Mentors**

A sufficient number of mentors should be available to support the number and level of trainees accepted to the program. The research experience of the mentors should align with the overall goals and allow for sustainability of the training program. Mentors should be carefully selected and matched to trainees. Selected mentors should be conducting sufficiently supported stem cell research activities to properly engage and train participating fellows and to provide a rich research environment for the fellowship program participants throughout the term of the contract. While it is acceptable to include individual mentors on multiple training program applications, care should be taken to demonstrate that sufficient research support is available to the mentor who may then be asked to accept trainees from multiple awards.

## **C. Trainee Eligibility**

Contractors will ensure all of the requirements in this Section (C) are met in the program implementation:

### **1. General Trainee Requirements**

There are no citizenship or legal residency restrictions on trainees. Trainees must commit a full time, 100% professional effort (unless otherwise defined by organizational policies provided in the application) directly associated with the stem cell training program. It is possible that a trainee may be working on a stem cell project related to one or more of the mentor's awards as part of their training, but the trainee cannot receive remuneration from any other award while on the training program. Further, the trainee's time cannot be devoted to activities or projects other than those that are recognized as part of this stem cell training program.

### **2. Predoctoral Trainees**

Predoctoral trainees accepted into the program will conduct relevant projects in stem cell-related research laboratories. Predoctoral trainees will have received a baccalaureate degree by the beginning date of the appointment, be trained at the post-baccalaureate level, and enrolled in a program leading to a PhD in science or in an equivalent research doctoral degree program. Students pursuing a dual degree (e.g., MD/PhD, DDS/PhD) may be supported for the PhD research rotation portion of their studies, as long as that requires/allows a full-time 100% commitment to the research training program.

### **3. Postdoctoral Trainees**

Postdoctoral trainees accepted into the program will conduct well-defined projects in stem cell-related research laboratories. Postdoctoral trainees will have received, as of the beginning date of the appointment, a doctoral or equivalent degree from an accredited domestic or foreign institution.

Applicants may subcontract components of the scope of work. For those applicants that propose subcontracting, it is necessary 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 DOH. All subcontractors should be approved by the Department of Health.

#### IV. Administrative Requirements

##### A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the New York State Department of Health (Department), NYSTEM 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  
[nystem@health.ny.gov](mailto:nystem@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.

- [www.grantsreform.ny.gov/grantees](http://www.grantsreform.ny.gov/grantees)
- Grants Reform Videos (includes a document vault tutorial and an application tutorial) on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYnWskVc7B3ajjOVfOHL6UA>
- Agate Technical Support Help Desk  
Phone: 1-800-820-1890  
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 8pm  
Email: [helpdesk@agatesoftware.com](mailto:helpdesk@agatesoftware.com)  
(Technical questions)
- Grants Team Email: [Grantsreform@budget.ny.gov](mailto:Grantsreform@budget.ny.gov)  
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.
- [www.grantsgateway.ny.gov](http://www.grantsgateway.ny.gov)

This RFA has been posted on the NYS Grants Gateway website at [https://www.grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants\\_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx](https://www.grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx) and the Department of Health'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 sheet of this RFA.

### C. Letter of Intent

The prospective applicant institution is **strongly encouraged** to complete and submit a Letter of Intent (**see RFA Attachment 1**). This form will be used to develop the review panel in a timely manner. The Letter of Intent form can be found in the Grants Gateway in the Pre-Submission Uploads section of the online application. The file name should include applicant organization and PD names. E-mail the completed form to [nystem@health.ny.gov](mailto:nystem@health.ny.gov) by the date posted on the cover of the RFA. A copy of the Letter of Intent should also be submitted/uploaded in the Grants Gateway in the Pre-Submission Uploads section of the online application. Please ensure that the RFA number, organization name and PD name are noted in the e-mail subject line.

Submission of a Letter of Intent is not a requirement or obligation upon the applicant to submit an application in response to this RFA. Applications may be submitted without first having submitted a Letter of Intent.

### 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 sheet 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. Tutorials (training videos) for use of the Grants Gateway are available at the following web address (and upon user log in): [https://www.grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants\\_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx](https://www.grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx).

To apply, log into the Grants Gateway and click on the View Opportunities button under View Available Opportunities. To get started, in the Search Criteria, enter the Grant Opportunity name listed on the cover page and select the Department of Health as the Funding Agency and hit the Search button. Click on the name of the Grant Opportunity from the search results grid and then click on the APPLY FOR GRANT OPPORTUNITY button located bottom left of the Main page of the Grant Opportunity.

In order to access the online application and other required documents such as the attachments, you **MUST** be registered and logged into the NYS Grants Gateway system in the user role of either a "Grantee" or a "Grantee Contract Signatory."

The following table provides 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

For further information on how to apply, please access the Grantee Quick Start Guide under the Pre-Submission Upload Properties for this opportunity.

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” from the menu. There is also a more detailed “Grantee User Guide” available on this page as well.

Once the application is complete, grantees should submit their applications, **at a minimum**, one (1) hour prior to the submission deadline. The system will perform an application error check and all identified issues must be resolved before the application is successfully submitted. Failure to leave adequate time to address issues identified during this process may jeopardize an applicant’s ability to submit their application. The Grants Gateway will notify applicants of successful submission via a pop-up message.

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

**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 begin on July 1, 2017 for a term of up to five 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.

A sample New York State Master Grant Contract for this funding opportunity can be found in the Forms Menu once an application to this funding opportunity is started.

## **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 (in the future) 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](mailto: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 NYSTEM 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 (in the future) the following periodic reports:
- Written progress reports in accordance with the forms and formats provided by NYSTEM, 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 NYSTEM, 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 9 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 online at [http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor\\_management/issues\\_guidance.htm](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor_management/issues_guidance.htm).

Additional information concerning the New York State Vendor File can be obtained online at [http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor\\_management/index.htm](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](mailto: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](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](mailto:ciohelpdesk@osc.state.ny.us).

Vendors opting to complete and submit a paper questionnaire can obtain the appropriate questionnaire from the VendRep website at [http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/forms\\_vendor.htm](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/forms_vendor.htm) or may contact the Office of the State Comptroller's Help Desk for a copy of the paper form.

Applicants should complete and submit the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (**see RFA Attachment 8**).

#### **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@budget.ny.gov](mailto:grantsreform@budget.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 into 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@budget.ny.gov](mailto:grantsreform@budget.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 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 NYSTEM administrators (**see RFA Attachment 2**). Applications that do not meet the mandatory requirements will not be considered for review and the applicant organization and PD 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 external peer review organization to develop and coordinate the review and scoring of applications. Each eligible application will be evaluated by the 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. NYSTEM does not convene pre-established peer review panels. Instead, each panel is formed based upon the expertise needed to evaluate the merit of actual applications submitted in response to each RFA.

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. triage based on adjectival scores of assigned reviewers for Training Program criterion in Section V.E. below
4. panel meeting discussion via teleconference, videoconference or in-person (review method chosen at the discretion of the Department) with numerical scoring (see table below).

Applications that are not triaged prior to panel meeting discussion will receive numerical scores from each participating 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 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. The numerical scores correspond to adjectival scores, as follows:

<b>Numerical Score</b>	<b>Adjectival Score</b>
1	Exceptional
2	Outstanding
3	Excellent
4	Very Good
5	Good
6	Satisfactory
7	Fair
8	Marginal
9	Poor

Applications that are triaged (receive an adjectival score of Very Good or worse from each assigned reviewer for the criterion identified in Section V.E.) will not receive scores.

The Review Panel will identify potential overlap with other resources/projects. 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 ESSCB Funding Committee 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.

#### **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 penalty of 0.1 point for any application that is not triaged, scores between 1.0 and 3.9, and 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 NYSTEM. The Summary Statements will document the merit evaluation and serve as the primary basis for the panel recommendation for the applications.

## **E. Review Criteria**

Six evaluation criteria will be considered by the Independent Scientific Merit Peer Review Panel:

### ***Training Program (30%) – triage criterion***

- Do the objectives, design and direction of the proposed program ensure effective training and professional development in stem cell research and related activities?
- Is the proposed program of training likely to ensure that trainees will be prepared for successful and productive stem cell-related scientific careers?
- Do the courses (where relevant) and research training experiences address state-of-the-art science relevant to stem cell research and the aims of the training program?
- Does the program provide training in inter- or multi-disciplinary research and/or training in state-of-the-art or novel methodologies and techniques applicable to stem cell research?
- Is a recruitment plan proposed with strategies to attract high-quality trainees, including those from under-represented populations in science?
- Are there well-defined and justified selection criteria and retention strategies?
- Is there evidence of a competitive applicant pool in sufficient numbers to warrant the proposed size and levels (pre- and postdoctoral) of the training program?

### ***Training Program Director (10%)***

- Does the Training PD have the scientific background, expertise and experience to provide strong leadership, direction, management and administration to the proposed training program?
- Does the PD plan to commit sufficient professional effort to the program to ensure its success?
- Is sufficient administrative and research training support and organizational structure/leadership provided for the program?
- Is a significant level of institutional commitment to the program evident, including a plan to meet the potential need for additional funding to support stipends throughout the contract term?

### ***Faculty/Mentors and the Stem Cell Research Environment (20%)***

- Are the research facilities and research environment (faculty, facilities, resources, educational opportunities) conducive to preparing trainees for successful careers as biomedical scientists in stem cell-related research?
- Are sufficient numbers of experienced mentors with appropriate expertise and funding available to support the number and level of trainees proposed in the application?
- Do the mentors have strong records in stem cell-related research?
- Do the mentors have strong records of training pre- and/or postdoctoral students and/or fellows?

- Is the process for identifying and evaluating mentors, including their prior training experience and laboratory environments, sufficient to yield a high-quality training experience for the trainees?
- Is there an effective process to match mentors appropriately with the needs, experience and career goals of trainees?

***Past Training Record (10%)***

- Does the institution have a track record of successful training programs?
- How successful have past students/trainees been in similar training programs at this institution?
- How productive were past trainees in terms of research accomplishments and publications?
- How successful were past trainees in obtaining further training appointments, fellowships and career development awards?
- How successful were past trainees in achieving productive scientific careers, as evidenced by successful competition for research grants, receipt of honors or awards, high impact publications, receipt of patents, promotion to scientific leadership positions and/or other such measures of success?

***Training Program Evaluation (10%)***

- Does the program have a rigorous evaluation plan to review the quality and effectiveness of the training?
- Are effective mechanisms in place for obtaining feedback from trainees and monitoring their subsequent career development over time?
- Are effective mechanisms in place to evaluate the success of the overall program?
- Are effective mechanisms in place to evaluate the success of individual trainees?

***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?

**F. Empire State Stem Cell Board Funding Committee Review**

The ESSCB Funding Committee will consider applications that receive a final score (after penalties are assessed) of 1.0 through 3.9. The ESSCB Funding Committee will not consider applications that receive a final score of 4.0 to 9 or those that are triaged.

The ESSCB Funding Committee will consider the application strengths and weaknesses, and administrative recommendations. When making funding recommendations, the ESSCB Funding Committee will consider responsiveness to the mission of the ESSCB, responsiveness to the RFA, programmatic balance, availability of funds, and compliance

with Public Health Law Article 2, Title 5-A, §265. The ESSCB Funding Committee is not obligated to recommend funding for any application. Scoring ties will be resolved on the basis of the above and with consideration of the score for 'Training Program' and among those applications involved in the tie.

The ESSCB Funding Committee will vote on each application that scores 3.9 or better until available funds are exhausted and in compliance with ESSCB bylaws as well as applicable laws and regulations. If an application for which there are available funds is not recommended for funding, the ESSCB Funding Committee will fully justify in writing why the application was not approved.

The ESSCB Funding Committee will make recommendations for funding to the Commissioner of Health.

### **G. Award Decisions and Pre-Funding Requirements**

Grant award contracts are entered into between New York State applicant organizations and the New York State Department of Health. Funding is contingent upon full execution of a contract between the applicant organization and the New York State Department of Health and approval by the Commissioner of Health, State Attorney General and State Comptroller.

Following the Commissioner's approval of awards, PDs 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
- Funding 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 an award has been made, applicants 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 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>.

### **H. Award Announcements**

NYSTEM makes public in press releases and annual reports to the Governor and Legislature, the project title, the PD(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 1-4

Attachment 4: Application Form 1-S

Attachment 5: Application Form 5

Attachment 6: Application Form 5-S

Attachment 7: Applications Forms 6-10

Attachment 8: Vendor Responsibility Attestation

Attachment 9: Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms