RFA # 1602230252
Grants Gateway # DOH01-STEM5-2016

Investigator Initiated Research Projects (IIRP) and
Innovative, Developmental or Exploratory Activities (IDEA)
in Stem Cell Research (Rd 5)

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

April 12, 2016 – May 19, 2016
Including an applicant conference on May 16, 2016

<u>Letter of Intent (RFA Section IV.C. and Attachment 1)</u>

1. When is the Letter of Intent due?

   A. The Letter of Intent form (Attachment 1) was due on 5/20/16. 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 for 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. When I upload the Letter of Intent in the pre-submission uploads section of the NYS Grants Gateway I receive an error message that two other documents (Attachments 8 and 9) must be uploaded. Are they required to be uploaded before the due date of the Letter of Intent?

A. The error message is bringing to your attention that a section of the application is missing required information, in this case attachments 8 and 9. Attachments 8 and 9 need to be completed and uploaded before the application due date and are required to be included before a completed application can be submitted.

Project Narrative / Workplan Outcomes (RFA Section III)

6. Why are there two workplans in the application?

   A. The Workplan Narrative – Form 12, will be used by the peer reviewers to understand the full context and details of your research plan. Page limits are established for each funding mechanism (IIRP and IDEA) for sections a-d of this document. The NYS Grants Gateway Online Workplan will be included in the system-generated contract using this standardized format and is an outline of the Workplan Narrative. See the Application Completion Instructions in Attachment 2 of the RFA.

7. Is the online workplan a summary of Form 12? Are performance measures required to be detailed?

   A. The online workplan is an abbreviated version of Form 12 (see question no. 39). Performance measures are required to be included in the online workplan.

Eligibility (RFA Section II)

8. Is there a minimum percent effort required by the PI?

   A. There is no minimum percent effort required by the PI.

9. Can I apply for both an IIRP and an IDEA award?

   A. Yes, as long as they are separate projects. However, if a PI submits more than one IIRP and/or more than one IDEA application, all the PI's applications will be disqualified for that funding mechanism(s).

10. Can I submit two IIRP applications, one as PI and the other as Co-PI? Can a PI on her/his own application be a collaborator on an application that I am listed as the PI?

   A. Yes, as long as they are separate projects. You cannot be a PI on two IIRP applications. The same is true of IDEA applications. A PI can be a Co-PI or collaborator on other applications, however the PI cannot exceed 100% effort for all projects.

11. Will participating in more than one application impact the score of an application?

   A. It could. The peer review panel is charged with identifying potential overlap (see RFA Section V.C). If scientific, budgetary or time commitment overlap among the pending and active research is of potential concern, the applicant should clearly delineate the differences among the projects using Application Form 9 – Other Support. Section V.F. of the RFA outlines the specific evaluation criteria and weights; the criteria do include assessment of the availability of time and resources to accomplish the project.

12. 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 and they may be private companies. Please note that all research done outside of NYS must be performed in accordance with New York State laws, regulations and applicable contract provisions.

13. My proposed research focuses on cancer stem cells. Is this type of research appropriate for this RFA? Also, I have significant preliminary data. Should I apply for an IIRP or an IDEA award?

    A. Any (within regulation) type of research involving stem cells may be funded by this RFA. Proposed research with robust preliminary data may use the IIRP funding mechanism. If there is no robust preliminary data associated with the proposed research, the IDEA funding mechanism should be used.

<u>PIs, Co-PIs and Co-Investigators (RFA Attachment 2 re: Application Forms 1, 1-S and 2)</u>

14. What's the difference between a co-investigator and a Co-PI?

    A. A Co-PI is designated by the PI as an individual who has equal responsibility and authority for ensuring the completion of the entire project. A co-investigator may be responsible for a specific component of the research project. The PI is the point of contact for all aspects of the application and contract. See RFA Attachment 2 for further delineation.

15. What if my Co-PI is from a different institution?

    A. That is acceptable. See the instructions (RFA Attachment 2) for Forms 1 and 1-S for further details.

16. 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.

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

    A. No. 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. For definitions of the terms "PI, Co-PI and Co-I" please see instructions for the completion of the Applicant Face Page (Form 1).

Subcontractors in the Application

18. Is there a limit to the percentage of work or the amount of funding that can be subcontracted to out of state collaborators?

    A. No limit is imposed by the RFA. Please note that the peer reviewers are required to note any excessive and/or unnecessary costs in budgets. Further, the Empire State Stem Cell Board Funding Committee members will consider applications that receive a final score of 1.0 through 2.9 and they may have an opinion as to whether or not the amount subcontracted is reasonable.

19. Are we required to provide a copy of the subcontract, or the subcontract indirect cost rate, as part of the application or at any time after award?

    A. Draft subcontracts in excess of $100,000 will be requested at time of award. See the NYS Master Grant Contract Section IV.B. The sub-applicant indirect cost rate need not be submitted.

20. Do sub-applicants/subcontractors need to be registered in the NYS Grants Gateway, be pre-qualified and have an SFS Vendor ID number?

    A. Sub-applicants are not required to do so. However, at time of award, the State may require the applicant/sub-applicant to provide information the State needs to determine whether a proposed subcontractor is a responsible vendor. See the NYS Master Grant Contract Section IV.B.

21. If proposed work is to be done at a shared core facility at the applicant's institution, is a subcontract required?

    A. No. These expenses should be included in the applicant's budget.

22. Where do I place subcontractor details?

    A. Subcontractor details can be described in the subcontractor budget forms (Attachment 6) and supplemental information (agreements, contracts, memoranda of understanding) may be included in the Appendices (placed at the end of the Forms 8-15).

23. Is cost sharing allowed between the applicant and sub-applicant?

    A Cost sharing is allowed.

Submitting the Application

24. 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.

25. 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 **no later than 6pm on June 23, 2016**.

26. When is the contract start date?

    A. The anticipated contract start date is July 1, 2017.

27. 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 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. Further, the NYS Grants Reform Team provides ongoing training webinars; the webinar schedule can be found here: http://grantsreform.ny.gov/training-calendar

28. 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 watch the training videos provided on the NYS Grants Gateway website.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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 files are not uploaded you will receive an error message describing what is missing. **NOTE:** the Grants Gateway does not assess the content or file format of an upload, only if a file upload was successful.

32. 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 incorporated into the concatenated file that will be used for peer review.

33. What in the application could become public under Freedom of Information Law?

    A. The entire application can become public under Freedom of Information Law. Refer to Section V. B. of the RFA for information labeling proprietary and/or confidential information. Also be aware that lay abstracts of the awarded contracts will be published on the NYSTEM website.

<u>Application Forms</u>

34. Why are we required to make a PDF of Excel budget spreadsheets? Do you have any advice for creating these documents properly?

    A. The peer reviewers are given the PDF of the Excel budget spreadsheets to review the budget component of the application. If this PDF is not legible, your budget score will be adversely impacted. There are three steps to creating a legible PDF from an Excel file: in Page Layout, Scale must be set to 100%; in Print Settings, select Print Entire Workbook and; in Print Settings, select No Scaling.

35. 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.

36. We downloaded 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. The exceptions are RFA Attachments 1, 8 and 9, which 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 pages make it difficult for the reviewers to navigate the complete application and have resulted in different versions of the file being uploaded in those two locations. This can adversely impact the final score of the application.

37. 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 8-15). Biographical sketches of collaborators named in the workplan and budget should be incorporated to the other biographical sketches using Form 8. The biographical sketches of other collaborators may be included in the appendices. See RFA Attachment 2 for further details.

38. Why are there two workplans in the application?

    A. The Workplan Narrative – Form 12, 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 is an abbreviated version that will be included in a system-generated contract using a standardized format. Both are peer reviewed, so consistency between the two is important.

39. 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.

40. 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.

41. 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 project.

42. Are there salary limits for PIs, postdocs or graduate students?

   A. The maximum salary is limited to $199,700 per person in each budget year and is not adjustable as the federal salary cap changes.

43. 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.

44. Should our application include a minimum number of aims/goals?

   A. There is no minimum number of aims/goals. If you’re applying for the IIRP mechanism, the application should include robust preliminary data (Section III. A.).

45. 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.

46. Can I budget for travel to the annual NYSTEM Symposia?

   A. Yes, support should be requested for travel to and costs associated with annual NYSTEM symposia for the duration of your contract and may also be requested for travel and costs related to participation in other meetings (see Attachment 2).

47. May I delete non-applicable tabs from the subcontractor budget forms (Form 6-S) before I print to a PDF?

   A. After the deadline, the NYS Grants Gateway concatenates your application into one PDF file. This PDF file is sent for review by the review panel. To minimize blank pages from your application’s concatenated PDF, you should delete unused Sub-applicant Budget and Justification tabs before you print these forms to a PDF.

48. 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.

49. 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 into an Excel file that also must be converted 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 converted to a PDF file. Detailed instructions are provided in RFA Attachment 2.

50. 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.

51. Who is responsible for completing and submitting the Vendor Responsibility Attestation form?

A. It is the institution's responsibility. Your grants office can likely assist you.

52. 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 on-line year 1 budget.

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

A. There is no page limit for the appendices. See attachment 2 (page 1) of the RFA for appropriate materials that can be placed in the appendices. The appendices may not be used to exceed the page limit for the Workplan Narrative.

54. 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 Gateway help desk (see question no. 27) for information regarding the online year 1 budget. You also can contact nystem@health.ny.gov for technical assistance.

55. Will the peer reviewers make suggested changes to the budget to enable the applicant to receive a better score?

A. No. The submitted budgets cannot be modified after the submission deadline to possibly improve the budget score.

Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Requirements

56. 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 is required for application submission. See RFA Section IV.I and Attachment 10.

57. We cannot identify MWBEs on the https://ny.newnycontracts.com website that can provide the supplies and equipment we need for our research. Are there any other resources available for identifying MWBEs that we can use?

    A. No. The https://ny.newnycontracts.com website that identifies approved MWBEs 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 MWBEs. **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

58. How are the peer reviewers selected?

    A. The Department of Health's peer review contractor, the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), will base initial recruitment efforts on submitted LOIs. Once all applications are received, AIBS will complete recruitment and selection of reviewers with expertise appropriate to the proposed research.