

RFA # 1602260415
Grants Gateway # DOH01-TRAIN3-2015

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

MODIFICATION, QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

April 19, 2016 – May 26, 2016
Including an applicant conference on May 23, 2016

Modification to the RFA:

In the RFA's Attachment 7, Forms 6-10, Form 6 does not follow the formatting specified in the instructions. Sections A-D have been replaced with the following Sections A and B:

- A. Positions and Honors.
- B. Selected peer-reviewed publications or manuscripts in press (in chronological order) from a total of _____.

Attachment 7 has been revised and posted in the New York State Grants Gateway as Addendum #1 dated 5/11/16 to incorporate this change.

Questions and Answers:

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 5/13/16. The Letter of Intent is not mandatory nor binding, 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. When I upload the Letter of Intent in the pre-submission uploads section of the NYS Grants Gateway I receive an error message that three other documents (Attachments 5, 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. Attachment 5 needs to be uploaded in the program specific questions section. **To resolve the error message regarding the Attachment 5 (with red asterisk) upload a page with the statement “No upload required here per NYSDOH”** (see question 34).

Project Narrative / Workplan Outcomes (RFA Section III)

5. Why are there two workplans in the application?
 - A. The Workplan Narrative – Form 10, will be used by the peer reviewers to understand the full context and details of your proposed training program. 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.
6. Is the online workplan a summary of Form 10? Are performance measures required to be detailed?
 - A. The online workplan is an abbreviated version of Form 10. Performance measures are required to be included in the online workplan.

Eligibility (RFA Section II)

7. My institution received an award for RFA # 0906290930 Empire State Institutional Training Programs in Stem Cell Research for Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows (Round 1). Are we eligible to apply for this RFA?
 - A. Awardees of Empire State Institutional Training Programs in Stem Cell Research for Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows (Round 1) are eligible to apply.
8. Can we subcontract with an awardee of RFA# 1009240111 Empire State Institutional Training Programs in Stem Cell Research for Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows (Round 2)?
 - A. Yes, awardees of Empire State Institutional Training Programs in Stem Cell Research

for Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows (Round 2) may be subcontractors.

9. Is there a minimum percent effort required by the PD?

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

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

10. What's the difference between a co-investigator and a Co-PD?

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

11. What if my Co-PD is from a different institution?

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

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

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

13. Is joint Co-PD leadership from the same institution allowed?

A. No. One individual from the applicant institution must be designated as the PD. If one or more Co-PDs are also designated, those individuals may or may not be from the applicant institution. For definitions of the terms "PD, Co-PD and Co-I" please see instructions for the completion of the Applicant Face Page (Form 1) and RFA Attachment 2.

Subcontractors in the Application

14. 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 3.9 and they may have an opinion as to whether or not the amount subcontracted is reasonable.

15. 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.
16. 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.
17. 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 Forms 8-15).

Submitting the Application

18. 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.
19. Is there an opportunity to submit a revised application?
- A. Yes, follow the instructions in Attachment 2 for Form 9. Please note that the reviewers may not be the same reviewers of the previous application.
20. 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 9, 2016.**
21. When is the contract start date?
- A. The anticipated contract start date is July 1, 2017.
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: <https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/>. Technical issues regarding the NYS Grants Gateway should be directed to the Grants Reform Team at 518-474-5595. Further, the 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 watch the training videos provided on the NYS Grants Gateway website.
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.
26. Is there a checklist that a PD 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.
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 incorporated into the concatenated file that will be used for peer review.

28. What is the maximum file size that can be uploaded into the Grants Gateway?

A. 10MB.

Application Forms

29. What NIH data tables should we use?

A. The NIH data tables are suggested formats. You may use and modify any of these tables to accurately reflect the content of your application.

30. Do we need to include headers/footers with applicant information on every page?

A. Headers/footers with identifying information is not necessary because everything is submitted and reviewed electronically. It is advisable to include page numbers on the Workplan Narrative.

31. Are steering committee members and outside advisors considered key personnel? If so, should their biosketches be included in Form 6 after the PD biosketch?

A. Steering committee members and outside advisors are not considered key personnel. Their biosketches should be placed in the appendices (see question 35).

32. 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.

33. Why is spell check turned off on some of the application forms and why can't we cut and paste into them?

A. Forms 1-4 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 1-4 only; it is available in other form sets. The cut/paste function will work on Forms 1-4; be sure to insert text inside the gray boxes.

34. 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. **An upload is erroneously required for Form 5 (with red asterisk); do not upload the document here, upload a piece of paper with the statement “No upload required here by NYSDOH”.** 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 (see question 4).
35. Where should I include letters of collaboration (not co-PD) 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 (see question 31).
36. 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.
37. 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: <https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/> and RFA Attachment 2.
38. 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.
39. Are there salary limits for PDs, 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. Postdoc and graduate student salaries/stipends are not capped, but awards resulting from this RFA will not cover costs above those stipulated on page 6 of Attachment 2.
40. 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 8% of modified direct costs. See RFA Attachment 2 for details.

41. 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 PD and for trainees supported by the award for the duration of your contract. Costs may also be requested for travel and costs related to participation of the trainees in other meetings (see Attachment 2).
42. 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.
43. 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). Requests for carry forward of unspent funds and no cost extensions may not be granted.
44. 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.
45. Should we submit a recurring annual budget? What if our program expenses vary considerably from year to year?
- A. Complete the expected budget throughout the contract term and provide sufficient justification for all expenses.
46. 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.
47. 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.

48. 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 at 518-474-5595 for information regarding the online year 1 budget. You also can contact nystem@health.ny.gov for technical assistance.

49. Can we include salary for an administrator to oversee the training program?

A. Yes, salary for administrative support is an eligible expense.

50. Are workshops and training classes eligible expenses for predoctoral trainees?

A. Yes, as long as they are clearly related to their stem cell research training.

51. 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

52. 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.

53. 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

54. 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.