Empire State Institutional Training Programs in Stem Cell Research for Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows
FAU # 0906290930

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS and MODIFICATIONS
5/14/10 – 6/1/10
Including an applicant conference

General

1. What have been the major mistakes made by NYSTEM applicants?

   A. Common application mistakes have included: failure to complete the forms as directed; failure to appropriately justify the budget; failure to ask questions; and failure to check the final Questions, Answers and Modifications to the RFA that are posted to the Department website.

2. Will there be an additional set of Questions, Answers and Modifications be posted after June 9, 2010?

   A. We typically only post these once, but in the rare event that a second set needed to be posted, we would send out an e-Alert.

3. Is it possible that the funding for this RFA will be increased between now and the recommendations for award?

   A. This is highly unlikely due to the timing of upcoming meetings and the amount of time needed to obtain required approvals.

4. This sounds very much like an NIH T-32 application. Can you explain the major differences?

   A. In concept, there are a lot of similarities between this RFA and the NIH T-32 program announcement. However, the specifics of this RFA, application requirements and forms, review and award processes, and post-award processes are very different. In general, federal grants and grant processes are more flexible than New York State contracts and related processes.

<u>Eligibility</u>

5. Can individual fellows apply for this award?

   A. No. This RFA does not support individual fellowship awards.

6. Our institution is a non-profit organization that conducts research. Many of our faculty are associated with degree granting institutions in the area. If the Principal Investigator/Program Director has a position at a New York based college, can our institution apply to train predoctoral fellows?

   A. No. The applicant institution must be a degree granting institution if predoctoral fellows are included in the training program. See Section II., Who May Apply?, page one of the RFA.

7. Can a subcontractor for the training program be an out-of-state academic institution?

   A. Yes. Subcontracting and collaborating organizations may include public, not-for-profit and for-profit entities. Such entities may be located outside of New York State. See Section II., Who May Apply?, page 2 of the RFA.

8. Can a collaborative, subcontracted partner that is a non-degree-granting institution accept and mentor predoctoral trainees through this program?

   A. Yes, as long as the policies of both institutions allow it and the collaboration strategies clearly provide a robust training experience for the predoctoral students working in the non-degree-granting institution.

9. Can we collaborate with larger/smaller institutions to create a training program with mentors and trainees from more than one institution? If yes, can we list mentors from other institutions even if those other institutions are submitting applications?

   A. Yes, collaborations between larger/smaller institutions are permitted, as long as the program composition, scope and goals are appropriately integrated among the participating institutions. It is acceptable to include mentors from the same institution on multiple training program applications. However, care should be taken to demonstrate that sufficient research support is available to the mentor who may then be asked to accept trainees from more than one award. Also note that Section II. of the RFA restricts individuals to serving as PI/PD on only one application, and institutions to submitting only one application.

10. Is there a preference for any collaborative composition?

    A. No, there is no preference toward any program composition in terms of single institution, multi-institution, in-state or out-of-state collaborations. Such arrangements should be guided by the overall program goals and fit with the established mentor pool, etc. However, the applicant organization must meet the eligibility requirements of Section II. of the RFA.

11. Could we send our trainees to learn a technique only conducted in a lab in another state?

    A. Yes, the benefit of these arrangements should be made clear in the application text.

12. What's the difference between a PI/PD, a Co-PI/PD and a co-investigator?

    A. The PI/PD is employed by the applicant institution and is responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing the training program. The PI/PD will act as a liaison between the awarded institution and NYSTEM, and be required to fulfill reporting requirements. A Co-PI/PD has equal responsibility and authority for ensuring the completion of the entire project and may be employed by the applicant institution or a subcontracted institution. A co-investigator is a partner in the work and is necessary to complete the work.

       An investigator who is the lead on a subcontract but is not equally responsible and authorized for ensuring the completion of the entire project is not a Co-PI/PD, but is the PI/PD for the subcontract, responsible for the subcontract portion of the training program, acting as liaison for the subcontract with the training program PI/PD. See Section V.A., Application Content and Format, page 10 of the RFA.

13. What if my Co-PI/PD or Co-Investigator is from a different institution?

    A. That is fine. Just be sure that each subcontracted institution includes its own signed face page (Form 1) as part of the application. See Section V.A., Application Content and Format, page 10 of the RFA.

14. Can I list more than one Co-PI from the same institution?

    A. A single PI and more than one Co-PI may be designated. The designation of Co-PI will be honored by NYSTEM. However, on each face page, there is room for only one Co-PI's name and information; the face page should not be altered or amended to include additional Co-PIs.

15. Does the RFA require a minimum percentage of effort for the PI/PD? Does this also apply to Co-PI/PDs?

    A. There is no minimum effort requirement for the PI/PD or Co-PI/PDs.

16. Is there a minimum effort requirement for the enrolled trainees (pre- and postdoctoral fellows)?

    A. Yes. Each trainee is required to commit a full-time, 100% professional effort to the training program. See Section III.A.1., The Training Program, page 2 of The RFA.

17. Section III.A.1. of the RFA states that each slot is designated as a full time 12 month commitment at 100% professional effort. Is a trainee allowed to commit effort on research grants awarded to his/her mentor if the scope of the research grant is consistent with the scope of the research proposed in the training plan?

    A. Trainees must commit a full time, 100% professional effort 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 project 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 the stem cell training program.

18. Are there citizenship restrictions on the pre- and postdoctoral fellows?

    A. There are no citizenship requirements for the candidate fellows. See Section III.A., General Expectations, page 2 of the RFA for other trainee eligibility requirements and general training program requirements.

19. Can MD/PhD students be supported on this contract?

    A. Yes, MD/PhD students 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.

20. Is there a maximum on the number of years of support a trainee can receive from NYSTEM? Does NIH training support count toward that maximum?

    A. Section III.A.2. of the RFA states NYSTEM's intention that no individual trainee receive more than three years of training support from NYSTEM at either the predoctoral or postdoctoral level, and that no individual trainee receive more than five years of collective training support from NYSTEM. Training support provided by the NIH does not count toward that maximum. However, institutional program policies may be more restrictive.

21. Can current trainees be included in the application or should we list trainees as "to be determined"?

    A. Trainees should be listed as "to be determined." The training program award cannot supplant other available funds. ***The program is intended to increase the size of the stem cell research program at institutions and afford additional training opportunities to predocs and postdocs at the awarded institution.*** It is expected that program participant trainees will not have been identified and/or matched with mentors at time of application development. However, if the applicant wishes to demonstrate past/current training experience or describe a robust pool of potential candidates it may be appropriate to include those individuals in tabular data and discuss current training programs in the Workplan. See Section V. of the RFA and Application Forms questions and answers, below.

Submitting the Application

22. What is the application due date and time?

    A. The application must be received by 6 pm on June 30, 2010.

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

    A. Refer to RFA Section V.A., Application Content and Format, page 10. An application package in response to this RFA must contain a CD or DVD containing the required application forms, tabular data and any appendix material. The electronic files to be included are:
    - Applicant Forms 1-4 in a single Microsoft Word (.doc) file. This version of Form 1 will not be signed. The contents will be extracted and used in various ways by NYSTEM. **Also see Modifications, below.**
    - Applicant Forms 1-4 in a single Portable Document Format (.pdf) file. This .pdf should be created from the electronic Word file noted above (again, Form 1 will not be signed). This file will be sent to the peer reviewers.
    - Signed Forms 1 (Face Pages) for the applicant and all sub-applicants in a .pdf. These forms should be scanned into a .pdf after original signatures are obtained.
    - Forms 5-11, tabular data and all appendix material in a single .pdf. This file will be sent to the peer reviewers.

- No file should be larger than 12MB or be password protected.

Forms can be downloaded from: http://www.nyhealth.gov/funding/rfa/0906290930.

A complete paper copy of everything on the CD or DVD should also be enclosed. The paper copy should include original signatures on all Face Pages (Form 1).

Also see Attachment 2 of the RFA, page 41 for a list of mandatory (pass/fail) requirements necessary for the application to be forwarded to peer review. Also see Section V.B.1. of the RFA and the Awards and Contracting Process questions and answers, below.

24. How do the point penalties work?

    A. Attachment 2 also includes a specific list of and application penalties that could be assessed. Penalties are applied following calculation of the final peer review panel score. In no case will a penalty of more than 0.1 points be assessed to any one application. However, because of the limited funding available for awards, 0.1 can make the difference between an application that is funded and one that is not.

25. Are human subjects, vertebrate animals and human stem cell protocol approvals required in the application?

    A. No. These would not be required, since mentors and trainees would not be matched at the time of application. Throughout the award, contractors will be responsible for ensuring that trainees are named on approved protocols as appropriate prior to working under those protocols.

26. How is proprietary confidential information handled by New York State?

    A. RFA Section V.A., Application Content and Format, addresses this topic. Such information in the application must be marked by the applicant. Freedom of Information requests are generally not able to be fulfilled until after the contract is executed. All such requests are coordinated and processed by the Department in compliance with the law. In addition, staff, peer reviewers and Funding Committee members are all held to strict confidentiality requirements.

27. Is supplemental or corrected data in support of the application able to be accepted after the deadline?

    A. No, unless such data is specifically requested by NYSTEM.

Scope and Content of the Proposed Training Program

28. How many fellows should be in the program? Is there a minimum or maximum number of training slots expected? Is there a preference for postdocs over predocs?

    A. Each application is expected to be different with regard to size, scope, cost and number of predoctoral and/or postdoctoral fellowships offered. No specific number of training slots is specified by the RFA. However, no award may exceed $350,000 in annual direct costs. There is no preference of any kind toward a certain number of predocs and/or postdocs to be trained. See Section I.C., Available Funds on page one, and Section V.A., Application Content and Format beginning on page 10 of the RFA. Also see Budget questions and answers, below.

29. What is the recommended number of mentors to take part in the program? Can mentors be added over the term of the contract?

    A. The number of mentors should be sufficient to support the number of training slots and the overall program goals. It is expected that mentors will be added and/or replaced over the term of the contract as the stem cell scientific program of the contractor grows. Also, the program may be structured so that the number of training slots is different each year. There is, however, a maximum of $350,000 in annual direct costs that will limit the overall size of the program in any year. Also see Budget questions and answers, below.

30. Is there a preferred composition for the mentor/faculty in terms of experience level? What about executive committee members?

    A. There is no preference. The composition and structure should align with the overall goals and allow for sustainability of the training program. An executive committee is not required but again, should match the program goals.

31. Do all mentors need to have NIH and/or NYSTEM funding?

    A. No. However, there must be 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.

32. Is there a benefit to larger programs, collaborative programs, etc?

    A. No, only to the extent that a larger program may be of benefit to the overall program planned. The application Workplan should be responsive to the instructions found on pages 18 – 20 and the merit review criteria, which begin on page 23. Also see Eligibility and Budget questions and answers.

33. Is training in the Responsible Conduct of Research required?

    A. Yes, see instructions for completion of Form 10, Workplan on page 19 of the RFA.

34. Can institutional support be used to supplement portions of training slots, so that, for example, we fund 3.5 postdocs from the award and the institution funds the remaining .5 so that we have four postdocs enrolled in the program?

    A. No. While a larger stem cell training program may be the institutional goal, the NYSTEM-funded portion of that program needs to reflect whole training slots. Also see Budget questions and answers, below.

Application Forms

35. Can I use the forms from the last NYSTEM application I submitted?

    A. No, the forms for each NYSTEM RFA are different. In addition, the forms set provided on the website at http://www.nyhealth.gov/funding/rfa/0906290930 are fillable Microsoft Word forms and should be used rather than the forms included as part of the RFA .pdf file. A complete application in response to this RFA includes Forms 1-11. **Also see Modifications, below.**

36. Where are the instructions for completion of the application forms?

    A. To facilitate proper completion of the application forms, a separate .pdf file on the website contains only the application instructions. They can also be found in RFA Section V.A., Application Content and Format. **Also see Modifications, below.**

37. The instructions for Form 2 are different from past RFAs. Who should I include?

    A. The instructions now ask that applicants exclude the PI/PD and Co-PI/PDs and “To Be Determined” staff and trainees from the listing on Form 2. Please identify **all other** staff, collaborators consultants, contributors and identified mentors and faculty **who are associated with this application**. Also note that full names and institutional affiliations are critical to discerning possible conflicts of interest.

38. How much minutia should we get into for the Acronyms list (Form 3)?

    A. Please be as thorough as possible so that there is no misunderstanding by the peer reviewers or the critique editors with regard to an acronym or abbreviation used in the application. Some “common” acronyms are not common to all and others have different meanings in different fields and/or contexts.

39. What is the definition of “key personnel”?

    A. Key personnel are defined as individuals who contribute to the development or execution of a project in a substantive measurable way; they are instrumental to the success of the program. The PI/PD is always considered senior/key personnel. The PI/PD may designate other senior/key personnel if they fit the definition.

40. Who needs a biosketch?

    A. A biographical sketch (Form 8) should be provided for **all key personnel listed on Form 7 and each identified mentor and faculty member participating in the program.** Trainee biosketches are not to be included, as they will not yet be selected into the training program. A penalty of 0.1 points will be assessed if a biographical sketch for a key personnel or mentor/faculty is missing. See instructions for completing the Biosketch – Form 8.

41. Can we insert an NIH biosketch form instead of using Form 8?

    A. No. The NYSTEM application forms for this RFA are provided on the web site. See Section V.A., Application Content.

42. Who should be included in two sections of the Other Support form?

    A. On Form 9, include all key personnel, mentors and faculty participating in the training program in both sections of the form. The first section asks for active and pending research support; the second asks for active and pending training support available to the participating mentors/faculty, department(s) or program(s). See instructions for completing Other Support – Form 9. Note that there is no page limit for Form 9 and that each table on Form 9 should be expanded to capture the required information.

43. Can we use an NIH form instead of Form 9?

    A. No. The NYSTEM application forms for this RFA are provided on the web site. See Section V.A., Application Content.

44. What is the page limit for the Workplan?

    A. Sections a-f of the Workplan (Form 10) are limited to 10 pages. This does not include tables of information that the applicant might wish to present. Narrative to summarize the tables should appear in the Workplan and will count toward the 10 page limit. Tables should appear following Form 10 or Form 11, not in an appendix.

45. How should tables be used and where should they appear?

    A. In addition to completion of Form 9, other tables may be provided. Any tabular data in support of the Workplan (e.g., records of the mentors' training histories and fellows trained) should provide sufficient evidence to convince reviewers that the proposed training program will be successful. There is no page limit on tabular information. Per the instructions in Section V.A. of the RFA, this information should be included in the Workplan rather than placed in an appendix.

    The RFA suggests table formats as used in NIH T-32 applications and provides a website link (URL) on page 11 **(see Modifications, below for the updated link)**. None of these tables are required, but any of them may be used as a means to provide supporting evidence for the Workplan. Applicants will note that Form 9 addresses only a portion of the data that might be represented using the sample formats found at the URL. Also see RFA Section V.C., Review Criteria.

46. How do we use Form 11? What are you looking for here?

    A. Form 11 becomes part of any executed contract, as does the Workplan and Budget. So it should clearly and accurately represent the various measurable steps of your application (e.g., trainees identified within a specific timeframe, matches made to mentors by…). An annual cycle may be appropriate to present for some portions of the timeline. Use the narrative to describe how information is exchanged, how/when collaborators are engaged, etc. This form then provides a means by which to measure progress throughout the contract term.

<u>Budget</u>

47. How many training slots may be included in the application budget?

    A. The number of requested training slots should be correspond to the size of the intended program. Note that the annual direct cost cap of $350, 000 limits the maximum number to seven slots funded at the maximum as follows:

Predoc Slots	Predoc $	Postdoc Slots	Postdoc $	Total Slots	Total $
0	$ 0	4	$296,700	4	$296,700
1	$ 49,680	4	$296,700	5	$346,380
2	$ 99,360	3	$222,525	5	$321,885
3	$149,040	2	$148,350	5	$297,390
4	$198,720	2	$148,350	6	$347,070
5	$248,400	1	$ 74,175	6	$322,575
6	$298,080	0	$ 0	6	$298,080
7	$347,760	0	$ 0	7	$347,760

48. Do we report percent effort or calendar months on the budget forms?

    A. **Percent** of Total Professional Effort (see Form 7).

49. Can we record zero percent effort for the PI/PD?

    A. No. Directing a training program does require some effort. Zero salary could be requested for some percentage of effort if the institution is willing to provide financial support for that effort.

50. How much budget justification is necessary?

    A. Form 7 requires that the application **describe and fully justify all elements of the budget.** Also see the instructions for completion of the form in Section V.A., Application Content and Format and budget review criteria in Section V.C.

    Starting with personnel, fully justify amounts requested in each budget category. Regardless of whether financial support is requested, describe the roles and expected contributions to the project of the PI/PD and other staff necessary for administration of the program. In addition, provide a detailed justification for each 'Other Than Personal Service' (e.g., supplies, equipment, travel, consultant costs and other expenses) necessary for the administration of the program. Note that tuition costs and other training related expenses are limited as described in the RFA and be verifiable upon audit but do not need to be itemized.

51. What are the rules regarding equipment purchases?

    A. See Section V.A., Application Content, where instructions regarding completion of the budget (Form 6) state:
    "Requests for purchase of equipment may be granted if strongly justified as essential to the proposed project; a current price quote

should be included in the application appendix. During the course of the contract term, prior approval will be required for all equipment purchases that were not detailed in the application and its appendix."

52. What is the allowable Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate?

    A. F&A costs are capped at 8% of the modified total direct costs.

53. How is the Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate for a sub-applicant calculated into the budget?

    A. The sub-applicant is also held to the Modified Total Direct Cost rate established by the RFA (see instructions for Budget – Form 6 in Section V.A.). A separate Form 6 is completed for each sub-applicant and the applicant. The F&A for each sub-applicant is included in the Grand Total Costs on line 12 of the sub-applicant's Form 6. That figure is also carried over to line 12 of the applicant's budget. Thus, the F&A costs of the sub-applicants are considered to be part of the direct costs of the applicant; no award may exceed $350,000 in annual direct costs.

54. Can we budget for travel to meetings in the budget?

    A. Yes. In fact, contractors are likely to be required to travel to and participate in at least one ESSCB-sponsored meeting during the contract period (see Section III.C., Reporting Obligations). Such meetings will be held in New York State.

55. What is the allowable fringe benefit cost rate?

    A. Fringe benefit costs are not capped by the RFA. These costs are allowable to the extent that the total compensation to individual employees conforms to the established policies of the institution, are consistently applied, and adhere to the administrative rules set forth in published accounting guidelines.

56. Are the stipend amounts listed for predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees ($23,000 and $50,000) mandatory?

    A. No, these are maximum yearly amounts to be paid trainees from this award. It is expected that the total yearly remuneration paid to trainees throughout the course of this award will, at a minimum, adhere to NIH guidelines and be consistent with both the established stipend structure for equivalent appointments and with actual remuneration provided by the institution from its own funds to other staff of equivalent qualifications, rank and responsibilities in the applicable department.

57. If our institutional stipend amount for postdoctoral trainees is only $40,000 is it allowable to add the remaining $10,000 to another category?

    A. No. Page 17 of the RFA contains a chart depicting the maximum allowance per trainee. Less than the maximum may be requested, but any difference between the maximum and the actual cannot be moved to another line in the application budget or during the contract term. Note: During the contract term, and **only** under the extenuating circumstance where a trainee's health insurance costs cannot be covered by the maximum allowable training related expenses, additional justification may be submitted to NYSTEM to move unused funds from another budget line.

58. Do trainees get paid fringe benefits?

    A. Trainees are paid stipends and are not employees, and are therefore not entitled to fringe benefits. However, trainees can be provided with support for health insurance from Training Related Expenses.

59. Are budget modifications and carry-forwards permitted?

    A. The only budget line that may be modified is Training Related Expenses and then, only for the purpose of covering trainee health insurance costs as described in # 57, above. All such budget modifications will require prior justification and authorization from NYSTEM, and may take several months to implement.

       Carry-forwards are permitted only if the training calendar year for the trainee is different from the contract year. (i.e., if a trainee begins 3 months after the contract term begins, the funds to complete that slot could be carried forward to the next contract year). If all the funds for a training slot are not utilized in a 12 month period they will be forfeited.

60. If institutional support for the training program is being provided to support a larger program, is it acceptable, for example, to use the NYSTEM funds only to pay for stipends and the institutional funds to pick up the remainder of the costs associated with a trainee slot?

    A. No. The NYSTEM-contracted funds must be used to support full training slot and all associated costs up to the allowable maximums. Institutional support may be used to supplement trainee costs above the maximum, consistent with institutional policies, provide funding for additional training slots for the larger program, etc. Also see instructions for completing the Workplan (Form 10), section c. on page 20 of the RFA.

61. Page 16 of the RFA details allowable expenses. If there is an existing seminar series or training program symposium, can dollar be budgeted to support that function? If so, what budget line would be appropriate?

    A. The award may not supplant existing funds but may be used to expand or lengthen the seminar series as appropriate. Funds for such an activity should be budgeted as Administration since the benefit is to the overall program rather than an individual trainee.

62. Can course development costs be supported?

    A. Yes, through Administration. Course attendance for a trainee would be covered by the Tuition line and be subject to that maximum amount.

63. How is the budget scored?

    A. See Section V.C., page 24 of the RFA for budget review criteria.

64. Is it possible that our budget will be cut without our input during the peer review, award and contracting process? Will those cuts potentially reduce the number of predocs or postdocs we can train?

    A. If the peer reviewers and/or the Funding Committee recommend specific budget cuts, or if the budget figures provided in the application revealed a math error, yes. It is not likely that numbers of trainees will be cut unless the mentor pool does not support that number. It is not likely that a postdoc slot would be recommended to be changed to a predoc slot to reduce the budget.

<u>Awards and Contracting Process</u>

65. Section V.B.1. references a set of mandatory requirements and refers to Attachment 2. Would you explain this process?

    A. After applications are received, they are inspected for the six mandatory elements listed at the top of Attachment 2. If any one or more of those criteria are not met, the application will not pass the preliminary review and will not be forwarded for peer review. The applicant will be notified of this determination.

66. When should we expect the Funding Committee to vote on the awards?

    A. This will depend on the number of applications and the length of time it takes to complete peer review but the vote is expected in December 2010. Meeting notices are sent to those who have signed up for e-Alerts at http://stemcell.ny.gov/sign_up_ealerts.php and elected to receive Event Announcements. The meeting agendas are posted on the website at http://stemcell.ny.gov/events.html.

67. How long will it take to get feedback from peer reviewers? When will an official notice of award be sent?

    A. After the Funding Committee meeting recommendations are made, critiques will be sent to the PIs, without scores. Several administrative approvals to enter into a contract are needed before formal letters of award/regret can be sent from the Extramural Grants Administration office. These approvals generally take six to eight weeks. With that formal correspondence, the PI will receive a complete copy of the critique, including scores. The letter of award is not a guarantee of funding; a contract must first be executed before funding is provided.

68. What happens when the Funding Committee determines an application to be "approved but not funded?"

    A. The Funding Committee has attributed an approximate amount of funding to the RFA. When that funding level has been reached, they may decide to "award but not fund" a small number of applications in the event that one or more of the awards is not accepted or cannot be finalized. In such instance, the designation of "approved but not funded" authorizes program staff to fund the next best scoring application without further action by the Committee. Applicants to whom this applies are notified of this status as part of the award/ regrets notification process and are given an estimated date by which a "funded" determination might be made.

69. Can a PI submit essentially the same application to NYSTEM that it has submitted to the NIH and then decide later which one to accept?

    A. Yes. If the NYSTEM award is declined by an applicant, this would allow an "approved not funded" application to move into the fundable category.

70. If our application is not funded, can we resubmit it?

    A. The Funding Committee has not made a determination about whether to re-issue the RFA. If it does, the RFA will indicate whether resubmissions will be accepted.

71. What is a Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire?

    A. This is a tool used by the Department and the Office of the State Comptroller to assess the risk of entering into contract with an organization. It can be completed and updated on-line (updates are required every six months). See RFA Section IV.I. for details.

72. Does the Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire have to be completed for each application or is it completed once for each institution?

    A. The Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire must be complete and kept current for each institution from application throughout the contract term. This can be completed and updated on-line. In addition, Attachment 3 to the RFA should be completed and included in each application.

73. What can we do to facilitate contract execution?

    A. Upon receipt of the letter of award, Grants Offices should complete/update the Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire (see Section IV.I.) and get the Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance forms (see Section IV.K. of the RFA) ready for submission/return with the signed contract. If a current F&A rate agreement was not provided as part of the application appendices, this documentation may also be required at this time. Then, when the contract is sent to the institution for signature, it can expeditiously return all necessary documents to the Department of Health with the signed contract. The contract execution process (signatures from all required parties including the Office of the State Comptroller and the Attorney General) generally takes about six months from receipt of the letter of award.

74. When will we actually receive the funds?

    A. Funds under the contract are reimbursed in accordance with the payment and reporting schedule (See RFA Attachment 5, Appendix C to the contract for a sample). The contract must be executed (signed by all required parties and returned to the applicant institution) in order for allowable expenditures to be reimbursed. Contract execution generally takes six months from the date of the notice of award. The contract start date will be noted on the letter of award; it is expected to be July 1, 2011. Eligible expenses incurred prior to contract execution are made at the applicant's risk. If the contract is not executed, no funds will be reimbursed.

75. Is there any pre-spending allowed?

    A. No. Awardees will not be eligible to submit expenditures incurred prior to the contract start date.

76. If my institution provides funds before the contract start date can we start the training program?

A. Yes, if your institution allows – but the institution cannot be reimbursed for expenditures prior to the contract start date.

77. Can we count on receipt of the funds in this fiscal/economic environment? Under what circumstances might we not receive them?

    A. Once the contract is executed, eligible expenses will be reimbursed according to the terms of the contract. For purposes of program stability and demonstration of fiscal accountability, it is important that quarterly vouchers and semi-annual progress reports are submitted in a timely fashion. If the contract is terminated in accordance with Section III of the contract (See Attachment 5 for a sample contract), expenses incurred beyond the date of termination will not be reimbursed.

78. Are “no cost extensions,” “carry-forwards” and budget modifications allowed and are they treated in the same way as the NIH?

    A. They are allowable under the contract but are treated very differently from an NIH grant. Each must be formally requested and none are guaranteed. No cost extensions and carry forwards may be allowed only if the training calendar year for the trainee is different from the contract year. (i.e., if a trainee begins 3 months after the contract term begins, the funds to complete that slot could be carried forward to the next contract year). Budget modifications are allowable only in rare situations, to provide funds for trainee health care costs, if fully justified and pre-approved. A formal contract amendment process, which is both lengthy and time-consuming, is generally necessary. Careful budgeting and consideration of institutional support prior to application submission should reduce the need for contract amendments. Also see Budget questions and answers, above, for restrictions to carry forwards and budget modifications.

<u>Post-Award</u>

79. What kind of reporting is required?

    A. See Section III.C., Reporting Requirements. Quarterly vouchering is required. Semi-annual progress reports are required. Progress report forms and instructions will be available on the NYSTEM website, and are likely to be more descriptive of the program than of scientific progress. Additionally, participation in annual NYSTEM meetings for the PI/PD and active trainees is expected.

80. Regarding annual NYSTEM meetings, how large are they, do only funded investigators get to attend, how will information about these be shared?

    A. Each conference is likely to be a bit different in terms of scope, attendance and size. Each will be advertised on the website as well as through e-Alert notifications and direct communications with contractors.

81. Will we have to provide NYSTEM with copies of the human subjects, vertebrate animals, human stem cells and recombinant DNA protocol approvals throughout the contract term?

    A. No. However, each contractor will be responsible for ensuring the proper protocols are in place, trainees are named on them and for monitoring compliance to related laws, regulations, policies and procedures, including but not limited to those of the contract (see Appendix A-2 of the sample contract included with the RFA).

82. If a mentor's protocol complies with the Appendix A-2 in his/her contract, and a trainee from this training program is added to that protocol, does the mentor's Appendix A-2 apply or does the training program contract Appendix A-2 take precedence?

    A. The training program contract Appendix A-2 would take precedence for any work that the trainee was involved in. This may mean that the research protocols of the mentor may need to be re-reviewed to ensure conformance with the training program contract Appendix A-2. Institutions are responsible for ensuring compliance with the contract provisions.

83. Can a PI/PD be replaced by the institution if the PI/PD leaves the institution?

    A. Yes. This must be requested and approved in advance.

84. Can a mentor be replaced by the institution?

    A. Yes. This must be approved in advance.

MODIFICATIONS TO FAU # 0906290930

1. **Change to URL** for suggested formats for tabular information: **Top of Page 11, V.A., Application Content and Format – now reads:**

   "figure legends. The header should contain the PI's last name, first initial and applicant institution name, with the exception of Forms 1-4. Each page should be numbered consecutively. Figures and illustrations are included in the page limits. Appendices may not be used to circumvent page limitations. Tabular data supporting the Workplan text (in addition to that requested on Form 9) is permissible and does not count against the page limit for the Workplan (see http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm#data for suggested formats and fillable tables).

2. **Applicant Forms 1-4** have been modified and **re-posted** on the internet at http://www.nyhealth.gov/funding/rfa/0906290930/index.htm . Importantly, the modifications activate dropdown boxes on Forms 1-4.