

**Partnership to Expand and Enhance NY Connects:
A Balancing Incentive Program Funding Opportunity for Independent Living
Centers and/or Community-Based Organizations
RFA Questions and Answers
September 16, 2016**

Applying for the RFA

1. Q: There are forms included in the section labeled “Contract Document Properties” that are able to be viewed, completed, and uploaded, but there are no directions to do so. NYS IT told me that this section is not for grantees to complete. Are applicants required to download the forms (Non-Collusion, MacBride, etc.), complete them, and upload them? If so, should we upload them to that folder or to the Grantee Document Folder?

A: Applicants should download, complete and upload all of the forms included in the “Contract Document Properties”. Completed forms should be uploaded to the Grantee Document Folder.

2. Q: All of the responses to the narrative questions are limited to 500 or 1000 characters which works out to one or two sentences to one paragraph at best. How can applicants “describe experiences, “methods, “processes,” or “steps” to systems covering a large number of counties in such a small amount of space when uploading additional documentation is not an option?

A: Applicants may download Attachment 4: Additional Information Document for additional space if needed. This document can be located on the NYSOFA website under Contracts, WMBE, and Procurement Information (on the right column).

3. Q: Applicants are asked to provide an RFA number, but there is none on the RFA. Should we use the Grants Gateway number assignment to identify this RFA?

A: Yes, the assigned grants gateway number should be used (OFA01-ILC-2016).

4. Q: If an agency has not had previous experience with options counseling, should they realistically bother to apply? Namely, is experience weighted more heavily than “demonstrated comparability”? (Page 8, #4)

A: The applicant must have a minimum of five years of experience with the basic core components of Information and Assistance (I&A) and Options Counseling/Person-Centered Counseling (OC/PCC) as delineated in the NY Connects Standards, or demonstrated comparability to such. If an applicant can demonstrate comparability to this minimum requirement,

then they will be considered an eligible applicant. The application scoring is based on the answers to the application questions and the corresponding points associated with each question.

5. Q: If we already are receiving BIP funds as a sub-contractor with our local OFA/NY Connects can we still apply? Would this be considered a conflict of interest? (Page 8, #5)

A: An existing subcontractor is not precluded from applying, but must adhere to Section 5, page 10 “Conflict of Interest” and Section 24, page 19 “Contractor Responsibilities”. It states that the Contractor agrees that it will not seek payment for NY Connects functions or activities under the Agreement for functions or activities performed by staff funded under another NY Connects contract or agreement. The purpose is to add expanded capacity and additional expertise in the delivery of NY Connects functions to individuals in accordance with the NY Connects State Program Standards throughout the selected grantee’s region.

6. Q: As part of the proposal submission, do you expect to see letters of commitment from sub-contractors?

A: Yes. Letters of support or commitment from anticipated subcontractors should be submitted with the application.

7. Q: Do you accept letters of support?

A: Only letters of support or commitment from anticipated subcontractors should be submitted with the application. No other letters of support or commitment are required other than from known subcontractors of the lead applicant. Additionally, letters of support or commitment from organizations other than known prospective subcontractors will not be considered in the review and scoring process.

8. Q: Are letters of support required from the AAAs within the specified regions?

A: No, only letters of support of the lead applicant’s anticipated or known subcontractors are required. Any letters that might be included from the AAA will not be considered in the review and scoring process.

9. Q: Page 8 indicates we must describe how we will deliver services at the NY Connect site. Workplan goal 4.2 indicated we need a schedule of physical presence at each NY Connects site. Standard 1.6 says that although not mandated, co-location of ILCH staff at NY Connects is considered best practice. Do you consider a schedule of regular presence co-located or do you mean that the permanent office site should be NY Connect? Will points be deducted if the permanent office is not the NY Connects site?

A: Points will not be deducted if the permanent office of the contractor is not at each NY Connects site. A regularly scheduled presence is acceptable.

10. Q: What criteria is used to define and identify the "Population with a Disability" for the regional funding? (Part II Completing the Application, 4. Allocation Schedule, Page 22).

A: Source: American Community Survey 2010-2014: Five-Year Estimates, Table B18101.

11. Q: Do applicants need to enter into formal agreements with the AAAs as part of the submission of the RFA response?

A: No. Discussions of formal agreements are not to occur until the RFA process has been completed and the selected grantees have been notified and are under contract. The formal agreements are a requirement for the workplan, not of the RFA.

MWBE

12. Q: Is the MWBE goal applied to the total contract or are there excluded/exempt budget lines such as Personal Services, Utilities, Rent, A&OH, etc.?

A: Personal services, fringe benefits, utilities, rent, and travel are excluded costs and are not subject to the MWBE requirement. As an example, if the total grant amount was \$100,000 and \$85,000 of that amount was used for personal services, fringe benefits, utilities and travel, then only \$15,000 of the grant amount would be subject to MWBE requirements. So, when one multiplies \$15,000 by 30% this amounts to \$4,500.

13. Q: Can the MWBE requirement be waived? As this grant is primarily staff occupancy and travel. (Page 13, #4)

A: Pursuant to State regulation, State agencies may not grant automatic waivers of goal requirements on a State contract. Personal services, fringe benefits, utilities, rent, and travel are excluded costs and are not subject to the MWBE requirement. As an example, if the total grant amount was \$100,000 and \$85,000 of that amount was used for personal services, fringe benefits, utilities and travel, then only \$15,000 of the grant amount would be subject to MWBE requirements. So, when one multiplies \$15,000 by 30% this amounts to \$4,500.

14. Q: What lines in the budget are to be included in calculation of the 30% MWBE requirement?

A: Personal services, fringe benefits, utilities, rent, and travel are excluded costs and are not subject to the MWBE requirement. As an example, if the total grant amount was \$100,000 and \$85,000 of that amount was used for personal services, fringe benefits, utilities and travel, then only \$15,000 of the grant amount would be subject to MWBE requirements. So, when one multiplies \$15,000 by 30% this amounts to \$4,500.

15. Q: We intend to subcontract funding to other organizations. Ninety-five percent of the subcontracts will be for personal (salary and fringe benefits). Are they excluded when considering the MWBE calculation?

A: Subcontractors are not excluded when determining the amount of discretionary spending for MWBE compliance. Personal services, fringe benefits, utilities and travel are excluded costs and are not subject to the MWBE requirement. As an example, if the total grant amount was \$100,000 and \$85,000 of that amount was used for personal services, fringe benefits, utilities and travel, then only \$15,000 of the grant amount would be subject to MWBE requirements. So, when one multiplies \$15,000 by 30% this amounts to \$4,500.

Contracting

16. Q: My organization is currently contracted with the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) to provide NY Connects services throughout Queens County. However, on page 22 of the RFA, Metropolitan New York is listed as one of the regions for which funding is available. Do we need to apply for funding via the current RFA in order to continue our existing contract with DFTA for Queens County?

A: No.

17. Q: If another CBO applies for, and receives, funding in Queens County, how would their contract coordinate with ours?

A: The state contractor for that region, including that county, would be required to collaborate with your organization as the operational entity for NY Connects in Queens County. The purpose is to add expanded capacity and additional expertise in the delivery of NY Connects functions to individuals in accordance with the NY Connects State Program Standards.

18.Q: Under this RFA, will new awardees contract with the NYS Office for the Aging, or with DFTA?

A: The contract will be with the NYS Office for the Aging (NYSOFA).

19.Q: What specific functions would the RFA contractors be responsible for that the current NY Connects entity are not already providing? (Part I: Overview and Information for Applicants, 24. Contractor Responsibilities, Page 16).

A: The AAA will maintain administrative responsibility for the overall operation of NY Connects, including responsibility for the Long Term Care Council and the NWD Implementation Team. The grantee would be responsible for providing functions in partnership with the local NY Connects programs, while focusing on expanding these services to individuals with disabilities, particularly those with physical disabilities. The agency must function in concert with the NY Connects Hub *in each location in the region it proposes to serve*. Applicants should refer to Standard 1 for further information.

20.Q: Are the AAA as the local lead administrative entity permitted to share information about NY Connects with perspective applicants?

A: AAAs are permitted to speak with prospective applicants about NY Connects. NYSOFA has advised that any information shared should be the same information provided to any and all prospective applicants that reach out to them.

Funding

21.Q: I have a question about the NY Connects RFA, page 7 -- Section 2, Purpose of Funding. The RFA states: "NYSOFA will select through this RFA process and contract with up to 6 Independent Living Centers and/or not-for-profit Community Based Organizations to perform NY Connects functions in a specified region." I just wanted to clarify--is that up to 6 grantees per region, or up to 6 grantees total?

A: Up to six Independent Living Centers and/or non-profit Community Based Organizations applicants will be selected statewide – one per region. If an organization wishes to apply for more than one region, they must submit a separate application for each region they are applying for.

22.Q: Will DFTA or SOFA set deliverables for awardees who receive RFA funds?

A: The deliverables are set by NYSOFA through Attachment C: Prescribed Program Workplan.

23.Q: May we apply for funding only to expand the Care Transitions component of the program?

A: No.

24.Q: Will ILCs receiving Federal ILC dollars be given preference? (Page 7, #2)

A: No.

25.Q: Will this grant upon award, be administered on the state or local level? i.e., local NY Connects office or directly with NYSOFA (Page 16-17, Contract Requirements)

A: The grant award is administered by NYSOFA.

Data System

26.Q: Would the ILC be required to use the same consent scripts and Peer Place data system that the County OFAs are preparing to use? These scripts and consents are particularly not in keeping with respecting an individual's need for information. (Page 15, #18)

A: Yes, the selected grantees will be required to use the same consent processes and scripts. NYSOFA will designate the database that contractors will be required to use for all aspects of information and data collection, use, tracking, and reporting for and about NY Connects.

27.Q: Will the ILC's under this grant be required to mingle their data with the Local NY Connects office data? (Page 15, #18 and Page 16-17, Contract Requirements)

A: NYSOFA will designate the database that contractors will be required to use for all aspects of information and data collection, use, tracking, and reporting for and about NY Connects.

28.Q: In reference to RFA Part III Attachment W, Goal 3, Deliverable 3.3:

For information collected by NY Connects outside of the NWD Screen information, will the contractor utilize their own data base system or will they be required to utilize a data tracking system that is shared among all NY Connects programs?

A: NYSOFA will designate the database that selected contractors will be required to use for all aspects of information and data collection, use, tracking, and reporting for and about NY Connects.

Eligibility

29.Q: Are existing NY Connects providers eligible to apply for this RFA? (Part I: Overview and Information for Applicants, 4. Eligible Applicants, Page 8).

A: An existing subcontractor is not precluded from applying, but must adhere to Section 5, page 10 “Conflict of Interest” and Section 24, page 19 “Contractor Responsibilities”. It states that the Contractor agrees that it will not seek payment for NY Connects functions or activities under the Agreement for functions or activities performed by staff funded under another NY Connects contract or agreement. The purpose is to add expanded capacity and additional expertise in the delivery of NY Connects functions to individuals in accordance with the NY Connects State Program Standards throughout the selected grantee’s region.

30.Q: Does the lead agency for the RFA have to be either an ILC and/or a Not-for-Profit CBO for Individuals with Physical Disabilities? What criteria is used to define and identify the Community-Based Organization (CBO) applicant as working with disabled populations? In the RFA Community-Based Organization applicant is defined as both:

1. "A public or private nonprofit organization that meets the minimum eligibility criteria for this RFA that - (A) is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and (B) provides educational or related services to individuals in the community." (Glossary of Terms, page 4).
2. "The ILCs and/or Not-for-Profit CBO for Individuals with Physical Disabilities regionally contracted by the NYSOFA to work in partnership and as part of the NY Connects in each county or AAA PSA will be responsible to comply with the NY Connects State Program Standards and State NWD Operating Protocols." (Part III: Attachments, 3. NY Connects State Program Standards, Standard 1.1, Page 2 of NY Connects Standards).

A: Organizations should primarily serve individuals with physical disabilities. However, organizations that also serve individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities are not excluded, as long as they can assist individuals with physical disabilities as required.

31.Q: In reference to RFA part I section 4. Eligible Applicants:

Do CBO applicants need to serve a population that has predominantly physical disabilities? In other words, could a CBO that serves mostly people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (who may also have physical disabilities) apply?

A: Organizations should primarily serve individuals with physical disabilities. However, organizations that also serve individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities are not excluded, as long as they can assist individuals with physical disabilities as required.

Branding

32.Q: The indication is that we will be considered NY Connects and must brand and identify that way on the phone and in physical presentation. Will we be allowed to co-brand and keep our own identity for staff under this grant? (i.e. Our Name a NY Connects Partner, or NY Connects/Our Name on literature) (Page 17, 24d)

A: All grantees will be required to meet the branding requirements of NY Connects.

Workplan

33.Q: Goal 2 (pages 26 and 27) indicates services must be provided but there are no minimum number to be served. What is the minimum number of individuals to be served?

A: There is not a minimum requirement for numbers served.

34.Q: In reference to Part III Attachment W, Goal 2, Deliverable 2.1:

Is there an anticipated number of annual calls/inquiries for each region? Additionally, is there an anticipated number of people to be supported by each NY Connects region?

A: There is not a minimum requirement for numbers served.