



**Office for
the Aging**



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term
Services and Supports

Part I: Solicitation of Interest

The Implementation and Administration of the NY Connects No Wrong Door System in Seneca County

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Part I: The Implementation and Administration of the NY Connects No Wrong Door System in Seneca County

Introduction

The NY Connects: Choices for Long Term Care Program (NY Connects) was established in 2006 by the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) and New York State Department of Health. It was implemented in counties across the state with the goal of promoting seamless access to long-term services and supports (LTSS) for older adults and individuals of ages with disabilities, to enable them to remain at home and in the community.

In March 2013, New York State was awarded \$598.7 million for participation in the federal Balancing Incentive Program (BIP), a program authorized by Section 10202 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. One of the requirements of BIP was the implementation of a statewide No Wrong Door system. To accomplish this structural change, NY Connects was expanded geographically, to cover the entire state, and functionally, to serve all populations with LTSS needs. New York State has funded the operation of the expanded and enhanced NY Connects No Wrong Door system since the conclusion of BIP in 2017.

The NY Connects No Wrong Door system (NY Connects) is statutorily mandated in New York State Elder Law §203(8) and complies with federal statute prescribed in the Older Americans Act. NY Connects is a statewide, locally based system, that provides one-stop access to free, objective, and comprehensive information and assistance on LTSS available in New York State. The system links individuals, families, and caregivers, with the most appropriate services and supports, regardless of age, payer source, or disability.

All entities administering, operating, and performing NY Connects functions must comply with all local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and issuances including:

- [14-PI-16: NY Connects Choices for Long Term Care - Revised Program Standards](#)
- [23-PI-10: NY Connects Application Procedures for AAAs Implementing and Operating a NY Connects System](#)
- Subsequent updates and amendments to local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and issuances.

This Solicitation of Interest (SOI) is being released for the purpose of gathering information from parties who are interested and qualified to enter into a contract to establish, implement, and administer NY Connects in the Seneca County planning and service area (PSA). Responding to this SOI may result in a non-competitive procurement and award of a contract or agreement with NYSOFA. Any future award of a contract or agreement is anticipated to be for the program year ending March 31, 2025 to align with existing NY Connects contracts and agreements in place.

At minimum, the core functions of all NY Connects must include:

1. Information and assistance;
2. A No Wrong Door screening process consisting of preliminary functional and financial screenings;
3. Coordination with other agencies to guide individuals through the financial and functional eligibility processes, including linkages to the state-designated screening tool or other comparable tool;
4. Person-centered options counseling;
5. Application and enrollment assistance for public benefit programs, including Medicaid;
6. Care transitions;
7. Maintenance of current provider listings in the online NY Connects Resource Directory;
8. Evaluation, quality assurance, and continuous improvement activities;
9. Data collection and reporting of services, outcomes, and quality measures;
10. Confidentiality, Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act compliance, and data sharing on LTSS for individuals of all ages, individuals with disabilities, families, and caregivers;
11. An active long-term care council (LTCC); and
12. Ongoing public education and awareness campaign promoting NY Connects.

Purpose of Funding

To align with federal direction and increase access to LTSS for all populations, NYSOFA will select an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) or Independent Living Center (ILC) and contract with them to implement and administer a formal NY Connects No Wrong Door system in the Seneca County PSA.

Mandatory Minimum Qualifications

Applicants and subcontractors, if applicable, must meet the following mandatory minimum qualifications. Applicants not meeting these criteria will be determined ineligible.

1. The applicant is a New York State AAA/ILC in, or contiguous to, Seneca County.
2. The applicant will maintain a physical location in Seneca County to provide “in person” core functions when needed.
3. The applicant has experience with implementing and administering the basic core components of NY Connects, including the provision of information and assistance and person-centered options counseling on LTSS to individuals of all ages and abilities.
4. The applicant has or will establish formal partnerships with other entities in Seneca County including but not limited to the AAA/ILC, the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS), as applicable, and other No Wrong Door system partner agencies (e.g., New York State Office of Mental Health’s (OMH) local government units and the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities’ (OPWDD) regional offices).

Issuing Office

This SOI is being issued by NYSOFA and NYSOFA is the sole contact for information regarding its contents.

Conflict of Interest

During the term of the agreement or contract, the selected applicant, and employees of the selected applicant, shall not engage in any business, personal activities or practices, or maintain any relationships that conflict in any way with the selected applicant fully performing its contractual obligations.

The selected applicant acknowledges that, in governmental contracting, even the appearance of a conflict of interest is harmful to the interest of the state. Thus, the selected applicant agrees to refrain from any practices, activities, or relationships that may appear to conflict with the selected applicant's ability to fulfill all contractual obligations and terms.

If the selected applicant is uncertain about a potential conflict of interest, the selected applicant must submit a full disclosure statement to NYSOFA with relevant details for consideration and direction. Failure to promptly submit a disclosure statement or follow directives received from NYSOFA related to apparent conflicts, shall be grounds for termination of the contract.

At the time the contract commences, the selected applicant shall submit documentation disclosing any connections or affiliations with LTSS providers to whom the applicant may make referrals. If the selected applicant is part of a legal entity that currently provides or may provide LTSS through another part of the organization, the selected applicant must demonstrate that they have sufficient organizational mechanisms and policies in place to ensure that all required NY Connects functions can be administered with independence and autonomy as needed to provide individuals with conflict free assistance in the selection of providers. This includes individuals being fully informed of all providers that are available and willing to provide the services and supports needed.

Contract Period

The initial contract period is for the program year ending March 31, 2025. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how they will carry out the required NY Connects functions in a cost-effective manner.

Questions on the SOI

NYSOFA will accept written inquiries until the close of business on August 19, 2024. All inquiries must be submitted to senecacountynyconnects@aging.ny.gov with the subject line "Seneca County NY Connects Inquiry." Responses to written inquiries will be posted to NYSOFA's website at nysofa@aging.ny.gov on or about August 23, 2024. Telephone calls will not be accepted.

Information Requested

1. Cover Letter
2. Mandatory Minimum Qualifications

3. Organizational Experience and Capacity
4. Organizational Structure
5. Attestation

Cover Letter

Applicants must submit a cover letter on organization letterhead to senecacountynyconnects@aging.ny.gov. The cover letter must include contact information for the person authorized to correspond regarding this SOI, including the person's:

- Name
- Job title
- Mailing address
- Email address
- Phone number

Organizational Experience and Capacity

Please describe how your organization and any subcontractors will meet the following NY Connects requirements.

1. Providing the required NY Connects core functions in Seneca County, including, but not limited to the provision of information and assistance and conducting the No Wrong Door screening.
 - a. Ensuring the ability to provide "in-person" services at a physical location in Seneca County and in the individual's home, if needed.
2. Delivering NY Connects core functions in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.
 - a. Linking individuals with disabilities to the appropriate services and providing individuals with limited English proficiency with reasonable, timely, and appropriate language assistance to ensure full access to LTSS.
3. Establishing and maintaining formalized relationships with the AAA/ILC, LDSS, and other No Wrong Door partners (e.g., OMH and OPWDD).
 - a. Developing partnerships and linkages with other community-based organizations and key LTSS providers to increase coordination and streamline access to information and community resources.
4. Serving all populations in need of LTSS regardless of age, disability, or payor source.
 - a. Providing services to individuals in greatest economic and social need, including but not limited to, diverse populations, individuals with disabilities, Medicaid eligible individuals, the LTBGQ+ community, individuals utilizing private pay options, individuals in underserved and rural areas, and individuals with limited English proficiency.
5. Providing person-centered options counseling to individuals and caregivers and assisting them in making informed choices to meet their identified needs.
6. Streamlining eligibility determinations and application assistance for publicly funded benefits and supports, including Medicaid.
 - a. Providing information on and making referrals to the MyBenefits pre-

- screening and NY State of Health.
 - b. Submitting completed applications, following up on eligibility determinations, and linking an individual to another entity for assessment, if needed.
- 7. Tracking the time spent on Medicaid-related activities by NY Connects staff and submitting quarterly cost allocation reports in a timely manner.
- 8. Collaborating with critical pathways and supporting care transitions to home or least restrictive setting and establishing linkages and referrals to LTSS upon discharge. This includes assisting discharge planners and professional staff working in skilled nursing facilities, acute care providers, rehabilitation providers, primary care providers, performing provider systems, dementia services providers, and community-based organizations.
- 9. Conducting NY Connects public education activities and events, including events that are jointly coordinated by the AAA and ILC.
 - a. Conducting public education and outreach to individuals in greatest economic and social need, including but not limited to, diverse populations, individuals with disabilities, Medicaid eligible individuals, the LTBGQ+ community, individuals utilizing private pay options, individuals in underserved and rural areas, and individuals with limited English proficiency.
- 10. Conducting ongoing quality assurance and evaluation activities that measure the delivery of NY Connects core functions and ensuring joint AAA/ILC coordination of these activities.
- 11. Developing and maintaining a qualified staffing plan to implement the NY Connects core functions in the Seneca County PSA.
 - a. Ensuring all direct service staff providing information and assistance and person-centered options counseling are proficient in the minimum competencies identified in 14-PI-16.
 - b. Ensuring NY Connects staff participation in all state mandated trainings and other in-person and online trainings and educational opportunities, to enhance their ability to provide up-to-date, comprehensive, objective information and assistance and person-centered options counseling on LTSS.

Organizational Structure

Please describe the mission of your organization and submit an organizational structure that includes staffing and reporting relationships of all staff involved in the delivery of NY Connects functions and their respective roles and responsibilities. If your organization is part of a larger organization, please describe your role within the larger organization.