

RFA #20495 / SFS # EVT0000004 (DOH01)

New York State Department of Health
Office for Primary Care and Health Systems Management
Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development
Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health

Request for Applications

Rural Health Network Development Program

KEY DATES:

Release Date:	October 1, 2024
Questions Due:	October 15, 2024
Questions, Answers, and Updates Posted (on or about):	October 25, 2024
Applications Due:	December 3, 2024 by 4:00 PM

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I. Introduction

The New York State Department of Health is committed to promoting access to timely, quality, and effective health care for all New Yorkers. The State has a long history of successful initiatives that have improved access in communities with provider shortages. Despite these successes, challenges remain, particularly in rural areas. In addition, to provider shortages, people living in rural areas generally are older, have lower incomes, and experience higher rates of death than people living in the rest of the state. Further, most rural areas lack public transportation and are affected by geographic barriers and weather conditions that often make it difficult to access health care services.

In recognition of these challenges, the Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health, situated within the Department of Health, administers the Rural Health Network Development Program. The overarching goal of the Rural Health Network Development Program is to improve the health of New Yorkers living in rural areas by supporting the development, operation, and sustainability of rural health networks. Rural health networks facilitate cooperative and collaborative efforts among rural health providers, which is vital to improve access to essential services, enhance coordination of services, increase the efficiency of service delivery, and preserve the stability and viability of rural communities.

The objectives of the Rural Health Network Development Program are as follows:

- encourage and strengthen cooperation through affiliations, coalitions, or partnerships that enhance and coordinate needed health care services in rural areas;
- increase community involvement and locally generated, innovative solutions to health systems issues in rural areas;
- support the development and continued vitality of comprehensive, cost-effective health care systems serving rural areas;
- promote the financial viability of rural health care providers in the existing health care economy;
- increase access to health care services and fill gaps in service delivery;
- promote Community Engagement and increase knowledge of local services;
- increase the numbers of health care personnel trained and practicing in rural communities;
- strengthen the accountability of local providers for improvements in key public health and/or health care outcomes in communities they serve; and
- foster improvements in the economic position of the local community.

Approximately \$3,695,726 in State funding is available annually for up to five years to support the formation and operation of rural health networks through the Rural Health Development Network Program (RHNDP).

The Department of Health anticipates awarding a minimum of 24 contracts, each for a five-year term beginning October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2030.

Applicants should propose to use the funding available in this Request for Applications (RFA) to address the unique health care challenges of their communities in the context of health care delivery system reform and the focus on patient value and population health.

II. Who May Apply

Applicants must meet all minimum eligibility requirements listed below. Applications that do not meet all requirements will not be reviewed and will not be considered for funding.

- Eligible Applicants must be prequalified in the New York State Statewide Financial System (SFS), if not exempt, on the date and time Applications in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) are due as specified in the “Key Dates” set forth on the Cover Page of this RFA.
- Applicants must be a registered not-for-profit 501(c)(3) or a municipality.
- Applicants must propose to serve residents of a New York State rural area. Refer to list of eligible areas in **Attachment 1-New York State Rural Counties and Towns Eligible Areas**. Applicants must complete **Attachment 2 Applicant Cover Sheet** stating the area they will **serve** and budget requests and upload to Bid Factor Question 1a.
- The existing or proposed rural health network must be composed of at least three members that are separate, existing health care providers, human service agencies, community-based organizations, and/or educational institutions, each of which has its own Federal Tax Identification Number and is located in the area proposed to be served by the rural health network. Applicants must complete **Attachment 3 Eligibility Requirements Attestation** for this information and upload to Bid Factor Question 1b.
- Applicants annual budget requests must not exceed \$150,000.

III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

A. Expectations of Project

Rural health networks (also referred to as Networks) are expected to develop and sustain coordinated solutions to their communities’ health care needs. All appropriate health and human services providers from the network’s service area should be included in activities. The Rural Health Network Development Program does not directly fund the provision of health care services, but instead supports activities that facilitate partnerships to address community needs. Activities designed to meet specific public health needs may be supported under the program if they are clearly demonstrated to be of importance to the applicant’s community.

Activities funded through this RFA must be conducted in rural areas as defined in **Attachment 1-New York State Rural Counties and Towns Eligible Areas**.

The following are examples of activities that may be pursued. Other activities may be proposed but

they should be aligned with the above focus areas.

- Achieving formal affiliations among local health care providers.
- Working with regional health planning organizations, hospitals, and local health departments on community health priorities.
- Increasing efficiency and reducing duplication through joint efforts in purchasing, staffing, recruitment, data collection and interpretation, community and public relations, and strategic planning.
- Supporting services that focus on the development or implementation of value-based payment systems.
- Supporting integrated and coordinated care delivery that improves population health consistent with the goals of the Prevention Agenda.
- Increasing local health system capacity through recruitment and retention initiatives, including continuing education, especially those that complement or link with Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) and other workforce efforts.
- Integrating pre-hospital and emergency medical services with other providers.
- Integrating behavioral health services with primary care and other community providers.
- Linking health care provider systems and public health.
- Improving data collection and sharing among local providers for the purposes of enhancing the local continuum of health care service delivery.
- Developing performance improvement programs, quality measurement and reporting, providing information to consumers on the availability of services; treatment options, and the quality of care of local health care providers.
- Engaging in strategic business planning to ensure sustainability.
- Working with health care providers to develop telehealth systems to address issues of access.
- Supporting long-term care planning.

Applicants are expected to identify baseline measures associated with each proposed objective that will be tracked throughout the five-year award period. Baseline measures should be identified where appropriate, should be consistent with the proposed project's goals and objectives, and should be used to define outcomes.

An Applicant may subcontract components of the work plan to be performed by Applicant pursuant to the terms of its Application. If known, the applicant is expected to state in their Application the specific components to be performed through as well as the names of the subcontractors. Grantees will need to name subcontractors prior to reimbursement. Applicants should note that the lead organization (that is, the successful Applicant, as Contractor) will have overall responsibility for all contract activities, including those performed by subcontractors and will be the primary contact for the New York State Department of Health. All subcontractors and subcontracts will be required to be approved by the Department of Health.

B. Department of Health Priorities

All activities should achieve efficiencies by integrating health care and human services programs to meet community needs; expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of essential health care

services; and strengthen the rural healthcare system to by implementing evidence-based programs to address health disparities and enhance population health.

In addition to the above, activities supported by the Rural Health Network Development Program are expected to be in alignment with several key Department of Health initiatives as outlined below. These initiatives are designed to increase quality, improve health, and provide appropriate access to services for all communities. Networks are expected to include objectives that address these initiatives in their work plans. Activities that are not consistent with one or more of the following initiatives will not be considered.

1. Health Equity

The Rural Health Network Development Program is committed to the elimination of health disparities caused by geography, race, culture, and income.

Health equity, as defined by the state legislation that established the Department of Health’s Office of Health Equity and Human Rights means achieving the highest level of health for all people and shall entail focused efforts to address avoidable inequalities by equalizing conditions for health for those who have experienced injustices, socioeconomic disadvantages, and systemic disadvantages. Health equity is about addressing the needs experienced by individuals and communities.

Applicants should develop and support activities that will incorporate health equity into the functions of its Rural Health Network. More information may be found at:

https://www.health.ny.gov/community/health_equity/

New York Health Equity Reform

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approved the New York Health Equity Reform (NYHER) 1115 Waiver Amendment on January 9, 2024. The goal of NYHER is “To advance health equity, reduce health disparities, and support the delivery of social care.”

The Department of Health is building on the investments, achievements, and lessons learned from past 1115 waiver program to scale delivery system transformation, improve population health and quality, increase integration across the delivery system, and advance health-related social need (HRSN) services. This will be achieved through investments that focus on:

- Social Care Networks and Health Related Social Need Services,
- Strengthening the Health Care Workforce,
- Population Health and Health Equity Improvement.

Applicants should develop activities that are related to the NYHER implementation in their service areas. Given that many of these activities are under development at the time of this posting, it is acceptable for Applicants to indicate which of the NYHER areas are most important to their communities and state their plans for future coordination to meet NYHER goals and objectives.

Information regarding NYHER may be found at:

https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/medicaid_waiver_1115.htm

https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/med_waiver_1115/docs/2024-02-16_nyher_overview_slides

2. Prevention Agenda

The Department of Health is currently implementing the Prevention Agenda 2019-2024, the Department's plan for population health improvement plan. The goal of the Prevention Agenda is to improve the health and well-being of all New Yorkers and to promote health equity in all populations who experience disparities in five priority areas listed below.

- Prevent Chronic Diseases
- Promote a Health and Safe Environment
- Promote Healthy Women, Infants and Children
- Promote Well-Being and Prevent Mental and Substance Use Disorders
- Prevent Communicable Diseases

The Prevention Agenda encourages local health departments to formally collaborate with the hospitals and other providers to assess community health needs, identify health priorities and develop public health programs to meet needs. Rural health networks are required to work with their local health departments, hospitals, health and human service providers, and other appropriate community-based organizations to pursue their community's priorities within the context of the Prevention Agenda. Activities of rural health networks funded under Rural Health Network Development Program should develop, support, and build upon local ongoing efforts related to the Prevention Agenda.

More information regarding the Prevention Agenda may be found at:

https://health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2019-2024/

The Prevention Agenda will be updated over the course of the five-year funding cycle. It is expected that the activities of rural health networks funded through this RFA will be revised accordingly.

C. Performance Evaluation

Applicants should identify meaningful and measurable objectives and demonstrate how they align with the specific priorities and goals referenced previously in this RFA. The Application should indicate not only the activities to be conducted in pursuing those objectives but also the intended public health and/or health care system outcomes to be achieved.

The Application should clearly state how the applicant will monitor and measure their activities, their results, and how improvements in the health of rural New Yorkers and their communities will be advanced. Quarterly reports must indicate the progress made in executing the work plan tasks and, to the extent possible, the network's performance in achieving stated health objectives.

IV. Administrative Requirements

A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the New York State Department of Health (hereinafter referred to as NYSDOH, or the Department), Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development, Charles. D. Cook Office of Rural Health. The Department is responsible for the requirements specified herein and for the evaluation of all Applications. *See*, Section V.C. (Review and Award Process).

B. Question and Answer Phase

All substantive questions by Applicants with respect to any aspect of the RFA must be submitted in writing to **Alanna Belanger, NYSDOH, Charles. D. Cook Office of Rural Health, at the following email address: orh@health.ny.gov**. This includes Minority and Woman Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Requirements questions and related forms. *See*, Section IV.K. (Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements). Questions of a technical nature related to formatting or other minor details related to preparation of an Application may also be addressed in writing to the email address noted above. Questions are of a technical nature if they are limited to how to prepare your Application (e.g., formatting) rather than relating to the substance of the Application.

To the degree possible, each question submitted by a potential Applicant pursuant to the terms of this RFA should cite the RFA section and paragraph to which it refers. Written questions will be accepted until the date posted on the Cover Page of this RFA.

Some helpful links for questions of a technical nature are below. Questions regarding specific opportunities or Applications should be directed to the NYSDOH contact listed on the cover of this RFA.

- On-Demand Statewide Financial System Training Videos: on-demand training focused on using the new grants management features in SFS is available by logging in to the SFS Vendor Portal and clicking the SFS Coach icon available on the homepage. Additional questions? Contact the SFS Help Desk listed below:
- Statewide Financial System Technical Support Help Desk
Phone: 1-877-737-4185 toll-free / 518-457-7737
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 8pm
Email: helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov
(Application Completion & Policy)
- Grants Management Team Email: grantsreform@its.ny.gov
Phone: 518-474-5595
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 4pm
(Registration questions)

Prospective Applicants must submit all requests for clarifications of, or exceptions or changes to, the terms, conditions or provisions of this RFA or the Master Contract for Grants during the Question and

Answer Phase, which will end on the “Questions Due” date specified on the Cover Page of this RFA. An Applicant must clearly indicate the clarification, exception or change in the RFA or the Master Contract for Grants the Applicant is requesting. All questions, answers, and requests for clarification, exception or change will be published by the Department at [SFS Public Portal Homepage](#) to ensure equal access and knowledge by all prospective Applicants, on or about the date specified on the Cover Page of this RFA.

This RFA has been posted on the NYS Statewide Financial System website at: [SFS Public Portal Homepage](#) and additionally, via a link provided on the Department's public website at: <https://www.health.ny.gov/funding/>.

Questions and answers, as well as any updates, addendums to, and/or other modifications of this RFA, will be posted on these websites. All such questions and answers, updates, addendums to, and other modifications to this RFA will be posted by the date identified on the Cover Page of this RFA under “Key Dates”.

All Questions must be received by the date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA, under “Key Dates”, opposite the heading “Questions Due”.

All questions submitted by email should state the RFA Title and Number set forth on the Cover Page (RFA#20495, Rural Health Network Development Program) in the subject line of the email.

C. Letter of Interest

A Letter of Interest is **not** required for this project.

D. Applicant Conference

An Applicant Conference **WILL NOT** be held for this project.

E. How to file an Application

Applications must be submitted online via the Statewide Financial System by the date and time posted on the Cover Page of this RFA under the heading “Key Dates”.

Reference materials and videos are available for Grantees applying to funding opportunities on the NYS Statewide Financial System. Please visit the Statewide Financial System website at the following web address: [SFS Public Portal Homepage](#) and click the “Search for Grant Opportunities” tile. There is also a more detailed “Statewide Financial System: Vendor User Guide” available in the documents section under Training & Guidance; For Grant Applicants located in SFS Coach. Training webinars are also provided by the Grants Management Team. Dates and times for webinar instruction can be located at the following web address: [Live Webinars | Grants Management \(ny.gov\)](#)

To submit an Application an Applicant must:

1. Log into the [Statewide Financial System Vendor Portal](#) .

2. Click the Grant Management Tile. Next, Click the Bid Event Search tile.
3. Enter the applicable search criteria in the Search Criteria Fields. Locate an opportunity; search by Funding Agency (DOH01) or enter the Grant Opportunity name into the Search by Grant Opportunity field: Rural Health Network Development Program. You can also filter search by Status such as “available” which filters to include only the bid events that are published and open for potential bid response.
4. Click on “Search” button to initiate the search.
5. Click on Event ID link to initiate a bid response.
6. Please review the Grantee User Manual found in SFS Coach for additional steps on how to respond to various types of Bid Events.

Once the Application is complete, a prospective Applicant is **strongly encouraged** to submit their Application. This will allow sufficient opportunity for the Applicant to obtain assistance and take corrective action should there be a technical issue with the submission process. **Failure to leave adequate time to address issues identified during this process may jeopardize an Applicant’s ability to submit their Application.** Both NYSDOH, SFS, and Grants Management staff are available to answer an Applicant’s technical questions and provide technical assistance prior to the Application due date and time. Contact information for the Grants Management Staff and SFS is available under Section IV.B. (Question and Answer Phase) of this RFA.

PLEASE NOTE: Although NYSDOH and the Grants Management staff will do their best to address concerns that are identified less than 48 hours prior to the due date and time for the submission of an Application, there is no guarantee that they will be resolved in time for the Application to be submitted on time and, therefore, considered for funding.

During the Application process, please pay particular attention to the following:

- Not-for-profit Applicants must be prequalified, if not exempt, on the date and time Applications in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) are due as specified in the “Key Dates” set forth on the Cover Page of this RFA. Be sure to maintain prequalification status between funding opportunities. **NOTE:** Three of a not-for-profit’s essential financial documents - the IRS990, its Financial Statement, and its Charities Bureau filing - expire on an annual basis. If these documents are allowed to expire, the not-for-profit’s prequalification status expires as well, and it will not be eligible for State grant funding until its documentation is updated and approved, and prequalified status is reinstated.
- Only individuals with the role of “Bid Response Submitter” can submit an Application on behalf of an Applicant.
- Prior to submission, the Statewide Financial System will automatically initiate a global error checking process to protect against an incomplete Application. An Applicant may need to attend to certain parts of the Application prior to being able to submit the Application successfully. An Applicant must be sure to allow time after pressing the submit button to clean up any global errors that may arise. (Vendor User Guide).
- Applicants should use numbers, letters, and underscores when naming their uploaded files. There cannot be any special characters in the uploaded file name. Also, be aware of the restriction on file size (20 MB) when uploading documents. Applicants should ensure that any attachments uploaded with their application are not “protected” or “pass-worded” documents.

The Applicant's Delegated Administrator is able to assign, modify, remove roles for the applicant in SFS. Please see SFS Vendor Portal Access Reference Guide, [SFS Vendor Portal Access Reference Guide.pdf \(ny.gov\)](#), for additional information on roles. **Bid Response Initiator and Bid Response Submitter** are the necessary roles for applying to a Bid Event in SFS. If you are a not-for-profit you will also need Prequalification Processor for Prequalification purposes.

PLEASE NOTE: Waiting until the last several days to complete your Application online can be dangerous, as you may have technical questions. Beginning the process of applying as soon as possible will produce the best results.

Applications will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, paper copy or hand delivery.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

F. Department of Health's Reserved Rights

The Department reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all Applications received in response to this RFA.
2. Withdraw the RFA at any time, at the Department's sole discretion.
3. Make an award under the RFA in whole or in part.
4. Disqualify any Applicant whose conduct and/or Application fails to conform to the requirements of the RFA.
5. Seek clarifications and revisions of Applications, in the Department's sole discretion.
6. Use Application information obtained through site visits, management interviews, and the State's investigation of an Applicant's qualifications, experience, ability, or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the Applicant in response to the Department's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFA.
7. Prior to Application opening, amend the RFA specifications to correct errors or oversights, or to supply additional information, as it becomes available.
8. Prior to Application opening, direct Applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFA amendments.
9. Change any of the scheduled dates.
10. Waive any requirements that are not material.

11. Award more than one contract resulting from this RFA.
12. Negotiate with successful Applicants within the scope of the RFA in the best interests of the State.
13. Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible Applicant, should the Department be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected Applicant.
14. Utilize any and all ideas submitted with the Applications received, at the Department's sole discretion.
15. Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, every offer in an Applicant's Application is firm and not revocable for a period of 60 days from the Application opening.
16. Waive or modify minor irregularities in Applications received after prior notification to the Applicant.
17. Require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an Applicant's Application and/or to determine an Applicant's compliance with the requirements of the RFA.
18. Eliminate any term of this RFA that can be complied with by none of the Applicants.
19. Award grants based on geographic or regional considerations to serve the best interests of the State.

G. Term of Contract

Any Contract resulting from this RFA will be effective only upon approval by the New York State Office of the Comptroller.

It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period:
October 1, 2025— September 30, 2030.

Continued funding throughout this five-year period is contingent upon availability of funding and state budget appropriations and the Grantee's continued satisfactory performance of its obligations under the Contract. NYSDOH also reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

A sample New York State Master Contract for Grants can be found at <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/12/january-2024-contract-for-grants.pdf>

H. Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardees

1. No advances will be allowed for contracts resulting from this procurement.
2. The Grantee will be required to submit invoices and required reports of expenditures based upon

the terms for payment set forth in Attachment A-1 to its Grant Contract to the State's designated payment office (below) or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System:

Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Room 2040
Albany, NY 12237

A Grantee must provide complete and accurate billing invoices in order to receive payment of the grant funding provided for under the terms of its Grant Contract. Invoices submitted to the Department must contain all information and supporting documentation required by the Contract, the Department, and the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). Payment for invoices submitted by the Grantee shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner of Health, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with OSC's procedures and practices to authorize electronic payments. Authorization forms are available at OSC's website at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm>, by email at: epayments@osc.state.ny.us or by telephone at 855-233-8363. Each Grantee acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any claims for reimbursement submitted under its Grant Contract if it does not comply with OSC's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

Payment of claims for reimbursement by the State (Department) shall be made in accordance with Article XI-A of the New York State Finance Law. Payment terms will be: grantee will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred as allowed in the Contract Budget and Workplan.

3. The Grantee will be required to submit the following reports to the NYSDOH at the address above or, if requested by the Department, through the Statewide Financial System:

Quarterly report of performance measures, as determined and agreed upon in the final contract.

All payment and reporting requirements will be detailed in "Attachment D: Payment and Reporting", of the final STATE OF NEW YORK MASTER CONTRACT FOR GRANTS.

I. Procurement Requirements

1. General Requirements

The Grantee may procure various goods and services in connection with the grant-funded project ranging from routinely purchased goods or services to those that involve substantive programmatic work. The procurement of such goods or services, however, must be conducted in an equitable and competitive manner to promote equal treatment, efficiency, and economy in grant-funded activities.

Any Grantee that is a State entity (i.e., a State agency or political subdivision of the State) must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its general funds. All other Grantees

(private companies, not-for-profit-organizations, etc.) must have a sufficient and documented procurement process that maintains records to detail the history of procurements associated with any awarded grant project. These records shall include, but are not limited to, rationale for the method of procurement (e.g., micro-purchase, small purchases, sealed bids, request for proposals, noncompetitive/sole source), the selection of a contract type, contractor selection and/or rejection, and the basis of a contract price.

The Grantee's documented procurement process must conform with any applicable federal, State and local laws and regulations. As part of the required procurement procedures, a Grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflict of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations by officers, employees or agents of the Grantee. Such standards shall provide, at a minimum, that no employee, officer, or agent of the Grantee will participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by grant funds if a conflict of interest, real or actual, is involved. Such conflicts may arise when:

- the employee, officer, or agent, or
- any member of such individual's immediate family, or
- such individual's partner, or
- any organization which employs, or is about to employ the selected contractor, has a financial or other interest in or receives or stands to receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm being considered for a contract.

The standards of conduct shall also cover organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest arise where an entity is or appears to be unable to conduct an impartial procurement action due to relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization.

2. Bid Protest Procedures

Any contractor, subcontractor, or aggrieved party has the right to protest actions before or after the award of a contract utilizing grant funds. The Grantee alone will be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgement, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurement contract solicitations and awards.

Grantees shall have written protest procedures, which may be analogous to those set forth in Part 24 of Title 2 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, in order for effective due process to be achieved. A Grantee's specific protest procedures shall be outlined in all bid requests, request for proposals, request for applications, etc. issued by or on behalf of the Grantee concerning any grant-funded projects. In summary, Grantees are responsible for handling all contract activity protests. Except in matters of direct State or possibly Federal concern (in cases involving federally funded grants), the NYSDOH will not substitute its judgement for that of the Grantee.

3. Procurement Contract Language

Any contract concerning a grant-funded project must be a written agreement between the Grantee a the third party providing specific goods and/or services. Whether with a contractor, subcontractor,

consultant or vendor, the contract must as appropriate state the activities to be performed; the time schedule; the policies and requirements that apply to the contractor, subcontractor consultant or vendor, including the above procurement requirements; and any other terms and conditions of the grant and the master grant contract.

J. Assurances of No Conflicts of Interest and/or Other Detrimental Effects

The Grantee as well as any subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors or consultants engaged by the Grantee to provide goods or services in connection with the grant-funded project shall attest that their performance of any contracted services does not and will not create a conflict of interest with nor position the Grantee to breach any other contract it currently has in force with the State of New York.

The Grantee as well as any subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors or consultants engaged by the Grantee to provide goods or services in connection with the grant-funded project shall disclose any existing or contemplated relationship with any other person or entity, including relationships with any member, shareholder of 5% or more, parent, subsidiary, or affiliate organization, which would constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, relating to other clients/customers/agents of the Grantee, subgrantees, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or former officers and employees of the State and its affiliates, in connection with the providing of goods or rendering of services related to the grant-funded project. The Grantee shall have procedures in place for alerting the State of any such actual or potential conflicts as well as procedures to resolve the same.

K. Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, the Department recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of New York State-certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs) and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of NYSDOH contracts.

In 2006, the State of New York commissioned a disparity study to evaluate whether minority and women-owned business enterprises had a full and fair opportunity to participate in state contracting. The findings of the study were published on April 29, 2010, under the title "The State of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises: Evidence from New York" ("Disparity Study"). The report found evidence of statistically significant disparities between the level of participation of minority- and women-owned business enterprises in state procurement contracting versus the number of minority- and women-owned business enterprises that were ready, willing and able to participate in state procurements. As a result of these findings, the Disparity Study made recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the statewide certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises program. The recommendations from the Disparity Study culminated in the enactment and the implementation of New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, which requires, among other things, that NYSDOH establish goals for maximum feasible participation of New York State Certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises ("M/WBE") and the employment of minority groups members and women in the performance of New York State contracts.

Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

For purposes of this solicitation, the Department hereby establishes a goal of **30%** as follows:

- 1) For Not-for-Profit Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include any subcontracted labor or services, equipment, materials, or any combined purchase of the foregoing under a contract awarded from this solicitation.
- 2) For-Profit and Municipality Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include the value of the total amount of the Budget provided for the Work Plan in the Grant Contract entered into pursuant to this RFA.

The goal on the Eligible Expenditures portion of a Grant Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will be 15% for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (“MBE”) participation and 15% for Women-Owned Business Enterprises (“WBE”) participation (based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs and outreach efforts to certified M/WBE firms). A Grantee awarded a Grant Contract pursuant to this RFA must document good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by M/WBEs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Grant Contract and Grantee will agree under the terms of its Grant Contract that NYSDOH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required M/WBE documentation required by the Department or the OSC. For guidance on how NYSDOH will determine “good faith efforts,” refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8.

The directory of New York State Certified M/WBEs can be viewed at: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. The directory is found on this page under “NYS Directory of Certified Firms” and accessed by clicking on the link entitled “Search the Directory”. Engaging with firms found in the directory with like product(s) and/or service(s) is strongly encouraged and all communication efforts and responses should be well documented by a Grantee to evidence its good faith efforts to encourage M/WBE participation in the performance of its obligations under its Grant Contract.

By submitting an Application, each Applicant and potential Grantee agrees to complete an M/WBE Utilization plan as directed in **Attachment 5** of this RFA. The NYSDOH will review the M/WBE Utilization Plan submitted by each Grantee. If a Grantee’s M/WBE Utilization Plan is not accepted, NYSDOH may issue a Notice of Deficiency. If a Notice of Deficiency is issued, Grantee agrees that it shall respond to the Notice of Deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt. The NYSDOH may disqualify a Grantee as being **non-responsive** under the following circumstances:

- a) If a Grantee fails to submit a M/WBE Utilization Plan;
- b) If a Grantee fails to submit a written remedy to a Notice of Deficiency;
- c) If a Grantee fails to submit a request for waiver (if applicable); or
- d) If the NYSDOH determines that the Grantee has failed to document good-faith efforts to meet the established M/WBE participation goals for the procurement.

In addition, Grantees will be required to certify they have an acceptable Equal Employment Opportunity policy statement.

L. Vendor Identification Number

Effective January 1, 2012, in order to do business with New York State, you must have a vendor identification number. As part of the Statewide Financial System (SFS), the Office of the State Comptroller's Bureau of State Expenditures has created a centralized vendor repository called the New York State Vendor File. In the event of an award of a grant to a successful Applicant pursuant to the RFA #20495, Rural Health Network Development Program

terms of this RFA and in order to initiate a Grant Contract with the NYSDOH, a Grantee must be registered in the New York State Vendor File and have a valid New York State Vendor ID.

If already enrolled in the Vendor File, the Applicant should include the Vendor Identification number in your organization information. If not enrolled, to request assignment of a Vendor Identification number, an Applicant should please submit a New York State Office of the State Comptroller Substitute Form W-9, which can be found on-line at: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/vendors/2017-11/vendor-form-ac3237s-fe.pdf>

Additional information concerning the New York State Vendor File can be obtained on-line at: http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor_management/index.htm, by contacting the SFS Help Desk at 855-233-8363 or by emailing at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

M. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

The Department strongly encourages each Applicant to file the required Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire online via the New York State VendRep System. The Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire must be updated and certified every six (6) months. To enroll in and use the New York State VendRep System, see the VendRep System Instructions available at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/file-your-vendor-responsibility-questionnaire> or go directly to the VendRep system online at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/vendrep-system>.

An Applicant must provide their New York State Vendor Identification Number when enrolling. To request assignment of a Vendor ID or for VendRep System assistance, contact the Office of the State Comptroller's Help Desk at 866-370-4672 or 518-408-4672 or by email at itservicedesk@osc.ny.gov.

Applicants opting to complete online should complete and upload the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (**Attachment 4**) of the RFA. The Attestation is located under the SFS Attachments Section and once completed should be uploaded to the applicable PSQ/Bid Factor.

Applicants opting to complete and submit a paper questionnaire can obtain the appropriate questionnaire from the VendRep website, www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep, and upload it with their Application in response to the applicable PSQ/Bid Factor.

N. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits

Each not-for-profit Applicant subject to prequalification is required to prequalify prior to having the ability to submit an Application in the New York State Statewide Financial System.

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated July 16, 2014, and revised on December 9, 2023, the new Prequalification Policy will be effective as of January 16, 2024. The updated policy requires that not-for-profit organizations register and prequalify in the SFS using the updated Prequalification Application. The updated Prequalification Application and New York State Prequalification Manual for Grantees can be found on the Grants Management website at: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/get-prequalified>.

An Application cannot be submitted/received from a not-for-profit Applicant that (a) has not Registered in the New York State Statewide Financial System or (b) has not Prequalified in the Statewide Financial System by the Application’s due date specified on the Cover Page of this RFA.

Below is a summary of the steps that must be completed to meet registration and prequalification requirements. The Vendor User Manual within the Statewide Financial System Website details the requirements and job aid walks users through the process.

1) Register for the Statewide Financial System

- Applicants will first need to create an account in SFS. Applicants that need to create an account should do so at the following link: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-vendors/portal/enroll-vendor-self-service-portal>. Any questions related to SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).

If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please email helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov. If you do not know your Password, please click the “I Forgot My Password” link from the main log-in page and follow the prompts.

2) Complete your Prequalification Application

- Log in to the Statewide Financial System.
- Applicants will first need to create an account in SFS. Applicants that need to create an account should do so at the following link: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-vendors/portal/enroll-vendor-self-service-portal>. Any questions related to SFS accounts should be sent to the SFS Help Desk (HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov).
- Instructions for SFS Prequalification can be found on Page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual entitled, “! Grantee Processing in SFS”. This user manual is accessible to organizations with an SFS account under the SFS Coach Tile/Button in the SFS Vendor Portal. Select “Handbook: User Manual with Screenshots” from the Training Type drop down to locate the manual. If you have any problems accessing the manual, please contact HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov. Please see the section entitled, “Enter and Submit a Prequalification Application”, located on page 20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual, for complete instructions on how to complete and submit an SFS Prequalification in the NYS Statewide Financial System.
- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your primary New York State agency representative. The representative specific to the NYS Department of Health can be reached at: vendorresponsibility@health.ny.gov

3) Add a signatory or “Grant Contract Approver” to your account

- In order to have your designated signatory (known in SFS as Grant Contract Approver) sign a contract and have their name appear on the contract agreement you have to add the Grant Contract Approver's name to your SFS Vendor Profile. The Delegated Administrator for your organization can add the Signatory's Name by following the instructions found on page 17-20 of the SFS Grantee User Manual entitled, "Grantee Processing in SFS". This user manual is accessible to organizations with an SFS account under the SFS Coach Tile/Button in the SFS Vendor Portal. Select "Handbook: User Manual with Screenshots" from the Training Type drop down to locate the manual. If you have any problems accessing the manual, please contact HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov.

All potential Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin Statewide Financial System Registration and Prequalification process as soon as possible in order to participate in this opportunity.

O. General Specifications

1. By submitting the "Application Form" each Applicant attests to its express authority to sign on behalf of the Applicant.
2. Grantees will possess, at no cost to the State, all qualifications, licenses and permits to engage in the required business as may be required within the jurisdiction where the work specified is to be performed. Workers to be employed in the performance of any Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA will possess the qualifications, training, licenses, and permits as may be required within such jurisdiction.
3. Submission of an Application indicates the Applicant's acceptance of all terms and conditions contained in this RFA, including the terms and conditions of the Master Contract for Grants. Any exceptions the Applicant would like considered by the Department relating to the terms and conditions of this RFA and/or Master Contract for Grants must have been raised during the Question and Answer Phase of this RFA (See, Section IV.B.).
4. An Applicant may be disqualified from receiving an award if such Applicant or any subsidiary, affiliate, partner, officer, agent, or principal thereof, or anyone in its employ, has previously failed to perform satisfactorily in connection with public bidding or contracts, in the State of New York or otherwise.
5. Provisions Upon Default
 - a. If an Applicant is awarded a grant pursuant to this RFA, the services to be performed by the successful Applicant pursuant to the terms of the Grant Contract entered into with the Department shall be at all times subject to the direction and control of the Department as to all matters arising in connection with or relating to the Contract resulting from this RFA.
 - b. In the event that the Grantee, through any cause, fails to perform any of the terms, covenants, or promises of any Contract resulting from this RFA, the Department acting for and on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate the Contract by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Grantee.

- c. If, in the judgement of the Department, the Grantee acts in such a way which is likely to or does impair or prejudice the interests of the State, the Department acting on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate any Contract resulting from this RFA by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Grantee. In such case the Grantee shall receive equitable compensation for such services as shall, in the judgement of the State Comptroller, have been satisfactorily performed by the Grantee up to the date of the termination of the Contract, which such compensation shall not exceed the total cost incurred for the work which the Grantee was engaged in at the time of such termination, subject to audit by the State Comptroller.

V. Completing the Application

A. Application Format/Content

Please refer to the Statewide Financial System: Vendor User Guide for assistance in applying for this procurement through the NYS Statewide Financial System. This guide is available by logging into the Statewide Financial System and searching under SFS Coach.

Please respond to each of the sections described below when completing the Statewide Financial System online Application. Your responses comprise your Application. Please respond to all items within each section. When responding to the statements and questions, be mindful that Application reviewers may not be familiar with your agency and its services. Your answers should be specific, succinct, and responsive to the statements and questions as outlined. Please be aware that the value assigned to each section described below indicates the relative weight that will be given to each section of your Application when scoring your Application.

It is each Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials included in its Application have been properly prepared and submitted. Applications must be submitted via the Statewide Financial System by the Application deadline date and time specified on the Cover Page of this RFA.

IMPORTANT: Any material added to a Bid Factor "Add Comments" box in SFS will not be reviewed as part of a submitted Application. Applicants are instructed to use the "Response" box for narrative responses unless otherwise instructed within this RFA.

Please note there is a 2,000-character limit for each response.

Please provide any requested attachments as specified within this RFA. Applicants are instructed to upload one (1) attachment in response to any request for an attachment. If more than one (1) version of an attachment is uploaded, the final version uploaded will be the version considered for review.

See the Event Comments and Attachments link at the bottom of the Bid Event page in SFS for required attachments to be completed in response to corresponding bid factor questions, as well as informational only attachments.

Program Specific Questions

1. Program Summary (Not Scored)

- a. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Applicant Cover Sheet as Attachment 2** to this Bid Factor Question.
- b. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Eligibility Requirements Attestation as Attachment 3** to this Bid Factor Question.
- c. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **Vendor Responsibility Attestation as Attachment 4** to this Bid Factor Question.
- d. Applicants are instructed to complete and upload **MWBE Requirement Forms as Attachment 5** to this Bid Factor Question.
- e. State the mission of the rural health network and briefly summarize the proposed project, including all major activities that will be undertaken to meet the objectives of the Rural Health Network Development Program.

2. Statement of Need (Maximum Score: 10 points)

a. Geographic Service Area

Describe the Network’s geographic service area and how it has been determined.

b. Service Area Demographics and Needs

Describe the service area’s population, specific health care needs, and problems that will be addressed by the Network. This response should include health disparities and references to existing local health plans and community needs assessments such as municipal public health services plan or hospital community service plans. The most recently available data should be used.

c. Service Area Health Care Capacity

Describe the current health care capacity landscape in the service area including providers of acute, primary, urgent, and long-term care. This response should also include a review of the challenges faced by providers. Quantitative and qualitative data should be used to support the discussion where possible.

3. Organizational Overview and Experience (Maximum Score: 15 points)

a. Background, Experience, and Qualifications

This section should discuss the organization of the Rural Health Network and the Applicant organization. Organizational information for both the applicant organization and the Rural Health Network should be discussed if applicable.

- i. Provide the Applicant’s brief organizational profile and include the following:

- organization name,
- description of organization,
- state of incorporation,
- date of incorporation,
- number of years in operation,
- number of employees (stated as full-time equivalents) who support the Rural Health Network's activities.

ii. Describe the Rural Health Network's presence in the community and how this enhances the capacity to meet the goals of the deliverables of this grant.

b. Organizational Structure

i. Describe the Rural Health Network's organizational structure including the essential staff that will be responsible for program compliance and completion of activities. Staff qualifications, applicable credentials, and expertise should be included in this response.

ii. Applicants are instructed to include a list of the Rural Health Network's Board of Directors including affiliation to this bid factor question. Please complete and upload **Attachment 6: Board of Directors** to this Bid Factor Question.

c. Governance Structure

Describe the network's governance structure, decision-making process, and operating policies and procedures. Describe how members of the Board of Directors are selected.

d. Strategic Planning Process

Describe the network's strategic planning process including a discussion of how goals and priorities are identified.

4. Organizational Capability and Program Readiness (Maximum Score: 20 points)

a. Description of Capability

i. Describe the ability of the applicant to carry out the project.

ii. Describe the Rural Health Network's capability and resources to ensure timely start-up and implementation of the proposed project.

iii. Describe how the Rural Health Network prioritizes health equity in its work and provide an example.

b. Description of Past Success - History of Collaboration

Describe the history of collaboration between members and provide examples of projects previously funded by the Rural Health Network Development Program or through other sources including outcomes.

c. Leverage Other Resources

Describe the Rural Health Network's plans to leverage other resources to make the project

more cost effective, including the types of resources. Do not include specific costs or amounts in the response.

5. Strategy to Address Needs (Maximum Score: 20 Points)

a.

i. Describe the proposed objectives and activities, how they will meet the needs identified in Service Area Demographics and Needs, and how they relate to the Rural Health Network's mission and goals. Activities should be evidenced based and tied to specific needs. Data should be used to support activities wherever possible. This section should also include a discussion of how the proposed objectives and activities meet the priority areas described in Section of this III.B. of this RFA. This section is required to be consistent with the activities in the Work Plan.

ii. Describe how barriers to successful implementation will be identified and how mid-course corrections will be made if needed. Describe implementation barriers and challenges, mitigation efforts, and why similar challenges will not occur for any proposed activities.

iii. Describe proposed activities related to maternal and infant mortality and/or substance abuse disorders prevention. Proposed activities are required to result in interventions that will address maternal and infant mortality and/or substance abuse disorder prevention. These activities are required to be evidence based and include baseline measures and targets for improvement over the five-year funding cycle.

Any activities that seek to address needs may include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Conduct an assessment of current need including an analysis of relevant data.
- Conduct an assessment of community capacity.
- Identify gaps in service delivery.
- Develop programs to meet need.
- Identify appropriate network partners and/or providers to implement programs.
- Identify resources to implement programs.

6. Budget (Maximum Score: 20 points)

Applicants are instructed to complete Year 1 (October 1, 2025 – September 30 2026) of the budget online in SFS. All costs must be related to the provision of Rural Health Network Development Program, and be consistent with the scope of services, reasonable, and cost effective. Justification for each cost should be submitted in narrative form. For all existing staff, the Budget Justification must delineate how the percentage of time devoted to this initiative has been determined. THIS FUNDING MAY ONLY BE USED TO EXPAND EXISTING ACTIVITIES OR CREATE NEW ACTIVITIES PURSUANT TO THIS RFA. THESE FUNDS MAY NOT BE USED TO SUPPLANT FUNDS FOR CURRENTLY EXISTING STAFF ACTIVITIES.

Any ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items.

All costs must adhere to the following guidelines when completing the online budget:

- a. Applications with budgets that exceed \$150,000 will not be accepted.
- b. The amount requested in the budget should be reasonable and cost effective, relate directly to the activities described in the Application, and be consistent with the scope of services outlined in this RFA. Budgets must relate directly to activities described in the work plan.
- c. Eligible costs include but are not limited to:
 - Personnel
 - Fringe
 - Contractual Services
 - Travel
 - Equipment
 - Space/Property and Utilities
 - Operating Expenses
 - Other
- d. Ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items. Ineligible budget items include the following.
 - Budget items related to the direct provision of health care services.
 - Budget items that are not related to the Rural Health Network's specific objectives and activities.
 - Budget items that are not related to the Department of Health's priorities as discussed in Section III. of this RFA.
 - Budget items that are not fully justified.
 - Administrative or indirect costs as a percentage.
 - Mini-grants, or other funds, to Rural Health Network members.
 - Mini-grants, or other funds, to Rural Health Network members or other organizations for said organization's existing activities.
 - Incentives or promotional items to encourage program participation.
 - Purchase, construction, renovation, or improvement of facilities or real property.
 - Purchase or lease of vehicles.
 - Equipment exceeding 5% of the total budget.
 - Sponsorship of events that are not directly related to program activities.
 - Food and beverages.
 - Miscellaneous items.
 - Undefined operating expenses.
 - Undefined other expenses.

- e. All budgeted positions should be consistent with the proposed activities. The budget justification must delineate how the percentage of staff time devoted to this project has been determined and provide a detailed description of roles and responsibilities. For partially funded positions, the percent effort being requested should be reasonable for the responsibilities being proposed in the project.
- f. The budget narrative should also include an explanation of how amounts were determined for each line item. Budget items that are not fully justified and explained in the narrative may be removed from the budget prior to contracting.
- g. The budget should include all subcontracts and/or consultants with contractual amounts and methodologies.

7. Work Plan (Maximum Score: 15 points)

Please note that the Work Plan for this RFA is limited to the following: 30 Objectives, 60 Tasks, and 90 Performance Measures. The Statewide Financial System does not keep a running count of these. Applicants will be responsible for ensuring that they stay within these limits. **If you exceed these limits, it will jeopardize your ability to submit your Application.**

Applicants are instructed to complete the Work Plan for the first 12-month period beginning on October 1, 2025 and ending on September 30, 2026 online in the SFS application. Applicants should include the name of the Rural Health Network on the Project Name line.

Objectives, Tasks and Performance Measures

Insert the objectives, tasks, and performance measures that will be achieved in year 1 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026). There should be at least 3 objectives with corresponding tasks and performance measures. The work plan should only include items that are funded explicitly with the funds received through this RFA. All activities are required to be related to one or more of the Department’s priorities as described in Section III.B. of this RFA.

Timeline

Include a timeline, within each objective and task, for initiating and competing the task that can be assessed for reasonableness.

Performance Measures

Tasks must have measures. Measures may be process or outcome oriented. Process measures are measures of performance and should provide feedback that can be acted upon midstream. Process measures show the progress of an activity. Outcome measures indicate whether completed activities affected the objective. In most cases, outcome measures should be quantitative. Outcomes that are qualitative should be justified. Insert the process and/or outcome measures for each activity and include baseline data where appropriate.

Performance measures must clearly indicate if an activity achieved its purpose.

Grantees (awarded Applicants) may be asked to modify work plans prior to initiation of the contract to

address issues identified during the review process and the amount of funding awarded.

B. Freedom of Information Law

All Applications may be disclosed or used by the NYSDOH to the extent permitted by law. NYSDOH may disclose an Application to any person for the purpose of assisting in evaluating the Application or for any other lawful purpose. All Applications will become State agency records and will be available to the public in accordance with the New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). **Any portion of an Application that an Applicant believes constitutes proprietary information entitled to confidential handling, as an exception to the general rule regarding the availability to the public of State agency records under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Law, must be clearly and specifically designated in the Application.** If NYSDOH agrees with the Applicant's claim regarding the proprietary nature of any portion of an Application, the designated portion of the Application will be withheld from public disclosure. Blanket assertions of proprietary material will not be accepted, and failure to specifically designate proprietary material may be deemed a waiver of any right to confidential handling of such material.

C. Review & Award Process

An Application which meets ALL of the guidelines set forth above will be reviewed and evaluated competitively by NYSDOH Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health. An Application that does not meet the minimum criteria (PASS/FAIL) will not be evaluated. An Application that does not provide all required information will be omitted from consideration.

In the event of a tie score among Applicants, the determining factor for a grant award will be the Applicant with the highest score in the Strategy to Address Needs. The next determining factor will be Organizational Capability and Program Readiness if a tie remains.

Applications with minor issues (for example, an Application missing information that is not essential to timely review and would not impact review scores) MAY be processed and evaluated, at the discretion of the State, but any issues with an Application which are identified by the Department **must** be resolved prior to time of award. An Application with unresolved issues at the time award recommendations are made will be determined to be non-responsive and will be disqualified.

A minimum score of 70 out of a possible 100 points is required to be considered for funding. The highest scoring applications up to total maximum available funding will be awarded. The review process will **not** use regional criteria to award grants.

If changes in funding amounts are necessary for this initiative or if additional funding becomes available, funding will be modified and awarded in the same manner as outlined in the award process described above.

Applicants will be deemed to fall into one of three categories: 1) not approved, 2) not funded due to limited resources, and 3) approved and funded. Not funded Applications may be awarded should additional funds become available.

Once awards have been made pursuant to the terms of this RFA, an Applicant may request a debriefing of their own Application (whether their Application was funded or not funded). The debriefing will be limited only to the strengths and weaknesses of the Application submitted by the Applicant requesting a debriefing and will not include any discussion of ANY OTHER Applications. Requests for a debriefing must be received by the Department Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health no later than fifteen (15) Calendar days from date of the award or non-award announcement to the Applicant requesting a debriefing.

To request a debriefing, please send an email to the Charles D. Cook Office of Rural at orh@health.ny.gov. In the subject line, please write: *Debriefing Request Rural Health Network Development Program*.

Unsuccessful Applicants who wish to protest the award(s) resulting from this RFA on legal and/or factual grounds, should follow the protest procedures established by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). These procedures can be found on the OSC website at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-agencies/gfo/chapter-xi/xi17-protest-procedures> (Section XI. 17.)

VI. Attachments

- Please note that ALL Attachments to this RFA are accessed under the “**Attachments Section**” of the Statewide Financial System online Application/Bid Event and are not included in the RFA document. In order to access the online Application/Bid Event and other required documents such as the Attachments, a prospective Applicant must be registered and logged into the NYS Statewide Financial System. Attachments that are requested to be uploaded as part of an Application/Bid Event response will be requested in individual corresponding Bid Factors (See Section V.A., “Program Specific Questions(PSQ)/Bid Factors”).
- **ALL applicants are instructed to verify each required attachment that has been uploaded to the application.** To check attachments, Applicants are instructed to click "View" in the SFS application for each uploaded attachment to ensure that the attachment and all of its applicable information/data is viewable in its final format.
- **PDF Attachments – due to system constraints, PDF attachments cannot be uploaded with annotations, editable fields, or JAVA/active controls. Please submit PDFs that are read-only.**

Attachment 1:	New York State Rural Counties and Towns Eligible Areas*
Attachment 2:	Applicant Cover Sheet **
Attachment 3:	Eligibility Requirements Attestation **
Attachment 4:	Vendor Responsibility Attestation**
Attachment 5:	MWBE Requirement Forms**
Attachment 6:	Board of Directors**

*This attachment is included for applicant information only. This attachment does not need to be completed.

**These attachments are required and must be completed by the Applicant and uploaded in the Bid factor where requested.