

**NYS Department of State  
Division of Community Services  
Workforce Development Discretionary Program  
Request for Applications # 11-CSBG-03**

**RFA Updates**

- 1. All applicants (both CAAs and CBOs) must be private not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organizations incorporated and operating within New York State.*
- 2. All applications must include a proposed local share match made in good faith. Pursuant to Executive Law § 159-j, following notice of award, successful applicants may apply to the Secretary of State for a waiver of the local share requirement based upon good cause shown. The Secretary of State reserves the right to review and approve or deny all such local share waiver requests.*
- 3. The sample contract included in the RFA package is for informational purposes only and the specific terms of the contracts and forms contained therein may be subject to change.*
- 4. Please note that there is no section X in the RFA. There was a numbering error, causing the sections to go from IX to XI in the posted document.*

**Questions and Answers**

*The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions submitted by potential applicants and are hereby incorporated into RFA #11-CSBG-03, issued on July 6, 2011. In the event of any conflict between the RFA and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.*

**General Questions and Application Forms**

Question 1: May agencies submit applications electronically?

Answer 1: No. Electronic Applications will not be accepted. Please see page 4, Section C of the RFA.

Question 2: How many proposals can one agency submit?

Answer 2: An agency may only submit one application.

Question 3: Will all applications that are successful be fully funded at the amount requested?

Answer 3: The intent is to fund all applications on the merit of the submission and based on eligible proposed expenditures. It is anticipated that most successful applicants will be funded at approximately the amount requested. It should be noted that the Department of State has reserved the right to negotiate with successful applicants within the scope of the RFA in the best interests of the state, to make an award under the RFA in whole or in part, and to withdraw the RFA at any time, at the Department's sole discretion.

Question 4: How many grants do you anticipate awarding?

Answer 4: Page 10, Section IX of the RFA states, "Approximately 20 grants of up to \$100,000 per award will be made based on rank order of final scores, until allocated funds are fully distributed. DOS reserves the right to offer partial or no funding to any applicant if its application cannot be fully funded within the funds remaining. DOS reserves the right to not fund applications with a final score below 70 points. In the event that any awardee fails to satisfactorily negotiate a proper contract, funding will be awarded to the next highest-scoring applicant."

Question 5: Is the project period only 9-months - Dec. - Sept 30?

Answer 5: The project period will be 10 months: from December 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012.

Question 6: (a) Is there a page limit for the narrative section?

Answer 6: All parts of the application have applicable page limitations noted. Please also note that the Logic Model (Part D) has no page limitations as robust descriptions are encouraged. There is no allowance for additional pages regarding the Budget forms within the Application (Part F, Forms B-1 through B-5).

Question 7: (b) Please confirm that resumes for key staff and organizational charts are in addition to the 4 allowable pages for Part C3.

Answer 7: Resumes for key staff and organizational charts are in addition to the 4 allowable pages for Part C3, so they will not count against the 4-page limitation for that Part.

Question 8: (c) Will linkages or support letters from community partners be reviewed?

Answer 8: This RFA does not request or require the submission of letters of support from community partners. If sent as part of the application, they will not positively or negatively affect scoring or awards.

Question 9: (a) I missed the ROMA training seminar; will there be another training in the near future?

Answer 9: There will not be another training seminar provided prior to August 10, 2011. For additional information regarding ROMA you may wish to view the content of the following website: <http://www.roma1.org/>. NYSCAA webcast and recorded the ROMA training provided on July 19, 2011. Please contact NYSCAA at (518) 690-0491 or check the NYSCAA website at [www.nyscaaonline.org](http://www.nyscaaonline.org), as an archive of this training is expected to be posted on that website in the near future.

Question 10: (b) The RFA references (p. 3) familiarity with ROMA and the NPI: if the agency does not have experience with ROMA and NPI, is the agency capacity to report just as good?

Answer 10: ROMA is the required reporting format for programs and services conducted with Community Services Block Grant funds. Applications will be scored based on the information presented.

Question 11: I did not read anything about performance funds, how will the performance be measured for grantees? Is this where ROMA comes in to place?

Answer 11: Periodic reporting based on the ROMA framework using NPIs and listing specific outcomes achieved, as well as programmatic and fiscal monitoring through site visits and other reviews is the manner in which performance will be measured for projects funded under this RFA.

Question 12: Can my agency apply for funding simply to extend an existing CSBG Discretionary program?

Answer 12: No. This RFA is separate and distinct from previous discretionary programs. Permissible activities must be within the scope of this RFA to be eligible for funding. Project funding from a previous year will not be carried forward.

Question 13: How often are reports required by NYS if the grant is awarded?

Answer 13: All funded projects will be required to submit periodic fiscal and programmatic reports. Funded projects will also be subject to programmatic and fiscal monitoring and on-site review. Please see sample Contract Appendix C for an indication of the anticipated reporting requirements.

Question 14: The website says that CSBG funds are awarded to CAAs only, but this RFA also includes CBOs as potential grantees; is that true for this RFA only, or am I misunderstanding the info in the DOS website?

Answer 14: The CSBG funds used for this RFA are permitted to be distributed to both CAAs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). For additional information about how CSBG funds are awarded in New York State, you can return to our website; in the section on Reports and Plans, you can review the most recent NYS Management Plan: <http://www.dos.ny.gov/dcs/documents.htm>.

Question 15: Other than income eligibility, are there any other eligibility requirements for a client seeking services through this grant? For example, would we have to determine an immigrant client's legal status (documented vs. undocumented) before providing services?

Answer 15: To be eligible for CSBG services within New York State, clients must be at or below 125% of the federal poverty line as determined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) based on the most recent federal census data and as revised annually (or more frequently) by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS Office of Community Services Memorandum No. 30 states that non-citizens, regardless of their alien status, should not be banned from CSBG programs based solely on their alien status unless the exclusion is authorized by another statute.

Question 16: (a) Should applicant agencies complete and include the sample contract documents that are cited as 'reference documents' in the RFA?

Answer 16: No. The sample contract documents are for information only.

Question 17: (b) Please confirm that the Workplan - Appendix D is not intended to be submitted with the application.

Answer 17: Applicant agencies should not complete or include any of the sample documents- referred to as RFA *Attachment 5*. These are reference documents to be used for information purposes only.

Question 18: Does a NYS OTDA contract serving non-TANF-receiving Food Stamp recipients and/or TANF eligible (200% of poverty) individuals qualify as *providing federally - or state-funded services to low-income persons*? In other words, how is a *low-income person* defined with respect to the contracts serving low-income persons and low-income communities?

Answer 18: Although CSBG funds must be used to provide services to individuals at or below 125% of the federal poverty line, an organization may consider itself as providing federally or state funded services to low-income persons if the federal or state funded service is directed to people at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

## Eligibility

Question 19: May local not-for-profit entities that are or were a delegate agency of a CSBG-designated eligible entity (CAA) respond to this RFA?

Answer 19: Yes. Agencies which are not-for profit 501 (c)(3) entities, and which are or were delegate agencies of a larger entity (such as a CAA) receiving CSBG funds may independently apply for RFA funding so long as they meet the RFA criteria.

Question 20: Are current recipients of CSBG Discretionary funds eligible to apply for FFY 2012 Discretionary funds?

Answer 20: Yes. Previous awards have no bearing on this year's funds. Agencies deemed eligible may apply for this funding opportunity.

Question 21: Are municipal/governmental entities eligible to apply for CSBG Discretionary Funds?

Answer 21: No. Governmental entities would not be eligible for discretionary funds through the RFA, as they would not fit the definition of community based organizations found in NYS executive law '159-e(4) and 159-i.

Question 22: Our organization would like to confirm whether or not a community-based adult and continuing education program offered by a college would be eligible to apply if it meets all other eligibility requirements.

Answer 22: The organizational applicant for funding must meet all the requirements of this RFA to be eligible for award. See page 4 of this RFA.

Question 23: (a) Does our organization qualify as a Community-based organization if its designated community is a county in New York State and where more than half of its Board members reside in that county? Our agency operates out of 3 locations in the county, and we serve people throughout the county.

Answer 23: As defined in Executive Law section 159-e, a "Community based organization shall mean any organization incorporated for the purpose of providing services or other assistance to economically or socially disadvantaged persons within its designated community. Such organization must have a board of directors of which more than half of the members reside in such designated community." A designated community may be a county.

Question 24: (b): Can a CBO apply for and receive a workforce development grant if fewer than 51% of its Board members live in its designated service area?

Answer 24: No. To be a CBO, more than half of the organizations directors must reside in its designated community/service area.

### **Local Share, In-Kind**

Question 25: (a) When the RFA talks about a match, are there any restrictions on where the 25% match comes from? Can it be in kind contributions?

Answer 25: In kind contributions can form the basis of a match under this RFA. For information regarding the applicable criteria for cost sharing or matching, please review OMB Circular A-110 Subpart C Section 23, available at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars\\_a110/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a110/).

Question 26: (b) Does the source of the 25% in match funds matter?

Answer 26: Yes. The source is a determining factor in the allowability of a match under OMB Circular A-110.

Question 27: (c) May Local Share include funds administered by NYC agencies such as DOL or DYCD which are supported by city or state funds?

Answer 27: Local share for CSBG services may include funds from State or municipal entities. Federal funds are excluded, however.

Question 28: (d) If the applicant has a NYS or NYC contract for workforce development services that may be Federal pass through funds, may this be used to meet the local share matching requirement?

Answer 28: Federal funds, including "pass-through," cannot be counted as local share under this RFA.

Question 29: (e) Can state funds be used as local match?

Answer 29: State funds may be used as a local match for CSBG funded programs.

Question 30: Can cash be used as In-kind?

Answer 30: Acceptable in-kind expenditures are those that directly support grant-funded activities which are not federal funds. Please note that any cash used as in-kind must be indicated in the appropriate space on form Budget B-3. Agencies must account for all funds that become part of their discretionary program.

Question 31: Can an application show local share greater than the required 25%?

Answer 31: Yes. Applications can show a local share greater than the required 25%.

Question 32: (a) Our agency will not be able to make the 25% required local match for the RFA because the county has cut back on our funding. Can I still submit a proposal and request a waiver from the Secretary of State?

(b) We will be submitting a proposal and are concerned with meeting the local share. Is a waiver available? Does one get submitted with the RFP or at the end of the contract period with the UFS?

(c) I understand that no Federal Funds may be applied to the local share of this grant, however, is the total 25% match mandatory or will the grant application be automatically disqualified if only a portion of the local share is obtained and a waiver requested?

Answer 32: Please see RFA Update number 2 on page 1 of these Questions & Answers, above. This RFA requires submission of an application demonstrating a proposed 25% local share match. Each application must provide a proposed 25% local share match in order to be reviewed as complete, pursuant to the terms of the RFA. Following scoring and award, and during the contracting process, pursuant to NY Executive Law section 159-j, the Department of State reserves the right to waive the local share requirement on a case-by-case basis upon an application made and upon good cause shown by the recipient.

Question 33: Is the 25% required Local Share of the grant request/allocation as indicated on page 9 of 14 (Introduction Section) or 25% of the total project costs - as indicated on page 9 of 13? (Application Section).

Answer 33: A local share equivalent to 25% of the federal CSBG funds requested is required.

Question 34: Can you provide more specificity about what constitutes an eligible "match" (e.g. what we spend on rent, telephone, computers, bookkeeping, insurance, etc.?)

Answer 34: Please review the Funding Restrictions/Guidelines as stated in section VIII of this RFA. Please also review the cost sharing and match requirements provided in OMB Circular A-110, Subpart C, Section 23 available at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars\\_a110/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a110/)

Question 35: Are there any restrictions on sub-contracting a portion of a contract?

Answer 35: Delegate agency agreements (also known as subcontract agreements) must be approved by DOS prior to contract. Vendor contracts necessary to carry out contracted services are not restricted so long as appropriate procurement practices are followed. All subcontractor's would be required to meet the same requirements and standards (performance, reporting, etc.) as the contractor.

### **Logic Model, Work Plan, and Budgets**

Question 36: (a) On the sample logic model form in column 2, Resources, what does the *Total Other Cash* refer to? Should this match the total amount listed in Part E1 - "List of other Sources of Funds"?

(b) In the Logic Model - Resources Column (4) - what belongs in the Local Share Cash, In-Kind, Total Other Cash lines? Does In-Kind plus the Local Share Cash line combine to include the 25% requirement?

Answer 36: Local Share Cash plus Local Share in-kind, when combined, should equal at least 25% of the requested CSBG Discretionary amount. Total other cash refers to any cash resources, above and beyond funds used to meet the 25% Local Share requirement, which will be used to support the proposed project. In Part E1, applicants should identify all sources and amounts of funding, above and beyond funds used to meet the 25% Local Share requirement, that will be used to support the proposed project. Dollar amounts listed in Part E1, when added, should equal the total dollar amount identified in PART E - Project

Costs and Resources under “Amount of other source(s) of funding (if any) for project and amounts.”

Question 37: (a) If an agency applies for funding to use a Workforce grant to expand and/or enhance an existing program; (1) should the budget and budget narrative only include expenses to be paid with CSBG funds, or for the whole project (which may be on a different funding cycle)? and (2) should outcomes and the logic model only apply to the CSBG-funded portion of the project?

(b) In the Outcome column(4) of the Logic Model: should this include the program as a whole (including *Total Other Cash*) or only the numbers expected to be served using CSBG plus the Local Share funds?

Answer 37: The budget and budget narrative should include expenses that will be paid for with the requested CSBG funds and Local Share funds, and which will be incurred between December 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012. The Logic Model should identify outcomes anticipated to be achieved within the project period as a result of the proposed project. The nature and scope of each proposed project is to be defined by the applicant, however, the Logic Model should reflect a reasonable relationship between the total resources used to support the project and expected outcomes.

Question 38: The *Federal Fiscal Year* fields in Section B-1 through B-5 are pre-filled with “2012”. Are these Discretionary funds in fact, associated with FFY 2012, which is completely uncertain at this time, or are they actually associated with FFY 2011 funds?

Answer 38: The Federal Fiscal Year fields in the Budget refer to the federal fiscal year in which the activities and expenditures take place.

Question 39: To measure and report outcomes, must applications (1) select one of the 6 National Performance Indicator Goals, or (2) select any one of the individual National Performance Indicators listed underneath the Goals?

Answer 39: Applicants must select one or more Goals, note the related NPI within that goal, and report on the outcome of the proposed service or activity. All NPIs are related to the specific goal which they illustrate.

Question 40: (a) In Part D, is the Project Description the same as the Logic Model?

(b) Do we need to submit a very detailed logic model OR a narrative and a logic model?

Answer 40: The Project Description is part of the Logic Model; taken together, columns 1-6 address the scope of the project. The completed Logic Model should fully and accurately describe the proposed project. A separate narrative is not necessary as part of the Logic Model. Application Part C2 requests a Project Summary, which also describes the overall project.

## National Performance Indicators

Question 41: Can DOS provide guidance in selecting the appropriate National Performance Indicators?

Answer 41: No. DOS cannot provide guidance on an individual basis regarding selection of performance indicators to applicant agencies. Applicants are required to identify appropriate National Performance Indicators as part of the grant application process.

Question 42: (a) Do *Community Action employment initiatives* as stated in the National Performance Indicators refer to CSBG Workforce Development job training / skills development programs?

(b) Where does advancing levels in ESL classes fit into the National Performance Indicators? Is that in the ABE/GED indicator?

(c) With regard to eligible activities, do individuals receiving job placement and retention activities also need to be receiving either job training or job skills development?

(d) With regard to NPI 1.2 A: would you consider *the ability to prepare a resume* as an appropriate measure for advancing in skills?

(e) Would the the NPI that would correlate to advancing an educational functioning level as a result of ESL services be 1.2A: *Obtain skills/competencies required for employment?*

Answer 42 (parts A, B, D, and E): NPIs are included to assist applicants to complete the proposal. These NPIs are not program-specific, and are used to help agencies in guiding the outcome of their efforts. Ultimately, data will be gathered that will explain program results for final outcome reporting as well as for agency use. DOS cannot provide guidance regarding which NPIs to select, or which activities are needed according to the program you wish to administer/operate.

Answer 42 (part C): Applicants may propose services addressing one or more of the targeted activities.

Question 43: (a) Are there minimum or maximum expected outcomes or National Performance Indicators for each program?

(b) Are there expected service levels? How many people does the NYS DOS expect each applicant to serve for \$100,000; are there estimated minimums and /maximums?

(c) Is there a suggested range for a unit cost per participant?

(d) Is there a preferred minimum number of people a proposed project should serve?

(e) May the project include 12<sup>th</sup> graders so that they can immediately get a job upon graduation?

Answer 43: DOS has not directed or mandated minimum or maximum outcome thresholds, the number or type of NPI to be selected, unit cost per participant, nor a preferred number or types of people that a local agency should serve. The numbers served and outcomes should be based on the agency's assessment of achievable outcomes addressing a community need within the scope of this RFA. A project may include services within the Priority Area directed to any persons eligible to be served by CSBG funds.

Question 44: The National Performance Indicators include the terminology *Community Action* such as in 1.1 - *The number and percentage of low-income participants in Community Action employment initiatives ....* Please confirm that this is also relevant to CBOs.

Answer 44: NPIs apply to CAAs and CBOs using CSBG funds. The key element is use of CSBG funds.

Question 45: While it is understood that the purpose of targeted activity #5, ESL classes, is to better prepare individuals for jobs, does this activity require job placements as an outcome? Will the RFA favor activities which result in a job placement outcome (even if the RFA does not require it)?

Answer 45: The purpose of this RFA is to improve the potential for employment and employment opportunities; the focus in the ESL portion is to ensure that participants obtain English language skills necessary to enhance employment opportunities, as stated in the RFA. Proposals will be scored based on the information the applicants have presented.

### Program Activities

Question 46: What is the definition of *living wage* according to the National Performance Indicators?

Answer 46: When reviewing the NPIs, organizations may wish to consult the website <http://www.roma1.org/> for NPI related information and definitions. A living wage is commonly defined as a wage sufficient to provide the necessities and comforts essential to an acceptable standard of living. The idea behind a living wage is that the people who work in a community should be able to live decently and raise families there. This requires a wage that takes into account the area-specific cost of living. Although living wage standards do, by definition, vary by region, they are generally all higher than the federal minimum wage.

Question 47: Regarding trainings that result in credentialing: our local Workforce NY Office is in the process of becoming a proctor for the National Work Readiness Credential. Although the credential is not in a specific job area, it does address workplace etiquette, math and reading skills, customer service, problem solving, etc. Would National Work Readiness instruction and credentialing be a recognized and approved activity for this grant?

Answer 47: DOS cannot address the merits of a potential proposal at this time. Please review the terms of the RFA regarding eligible activities.

Question 48: Does the statement *Training should lead to full and unsubsidized employment* mean that in order to count as a positive outcome, the employment has to be full-time? Will outcomes of part-time, unsubsidized employment count as positive outcomes?

Answer 48: All forms of employment may be noted as outcomes, where applicable and appropriate. Distinctions in the nature of the employment should be noted. Proposals are not limited to only full-time employment outcomes.

Question 49: Is the TABE Test (9 & 10) an acceptable pre and post test instrument to show gain in reading and math skills?

Answer 49: Specific questions about the merits of a potential proposal and the validity of the methods used therein cannot be addressed by DOS at this time.

Question 50: Can organizations do work in all targeted activities if it is done under one cohesive, comprehensive program?

Answer 50: Yes.

Question 51: (a) Does DOS expect outcomes to be achieved within the 10 -month project period? For example - *Completed post-secondary education program and obtained certificate or diploma* - would it be ok to continue to monitor the participant once the 10-months have ended in order to demonstrate achievement of this outcome?

(b) For the job placement and retention priority area, what kind of retention tracking does DOS want to see and tracking, and for how long? Also, if the contract period is 10 months long and all deliverables must be submitted by the end of the period, how to account for people that reach retention benchmarks after the contract end date?

Answer 51: All outcomes charged to this CSBG grant must be completed at the end of the 10-month project period. As stated in the RFA Introduction, one goal of the project is to create opportunities *for sustainable improvements in the lives of low-income individuals and families*. Projected outcomes should be reasonable for the time period included in the award.

Question 52: Will programs centered primarily around low-or no income consumers with disabilities and/or *work limited* status be considered?

Answer 52: There is no prohibition against proposed projects responsive to the scope and priority area of this RFA directed to disabled persons who meet the CSBG eligibility criteria.

Question 53: There seems to be significant overlap between the first and second priority areas. What is the difference(s) between the Job Training and Job Skills Development areas?

Answer 53: Please see the descriptions provided in Section IV of this RFA.

Question 54: Regarding the annual income thresholds listed in Attachment 3, how is a "family" defined?

Answer 54: For the purposes of this RFA, the Department of State has not defined 'family' as any one particular entity. It is important to note, however that the definitions used by the US Census are available at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>