

NYS Department of State
Office for New Americans (ONA)
Workforce Community Education, Community Navigator and
Welcoming Communities Program
Request for Applications #16-ONA-24
Questions & Answers

RFA modification (Q25, Q39, Q45) on pages 10, 21 and Logic Model Work Plan Parts A, B and C.

Correction: The Outreach Specialist refers to the ONA Immigrant Community Navigator.

RFA modification (Q1, Q44) on page 38 and Logic Model Work Plan Part C.

Correction: On page #38, section F does not apply and should be disregarded. Answers provided to Section F on page 38 will not be reviewed or scored.

RFA modification (Q45) on Logic Model Work Plan Part C

Correction:

1. Community Conversations should occur at least ten (10) times a year
2. At least 125 volunteers are to be recruited a year by each ONA Immigrant Community Navigator
3. Community Impact Days should occur at least ten (10) times a year

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions submitted by potential applicants and are hereby incorporated in RFA #16-ONA-24 issued on November 22, 2016. In the event of any conflict between the RFA and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

Q1. Part C, Bullet Point f, on page 38 states that the applicant needs to “identify a partner organization with which the applicant proposes to conduct workforce development workshops.” Workforce development workshops are not discussed under Part C on pages 19-22, and nor or they described in Part C on pages 29-30. Could you please provide clarification on whether the workforce development workshops apply to applicants under Part C?

A1. Please see modifications at top of page 1, which states, “On page #38, section F does not apply and should be disregarded. Answers provided to Section F on page 38 will not be reviewed or scored.”

Q2. What are the page limitations?

A2. Other than the requirement that the budget narrative description be up to 2 pages, there are no page limitations.

Q3. Thank you so much for information on this grant opportunity. As the potential applicant is currently the ONA Legal Counsel for NYS Region 6, are we still eligible for this grant as an agency as long as funds are not used to supplant any current programs/award funds?

A3. Yes, even if an applicant currently receives ONA funding, they are eligible for the grant, provided they meet the following criteria:

- **Community Action Agencies (CAAs)** which is defined as shall mean any private not-for-profit organization currently designated as an eligible entity pursuant to New York State Executive Law section 159-e. Such organization shall have a tripartite board as its governing board, selected by the entity and composed so as to assure that: (1) one-third of the members of the board are elected public officials, holding office on the date of selection, or their representatives, except that if the number of such elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve on the board is less than one-third of the membership of the board, membership on the board of appointive public officials or their representatives may be counted in meeting such one-third requirement; (2) not fewer than one-third of the members are persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that these members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the neighborhood served; and (3) the remainder of the members are officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, law enforcement, education, or other major groups and interests in the community served.

or,

- **Community-based not-for-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) IRS status**, having a principal place of business within New York State and meeting the definition of “community-based organization” as outlined in NY Executive Law section 159-e[4] . 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.

Additionally, all applicants are required to demonstrate that their organization:

- Currently provides services to low-income persons directly or through contract, and includes a board of directors that allows for maximum feasible participation of the poor, either through tripartite composition as required by NY Executive Law section 159-e(2) (for CAAs), or where more than 50% of its members reside in its service area as required by NY Executive Law section 159-e(4) (for CBO’s); and,
- Applicants are required to demonstrate that funds will address one or more of CSBG National Performance Indicators (NPIs) (See Appendix A) and will result in clear and self-evident positive outcomes in the lives of low-income individuals and families.

- Applicant is a not-for-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) status operating continuously for the last three (3) years, and has not been debarred from contracting with the State or federal government in the past three (3) years.

Q4. I read the announcement on the Workforce Community Education, Community Navigator and Welcoming Communities Program (CR 2028731) on the NY State Contract Reporter this morning with great interest. I am writing you from the NYC Labor Market Information Service at the CUNY Graduate Center in NYC (NYCLMIS). As you may know, CUNY was originated to serve the immigrant and working class residents of NYC writ large and its grants and contracts are administered by a 501(c)(3) arm of CUNY known as the Research Foundation of CUNY. While we do not seem to strictly adhere to the Executive Law definition of community-based-organization, we do adhere to the spirit of the law. Indeed the type of work envisioned in the announcement fits squarely within our mission. What is your sense of our eligibility to apply for this RFA opportunity?

A4. The organization applying for this grant (lead applicant) must meet all of eligibility criteria below.

- Community Action Agencies (CAAs) which is defined as shall mean any private not-for-profit organization currently designated as an eligible entity pursuant to New York State Executive Law section 159-e. Such organization shall have a tripartite board as its governing board, selected by the entity and composed so as to assure that: (1) one-third of the members of the board are elected public officials, holding office on the date of selection, or their representatives, except that if the number of such elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve on the board is less than one-third of the membership of the board, membership on the board of appointive public officials or their representatives may be counted in meeting such one-third requirement; (2) not fewer than one-third of the members are persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that these members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the neighborhood served; and (3) the remainder of the members are officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, law enforcement, education, or other major groups and interests in the community served.

or,

- Community-based not-for-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) IRS status, having a principal place of business within New York State and meeting the definition of “community-based organization” as outlined in NY Executive Law section 159-e[4]) . 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.

Additionally, all applicants are required to demonstrate that their organization:

- Currently provides services to low-income persons directly or through contract, and includes a board of directors that allows for maximum feasible participation of the poor, either through tripartite composition as required by NY Executive Law section 159-e(2) (for CAAs), or where more than 50% of its members reside in its service area as required by NY Executive Law section 159-e(4) (for CBO’s); and,

- Applicants are required to demonstrate that funds will address one or more of CSBG National Performance Indicators (NPIs) (See Appendix A) and will result in clear and self-evident positive outcomes in the lives of low-income individuals and families.
- Applicant is a not-for-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) status operating continuously for the last three (3) years, and has not been debarred from contracting with the State or federal government in the past three (3) years.

Q5. Can undocumented immigrants be enrolled in this program?

A5. This RFP does not require the awarded entity to restrict client eligibility based on immigration status.

Q6. Is there a target number of participants?

A6. Each awardee is required to hire one full time ONA Immigrant Community Navigator. For regions A and B, each navigator must recruit 100 volunteers, and for region C, 125 volunteers must be recruited. There is no minimum number of participants for the other services.

Q7. What is the minimum time requirement/commitment for volunteers?

A7. There is no minimum time requirement or commitment for volunteers.

Q8. Per RFP page 3, "Only organizations with a federally approved indirect cost rate will be able to apply it towards this grant." The federal Uniform Guidance allows organizations - even those without a federally approved indirect cost rate - to charge a de minimus fee of 10% to cover indirect costs. Can we charge 10% for indirect costs to this grant?

A8. No, only organizations with a federally approved indirect cost rate will be able to apply it towards this grant.

Q9. Per RFP page 4, "Preference will be given to agencies who demonstrate extensive knowledge of the low-income immigrant community" By "preference," did you mean added points? A specific designation? A warm feeling?

A9. In this instance "preference" refers to the applicant's ability to score higher points, based on prior experience with serving low-income immigrant populations. Scoring criteria is specified in the RFA, page #32, Section IX, Organizational Experience.

Q10. Do we need to submit a sample work plan at the time we submit the application?

A10. Yes, the Logic Model Work Plan, as listed on page #46, should be submitted as part of the application.

Q11. Can we re-create the required forms - or can you provide these in MS Word?

A11. Required forms have been re-created into MS Word.

Q12. RFA p. 3 Section II. Funding and Project Period: The bulk of the work in the RFP revolves around workshops or conversations in group settings. Must all participants meet the 125% FPL requirement?

When hosting events that are open to the public it is very hard to capture only individuals under 125% of the FPL.

A12. This program is geared towards participants who are 125% or below the federal poverty level (FPL), however, individual documentation from clients may not be required if: services are provided on a group, rather than individual, basis and circumstances indicate that those benefiting are likely to meet the 125% of the FPL income eligibility requirements; services are provided on an individual basis but circumstances make it impossible or impracticable to obtain income documentation and indicate that those benefiting are likely to meet the CSBG income eligibility requirements and/or that the services facilitate linkages and coordination of services to low-income people in the community; or services are intended to increase community awareness of or involvement in poverty issues if it can be established that the open forum is constructed in a manner reasonably likely to serve individuals and families with incomes falling within 125% of the FPL.

Q13. RFA p. 3 Section II. Funding and Project Period: What kind of documentation will you need to prove income? Are self-attestations acceptable? We ask because, often, immigrants do not have any way of proving income other than self-attestation.

A13. This program is geared towards participants who are 125% or below the federal poverty level (FPL), however, individual documentation from clients may not be required if: services are provided on a group, rather than individual, basis and circumstances indicate that those benefiting are likely to meet the 125% of the FPL income eligibility requirements; services are provided on an individual basis but circumstances make it impossible or impracticable to obtain income documentation and indicate that those benefiting are likely to meet the CSBG income eligibility requirements and/or that the services facilitate linkages and coordination of services to low-income people in the community; or services are intended to increase community awareness of or involvement in poverty issues if it can be established that the open forum is constructed in a manner reasonably likely to serve individuals and families with incomes falling within 125% of the FPL.

Q14. RFA p. 3 Section II. Funding and Project Period: "Only organizations with a federally approved indirect cost rate will be able to apply it towards this grant." This requirement is inconsistent with other state agencies' provisions for allowing indirect costs in contract budgets and places unnecessary burden on grantees. We suggest allowing a minimum rate for all grantees.

A14. As stated, only organizations with a federally approved indirect cost rate will be apply it towards this grant.

Q15. RFA p. 5 Section V. General Program Services: Does the Navigator have to be a new hire, or can the role be filled by existing unfunded staff with the understanding that the Navigator program does not supplant existing work?

A15. The Navigator can be existing staff, provided that they are 100% dedicated to this grant as outlined in the RFA.

Q16. RFA p. 5 Section V. General Program Services: Can the Navigator responsibilities be shared by more than one staff, and funding therefore cover more than one staff?

A16. Yes, as long as the contract requirements of at least one full time employee dedicated 100% to this grant are met.

Q17. RFA p. 5 Section V. General Program Services: Must the Navigator be 1 FTE? \$75,000 is not enough to cover true costs of one new full hire, and we can fulfill grant responsibilities with less than 1 FTE.

A17. Yes, the contract requires at least one full time employee dedicated 100% to this grant.

Q18. RFA p.15 VI. Required Activities Part B: Can you further define what employment/workforce topics might be, and provide examples? If employment as it relates to issues of wage theft and workers' rights were found to be the topics most relevant to the community, could forums on these topics count?

A18. Examples of employment/workforce topics could include, but are not limited to, resume writing, interviewing, business writing, business communication skills, and career coaching. If worker's rights were found to be among the topics most relevant to the community, forums on these topics could count.

Q19. Will ONA consider applications to provide training and technical assistance to awardees of the Workforce Community Education, Community Navigator and Welcoming Communities Program grant?

A19. No. This RFA specifically seeks to award funding to up to fourteen (14) partner organizations located throughout New York State to coordinate and conduct outreach to low-income immigrant communities, and to create a grassroots community navigators program to help low-income New Americans.

Q20. Does the academic/think tank partner need to be in located in NYS?

A20. Yes, the academic/think tank partner needs to be in located in New York State.

Q21. In Section VII – the “A” geographic region has a required partner for workforce development workshops (Part A, 2, f). However, that same requirement is not listed for the “B” geographic region. Do the Part B applications also need a workforce development partner?

A21. Part B applicants do not have to find their own workforce development partner, as they are expected to partner with the local ONA Opportunity Centers in their region.

Q22. Must we document client/participant income? Whose? How?

A22. This program is geared towards participants who are 125% or below the federal poverty level (FPL). Programs and services providing individualized benefits to a client must be documented with an intake process demonstrating the client's income eligibility. However, individual documentation from clients is may not be required if: services are provided on a group, rather than individual, basis and circumstances indicate that those benefiting are likely to meet the 125% of the FPL income eligibility requirements; services are provided on an individual basis but circumstances make it impossible or impracticable to obtain income documentation and indicate that those benefiting are likely to meet the CSBG income eligibility requirements and/or that the services facilitate linkages and coordination of services to low-income people in the community; or services are intended to increase community

awareness of or involvement in poverty issues if it can be established that the open forum is constructed in a manner reasonably likely to serve individuals and families with incomes falling within 125% of the FPL.

Q23. In the part B logic model (no pages given) you require paid media advertisement, but there are no print media that effectively reaches the population, and the budget isn't large enough for a TV or radio buy. Can we use free publicity or other forms of non-paid outreach to meet this requirement?

A23. Some level of paid media is required under this grant. The ONA Press Office as well as local community based organizational partners, can assist with identifying local media sources for any contractors having difficulty in locating them. Regardless of the ability to spend on advertising, awardees are encouraged to use free publicity or other forms of non-paid outreach.

Q24. Also, in the part B logic model under "coordinator and support ONA Press Office with advertising" you reference logs and records. What would these be logs of?

A24. Records of advertising placed including source, date, and content. Any advertising, creative, placement, and payments must be approved by the ONA Press Office beforehand.

Q25. Similarly, in the part B logic model, you refer to "The Outreach Specialist." Who is that person? Does ONA expect that our organization will provide this person in-kind to this contract?

A25. The Outreach Specialist refers to the ONA Immigrant Community Navigator as stated in the modifications at top of page 1.

Q26. Per NY Executive Law Section 158e(4) - where community-based organizations are required to have "a board of directors of which more than half of their members reside in such a designated community" please explain what the law means by "designated community." The geographical area served? the immigrant community? the low-income community?

A26. The designated community is the geographic area served by the organization.

Q27. Does ONA allow an academic institution/think tank to work with more than one grantee on the research report? (It may be useful to have one research institution work with multiple grantees to provide efficiencies of scale)

A27. That is not precluded.

Q28. Is ONA interested in a research report that is based on both qualitative and/or quantitative data? Could ONA provide more detail about what they mean by "statistically-led study" (under the service description for the research report)? It may be informative to undertake a qualitative study combined with quantitative data analysis to shed light on both the general economic and workforce issues faced by immigrants, as well as a more nuanced examination of the range of issues faced by different members of the immigrant community.

A28. The report can be a qualitative study combined with quantitative data analysis. While ONA does not dictate to contractors the topics or interests of the local community, the study should reflect the needs and interests, service provision, and economic development goals developed in collaborative conversation in the local immigrant integration roundtables that are set up as part of this RFA. The report must be methodologically sound.

Q29. For the research report, the description of services states, “Survey the local communities” Does ONA mean survey in the purely statistical sense of a random sample survey (which would likely be cost prohibitive to collect). Or in a more general sense of a general assessment based on available data sources?

A29. The research report is not limited to only sample surveys or general assessment based on available data sources. The report can be a qualitative study combined with quantitative data analysis. The report must be methodologically sound.

Q30. For the research report, is “immigrant community” defined as all low-income immigrants (documented and undocumented) who live in the county or city where the ONA grantee provides services? Or is “immigrant community” defined as the immigrants who are part of the ONA grantee’s target population, which may or may not include all immigrants within these geographical boundaries? Or both?

A30. The immigrant community is defined as all immigrants in the geographic boundaries of the award that is won.

Q31. Could ONA elaborate on their goals and purpose for the research study? For example, is the primary purpose of the research report to provide ONA with a better understanding of the economic and workforce issues that the immigrant community faces in general? (In other words, would the purpose be to systematically document for ONA economic and workforce issues in the ONA grantee communities)? Or is the purpose primarily to inform the ONA grantee about how they might adapt their services to best meet the needs of their clients or potential clients (in other words, would the primary purpose be to uncover new issues or address research questions that are of specific interest to each ONA grantee)?

A31. The purpose of the research study is to better inform the local community and policy makers of the issues that the immigrant community faces in that region.

Q32. Would ONA allow a research center to seek additional funding to supplement this research and produce additional research reports on the economic and workforce issues faced by immigrants in ONA grantee communities, using anonymized data collected through activities funded by this grant?

A32. Yes.

Q33. Will any type of research report be required for Region L, Region M, or Region N (Part C). There doesn't seem to be a mention of the research report in this section.

A33. No, a research report will not be required for Region L, Region M, or Region N.

Q34. Is there a limitation on the number of pages for the proposal?

A34. Other than the requirement that the budget narrative description be up to 2 pages, there are no page limitations.

Q35. Are there requirements regarding the font size and margins for the proposal?

A35. Yes. Per the RFA, (page 23, Section VII, Completing the Application) applicants should respond to this RFA by compiling the narratives and forms described below. The narrative portions of the

application should be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman font size 12, and margins no narrower than .75/right-left, and .5/top-bottom.

Q36. The second goal of the RFA is to: Create or be involved in a number of employment/career development workshops in connection with the partnering ONA Opportunity Center. None of the required activities for Part C references these workshops. What is the role of these workshops in connection with the nine required activities for Part C?

A36. Employment/career development workshops are not required for Part C.

Q37. With respect to the Community Conversations: who are the targeted participants? What are the expectations about community collaborations in hosting these conversations?

A37. The targeted participants are the residents of the region, which includes both the immigrant communities and the receiving communities. It is encouraged and expected there be community collaborations in hosting these conversations.

Q38. What are the principal differences between Community Conversations and Community Navigator Trainings? Should the two reach different audiences?

A38. They are two separate deliverables. Community Conversations are to engage the immigrant communities and the receiving communities in conversations about welcoming immigrants into their region. Community Navigator trainings implement trainings for the community leaders about immigrant integration issues and resources to which they can connect immigrants in their community. They should reach two different audiences.

Q39. In the RFP, under Part C activity, Coordinate and support ONA Press Office with advertising and other media related efforts, the “expected outcomes” state: “The Outreach Specialist is required to participate in monthly meetings with ONA Press Office or on an as needed basis to be determined by ONA.” For Part C, should this say the “ONA Immigrant Community Navigator”?

A39. Yes. The Outreach Specialist refers to the ONA Immigrant Community Navigator, as stated in the modifications at top of page 1.

Q40. For Part C, required activity #6 speaks to recruiting significant numbers of community volunteers who will help low income immigrants gain/learn existing services. What are the expected roles of these volunteers? What kinds of activities should be developed for them, other than community impact days?

A40. Community volunteers will help low-income immigrants learn about existing services. Specific roles and activities of volunteers will be at the discretion of the grantee in collaboration with ONA, and to advance the goals set out in the local roundtables (as applicable).

Q41. The “expected outcome” for activity #6 is “at least 125 volunteers to be recruited each year for each navigator.” That is a very high number of volunteers each year considering recruitment, selection, training and supervision. Is there any flexibility in this number?

A41. No.

Q42. How do Community Impact Days differ from Community Conversations and Community Navigator trainings?

A42. Community Impact Days are specific days in which targeted information is disseminated in person, including, but not limited to volunteer canvassing and tabling in immigrant communities. Community Conversations are to engage the immigrant communities and the receiving communities in conversations about welcoming immigrants into their region. Community Navigator trainings implement trainings for community leaders about immigrant integration issues and resources to which they can connect immigrants in their community.

Q43. For Part C, activity #9 states, “create up to 4 local tours for relevant stakeholders, as requested.” Who are the expected audiences for these tours? Who makes the requests for tours?

A43. The Office for New Americans would be the entity requesting the tours. The audience will differ based on the thematic nature of the tour. For example, a walking tour of immigrant small businesses would highlight the positive net impact immigrants have on the local business climate.

Q44. Under the Proposal Organization for Part C, Organizational Experience, it is stated: “Identify partner organizations with which the applicant proposes to conduct workforce development workshops and fully describe that organization’s past experience working with low income immigrants including length of time serving this community and number of low income immigrants served annually. Fully describe the organization’s past experience conducting workshops on employment/workforce development including the type of workshops held and number of clients served in these types of workshops annually.” This appears on page 38 but not on page 29 where the proposal requirements for Part C are initially listed. There is no reference in the RFP to workshops on employment/workforce development for Part C under than as goal 2. Is this requirement correct for Part C ?

A44. Please see modifications at top of page 1.

Q45. Regarding The Logic Model Work Plan in Appendix E: Some of the information is not consistent with the RFP. For example, 5 Community Conversations and 5 Community Navigator trainings are provided as outcome indicators when the RFP requires 10 of each. The RFP states that there is no matching funds requirement but the chart requires local share case, in-kind and total other cash. There are references to an “Outreach Specialist” when the term ONA Immigrant Community Navigator is used throughout the RFP for Part C. Would you provide clarification about these differences between the Logic Model Work Plan and the text of the RFP?

A45. Please see modifications at top of page 1. While there are no matching funds or local share required under this grant, it is encouraged if any organization desires to do so. If no matching funds or local share are being proposed, applicants should complete these lines with a \$0 amount.