



New York Peer Specialist Certification Board (NYPSCB)

Request for Proposals

Grant Procurements

(On-Line Submission Required)

September 2022

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Purpose of the Request for Proposal

OMH is seeking proposals to contract with an entity to maintain and improve the current Certification Board for New York Certified Peer Specialists.

Several changes have occurred since the initial certification process began in NYS. There is more funding available for peer specialist positions in both new and existing program types. The awardee of this grant will be expected to provide more engagement with mental health providers and the peer workforce to modify the existing infrastructure of the overall certification process and continuing education approval, to make it more transparent and accessible to providers who wish to employ peer specialists.

In addition to reviewing and processing applications/renewals, the awardee will provide training and informational handouts for mental health providers with the goal of increasing the use of qualified peer specialists and clarifying the integrity of the peer specialist position and peer support services.

1.2 Target Population/Eligibility Criteria

The target populations are people with lived experience of Mental Health, who are in recovery and are applying for certification to be a peer specialist and people who have been certified and are requesting renewals.

Target audiences for the training shall include, but not be limited to:

Licensed programs that may or may not have a peer specialist component, such as: PROS, CCBHC, ACT, Clinic, CPEP, Housing.

Unlicensed programs such as: Respite, Advocacy/Support Services, Drop In Centers, Peer Wellness Center, Psychosocial Club, Recovery Center, Self Help Programs, and Unlicensed Housing.

2. Proposal Submissions

2.1 Designated Contact/Issuing Officer

OMH has assigned an Issuing Officer for this project. The Issuing Officer or a designee shall be the sole point of contact regarding the RFP from the date of issuance of the RFP until the issuance of the Notice of Conditional Award. To avoid being deemed non-responsive, an applicant is restricted from making contact with any other personnel of OMH regarding the RFP. Certain findings of non-responsibility can result in rejection for a contract award. The Issuing Officer for this RFP is:

Carol Swiderski
Contract Management Specialist 2
New York State Office of Mental Health
Contracts and Claims
44 Holland Avenue, 7th Floor
Albany, NY 12229
carol.swiderski@omh.ny.gov

2.2 Letter of Intent

Agencies interested in responding to this Request for Proposal **must** submit a Letter of Intent to Bid to the OMH Issuing Officer by 10/18/2022. The Letter of Intent to Bid shall be non-binding.

Please email the letter of intent to the Issuing Officer:

Carol.swiderski@omh.ny.gov

You must put in the Subject Line: "Peer Certification Board LOI"

2.3 Key Events/Timeline

RFP Release Date	9/7/2022
Questions Due	9/22/2022
Questions and Answers Posted on Website	10/11/2022
Letter of Intent Due	10/18/2022
Proposals Due by 1:00 PM EST*	10/26/2022
Anticipated Award Notification	11/15/2022
Anticipated Contract Start Date	1/1/2023

*OMH strongly advises that applicants do not wait until the last day/last few hours to complete and submit applications/proposals to Grant RFPs. Exceptions will not be considered or made for an

applicant who cannot complete their proposal/application by the due date and time of the RFP.

2.4 Disposition of Proposals

All proposals submitted by the due date and time become the property of OMH. Any proposals not received by the due date and time do not get reviewed and are excluded from consideration.

2.5 Eligible Agencies

Eligible applicants are not-for-profit agencies with 501(c) (3) incorporation and at least 51% of their governing board, and a preponderance of the staff are people with lived experience of having mental health issues.

Please be advised that all questions regarding Eligibility will be responded to through the official posting of the Questions and Answers. No questions about Eligibility will be responded to either individually or prior to the posting of the Q&As.

2.6 RFP Questions and Clarifications

All questions or requests for clarification concerning the RFP shall be submitted in writing to the Issuing Officer by e-mail to carol.swiderski@omh.ny.gov by 4:00 PM EST on the “Questions Due” date indicated in section 2.3 and will be limited to addressing only those questions submitted by the deadline. No questions can be submitted or will be answered after this date. No questions will be answered by telephone or in person.

The questions and official answers will be posted on the OMH website by 10/11/2022.

2.7 Addenda to Request for Proposals

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP during the application submission period, an addendum will be posted on the OMH website, the Grants Gateway and the NYS Contract Reporter.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to periodically review the OMH website, the NYS Contract Reporter and Grants Gateway to learn of revisions or addendums to this RFP. No other notification will be given.

2.8 Disqualification Factors

Following the opening of bids, a preliminary review of all proposals will be conducted by the Issuing Officer or a designee to review each proposal's submission for completeness and verify that all eligibility criteria have been met. Additionally, during the proposal evaluation process, evaluators will also be reviewing eligibility criteria and confirming that they have been met. During the course of either of these review processes, proposals that do not meet basic participation standards will be disqualified, specifically:

- Proposals from applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in 2.5; or
- Proposals that do not comply with bid submission and/or required format instructions as specified in 2.10 or
- Proposals from eligible not-for-profit applicants who have not completed Vendor Prequalification, as described in 2.9, by the proposal due date of 1:00 PM EST on 10/26/2022.

2.9 Grants Gateway Requirement

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated June 7, 2013, New York State has instituted key reform initiatives to the grant contract process which require not-for-profits to register in the [Grants Gateway](#) and complete the Vendor Prequalification process in order for proposals to be evaluated and any resulting contracts executed.

Proposals received from eligible not-for-profit applicants who have not been Prequalified by the proposal due date of 1:00 PM EST on 10/26/2022 cannot be evaluated; therefore, such proposals will be disqualified from further consideration.

Please do not delay in beginning and completing the prequalification process. The State reserves five (5) days to review submitted prequalification applications. Prequalification applications submitted to the State for review less than 5 days prior to the RFP due date and time may not be considered. Applicants should not assume their prequalification information will be reviewed if they do not adhere to this timeframe.

2.10 Instructions for Bid Submission and Required Format

Each proposal submission through the Grants Gateway is required to contain:

- Operating Budget (Appendix B)
- Budget Narrative (Appendix B1)

All applicants must be registered with the New York State Grants Gateway System (GGS) and all Not-for-Profit agencies must be prequalified prior to proposal submission.

If you are not already registered:

Registration forms are available at the GGS website:

<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization>

Include your SFS Vendor ID on the form; if you are a new vendor and do not have a SFS Vendor ID, include a Substitute for W-9 with your signed, notarized registration (also available from the website). All registration must include an Organization Chart in order to be processed. When you receive your login information, log in and change your password.

If you are an applicant, and have problems complying with this provision, please contact the GGS help desk via email: Grantsgateway@its.ny.gov -- OR -- by telephone: 1-518-474-5595.

How to Submit a Proposal

Proposals must be submitted online via the Grants Gateway by the date and time posted on the cover of this RFP. Tutorials (training videos) for use of the Grants Gateway (and upon user log in):

You must use Microsoft Edge to access the Grants Gateway. Using Chrome or Firefox causes errors in the Work Plan section of the application.

To apply, log into the Grants Gateway as a Grantee, Grantee Contract Signatory or Grantee System Administrator and click on the View Opportunities button under View Available Opportunities. To get started, in the Search Criteria, enter the Grant Opportunity name provided on the cover page of this RFP,

select the Office of Mental Health as the Funding Agency, and hit the Search button. Click on the name of the Grant Opportunity from the search results grid and then click on the APPLY FOR GRANT OPPORTUNITY button located at the bottom left of the Main page of the Grant Opportunity.

In order to access the online proposal and other required documents such as the attachments, you MUST be registered and logged into the NYS Grants Gateway system in the user role of either a “Grantee” or a “Grantee Contract Signatory” or a “Grantee System Administrator”.

The ‘Grantee’ role may ONLY Initiate and Save changes to the application such as add/update information to forms, upload documents while the user logged in as a ‘Grantee Contract Signatory’ or a ‘Grantee System Administrator’ role can perform all the tasks of Grantee role and in addition, can SUBMIT the application to the State. When the application is ready for submission, click the ‘Status Changes’ tab, then click the ‘Apply Status’ button under “APPLICATION SUBMITTED” before the due date and time.

For further information on how to apply, and other information, please refer to the Vendor User Manual document.

Reference materials and videos are available for Grantees applying to funding opportunities on the NYS Grants Gateway. Please visit the Grantee Documents section on Grants Management website.

Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, hard copy or hand delivery.

Helpful Links

Some helpful links for questions of a technical nature are below.
<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/frequently-asked-questions>

Grants Reform Videos (includes a document vault tutorial and an application tutorial) on YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYnWskVc7B3ajjOVfOHL6UA>

Grants Team Email (Proposal Completion, Policy and Registration questions): grantsgateway@its.ny.gov or by phone at 518-474-5595.

2.11 Instructions for completing the Workplan and Objectives in NYS Grants Gateway

The Workplan Overview Form will be used to create the Work Plan portion of the contract. Some of the information requested will be duplicative of information provided earlier in the application. Be sure to follow the guidance provided below.

The Work Plan Period should reflect the anticipated contract period. Contracts will be approved for a five-year term.

The Project Summary section should include a high-level overview of the project as instructed.

The Organizational Capacity section should include the information requested regarding staffing and relevant experience of staff and any applicable consultants to be involved in undertaking the proposed project.

The Objectives and Tasks section should identify grantee-defined objectives and tasks that are relevant to the completion of the proposed project. To get started, add your first Objective Name and Description and then click the [SAVE] button at the top of the page. After hitting Save, a field for the Task Name and Task Description will show under the Objective box. Complete both fields and hit the [SAVE] button at the top of the page. After entering the Task information and clicking Save, you will now see a box for the Performance Measure information and a box to enter a second Task. Enter a Performance Measure Name and select the Performance Measure Data Capture Type from the dropdown box. The type you choose from the dropdown will show on the screen for you to complete. Once you've entered the name, data capture type and the text/integer/or date as applicable, click the [SAVE] button at the top of the page.

For Performance Measure Name restate the Objective then enter the narrative requested in the box below. Once entered, click Save. You may continue to add Objectives, Tasks and Performance Measures up to and including the max amount allowed by the state.

The online Workplan is essentially an outline/summary of the work associated with the Project(s) described in the sections above. Please note that if an application is selected for award, the Workplan will be subject to change and can be updated during the contract development/negotiation process.

Applicants should refer to Section 5.2.4 Grantee Defined Workplan of the 'Grantee User Guide' ([Click here for Grants Gateway: Vendor User Guide](#)) for detailed instructions on how to complete the Workplan.

3. Administrative Information

3.1 Reserved Rights

OMH reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals received in response to the RFP that are deemed non-responsive or do not meet the minimum requirements or are determined to be otherwise unacceptable, in the agency's sole discretion;
- Withdraw the RFP at any time, at the agency's sole discretion
- Make an award under the RFP in whole or in part;
- Disqualify and applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFP;
- Seek clarifications and revisions of proposals for the purposes of assuring a full understanding of the responsiveness to this solicitation requirements;
- Use proposal information obtained through 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 agency's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFP;
- Prior to the bid opening, direct applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFP amendments;
- Prior to the bid opening, amend the RFP specifications to correct errors or oversight, supply additional information, or extend any of the scheduled dates or requirements and provide notification to potential bidders via the OMH website, Grants Gateway and the New York State (NYS) Contract Reporter;
- Eliminate any non-material specifications that cannot be complied with by all of the prospective applicants;
- Waive any requirements that are not material;
- Negotiate any aspect of the proposal with the successful applicant in order to ensure that the final agreement meets OMH objectives and is in the best interests of the State;
- Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible

applicant, should the agency be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected applicant;

- 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 proposal and/or to determine a applicant's compliance with the requirements of the solicitation;
- Cancel or modify contracts due to insufficiency of appropriations, cause, convenience, mutual consent, non-responsibility, or a "force majeure".

3.2 Debriefing

OMH will issue award and non-award notifications to all applicants. Non-awarded applicants may request a debriefing in writing requesting feedback on their own proposal, within 15 business days of the OMH dated letter. OMH will not offer debriefing to providers who are awarded a team. OMH will not offer ranking, statistical, or cost information of other proposals until after the NYS Office of the State Comptroller has approved all awards under this RFP. Written debriefing requests may be sent to the Designated Contact, as defined in Section 2.1.

3.3 Protests Related to the Solicitation Process

Protests based on errors or omissions in the solicitation process, which are or should have been apparent prior to the deadline for receipt of all written questions for this RFP, must be filed prior to the deadline for questions. In the event an applicant files a timely protest based on error or omission in the solicitation process, the Commissioner of OMH or their designee will review such protest and may, as appropriate, issue a written response or addendum to the RFP to be posted on the OMH website in the RFP section. Protests of an award decision must be filed within fifteen (15) business days after the notice of conditional award or five (5) business days from the date of the debriefing. The Commissioner or their designee will review the matter and issue a written decision within twenty (20) business days of receipt of protest.

All protests must be in writing and must clearly and fully state the legal and factual grounds for the protest and include all relevant documentation. The written documentation should clearly state reference to the RFP title and due date. Such protests must be submitted to:

New York State Office of Mental Health
Commissioner Ann Marie T. Sullivan, M.D.
44 Holland Ave
Albany, NY 12229

3.4 Term of Contracts

The contracts awarded in response to this RFP will be for a five-year term. Selected applicants awarded a contract under this RFP will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions in OMH's Master Grant Contract.

3.5 Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises

OMH recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of certified minority and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of OMH. OMH expects that all contactors make a good-faith effort to utilize Minority and/or Women Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE), on any award resulting from this solicitation in excess of \$25,000 for commodities and services or \$100,000 for construction.

With respect to MWBEs, each award recipient must document its good faith efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for participation by MWBEs as subcontractors and suppliers in the performance of the project to be described in each grant disbursement agreement, and must agree that OMH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. The directory of MWBEs can be viewed at <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. For guidance on how OMH will determine a contractor's "good faith efforts", refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8.

In accordance with 5 NYCRR § 142.13, each award recipient acknowledges that if it is found to have willfully and intentionally failed to comply with the MWBE participation goals set forth herein and in its grant disbursement agreements, such finding constitutes a breach of contract and OMH may withhold payment from the award recipient as liquidated damages.

Such liquidated damages shall be calculated as an amount equaling the difference between: (1) all sums identified for payment to MWBEs had the award recipient achieved the contractual MWBE goals; and (2) all sums paid to MWBEs for work performed or material supplied under the grant disbursement agreement.

By applying, an Applicant agrees to demonstrate its good faith efforts to achieve its goals for the utilization of MWBEs by submitting evidence thereof in such form as OMH shall require. Additionally, an Applicant may be required to submit the following

documents and information as evidence of compliance with the foregoing:

A. An MWBE Utilization Plan, which shall be submitted in conjunction with the execution of the grant disbursement agreement except as otherwise authorized by OMH. Any modifications or changes to the MWBE Utilization Plan after the execution of the grant disbursement agreement must be reported on a revised MWBE Utilization Plan and submitted to OMH.

OMH will review the submitted MWBE Utilization Plan and advise the award recipient of OMH acceptance or issue a notice of deficiency within 30 days of receipt.

B. If a notice of deficiency is issued, the award recipient will be required to respond to the notice of deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt by submitting to OMH, a written remedy in response to the notice of deficiency. If the written remedy that is submitted is not timely or is found by OMH to be inadequate, OMH shall notify the award recipient and direct the award recipient to submit within five (5) business days, a request for a partial or total waiver of MWBE participation goals. Failure to file the waiver form in a timely manner may be grounds for disqualification of the bid or proposal.

OMH may refuse to enter into a grant disbursement agreement, or terminate an existing grant disbursement agreement resulting from this solicitation, under the following circumstances:

- a. If an award recipient fails to submit a MWBE Utilization Plan;
- b. If an award recipient fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
- c. If an award recipient fails to submit a request for waiver; or,
- d. If OMH determines that the award recipient has failed to document good faith efforts

The award recipient will be required to attempt to utilize, in good faith, any MBE or WBE identified within its MWBE Utilization Plan, during the performance of the project. Requests for a partial or total waiver of established goal requirements may be made at any time during the term of the project, but must be made no later than prior to the submission of a request for final payment under the grant disbursement agreement.

Each award recipient will be required to submit a Quarterly MWBE Contractor Compliance & Payment Report to OMH over the term of the project, in such form and at such time as OMH shall require, documenting the progress made toward achievement of the MWBE goals established for the project.

3.6 Participation Opportunities for New York State Certified Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business

Article 17-B of the New York State Executive Law provides for more meaningful participation in public procurement by certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB), thereby further integrating such businesses into New York State's economy. OMH recognizes the need to promote the employment of service-disabled veterans and to ensure that certified service-disabled veteran-owned businesses have opportunities for maximum feasible participation in the performance of OMH contracts.

In recognition of the service and sacrifices made by service-disabled veterans and in recognition of their economic activity in doing business in New York State, applicants are expected to consider SDVOBs in the fulfillment of the requirements of the Contract. Such participation may be as subcontractors or suppliers, as proteges, or in other partnering or supporting roles.

OMH hereby establishes an overall goal of 0% for SDVOB participation, based on the current availability of qualified SDVOBs. For purposes of providing meaningful participation by SDVOBs, the Applicant/Contractor would reference the directory of New York State Certified SDVOBs found at <https://ogs.ny.gov/Veterans>. Additionally, following any resulting Contract execution, Contractor would be encouraged to contact the Office of General Services' Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development to discuss additional methods of maximizing participation by SDVOBs on the Contract.

It would be required that "good faith efforts" to provide meaningful participation by SDVOBs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of a resulting awarded Contract as documented.

3.7 Equal Opportunity Employment

By submission of a bid or proposal in response to this solicitation, the Applicant/Contractor agrees with all terms and conditions of Master Contract for Grants, Section IV(J) – Standard Clauses for All New York State Contracts including Clause 12 – Equal Employment Opportunities for Minorities and Women. The Contractor is required to ensure that it and any subcontractors awarded a subcontract over \$25,000 for the construction, demolition, replacement, major repair, renovation, planning or design of real property and improvements thereon (the "Work"), except where the Work is for the beneficial use of the Contractor, undertake or continue programs to ensure that minority group members and women are afforded equal employment opportunities without discrimination because of race, creed, color,

national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status. For these purposes, equal opportunity shall apply in the areas of recruitment, employment, job assignment, promotion, upgrading, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, and rates of pay or other forms of compensation. This requirement does not apply to (i) work, goods, or services unrelated to the Contract; or (ii) employment outside New York State.

The Applicant will be required to submit a Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises and Equal Opportunity Policy Statement, to the State Contracting Agency with their bid or proposal. To ensure compliance with this Section, the Applicant will be required to submit with the bid or proposal an Equal Opportunity Staffing Plan (Form # to be supplied during contracting process) identifying the anticipated work force to be utilized on the Contract. If awarded a Contract, Contractor shall submit a Workforce Utilization Report, in such format as shall be required by the Contracting State Agency on a monthly or quarterly basis during the term of the contract. Further, pursuant to Article 15 of the Executive Law (the "Human Rights Law"), all other State and Federal statutory and constitutional and non-discrimination provisions, the Contractor and sub-contractors will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment status because of race, creed (religion), color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, age, disability, predisposing genetic characteristic, marital status, or domestic violence victim status, and shall also follow the requirements of the Human Rights Law with regard to non-discrimination on the basis of prior criminal conviction and prior arrest. Please Note: Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in a finding of non-responsiveness, non-responsibility and/or a breach of the Contract, leading to the withholding of funds, suspension or termination of the Contract or such other actions or enforcement proceedings as allowed by the Contract.

3.8 Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification

State Finance Law §139-I requires applicants on state procurements to certify that they have a written policy addressing sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and provide annual sexual harassment training (that meets the Department of Labor's model policy and training standards) to all its employees. Bids that do not contain the certification may not be considered for award; provided however, that if the applicant cannot make the certification, the applicant may provide a statement with their bid detailing the reasons why the certification cannot be made. A template certification document is being provided as part of this RFP. Applicants must complete and return the certification with their bid, or provide a statement detailing why the certification cannot be made.

3.9 Bid Response

Neither the State of New York or OMH shall be responsible for the costs or expenses incurred by the applicant in preparation or presentation of the bid proposal.

3.10 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

A bid, in order to be responsive to this solicitation, must satisfy the specifications set forth in this RFP. A detailed description of this format and content requirements is presented in Section 2.10 of this RFP.

3.11 Freedom of Information Requirements

All proposals submitted for OMH's consideration will be held in confidence. However, the resulting contract is subject to New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). Therefore, if an applicant believes that any information in its bid constitutes a trade secret or should otherwise be treated as confidential and wishes such information not be disclosed if requested, pursuant to FOIL (Article 6 of Public Officer's Law), the applicant must submit with its bid, a separate letter specifically identifying the page number(s), line(s), or other appropriate designation(s) containing such information explaining in detail why such information is a trade secret and formally requesting that such information be kept confidential. Failure by an applicant to submit such a letter with its bid identifying trade secrets will constitute a waiver by the applicant of any rights it may have under Section 89(5) of the Public Officers Law relating to the protection of trade secrets. The proprietary nature of the information designated confidential by the applicant may be subject to disclosure if ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. A request that an entire bid be kept confidential is not advisable since a bid cannot reasonably consist of all data subject to a FOIL proprietary status.

3.12 NYS and OMH Policies

The applicant/contractor must agree to comply with all applicable New York State and OMH policies, procedures, regulations and directives throughout the Term of the contract.

4. Evaluation Factors and Awards

4.1 Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be rated and ranked in order of highest score based on an evaluation of each applicant's written submission.

The Evaluation will apply points in the following categories as defined in Section 7:

Technical Evaluation	Points
Description of Program	20
Implementation	25
Agency Performance, Reporting, and Quality Improvement	20
Letters of Support	5
Inclusion and Diversity	10
Financial Assessment	20
Total Proposal Points	100 Points

For a detailed description of evaluation criteria for the Technical Evaluation and the Financial Assessment components, see Section 7 (Proposal Narrative).

4.2 Method for Evaluating Proposals

Designated staff will review each proposal for completeness and verify that all eligibility criteria are met. A complete proposal shall include all required components as described in Section 2.10. If a proposal is not complete or does not meet the basic eligibility and participation standards as outlined in Section 2.5, the proposal will be eliminated from further review. The agency will be notified of the rejection of its proposal within 10 working days of the proposal due date.

Proposals will be conducted in two parts: Technical Evaluation and Financial Assessment. The technical evaluation committee, consisting of at least three evaluators, will review the technical portion of each proposal and compute a technical score. A financial score will be computed separately based on the operating budget and budget narrative submitted.

Evaluators of the Technical Evaluation component may then meet to discuss the basis of those ratings. Following the discussion, evaluators may independently revise their original score in any section. Once completed, final Technical

Evaluation scores will then be recalculated, averaged, and applied to the final Financial Assessment score to arrive at final scores.

Any proposal not receiving a minimum score of 70 will be eliminated from consideration.

In case of a tie in the scoring process, the proposal with the highest score on the Implementation (Section 7.2) of the Proposal Narrative will be ranked higher.

4.3 Process for Awarding Contracts

4.3.1 Initial Awards and Allocations

Proposals will be ranked, and one award made to the applicant with the highest score to assume the operation of the Peer Certification Board initiative.

4.3.2 Contract Termination and Reassignment

There are a number of factors that may result in the contract being reassigned. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to meet start-up milestones or poor performance outcomes. A contractor will be provided notification if there is need for reassignment.

To reassign the contract, OMH will go to the next highest ranked proposal.

4.4 Award Notification

At the conclusion of the procurement, notification will be sent to successful and non-successful applicants. All awards are subject to approval by the NYS Attorney General and the Office of the State Comptroller before an operating contract can be finalized.

5. Scope of Work

5.1 Introduction

OMH is seeking proposals to contract with an entity to maintain and improve the current Certification Board for New York Certified Peer Specialists.

Several changes have occurred since the initial certification process began in NYS. There is more funding available for peer

specialist positions in both new and existing program types. The awardee of this grant will be expected to provide more engagement with mental health providers and the peer workforce to modify the existing infrastructure of the overall certification process and continuing education approval, to make it more transparent and accessible to providers who wish to employ peer specialists.

In addition to reviewing and processing applications/renewals, the awardee will provide training and informational handouts for mental health providers with the goal of increasing the use of qualified peer specialists and clarifying the integrity of the peer specialist position and peer support services.

5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities

Goal 1: Create a public facing website that is accessible and user friendly for potential applicants and mental health providers seeking to effectively implement peer workers in their programs and agencies.

- **Objective 1.1** The contractor will ensure that the New York Peer Specialist Certification Board (NYPSCB) website contains up-to-date information and that the online submission software is functional and user friendly. The website shall meet minimal standards for Section 508 web accessibility compliance. Alternative versions of application materials for those with low or no vision shall be made available upon request.
- **Objective 1.2** The contractor shall create application guidelines that are clearly described and include information on the: application process, (including anticipated timeframes for application determinations/decisions once all paperwork is submitted), core course requirements, testing requirements, where to find the courses, and policies regarding the maintenance of the certification.
- **Objective 1.3** The contractor will ensure that the website contains:
 - Separate, easy to locate forms for people submitting reference letters
 - Separate, easy to locate forms for supervisors to attest hours someone has worked toward certification

- List of all trainings and training organizations (with URL links to those organizations) that have been approved for continuing education
 - News page for NYPSCB updates
 - An estimated time frame of how long it will take a completed application to be reviewed and processed.
- **Objective 1.4** A directory of individuals and online verification tool who are certified/provisional (listing expiration dates) shall be developed. This directory shall be reviewed for accuracy monthly and shall state when it was last updated as part of the revamped NYPSCB website. (Similar to the Office of the Professions, [NYS Professions - Online Verifications \(nysed.gov\)](http://nysed.gov))
 - **Objective 1.5** An email distribution (listserv) of people who are certified and provisionally certified that can be used for announcements, updates to training requirements, notice from OMH, etc.
 - **Objective 1.6** A functional database that describes the Certified Peer Specialist workforce in New York (demographics, work history, educational history, region, etc.) shall be developed and maintained by the contractor.

Goal 2: Broaden the ability of how workshops and trainings are approved for continuing education. Create a formal application process for agencies to submit their trainings to count toward the Continuing Education Credits needed for peer specialists who need to renew their certification.

- **Objective 2.1** An expedited process for approval or denial for of continuing education for New York Certified Peer Specialists.
 - Denials should indicate the specific reason(s) for the denial and what could be done to rectify and resubmit for another review.
- **Objective 2.2** Establish criteria for Continuing Education approval for trainings, workshops at conferences, seminars, etc. This criteria and process shall be on the website. The vendor should describe

how they will collaborate with conference organizers, training organizations, etc. to ensure a smooth and clear process for approval.

- **Objective 2.3** Establish a mechanism for the recognition of OMH approved peer specialization tracks.

Goal 3: Continuous Quality Improvement

- **Objective 3.1** The awardee shall hold regular meetings with the certification board.
- **Objective 3.2** Within the first six months after receiving the award the vendor will review all existing NYPSCB materials and update as needed. (All materials should have a date indicating when it was reviewed/updated)
- **Objective 3.3** Review and update the process for responding to complaints of ethical violations by New York Certified Peer Specialists.
- **Objective 3.4** For people whose applications or renewals are denied, the vendor shall have a formal grievance and appeals process
- **Objective 3.5** Establish and participate in regular meetings with peer certification or credentialing entities and training affiliates for the Youth Peer Advocate and Family Advocate credentials, the Certified Recovery Peer Advocate, and the Certified Peer Worker. The purpose of these meetings is to communicate and coordinate efforts and to explore and establish dual credentialing pathways for the peer workforce.

Goal 4: Reporting requirements.

- **Objective 4.1** The awardee will be required to submit quarterly reports to OMH to include:
 - A summary of the outreach/training efforts that were held during the reporting quarter,
 - The number of participants per outreach/training session,
 - Tracking data on the number of unique providers by county and by region who participated in outreach/trainings
 - The number of standard applications approved

- The number of provisional applications approved
 - The number of renewals approved
 - The name and a brief description of the trainings approved for Continuing Education.
 - Demographics of newly certified peer specialists
 - Additional data and narratives, as requested by OMH.
- **Objective 4.2** The awardee will be required to submit an annual cost report using the Consolidated Fiscal Reporting System. The Consolidated Fiscal Reporting System (CFRS) is a standardized reporting method consisting of schedules which, in different combinations, capture financial information for budgets, quarterly and/or mid-year claims, an annual cost report, and a final claim.

6. Operating Funding

One award will be made in the amount of \$1,293,000 for the five years.

Annual funding for each of the 5 years is \$258,600.

7. Proposal Narrative

When submitting proposals for funding under this RFP, the narrative must address all components listed below, in the following order:

7.1 Description of Program

Please address the following areas:

- Describe the organization's experience with the certification or credentialing processes for peer specialists, peer advocates and peer workers.
- Describe the organization's experience in the development and implementation of outreach/training on the certification process for New York Peer Specialists.
- Describe the organization's capacity and resources to develop and maintain an up-to-date website, directory, and database as described in objective 1.6.
- Describe the organization's capacity and resources to do outreach to OMH licensed and unlicensed programs as described in section 1.2

- Describe the organization’s understanding and experience of peer values and the role a peer specialist in the recovery process.
- Describe the organization’s capacity and experience to investigate ethics complaints of certified peer specialists.
- Describe the organization’s grievance/appeal process for denied applications and revoked certifications.
- Describe the organization’s capacity and experience to translate online training and materials into languages other than English in accordance with executive order 26.
https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/EO26_0.pdf
- Describe the organization’s capacity to create an advisory board for the NYPSCB.
- Describe how the organization will select the advisory board members for the NYPSCB.
- Describe your expectations of the board’s membership, roles, and functions.
- Identify any cash or in-kind contributions that will be made to the project.
- Describe how the organization would collaborate and communicate with mental health providers, (including consumer operated programs); what obstacles you would envision; and how your organization would address these obstacles in the implementation of this initiative.
- Describe how the organization would collaborate and communicate with OMH and New York State peer certification and credentialing boards and other statewide certification and credentialing boards.
- Describe how the organization would collaborate and communicate with Peer Training entities.
- Describe the potential barriers to successful implementation of the proposed project and how you will overcome them.
- Describe the organization’s existing practice or vision to promote recruitment and retention of the New York Certified Peer Specialist workforce.

- Describe how the applicant will maximize the use of existing resources.
- How will the applicant ensure that materials and products to be used in the project will address the diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic needs of the prevalent populations?
- What evidence, and/or, indicators can the applicant organization provide to show that it understands the cultural aspects of the community that will ensure the implementation of the project will reach the target audience(s)?

7.2 Implementation

- Provide a realistic timeline for the project (chart or graph) showing key activities, milestones, and responsible staff.
- Discuss the capability and experience of the applicant organization and other participating organizations with similar projects and populations, including experience in providing culturally appropriate/competent services.
- Provide a list of staff who will participate in the project. Please include the role of each and a job description, including qualifications. Include the Project Director and other key personnel.
- Describe how the staff will represent the multicultural, bilingual, and diversity of the target audience and describe any relevant lived experience of the staff that will benefit the project.
- Describe the resources available for the proposed project (e.g., facilities, equipment). Provide evidence that the project will be implemented in a way that is adequate, accessible, compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and amenable to the target population(s)
- Describe your organization's capability to implement this initiative:
 - Relationships with peer organizations.
 - Relationships with non-peer organizations
 - Relationships with other peer certification and credentialing entities
 - Relationships with New York State Agencies that oversee peer certification and credentialing
 - Time frame(s) for implementation

7.3 Agency Performance, Reporting, and Quality Improvement

Programs should describe their current or anticipated CQI process including what is expected to collect data that will tell them how they are doing in achieving the program objectives as described in section 5.2. Specific quality improvement activities should include:

- how your organization will utilize the CQI data
- plans for collecting and using data to monitor and improve program performance.
- how the organization will provide training and support to assure staff competencies.
- the process that supervisory staff will utilize to identify problems and implement corrective actions
- Establishing data collection systems to support quality improvement.
- Tracking the program's record in providing required deliverables.
- Quarterly Reporting to OMH

7.4 Letters of Support

Please include a maximum of 10 letters of support.

7.5 Inclusion and Diversity

- Provide a mission statement for this project, that includes information about the intent to include individuals from marginalized/underserved populations.
- Identify the agency's management level person responsible for coordinating/leading efforts to reduce disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized populations. This includes activities related to diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic competence. Information provided should include the individual's (title, organizational positioning, education, relevant experience).
- Provide the diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic competence plan as outlined in the National CLAS Standards for this program.

Note - plan format should use the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely). Plan should include information in the following domains: workforce diversity (data informed recruitment), workforce inclusion, reducing disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes in patient population, soliciting input from diverse community stakeholders and organizations).

- Describe the agency's committees/workgroups that focus on efforts to reduce disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized populations (diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic competence).
- Describe the membership of these committees/workgroups (organizational positioning). Please include:
 - how committees/workgroups review services/programs with respect to cultural competency issues within the entity.
 - how this group corresponds and collaborates with the quality assurance/quality improvement/compliance parts of the organization.
 - how committees/workgroups participate in planning and implementation of services within the entity.
 - how committees/workgroups transmit recommendations to executive level of entity.

Note - it is important to describe membership of the New York Peer Specialist Certification Advisory Board from the most prevalent cultural groups to be served in this project.

- Describe the organization's training strategy on for topics related to diversity, inclusion, cultural competence, and the reduction of disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized/underserved populations. These include trainings about implicit bias, diversity recruitment, creating inclusive work environments, providing languages access services.
- Describe program efforts to recruit, hire and retain NYPSCB members and the organization's staff from the most prevalent cultural group of service users. This includes a description of:
 - a documented data driven goal to recruit, hire and retain direct service/clinical, supervisory and administrative level staff who are from or have had experience working with the most prevalent cultural groups of its service users.

- current staffing levels of direct service/clinical staff members who are from or have experience working with the most prevalent cultural groups of its service users.
- current staffing levels of supervisors who are from or have experience working with the most prevalent cultural groups of its service users.
- current staffing levels of administrative staff members who are from or have experience working with the most prevalent cultural groups of its service users.

(This can also include information about employment postings on platforms and in places specifically designed to hire diversity, the use of language in recruitment posting(s) that illustrate that the program is seeking to recruit diverse candidates, efforts to retain diverse employees use of best practice approaches to mitigate bias in interview/hiring processes.)

8. Financial Assessment

- a. The proposal must include a 5-year Budget (Appendix B). \$258,600 is available annually. Any travel costs included in the Budget must conform to New York State rates for travel reimbursement. Applicants should list staff by position, full-time equivalent (FTE), and salary.

The indirect cost/administrative overhead rate is capped 15%. Providers must follow Consolidated Fiscal Reporting Ratio-Value guidance which excludes equipment/property from the direct cost base. Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements are not allowable.

- b. Describe how your agency manages its operating budget. Also, applicants must complete a Budget Narrative (Appendix B1) which should include the following:
 1. detailed expense components that make up the total operating expenses.
 2. the calculation or logic that supports the budgeted value of each category; and,
 3. description of how salaries are adequate to attract and retain qualified employees.