



**Youth and Family Peer Advocate Workforce Expansion
Grants: Ensuring Access to Diverse and Inclusive
Peer Support**

Request for Proposals

**Grant Procurements
(On-Line Submission Required)**

October 2024

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Purpose of the Request for Proposal

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH or “Office” herein after) announces the availability of funds for the procurement of Youth and Family Peer Advocate Workforce Expansion grants.

For decades, New York State has recognized the value of Youth and Family Peer Advocates (Peer Advocates herein after). A credentialed Youth Peer Advocate is an individual 18-30 years old who has self-identified as a person who has first-hand experience with emotional (mental health), behavioral challenges, and/or co-occurring disorders. A credentialed Family Peer Advocate is an individual that self-identifies and has “lived experience” as a parent or primary caregiver who has navigated multiple child-serving systems on behalf of their child(ren) with social, emotional, developmental, health and/or behavioral healthcare needs. Peer Advocates use their personal experience to help others. They provide a variety of direct support services helping individuals on their health care journey and act as advocates and key stakeholders in shaping and guiding program development.

Peer Advocates have been an essential part of New York State’s system of care. This is most clearly demonstrated in the creation and integration of Peer Advocates across multiple fields of health care within New York State and the commitment State agencies have made to include certified and credentialed Peers as professionals and multidisciplinary partners in treatment, rehabilitation, and support services, including community-based crisis, residential, inpatient, and outpatient services.

As part of New York State’s efforts to expand the system of care, High Fidelity Wraparound was introduced in 2017 as an evidence-based care management approach for complex and high needs children. A critical part of the High Fidelity Wraparound model is to include Family and Youth Peer Advocates as part of the wraparound support team. The Family and Youth Peer Advocates are integral to assisting children with serious emotional disturbance, and their families, in actively participating in their planning and treatment and advocating alongside them to identify the services they need to address the challenges they are facing. Having Family and Youth Peer Advocates as part of the wraparound team has yielded greater positive outcomes for children and families. However, there continues to be a shortage of available peer advocates in the field, making access to their specialized support limited.

This funding is an investment in expanding the Family and Youth Peer Advocate workforce. Through these grants, not-for-profit community-based organizations that are either OMH funded agencies or OMH licensed or designated mental health agencies who offer family and/or youth peer support services (hereafter referred to as Peer Support Champion Organizations or “PSCO”) will work within a region of the State to establish collaborative partnerships with non-mental health community agencies and organizations (such as social and membership clubs, places of worship, community service agencies, etc.) (hereafter referred to as Grassroots Organizations), with demonstrated experience serving diverse, disenfranchised and/or marginalized communities. Individuals from diverse populations have historically been underrepresented in the mental healthcare field, including, but not limited to workers

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from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds, indigenous people, immigrants, refugees, bilingual or multilingual speakers, LGBTQIA+ individuals, religious minorities, individuals with chronic health conditions and individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

This partnership is expected to foster and develop opportunities to expand the peer workforce and create a career pipeline for individuals with lived experiences throughout the five regions of New York State. This funding is available to ensure that Youth and Family Peer Advocates have the support they need for their professional development, including completion of their credentialing pathway. This funding also includes access to information and resources on youth/family support, opportunities for networking and professional connections and direct support for grassroots organizations representative of communities.

Peer Support Champion Organizations have a long history of providing high-quality peer support services. They are experts in the field and have a deep understanding of the needs of youth with mental health challenges and their families. OMH is seeking experienced Peer Support Champion Organizations to partner with grassroots community organizations to create opportunities to grow family and youth peer advocates and develop a diverse peer professional workforce.

This OMH funding is expected to have a significant impact on the Family and Youth Peer Advocate workforce in New York State. By supporting the recruitment, credentialing, and linkage of Peer Advocates to the workforce, the funding will help to ensure that more families and youth have access to high-quality, diverse, and inclusive Peer Support services.

2. Proposal Submissions

2.1. Designated Contact/Issuing Officers

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:

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

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2.2. Key Events/Timeline

RFP Release Date	10/31/2024
Letter of Intent to Bid Due	11/14/2024
Questions Due	11/21/2024
Questions and Answers Posted on Website	12/11/2024
Proposals Due by 2:00 PM EST*	1/14/2025
Anticipated Award Notification	2/18/2025
Anticipated Contract Start Date	7/1/2025

*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.

2.3. 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.

2.4. Eligible Agencies

Prequalification is required for all not-for-profit organizations seeking grant funding from New York State. Please see Section 2.9 and Section 2.10 for additional Prequalification Information.

Eligible applicants (Peer Support Champion Organizations) must be a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3), that is one the following:

1. A NYS OMH funded community-based organization that provides direct peer services to children with mental health needs and their families in the community through family peer and/or youth peer support.
2. An agency with OMH licensed or designated programs/services that offer credentialed family and/or youth peer services, defined as:
 - Agencies with more than one OMH licensed or designated community-based programs authorized to offer family and/or youth peer services including, Children and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS), Mental Health Outpatient & Treatment & Rehabilitative Services (MHOTRS) (clinic), Youth Assertive Community Treatment (Youth ACT)

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.

2.5. 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 OMHLocalProcurement@omh.ny.gov by 2:00 PM EST on the "Questions Due" date indicated in section 2.3 and will be limited to

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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. Please enter "Youth and Family Peer Advocate Workforce Expansion Grants: Ensuring Access to Diverse and Inclusive Peer Support" in the subject line of the email.

The questions and official answers will be posted on the OMH website by the date listed in the timeline section 2.3.

2.6. 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 and the NYS Contract Reporter.

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

2.7. 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 2:00 PM EST on 10/31/2024.

2.8. SFS Prequalification 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 be Prequalified 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 2:00 PM EST on will not be able to submit their bid response through SFS.

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

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assume their prequalification information will be reviewed if they do not adhere to this timeframe.

2.9. Vendor Registration, Prequalification and Training Resources for Not-for-Profits

NOTE: For any application that does not contain all the required documentation and/or “See Attached” responses that were to be uploaded, please be advised that the application will be reviewed and scored as submitted. For any incomplete response or missing and/or inappropriately submitted documentation, points will be deducted. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, prior to submission, that the application is appropriate and complete.

Each proposal submission through SFS is required to contain:

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

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

Not-for-profit organizations must Register as a vendor the Statewide Financial System and successfully Prequalify to be considered for an award.

This grant opportunity is being conducted as an SFS bid event. Not-for-profit vendors that are not prequalified can initiate and complete bid responses. However, not-for-profit vendors that are not prequalified will NOT be allowed to submit their bid response for consideration.

Information on [Registration](#) and [Prequalification](#) are available on the Grants Management Website. A high-level synopsis is provided below.

Registering as an SFS Vendor

To register an organization, send a complete [Grants Management Registration Form for Statewide Financial System \(SFS\) Vendors](#) and accompanying documentation where required by email to grantsreform@its.ny.gov. You will be provided with a Username and Password allowing you to access SFS.

Note: New York State Grants Management reserves 5-10 business days from the receipt of complete materials to process a registration request. Due to the length of time this process could take to complete, it is advised that new registrants send in their registration form as soon as possible. Failure to register early enough may prevent potential applicants from being able to complete a grant application on time.

If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please contact the SFS Help Desk at (855) 233-8363 or at Helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov. If you do not know your Password, please click the [SFS Vendor Forgot Password](#) link from the main log in page and follow the prompts.

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Prequalifying in SFS

- Log into the SFS Vendor Portal.
- Click on the Grants Management tile.
- Click on the Prequalification Application tile. The Prequalification Welcome Page is displayed. Review the instructions and basic information provided onscreen.

Note - If either of the above referenced tiles are not viewable, you may be experiencing a role issue. Contact your organization's Delegated Administrator and request the Prequalification Processor role.

- Select the Initiate a Prequalification Application radio button and click the Next button to begin the process. Starting with Organization Information, move through the steps listed on the left side of the screen to upload Required Documents, provide Contacts and Submit your Prequalification Application.

Note - If the Initiate a Prequalification Application radio button is not available, your organization may have already started a prequalification application and could even be prequalified. Click on the Version History Link to review your organization's prequalification status. If you are not currently prequalified, or your prequalification expires prior to the due date of this RFA, you will need to choose Collaborate on or Update your application.

- System generated email notifications will be sent to the contact(s) listed in the Contacts section when the prequalification application is Submitted, Approved, or returned by the State for more information. If additional information is requested, be certain to respond timely and resubmit your application accordingly.

Note: New York State reserves 5-10 business days from the receipt of complete Prequalification applications to conduct its review. If supplementary information or updates are required, review times will be longer. Due to the length of time this process could take to complete, it is advised that nonprofits Prequalify as soon as possible. Failure to successfully complete the Prequalification process early enough may result in a grant application being disqualified.

Specific questions about SFS should be referred to the SFS Help Desk at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

On Demand Grantee Training Material

A recorded session with information about the transition to SFS is available for Grantees on the Grants Management website - <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/> and in SFS Coach.

The following training material focused on grants management functionality is currently available in SFS Coach:

- An SFS Vendor Portal Reference Guide (https://upk.sfs.ny.gov/UPK/VEN101/FILES/SFS_Vendor_Portal_Access_Reference_Guide.pdf) to help Grantees understand which Grants Management roles

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they need in the SFS Vendor Portal based on the work they are currently involved in.

- A Grantee Handbook ([upk.sfs.ny.gov/UPK/VEN101/FILES/Grantee User Manual.pdf](http://upk.sfs.ny.gov/UPK/VEN101/FILES/Grantee_User_Manual.pdf)), which provides screenshots and step-by-step guidance on how to complete Grants Management-related tasks in SFS
- On-demand recorded training videos focused on each aspect of the Grants Management business process

Agencies can view vendor training material in SFS Coach by selecting **SFS Training for Vendors** from the Topic drop-down list.

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, SFS 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

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and complete understanding of an applicant's proposal and/or to determine an 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";
- Repurpose grant funds to support other initiatives if no applications or offers accepted and awards made; and
- Change any of the scheduled dates stated in the RFP.

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 one-year term. Completion of deliverables is expected within 1 to 3 years. If more than one year is needed to meet the deliverables, there will be an option to extend the contract for an additional 12 months (up to 3 years total), but all funding will be disbursed in the first year. By the end of the optional third year, all deliverables must be attained. Selected applicants awarded a contract under this RFP will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions in OMH's Master Grant Contract.

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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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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

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(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.

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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, o 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

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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 as well as OMH internal reviews.

The Evaluation will apply points in the following categories as defined in Section 6:

Technical Evaluation	Points
6.1 Equity	10
6.2 Agency/Organization Qualifications	20
6.3 Population Experience	20
6.4 Program Implementation	20

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6.5 Utilization Review, Reporting, and Quality Improvement	10
6.6 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 6 (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 Program Implementation (Section 6.5) 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 by score. A minimum of ten (10) awards will be made to the applicants with the highest score(s) in each region until the award distribution reflects the regional distribution in Table 1, intended to cover all five regions.

Table 1. Distribution of Awards per OMH Region

OMH Regions	Counties in each Region	Number of Awards
NYC	Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond	3
Long Island	Nassau, Suffolk	1

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Hudson River	Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Westchester	2
Central New York	Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Clinton, Cortland, Delaware, Essex, Fulton, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence	2
Western New York	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates	2

If a sufficient number of applications or passing applications is not reached in a region by the proposal due date listed in Section 2.3, then the remaining awards allocated for that/those regions will be re-distributed for additional awards to other regions in order of NYC, Hudson River, Western New York, Central New York, Long Island. In the event that more than one award needs to be reallocated, the first award would be reallocated to NYC, the second award would be reallocated to Hudson River, the third award would be reallocated to Western New York, the fourth award would be reallocated to Central New York and the fifth award would be reallocated to Long Island.

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, failure to secure at least two but no more than six subcontracts with Grassroots Organizations, failure to identify and support individuals through the peer credentialing process. 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. If there are no agencies left with a passing score, OMH will go to the top of the list and work its way down the list to reassign the contract.

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

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) is providing \$2,750,000 in one-time funding to support the demand and growth of the Family and Youth Peer Advocate workforce. The funding will be awarded as 10 grants, with grants awarded to organizations in each of the five NYS regions: Central (2 grants), Western (2 grants), Hudson (2 grants), NYC (3 grants), and Long Island (1 grant). Each grant will be for \$275,000.

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Grants are to be awarded to Peer Support Champion Organizations (hereafter referred to as “PSCO”). Applicants will need to demonstrate relationships with and connections to a wide variety of Grassroots Organizations, capacity for outreach to diverse communities, a commitment to and experience with engaging diverse populations, and a strong understanding of and support for the role of Family and Youth Peer Advocates in the workforce.

Applicants will subcontract with Grassroots Organizations to provide outreach/education and recruitment of candidates for youth and family peer credentialing. Examples of diverse, disenfranchised and/or marginalized communities include those that are disproportionately underserved due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, mental health, language, housing status, religious beliefs, and/or immigration status. Grassroots Organizations could include churches, small agencies, agencies focused on specific populations (e.g., immigrants), civic organizations, and other specialized neighborhood entities that are well-positioned to know individuals that could be recruited to work in the peer workforce.

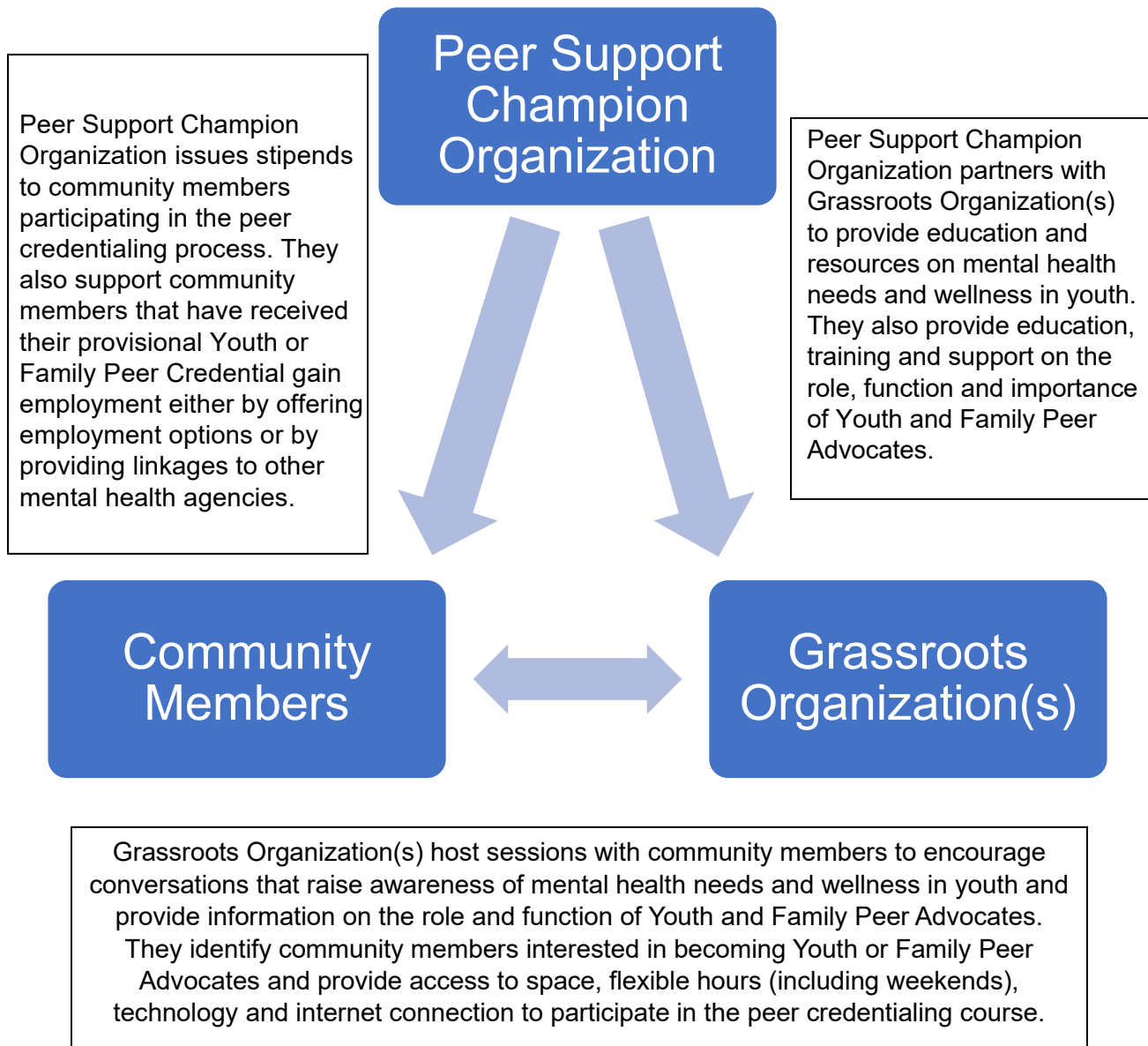
Selected PSCOs will engage with Grassroots Organizations to educate and orient them to the value and importance of peer services. They will work to promote and market the benefits of becoming a family and youth peer support professional. PSCOs will offer written materials, workshops and presentations on family and youth peer support, in order to garner interest from community members in exploring the option of becoming a credentialed peer. PSCOs will work closely with Grassroots Organizations to identify locations, space, and computers where individuals may complete training to receive a peer credential. The selected PSCOs will establish an oversight structure, inclusive of appointed staff that will oversee and manage the partnerships with the Grassroots Organizations.

Each individual that participates in peer credentialing through this initiative has the opportunity to receive three stipends. (See chart below.) The first, in the amount of \$250, will be issued to the individual upon registering and completing Level 1 of the Advocate Credentialing Pathway. The second stipend, in the amount of \$500, will be issued to the individual upon receipt of their provisional youth or family peer credential. The third and final stipend in the amount of \$1500 will be issued as an employment bonus to the youth/family peers that have been connected to employment through this initiative and are beginning to offer peer services under their provisional certification.

Peer Credentialing Stipends

Stipend One	Stipend Two	Stipend Three
Issued upon registration and completion of Level 1 of the Advocate Credentialing Pathway.	Issued upon receipt of Provisional Youth or Family Peer credential.	Issued upon connection to employment and offering of peer services using the provisional certification.

Youth and Family Peer Advocate Workforce Expansion Visual



The Local Governmental Unit (LGU), Director of Community Service (DCS)/Mental Health Commissioner has a statutory authority and responsibility for oversight and cross-system management of the local mental hygiene system to meet the needs of individuals and families affected by mental illness, substance use disorder and/or intellectual/

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developmental disability in their communities. Awardees will be expected to work collaboratively with counties (LGU) to identify grassroots organizations, connecting to providers for the workforce pipeline and other systematic opportunities during the implementation of the grant.

5.2. Objectives and Responsibilities

Deliverables for Awardees to include:

- Outreach to diverse communities to identify a minimum of two, maximum of six, Grassroots Organizations throughout the region interested in collaborating to grow a diverse and equitable family and youth peer workforce.
- Subcontract with minimum of two, maximum of six, Grassroots Organizations.
- Gather stakeholder feedback in the planning process.
- Lead efforts to raise community awareness of mental health needs in youth and provide education and training on the role and function of Youth and Family Peer Advocates.
- Educate the subcontracted Grassroots Organizations on the value and importance of peer services and the practical application and utilization of peer support roles.
- Support subcontracted Grassroots Organizations to deliver in-person outreach sessions to encourage conversations and raise community awareness of mental health needs and wellness in youth and the role and function of Youth and Family Peer Advocates.
- Provide written material, technical assistance and offer guidance in the planning and implementation of these sessions. Active participation in the sessions is not required. All marketing, outreach, engagement, and orientation must be done with cultural sensitivity and trauma responsive approaches.
- Coordinate and collaborate with subcontracted nonprofits to identify individuals interested in becoming Youth or Family Peer Advocates.
- Provide linkages to/offer employment options to individuals who receive a provisional Family or Youth Peer credential through partnerships with a wide array of mental health agencies so that they may continue to gain the experience necessary to receive their professional credential.
- Manage peer incentive/stipend. Each individual that signs up for the peer credentialing through this initiative has the opportunity to receive three stipends. The first, in the amount of \$250, will be issued to the individual upon registering and completing Level 1 of the Advocate Credentialing Pathway. The second stipend, in the amount of \$500, will be issued to the individual upon receipt of their provisional youth or family peer credential. The third and final stipend in the amount of \$1500 will be issued as an employment bonus to the youth/family peers that have been connected to employment through this initiative and are beginning to offer peer services under their provisional certification.

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- Manage and oversee the subcontract with the Grassroots Organizations to ensure subcontracted deliverables for this initiative are met. Deliverables of the subcontracted agency/group to include:
 - Provide access to space, flexible hours (including weekends), technology and internet connection to individuals participating in the peer credentialing course. This can be done through dedicated learning time at an identified space at the organization or through the purchase or lending of tablets to learners. Access and accommodation for disabilities must be offered. This includes but is not limited to screen readers, translation support, ASL interpreters (in-person or virtually), wheelchair accessibility, printed braille materials.
 - Coordinate with local disability accommodation resources
 - Host sessions and encourage conversations to raise community awareness of mental health needs and wellness in youth and provide information on the role and function of youth and family peer advocates. Community sessions should be designed and implemented with flexibility to meet the needs of the community and potential Peer Candidates.
 - Identify agency/organization staff to actively participate in these sessions.
 - Market the education/outreach/training/technical assistance to their communities or neighborhoods.
 - Coordinate and collaborate with awarded agency to identify individuals interested in becoming Youth or Family Peer Advocates.
- Programs will be required to maintain accurate reporting of activities and deliverables as outlined in this RFP.
- It is expected that providers will routinely submit data on progress to OMH, including outcome data. Data submission requirements and guidance will be provided by OMH.

5.3. Operating Funding

A total of 10 awards will be made in the amount of \$275,000 per award. Each award must be allocated across the following three categories:

1. **Subcontracts with Grassroots Organizations:** a minimum of two, maximum of six, subcontracts must be awarded to Grassroots Organizations throughout the region to grow a diverse and equitable family and peer workforce.
2. **Peer stipends/incentives:** Each individual that participates in the peer credentialing through this initiative can receive up to three stipends. The first, in the amount of \$250, will be issued to the individual upon registering and completing Level 1 of the Advocate Credentialing Pathway. The second stipend, in the amount of \$500 will be issued to the individual upon receipt of their provisional youth or family peer credential. The third stipend, in the amount of \$1500, will be issued as an employment bonus to the youth/family peers that have been connected to employment and are beginning to offer peer services under their provisional certification.

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3. **PSCO:** An allocation to outreach to diverse communities to identify Grassroots Organizations interested in collaborating to grow a diverse and equitable family and youth peer workforce, establish and manage subcontracts with the identified Grassroots Organizations, lead efforts to raise community awareness of youth mental health and the vital role of youth and family peers, collaborate with the Grassroots Organizations to identify and support individuals to participate in the youth and family peer credentialing process, provide linkages/offer employment to individuals that complete their provisional certification and manage the tracking, verification and payment of peer stipends.

Awards should be used to maximize the number of youth and family peers that receive their provisional youth or family peer credential, are connected to employment, and begin to offer peer services under their provisional certification.

Completion of deliverables is expected within 1 to 3 years. Please submit a budget that reflects total spending to meet the deliverables within the first 12 months. If more than one year is needed to meet the deliverables, you will have an option to extend the contract for an additional 12 months (up to 3 years total), but all funding will be disbursed in the first year. By the end of the optional third year, all deliverables must be attained. In the event of a contract extension, modified budgets may be submitted if expenditures exceed or fall short of expectations in the three categories outlined above.

An example of a possible allocation structure is as follows:

- \$100,000 will be allocated for a minimum of two, maximum of six, subcontracts with Grassroots Organizations throughout the region to grow a diverse and equitable family and youth peer workforce.
 - \$46,500 per award will be allocated for peer stipends/incentives.
 - It is expected that 48 individuals will complete Level 1 of the Advocate Credentialing Pathway and receive the initial stipend of \$250. Initial stipend spend will total \$12,000.
 - 24 of those individuals will continue to receive their provisional credential and receive the second stipend of \$500. The second stipend spend will total \$12,000.
 - 15 of those individuals will enter the workforce through this initiative and receive the third stipend of \$1500. The third stipend spend will total \$22,500.
 - The remaining \$128,500 per award will be allocated to the PSCO.

OMH Regions	Counties in each Region	Number of Awards
NYC	Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond	3
Long Island	Nassau, Suffolk	1

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Hudson River	Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Westchester	2
Central New York	Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Clinton, Cortland, Delaware, Essex, Fulton, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence	2
Western New York	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates	2

5.4. Implementation

All agencies will be required to complete a workplan that outlines the subcontracted partnerships. Workplans must be updated regularly and submitted quarterly.

Awardees will provide an adequate level of professional staffing to perform the required work and will establish a staffing structure commensurate with the deliverables outlined in this project. Applicants are required to describe the proposed staffing resources, experience and qualifications needed to support this project. Project staff should be reflective of the population being served. Awardees will provide a staffing outline. At minimum, a project leader should be identified to oversee all aspects of the project. Applicants are encouraged to include one or more Credentialed Youth Peer Advocates (YPA) and/or Credentialed Family Peer Advocates (FPA) in their staffing plan.

5.5. Utilization Review, Reporting and Quality Improvement

Awardees will establish a systemic approach for monitoring and ensuring ongoing quality support of Youth and Family Advocates engaged in the credentialing process, including tracking of recruited peers, in progress and completed credentialing trainings. This information should be used to assess the future availability of peers that are to be eligible for employment and have begun the hiring process with an OMH eligible employer for peer support services. This information should also be used to measure the subcontracted organizations achievement of goals.

6. Proposal Narrative

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

6.1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Recipient Input

This section describes the commitment of the entity to advancing equity. OMH is committed to the reduction of disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for historically marginalized populations as well as centering and elevating the voice of individuals with lived experience throughout the system.

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a. Commitment to Equity and the Reduction of Disparities in Access, Quality and Treatment Outcomes for Marginalized Populations

1. Provide a mission statement for this project that includes information about the intent to serve individuals from marginalized/underserved populations in a culturally responsive trauma-informed way.
2. Identify the management-level person responsible for coordinating/leading efforts to reduce disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized populations.
3. Identify the management-level person responsible for coordinating/leading efforts to ensure incorporation of feedback from participants in services in continuous agency improvement. Information provided should include the individual's title, organizational positioning and their planned activities for coordinating these efforts).
4. Provide the diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural and linguistic competence plan for this program (as outlined in the National CLAS Standards). Plan should include information in the following domains:
 - workforce diversity (data-informed recruitment);
 - workforce inclusion;
 - reducing disparities in access quality, and treatment outcomes in the patient population;
 - soliciting input from diverse community stakeholders, organizations and persons with lived experience;
 - efforts to adequately engage underserved foreign-born individuals and families in the identified sub-regions as outlined in Section 4.3.1.; and
 - how stakeholder input from service users and individuals from marginalized/underserved populations was used when creating the diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural and linguistic competence plan.

Discuss how the plan will be regularly reviewed and updated.

b. Equity Structure

1. Describe the organization's committees/workgroups that focus on reducing disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized populations (diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic competence).
2. Describe the organization's committees/workgroups that focus on incorporating participants of services into the agency's governance. Note - it is important to describe how membership of any such committee/workgroup includes people with lived experience and representatives from the most prevalent cultural groups to be served in this project.

c. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

Describe program efforts to recruit, hire and retain a) staff from the most prevalent cultural group of service users and b) staff with lived experience with mental health and receiving mental health services.

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- Providing empowerment and/or educational opportunities for youth/caregivers to learn about advocacy and youth/family peer services, and
- Providing training for young people on advocacy, leadership and peer mentoring to empower youth/family to peer careers.
- Creating access to resources, such as trainings, documents, tools and toolkits, both physical and digital, in support of peer services and peer credentialing.

d. Language Access

Describe efforts to meet the language access needs of the clients served by this project (limited English proficient, Deaf/ASL). This information should include the use of data to identify the most prevalent language access needs, availability of direct care staff who speak the most prevalent languages, the provision of best practice approaches to provide language access services (i.e., phone, video interpretation). Also, include information about efforts to ensure all staff with direct contact with clients are knowledgeable about using these resources. Additionally, provide information about the plan to provide documents and forms in the languages of the most prevalent cultural groups of its service users (consent forms, releases of information, medication information, rights, and grievances procedures).

This section should also include information related to:

- addressing other language accessibility needs (Braille, limited reading skills);
- service descriptions and promotional material.

e. Recovery Values

Describe your agencies understanding of recovery and resiliency-oriented values, how your agency plans to adopt them, and how your agency plans to implement them in practice.

6.2. Agency Organization and Qualifications

- a. Provide a brief summary of your agency, the services you provide for which you are licensed or funded, and the population(s) you serve, including the demographic makeup of the population using available data (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, etc.) and how this data informs policies, service provision and staff recruitment. Outline how these practices demonstrate your experience and qualification to support Youth and Family Peer Advocate workforce expansion and ensuring access to diverse and inclusive peer support.
- b. Describe your agency's experience in working with and employing youth peer advocates and/or family peer advocates, and the role of peers within your organization.
- c. Specify the region for which you are applying and how you are experienced with and able to serve the counties within the region.

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- d. Describe current partnerships with Grassroots Organizations of the region you propose to serve. Describe the types of agencies and specific names of organizations that you plan to outreach to throughout the catchment area of the region.
- e. Describe your organizational structure and administrative and supervisory support for clinical mental health and/or children's services. Include your governing body, and any advisory body, structure that supports your organization and effective service provision.

6.3. Population Experience

- a. Describe your understanding of the service needs of children/youth who are experiencing mental health challenges in a family and community setting, including but not limited to: the role of Youth and Family Peer Advocates and your experience in providing peer services.
- b. Describe your experience in providing mental health and peer support services to children with mental health challenges and their families.
- c. Describe your experiences in delivering services that are trauma-informed, family-driven, youth guided, strength based and developmentally appropriate.
- d. Describe your role and experiences in developing and sustaining relationships/connections with a wide variety of Grassroots Organizations.
- e. Describe your experience and capacity for outreach to diverse communities and your commitment to engaging diverse populations.
- f. Describe your experiences in understanding the cultural issues that define how individuals, families and communities define and seek help.
- g. Describe your experience supporting the role of Youth and Family Peer Advocates in the workforce as distinct disciplines with complimentary needs of professional development and support.
- h. Describe your experience representing or having collaborative relationships with a wide range of mental health agencies that offer peer services by credentialed peer staff to facilitate connections to employment.

6.4. Program Implementation

- a. Describe the start-up and phase-in activities necessary to implement this initiative. Include timeframes in the description.
- b. Provide a staffing plan. Indicate the specific skills and level of experience expected of each staff member. Include timeframes with dates for recruitment, hiring, and onboarding. Describe plans to recruit diverse staff.
- c. Describe the process and criteria that will be used to identify and secure the necessary subcontracts to implement this initiative. Include timeframes in the description.

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- d. Describe proposed efforts to partner, collaborate with and include diverse, culturally relevant community partners in service provision and in the gathering of stakeholder input. This includes information about subcontracting entities and other efforts to ensure government resources reach organizations and populations that are historically economically marginalized, including those that are peer run.
- e. Describe the communication strategy that will be employed to ensure collaborative and effective partnerships with subcontracted agencies/organizations.
- f. Describe the performance management strategies that will be deployed to ensure that the subcontracted agencies/organizations meet their contractual objectives for this initiative.
- g. Describe the activities necessary to raise community awareness of mental health needs in youth and provide education and training on the role and function of youth and family peer advocates.
- h. Describe the approach that will be taken to identify individuals that may be qualified and interested in participating in the credentialing process to become a youth or family peer advocate.
- i. Describe how you will develop partnerships with a wide array of mental health agencies to support linking individuals who receive a provisional Youth or Family Peer credential with employment opportunities.
- j. Describe the process that will be used to link individuals who receive a provisional Youth or Family Peer credential to the agencies in (h) above and describe the process and criteria for offering employment at your agency for individuals who receive a provisional Youth or Family Peer credential.
- k. Describe the process to issue and maintain oversight of the peer stipends offered by this initiative.

6.5. Utilization Review, Reporting, and Quality Improvement

- a. Describe your agency's experience and approach to data collection and monitoring to inform service provision, outline how this information is used to inform scope, frequency, duration of interventions in your services and programs. Outline your agency's standard quality assurance activities to demonstrate how you monitor the effectiveness of your services and programs.
- b. Describe how your procedures are used to ensure ongoing quality improvement. Outline your agency's standard quality assurance activities to demonstrate how you monitor the effectiveness of your services and programs. Describe how your procedures are used to ensure ongoing quality improvement. Describe how you incorporate key community entities, consumers, and their families in evaluating your approaches to ensure they reflect considerations for cultural competence and language access. Include how this informs your equity and inclusion plan.

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- c. Describe your proposed approach to self-monitor this partnership program in order to ensure ongoing quality improvement for the Peer Advocates in Training. Include how you plan to implement utilization review including at what frequency, how you plan to analyze utilization review findings, how you plan to implement recommendations and measure changes.

6.6. Financial Assessment

- a. The proposal must include a 1-year Budget (Appendix B). 100% is available in year one. The indirect cost/administrative overhead rate is capped 15%. Providers must follow Consolidated Fiscal Report (CFR) Ratio-Value guidance which excludes equipment/property from the direct cost base. Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) are not allowable. 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.
- 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.

7. Required Reporting

Awardees will be required to maintain accurate reporting of all subcontracts, educational/promotional presentations and trainings provided (locations, number of attendees, etc.), recruited peers, training progress, credentialing progress, and employment connections/hires. Reports will be required to be submitted to OMH quarterly.