



**Office of  
Mental Health**

## **Academy of Peer Services (APS)**

# **Request for Proposals/Request for Application**

**Grant Procurements**

**(On-Line Submission Required)**

**Statewide Financial System (SFS) Identifier- MH253006**

**November 2025**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### APPLICANT CHECKLIST

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.	Purpose of the Request for Proposal .....	1
<b>2.</b>	<b>PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1.	Designated Contact/Issuing Officer .....	1
2.2.	Key Events/Timeline .....	1
2.3.	Disposition of Proposals.....	2
2.4.	Eligible Agencies.....	2
2.5.	RFP Questions and Clarifications .....	2
2.6.	Addenda to Request for Proposals .....	2
2.7.	Disqualification Factors .....	2
2.8.	SFS Prequalification Requirement .....	3
2.9.	Vendor Registration, Prequalification and Training Resources for Not-for-Profits.....	3
<b>3.</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1.	Reserved Rights .....	6
3.2.	Debriefing .....	7
3.3.	Protests Related to the Solicitation Process.....	7
3.4.	Term of Contracts .....	7
3.5.	Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises.....	8
3.6.	Participation Opportunities for New York State Certified Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business.....	9
3.7.	Equal Opportunity Employment.....	10
3.8.	Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification .....	11
3.9.	Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification .....	11
3.10.	Bid Response .....	11
3.11.	Acceptance of Terms and Conditions.....	11
3.12.	Freedom of Information Requirements.....	11
3.13.	NYS and OMH Policies.....	12
<b>4.</b>	<b>EVALUATION FACTORS AND AWARDS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1.	Evaluation Criteria.....	12
4.2.	Method for Evaluating Proposals .....	12
4.3.	Process for Awarding Contracts.....	13
4.3.1	Initial Awards and Allocations .....	13
4.4.	Contract Termination and Reassignment .....	13
4.5.	Award Notification .....	13
<b>5.</b>	<b>SCOPE OF WORK.....</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1.	Introduction .....	13
5.2.	Objectives and Responsibilities.....	14
5.3.	Staffing and Subject Matter Expertise .....	15
5.4.	Monitoring and Reporting.....	16
5.5.	Transition.....	16
5.6.	Operating Funding .....	17
<b>6.</b>	<b>PROPOSAL NARRATIVE.....</b>	<b>17</b>
6.1	Experience.....	17
6.2	Vision, Implementation, and Maintenance.....	18

**New York State Office of Mental Health**

6.3.	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Peer Support Worker Input.....	19
6.4.	Financial Assessment .....	20

**Academy of Peer Services (APS)  
RFP#MH253006  
Applicant Checklist**

**Frequent Issues/Questions:**

-Please begin working on your application in SFS **no later than 5 business days before the application due date** and **submit no later than 48 hours before the due date**. This will allow you time to troubleshoot any issues that arise that may prevent you from submitting. 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.

-All required forms/templates are available in the “Event Comments and Attachments” section of SFS. Please note that there are restrictions to the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.

-No workplan is required at this time, if awarded, a workplan will be developed during the contract development phase.

-The “Bid Amount” box is required to be filled out in SFS. Please enter the total amount of funding your organization is requesting from NYS OMH in this box.

-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 will prohibit the submission of the application in SFS.

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Please complete the following checklist prior to submission of your proposal. This checklist **SHOULD NOT** be submitted, it is for your use only.

Confirm the following:

- ☐ Your organization has met the eligibility requirements outlined in **Section 2.4 Eligible Agencies**
- ☐ Your organization is prequalified in SFS. SFS will prevent submission if your organization is a not-for-profit and not prequalified (see **Section 2.8 and 2.9 of the RFP document** for more information on Registration, Prequalification and Training Resources for SFS)
- ☐ Updates to the RFP can happen at any time, per **Section 2.6**, check the OMH website for any updates to the RFP posted by OMH.
- ☐ Provider Contact form completed and uploaded in SFS
- ☐ Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification Completed and uploaded in SFS
- ☐ Gender Based Violence and the Workplace Certification completed and uploaded in SFS.
- ☐ Proposal Template completed and any applicable attachments labeled with question numbers (example: question 6.2a calls for a sample assessment tool, the assessment tool should be labeled as 6.2a and added at the end of the Proposal Template)
- ☐ Proposal Template and attachments (except budget, see next checkbox) combined into one PDF and uploaded in SFS under Q1
- ☐ Budget Template Completed (left in Excel) and uploaded in SFS under Q2
- ☐ Application submitted in SFS prior to the due date and time listed in **Section 2.2 Key Events/Timeline** (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.)

## 1. Introduction And Background

### 1.1. Purpose of the Request for Proposal

The New York State (NYS) Office of Mental Health (OMH) is committed to advancing and promoting the professional development of the Peer Support Service profession. As such, accessible, high quality, evidence-based training to meet certification requirements are crucial. Thus, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) is soliciting proposals from responsive and responsible entities to provide a platform for the Academy of Peer Services (APS) which houses education and information relevant to current or aspiring peer support specialists in New York State, including the core curriculum for the NYCPS(-P) certification and approved CEUs.

## 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:

Jerry Witkop  
New York State Office of Mental Health  
Contracts and Claims  
44 Holland Avenue, 7th Floor  
Albany, NY 12229  
[OMHLocalProcurement@omh.ny.gov](mailto:OMHLocalProcurement@omh.ny.gov)

### 2.2. Key Events/Timeline

RFP Release Date	<u>11/20/2025</u>
Questions Due	<u>12/09/2025</u>
Questions and Answers Posted on Website	<u>12/23/2025</u>
Proposals Due by 2:00 PM EST*	<u>01/15/2026</u>
Anticipated Award Notification	<u>02/11/2026</u>
Anticipated Contract Start Date	<u>04/01/2026</u>

\*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. **Please note that there are restrictions to the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.**

## **New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)**

### **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 2.8 and Section 2.9 for additional Prequalification Information.

Eligible agencies are colleges and universities located in New York State, New Jersey, or Connecticut.

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](mailto:OMHLocalProcurement@omh.ny.gov) by the "Questions Due" date indicated in section 2.2 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. Please enter "Academy of Peer Services" 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 2.2.

### **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 Procurement 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 2.4; or

## New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

- Proposals that do not comply with bid submission and/or required format instructions as specified in 2.9 or
- Proposals from eligible not-for-profit applicants who have not completed Vendor Prequalification, as described in 2.9, by 2:00 PM EST on the Proposal Due Date posted in section 2.2.

### 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 the Proposal Due Date posted in section 2.2 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 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: All applications must be submitted through the Statewide Financial System (SFS). No applications will be accepted electronically, US Postal Service, express mail delivery service or hand delivered.**

**For any application that does not contain all of 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. A workplan is not required for this RFP.**

Each proposal submission through SFS is required to contain:

- Operating Budget (Appendix B)

**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 with 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

## New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

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 [grantsmanagement@its.ny.gov](mailto:grantsmanagement@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](mailto: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.

### 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,



## New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

be certain to respond timely and resubmit your application accordingly.

Note: New York State reserves 5 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 will prohibit the submission of the application in SFS.

### Final Submission Format

Please note that all responses/applications/submissions to this RFP **must** be submitted through the Statewide Financial System (SFS). No mailed, delivered or emailed submissions will be accepted. OMH strongly recommends that applicants plan accordingly and allow themselves enough time to appropriately complete and submit by the due date and time of this RFP.

When providing uploads in response to any of the questions posed (other than the Fiscal/Budget component), please upload only PDF versions of those documents. When saving these files before uploading, with the exception of an underscore, please do not use any special characters in the file name, letters only should be used. All attachments required with the proposal must be combined into the proposal template PDF and clearly labeled. Uploading documents that are not in PDF form (other than the budget, which must be uploaded as an excel document) will result in the disqualification of the application.

Specific questions about SFS should be referred to the SFS Help Desk at [helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov](mailto: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](https://upk.sfs.ny.gov/UPK/VEN101/FILES/SFS_Vendor_Portal_Access_Reference_Guide.pdf)) to help Grantees understand which Grants Management roles 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](https://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

## New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

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 any applicant, and rescind any conditional award or contract made to such applicant whose conduct as a provider does not meet applicable standards as determined solely by OMH 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's 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

## **New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)**

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 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";
- 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 calendar days of the OMH dated letter. OMH will not offer debriefing to providers who receive an award. 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. OMH reserves the right to modify the first period of the contract to coincide with the applicable fiscal period. For New York City contracts, the fiscal period is July 1 through June 30 of each year. Selected applicants awarded a contract under this RFP will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions in OMH's Contract for Grants.

**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 contracts. In accordance with New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, OMH hereby establishes a 16% goal for Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE) participation, a 14% goal for Women-owned Business Enterprise (WBE) participation, based on the current availability of qualified MWBEs, 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

## **New York State Office of Mental Health (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:

- i. If an award recipient fails to submit a MWBE Utilization Plan;
- ii. If an award recipient fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
- iii. If an award recipient fails to submit a request for waiver; or,
- iv. 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 6% 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 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 subcontractors 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-l 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 Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification**

State Finance Law §139-m requires all vendors bidding on state contracts to implement and attest to a Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace policy. Applicants on state procurements must certify that they have a written policy addressing gender-based violence and the workplace that meets the minimum requirements of State Finance Law §139-m. 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.

**3.10 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.

**3.11 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 2.9 of this RFP.

**3.12 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

## New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

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.

### 3.13 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. **Please note that there are restrictions to the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.**

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

Technical Evaluation	Points
Experience	30
Vision, Implementation, and Maintenance	40
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Peer Support Language	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 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 2.9. If a proposal is not complete or does not meet the basic eligibility and participation standards as outlined in Section 2.4, 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.



## **New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)**

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 “Vision, Implementation, and Maintenance” section 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 (1) award will be made to the applicant with the highest score to assume the operation of the Academy of Peer Specialists.

### **4.4. 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 contract deliverables, failure to complete and submit reports on required timeframe, failure to be responsive to and complete required or requested tasks within the scope of the contract, 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. In the event the award cannot be made, OMH reserves the right to re-procure the terminated or reassigned contract.

### **4.5. 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 (NYS) Office of Mental Health (OMH) is committed to advancing and promoting the professional development of the Peer Support Service profession. As such, accessible, high quality training to meet certification requirements are crucial. Thus, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) is soliciting proposals to provide a platform for the Academy of Peer Services (APS) which houses education and information relevant to current or aspiring peer support specialists in New York State, including the core curriculum for the NYCPS(-P) certification and approved CEUs.

The Academy of Peer Services (APS) is the online training, testing, and tracking platform for learners seeking the New York Certified Peer Specialist (NYCPS) credential. APS has provided self-directed online training for peer providers in New York State since January 2014. Currently APS offers a wide array of courses over three (3) terms per

## New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

year including but not limited to the following curricula:

- 13 Core Courses
- Elective Courses
- Continuing Education (CE) courses
- Non-credit developmental courses
- Specialization tracks

This RFP seeks to contract with an entity to provide the following services: manage the Academy through the provision of technical development, instructional design, project management, new course development, and learner support to thousands of active learners per term as part of this partnership.

The primary goal of the APS training is to prepare learners for the New York Certified Peer Specialist credential, to serve as a continuing education source for the maintenance of the credential, and to offer virtual professional development learning opportunities for the peer support workforce.

The Academy needs to accommodate adult learners, allow for intuitive and creative interfaces, host SCORM package (SCORM stands for Sharable Content Object Reference Model), and a learner-driven dashboard to register and track courses.

The APS is also responsible for tracking outcome measurements to determine the efficacy of the courses in collaboration with OMH.

### 5.2. Objectives and Responsibilities

The vendor shall be responsible for implementing the Academy webpage and support activities as described in 5.1 Introduction that meets the technical, functional, and business requirements as stated in this RFP. The proposal should include detailed narrative regarding implementation.

- a. The vendor shall ensure their services meet the functionality, accessibility, and content needs relevant to the peer support workforce.
- b. The applicant's narrative shall include details such as project planning, configuration, customization, testing, training, documentation and use of subject matter experts for course content.
- c. The vendor shall provide a detailed implementation plan with a timeline, milestones, and resource allocation.
- d. The vendor shall provide ongoing support and maintenance services to ensure their systems operate effectively and efficiently after implementation.
- e. The vendor shall provide support and TA to learners, including but not limited to an FAQ page that is regularly updated, on an as-needed basis to ensure the platform is accessible and understood by individuals seeking educational content on the APS.
- f. The vendor shall utilize existing APS coursework, perform quality assurance, and

## New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

improve upon materials and resources on a regular basis, decided on in collaboration with and approved by OMH.

- g. The vendor shall add coursework in collaboration with subject matter experts and approved by OMH.
- h. The vendor shall implement an advisory board composed of members representative of the New York State peer support workforce community. Members of the board shall have term limits determined in collaboration with OMH and opportunities for new advisory board members will be advertised to all APS learners to ensure diversity in perspectives and experiences.
- i. Host a virtual learning community that will house resources relevant to the peer support workforce, including regular networking meetings, job board and opportunities with resources to support interview and job readiness, tools and resources for best practice, and more.
- j. Organize all content in a way that is responsive to learners.

### 5.3. Staffing and Subject Matter Expertise

The vendor shall ensure that they are staffed with experienced and knowledgeable personnel to meet the responsibilities and timeframes outlined in this RFP throughout the duration of the resulting contract. Staff hired must be able to travel throughout New York State to meet the needs of this contract as directed by OMH.

The vendor must directly employ or contract with trainers who are subject matter experts in peer values and principles, issues that impact the peer workforce, supervisory best practices, and trauma informed and responsive practices, ensuring diversity in experiences and perspectives of workforce subject matter experts. The vendor must employ the following staff levels who meet qualifications as described below:

1. Engagement Manager: Responsible for managing the relationship with OMH/APS, oversight of the delivery of services, serving as the primary point of contact for OMH/APS, and the resolution of issues that may arise. The Engagement Manager must have experience with similar roles overseeing implementation.
2. Project Manager: Responsible for the execution and coordination of all aspects of the project including schedule, staff, and implementation management. This person must have experience as a program manager having successfully overseen project implementation involving data migration on an LMS platform. This individual must have led projects that involved communication and customer relationship management activities with both internal and external partners.
3. Training/Testing Lead: Responsible for planning, scheduling, preparing materials for, and conducting training and testing. This individual will have experience developing and delivering training of the LMS solution and testing an implementation.
4. Content Matter Expert: Staff responsible for generating content for the Academy and working in partnership with the other staff to ensure peer-led values are present and the Academy maintains integrity to the peer support model.

## **New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)**

5. The APS advisory board shall be composed of members representative of the New York State peer support workforce community, certified (NYCPS or NYCPS-P) and who have worked as peer specialists. Members of the board shall have term limits determined in collaboration with OMH and opportunities for new advisory board members will be advertised to all APS learners to ensure diversity in perspectives and experiences. Accepted members should be limited to currently certified individuals who have been employed as a peer specialist within the last five years.

OMH reserves the right to review potential staff resumes prior to the start of work, and to reject project staff and any proposed personnel or subcontractors. In addition, OMH may require changes in staff based on performance and may require replacement staff with equal or stronger qualifications.

OMH has the right to review and approve all subcontracts prior to commencing work under the contract. OMH will work directly with the Vendor, not through subcontractors. Subcontractors and consultants should not be contacting OMH support staff or Subject Matter Experts (SME) directly unless authorized to do so by OMH and the Vendor. All communication must flow through the Vendor to OMH unless specified.

### **5.4. Monitoring and Reporting**

**Regular Monitoring Meetings:** The assigned APS staff will meet as determined by OMH, via conference call or in person, with OMH OAPSS staff with a mutually agreed upon agenda and status report. These meetings will be held to discuss all aspects of the contract. The frequency of monitoring meetings may be adjusted by OAPSS as needed.

**Monthly and Quarterly Reporting:** The vendor will complete monthly and quarterly reports which includes a brief written report of progress toward all deliverables. The vendor will work closely with OAPSS to ensure execution of the contract is strategic and outcome focused.

**Annual Report:** The vendor shall complete annual reports, based on the contract year, as prescribed by OMH OAPSS to be received by close of business at the end of the month following the end of the contract year being reported on. To support these reports, the vendor must report back on all workplan deliverables, including measures established in collaboration with OAPSS Staff.

### **5.5. Transition**

A transition represents a period when services provided by the vendor resulting from this RFP must be transitioned to another vendor during or at the end of a contract period or delivered to OMH or another state agency.

The vendor will ensure that any transition to another vendor be done in a way that provides OMH with uninterrupted services. The vendor will develop an organized work plan and timeline to ensure a smooth transition of all current and future service. In this plan the vendor will detail their plan to transition any deliverables to OMH should their contract be terminated for any reason.

## 5.6. Operating Funding

One award will be made in the amount of \$576,000.00 annually for five (5) years.

Applicants are reminded that funding to support the operation of this program is contingent upon the continued availability of State appropriations.

## 6. Proposal Narrative

**Please note that there are restrictions to the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.**

A proposal template is provided in the “Event Comments and Attachments” section of SFS and MUST be used to answer the following questions. Any supporting attachments MUST be included in the upload of the proposal template as one continuous PDF document AND be labeled specific to the question number it is associated with. **Proposals/applications not submitted as described (other than the budget which must be uploaded in excel format) will result in disqualification of the application.**

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

### 6.1 Experience

This section is intended to describe the applicant’s experience as it relates to their ability to operate the Academy of Peer Services. The Vendor’s response must demonstrate the history and ability to effectively implement, maintain and support, the ongoing operations of the proposed LMS/SIS solution.

- a. Please describe your experience successfully implementing a LMS/SIS solution for universities, colleges, and other educational institutions
- b. Please describe your experience building and maintaining a virtual LMS and hub with resources such as a job board that would be relevant to the peer workforce. History should include measurable outcomes such as number of site hits, number of posted jobs within the state, website use, etc.
- c. Please describe your experience with project Management as it relates to key areas of this RFP including but not limited to the development, implementation, and management of a learning management hub and other resources, and technical support.
- d. Please describe your experience with system configuration and customization, interface design and development, and testing and training.
- e. Please describe your experience with technical operations and service (help) desk support. The help desk provides customer support to interact with users and resolve concerns.
- f. Please describe your experience with curriculum development and creating accessible materials relevant to this RFP.

- g. Please describe your expertise in working with peer support workers as subject matter experts
- h. Please describe your experience maintaining collaborative partnerships with peer-run or focused training entities
- i. Please describe your experience engaging and building relationships with a variety of statewide partners with subject and content-matter expertise.
- j. Please describe your experience providing high-quality, virtual education and training to adult and non-traditional learners, utilizing an LMS.
- k. Please describe your expertise in creating, providing, and managing training initiatives that represent peer values, peer principles and practices, trauma aware and responsive practices, and other peer discipline related topics that contribute to the skill enhancement and practice of peer support across the lifespan and/or willingness to adapt existing resources to meet the needs of the peer support workforce.

## **6.2 Vision, Implementation, and Maintenance**

This section should describe an implementation plan which provides information relevant to the applicant's ability to successfully administer services for the Academy of Peer Services. It should encompass a vision and mission for the APS demonstrating an understanding of and fidelity to peer values, principles, and practices, a commitment to peer leadership, and enhancement of the quality of education offered to the peer workforce relevant to where they are employed.

- a. Provide an overview of the bidder's vision and mission for the Academy of Peer Services. These statements should be clear and concise, inclusive of key operating principles and values, and a brief program overview that describes in the bidder's words how APS will meet OMH's goal of this RFP.
- b. Describe the vendor's understanding of peer support values and principles.
- c. Describe the vendor's staffing plan as it relates to section 5.3 of this RFP. Please also detail how the vendor will make use of Subject matter Expertise relevant to peer support workers and the various areas they are employed, including their role in the development and improvement of curricula.
- d. Describe the implementation plan for the LMS/SIS solution that meets the technical, functional, and business requirements as stated in this RFP with attention to the following:
  - i. Project planning and timeline, configuration, customization, testing, training, and other milestones.
  - ii. User input and the role of staff in implementation
  - iii. How the vendor will provide ongoing support and maintenance services to ensure the LMS operates effectively and efficiently post-implementation
  - iv. How the vendor will conduct testing of the LMS to ensure it functions correctly and meets APS requirements
- e. Describe how the vendor will train and support end users on site usage and through the continuous availability of a help desk and IT ticketing and how will the vendor

## **New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)**

- track response time and the content of user concerns so that information is used to improve APS?
- f. Describe how the vendor will work with OMH to provide regular updates on progress and activities and ensure content that is relevant to peer support workers in the various areas they are employed
  - g. Describe how the vendor will host a virtual learning community that will house resources relevant to the peer support workforce.
  - h. Describe how the vendor will implement a job board, maintain relevant opportunities, and house resources for interview and job readiness.
  - i. Describe learner accommodations that will be incorporated for various learners with attention to the demographics of New York State.
  - j. Describe the frequency of course offerings.
  - k. Describe the vendor's plan to ensure collaboration with (1) the New York Peer Specialist Certification Board to ensure courses provide learners with Continuing Education Units for the maintenance and upgrade of their certification; and (2) other OMH-funded training partners, peer run organizations, and existing regional networking groups
  - l. Provide an overview of the bidder's transition plan that ensures a complete and total transfer of all training files, reports, materials, and records necessary to perform the services, as described in Section 5.5.

(Note that this list is intended only as a proposal; specific knowledge, skills, and competencies to be included in the contract deliverables will be established in collaboration with OMH.)

### **6.3. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Peer Support Worker Input**

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

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

- a. Provide a mission statement for this project that includes information about the intent to provide training and technical assistance focused on supporting the professional development needs of peer support workers across the lifespan who have experienced various forms of oppression i.e. racism, sexism, ableism, classism, and other forms of discrimination that will inform their practice of peer support.
- b. Identify the management-level person responsible for ensuring that trainings, curricula, and mentoring/networking resources developed through this project will promote equity, inclusion and amplify the voices of peer support workers across the lifespan most impacted by these issues.



## **New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)**

- c. Identify the management-level person responsible for coordinating/leading efforts to ensure incorporation of feedback from the Advisory Committee and membership and OAPSS in continuous initiative improvement. Information provided should include the individual's title, organizational positioning and their planned activities for coordinating these efforts.

### **Equity Structure**

- d. Describe how the organization's Advisory committee, workgroups, and processes focus on reducing disparities in all deliverables for peer support workers who have experienced oppression.

### **Workforce Diversity and Inclusion**

- e. Describe how this project will recruit, hire, and retain staff and subcontractors from the most prevalent cultural group of service users, and staff and subcontractors with lived experience with mental health and receiving mental health services as a youth, adult, or family member supporting a youth who has received mental health services.

### **Language Access**

- f. Describe how this project will support the language access needs of peer support workers with differing levels of English proficiency, reading comprehension, and overall accessibility.

## **6.4. Financial Assessment**

- a. The proposal must include a 5-year Budget (Appendix B). \$576,000.00 is available annually. The indirect cost/administrative overhead rate is capped at 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. Please include the following:
  - detailed expense components that make up the total operating expenses;
  - the calculation or logic that supports the budgeted value of each category; and,
  - description of how salaries are adequate to attract and retain qualified employees.