

HEALTH RESEARCH, INC. (HRI)
New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)
Center for Community Health/Division of Epidemiology
Bureau of Healthcare Associated Infections
Request for Application #: CCH-2021-02
Project Firstline Infection Prevention and Control Training

Questions and Answers - May 11, 2021

1. **Question:** Is the Contractor required to “develop an engaging, innovative and effective IPC training curriculum” as defined in the Background/Intent section, OR if we are to use the Project Firstline (PF) modules referenced in the Deliverables section on page 4, bullet point number 4?

Answer: This will depend on your target audience. For some, PF modules may present sufficient information to be discussed and applied to their tasks. For others, some innovation and additional information may be required. The basis of the training, however, should be in line with Project Firstline.

2. **Question:** Will the training be mandatory to complete for the frontline healthcare personnel and targeted sectors of the public health workforce?

Answer: NYS is not mandating Project Firstline training. Individual employers may or may not make participation mandatory.

3. **Question:** Are home health agencies included in the targeted sectors?

Answer: Yes, applicants can choose to target any frontline healthcare employee groups in any setting where health care is delivered.

4. **Question:** If other entities currently have contact information and a process to perform a survey and outreach to the targeted facilities, and a proven track record of outreach to these members, will the application be considered equal to that of the preferred applicants?

Answer: All applicants will be considered and judged on their capacity to do this work. It is anticipated that larger organizations such as facility associations will be better situated in terms of infrastructure, capacity, and experience. If other applicants display the same, they will have an equal opportunity to be awarded a contract.

5. **Question:** Is the expectation for trainings: live in-person OR live virtually OR via virtual access to training modules? Or, some combination of all three? (All options are mentioned in the Deliverables section in bullets number 5 and 7.)

Answer: Applications will be judged based on the applicant’s ability to conduct the training using a variety of media.

6. **Question:** Do the deliverables include a target number of trainings AND a target number of healthcare facilities to be completed within specified timeframes?

Answer: The application should provide target numbers for both measures. NYS has not set target numbers because this will vary depending on target audiences, types of facilities, and length and types of trainings offered. However, the target an applicant sets will need to be reasonable in terms of their budget and allotted time frame.

7. **Question:** As written, this section provides an e-mail address OR a physical address for application submission. Kindly confirm that two submission options are being offered, i.e., 1) Submit an application via e-mail ONLY. OR 2) Ship one original and three hard copy applications ONLY. That is, we do not have to submit hard copy applications if we submit one e-mailed copy. If this is not correct, please clarify.

Answer: Applicants may choose the submission method. Only one submission (online or by mail) is required.

8. **Question:** Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Content, page 17. This requirement starts, “In addition to the items requested above...” HRI’s General Terms and Conditions are presented prior to this statement. Please describe which “items requested above” are being referenced (and whether they must be submitted along with our application). Is that implicit in our submitting an application, or do we need to spell that out within the body of the application?

Answer: Additional documentation described in this section of the RFA will be requested when awardees receive their contracts for signature. Submission of an application indicates the applicant’s acceptance of all conditions and terms contained in the RFA, including the terms and conditions of the contract. Any exceptions allowed by HRI during the Question and Answer Phase (Section IV.B) must be clearly noted in a cover letter attached to the application.

9. **Question:** Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Content, page 18. No requirements are provided in this section. Are we to complete a draft Work Plan (RFA Attachment 3) and submit with our Application? If not, please specify the requirements for this section

Answer: Yes

10. **Question:** If we are to submit a draft Work Plan (RFA Attachment 3) please confirm it will be outside the 15-page limitation, and that it should be submitted as an appendix to the Application. If not, please specify the requirements for Attachment 3.

Answer: The workplan is considered an attachment and not included in the application page count.

11. **Question:** May we add a Table of Contents (not counted in 15-page limit) after “1. Cover Sheet” and before “2. Application Organization”?

Answer: A table of contents is considered an attachment and not included in the application page count.

12. Question: Please confirm applications must be submitted double spaced and not single spaced.

Answer: Applications must not exceed 15 double-spaced, typed pages.

13. Question: Are organizations being asked to provide online *synchronous* COVID-19 trainings? Or is this RFA seeking organizations to provide online *asynchronous* training? Or is this RFA seeking organizations that can provide both online formats - self-study and real-time or face-to-face trainings?

Answer: Applications can include synchronous trainings, asynchronous trainings, or a combination of both. Judging will include an assessment of the level of interaction and engagement offered.

14. Question: Can DOH provide a link or copy of the CDC Jurisdictional Learning Needs Assessment?

Answer: The CDC Jurisdictional Learning Needs Assessment and guidance is available as a pdf document located on the HRI website at: <https://www.healthresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CDC-Learning-Needs-Assessment-and-Guidance.pdf>

15. Question: Would it be acceptable to gather the information directly from the employer facility, rather than each individual workforce staff person?

Answer: Preference will be given to applications that describe an assessment that most accurately reflects the needs of the audience(s).

16. Question: Are there preferred or required qualifications for faculty/facilitator for the sessions?

Answer: No. There are no specific qualifications required for faculty/facilitators. However, it is expected that faculty/facilitators will have the background, education, and experience to answer questions from participants related to the content of the training.

17. Question: Would closed caption or transcript post live event suffice for language interpretation?

Answer: No. Options for language interpretation are as follows:

- English only
- Preferred language only
- English with a live interpreter speaking the preferred language

18. Question: Are faculty expected to provide live instruction in languages other than English?

Answer: No, this is not a requirement. It is the expectation that faculty/facilitators and their audience(s) can effectively communicate with one another. The language used in the training should be based on the results of the Learning Needs Assessment conducted with the target audiences.

19. Question: Do participants need to attend training sessions live for the purpose of this RFA, or if a contractor can produce participation report information from a posted recording-would that meet the requirement?

Answer: Awardees should provide training using a variety of methods as determined by the Learning Needs Assessment results from the target audiences.

20. Question: Can we use the platforms available through our organization, or must we use the one's most respondents report via the learning needs assessment?

Answer: The application should include platforms that will reach the maximum number of participants.

21. Question: We do not have Exhibit A attached to the RFA

Answer: Exhibit A will be your workplan. Exhibits B and C will be your approved budget and vouchering requirements, respectively.

22. Question: Is there an approved rate for overhead expenses?

Answer: There is no set rate. To claim indirect costs, the contractor may have a federally approved indirect cost rate agreement or if they don't have a federally approved indirect cost rate, they may claim a *deminimus* 10% Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). If contractors claim more than the 10% *deminimus* they must complete the HRI Administrative Cost Worksheet. MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant costs and the portion of each subaward above \$25,000.

23. Question: If bidders are approved federal contractors, may they use their established federal overhead rate?

Answer: Yes

24. Question: Could you please share an overview of what this project involves?

Answer: Please refer to the RFA Section III – Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes on page 4.

25. Question: Is it the expectation that different applicants can work with a single group not all healthcare facilities? For example: nursing homes or hospitals

Answer: Yes, applicants can choose to focus their training on specific audiences. For example, applicants might choose to provide training to housekeeping staff in hospitals, nursing homes, and/or adult care facilities.

26. Question: Is it the plan to award at least 3 awards?

Answer: We anticipate awarding between 3 and 6 contracts. However, we reserve the right to award any number of contracts or none.

27. Question: Is home health care included in the target sector to receive training? It is not mentioned in the RFA.

Answer: Yes, applicants can choose to target any frontline healthcare employee groups in any setting where health care is delivered.

28. Question: Is the expectation to provide training live virtually, module based or live in person or combination of all?

Answer: Awardees should provide training using a variety of methods as determined by the Learning Needs Assessment results from the target audiences.

29. Question: Will NYSDOH notify healthcare facilities that Project Firstline will be available to them in the coming months?

Answer: Currently, NYSDOH has no plans to advertise Project Firstline on a statewide basis. We reserve the right to do so at a later date.

30. Question: Since this is a one-year grant what outcomes are expected to be measured?

Answer: NYSDOH will work with awardees to establish reasonable and appropriate outcome measures based on the approved workplan.

31. Question: Does the facilitator have to speak the language of the majority based on assessment results?

Answer: No, this is not a requirement. It is the expectation that faculty/facilitators and their audience(s) can effectively communicate with one another. The language used in the training should be based on the results of the Learning Needs Assessment conducted with the target audiences.

32. Question: Section V. Completing the Application, A. Application Content, page 18. For "Timeline of Project Implementation," no requirements are provided.

Answer: There are no specific requirements for the Timeline of Project Implementation. This section of the application is weighted 10% of the total application.

33. Question: Is the expectation to complete the Sample Work Plan (RFA Attachment 3) and include it outside the page limitations (in an Appendix).

Answer: The workplan is considered an attachment and not included in the application page count.

34. Question: Is there a requirement to train outside our healthcare network or can we concentrate within our organization?

Answer: There is no requirement to train staff outside your organization.

35. Question: Is there an expectation to the number of participants to be trained and can they be members of our organization or certain percentage must be out of our network?

Answer: There are no minimum number of participants required. Applicants are not obligated to provide the education to anyone other than their target audience(s).

36. Question: Just to clarify: the application is emailed to Karyn directly not on the Grants Gateway?

Answer: The completed application may be emailed OR sent via hardcopy to the mailing address listed in the RFA. This opportunity is not on the Grants Gateway.

37. Question: Will the participants receive any type of certificate of participation through the state or any acknowledgement to the organization that participates incentive to encourage staff to attend sessions?

Answer: Awardees are responsible for providing course attendees and NYS with proof of participants' course completion. The NYSDOH documentation required will be arranged with awardees after contracts have been executed.

38. Question: Do you have a date this project needs to be implemented by?

Answer: Training must commence within two months of contract execution, therefore all pre-training activities (e.g. conducting the learning needs assessment) need to be completed before training begins.

39. Question: Can you submit as a prime in one app and a sub in another app?

Answer: Applicant can submit as a prime contractor in one application and a subcontractor in another application as long as their scope of work is different. If the scope of the work is the same, only one could be awarded.

40. Question: Materials must acknowledge HRI, DOH and CDC. Will there be templates?

Answer: NYSDOH will provide awardees with standard acknowledgement statements that need to be included in the training.

41. Question: Do you expect to see target staff numbers, or will you accept provider types/offices/dialysis/home care?

Answer: Applications should include both the intended audience(s), and an estimate as to the number of participants awardees expect to be able to reach with the education during the project period.

42. Question: Section III, Second to last bullet, page 4. What type of tracking software was created by the Department and how does it work?

Answer: The NYSDOH documentation required will be arranged with awardees after contracts have been executed