

**RFA #1207121030
Grants Gateway # DOH01-MCNHPR-2014**

**Nursing Home Quality Improvement Projects:
Evaluation of the Medical Direction and Medical Care in Nursing Homes Project
Modifications, Questions and Answers**

June 27, 2014

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the modification outlined below, the Application Due Date is being extended to August 8, 2014, 4:00 P.M.

RFA Modifications:

The following has been updated/modified in the RFA. Strike-through indicates deleted text; underlined/bolded text is new.

PAGE 25:

References-Verification Letters: Provide six (6) verification letters ~~of reference~~ and current contact information as follows:

(1) **verification letters from** two of the New York State nursing homes used in your application to document your organization's and staff's experience providing education, training and technical assistance (ETTA) to nursing homes to help them implement quality improvement projects and best practices. The letters of reference should address the quality and effectiveness of the ETTA you provided, the credibility of your staff (e.g., how familiar were your staff with the nursing home work environment, care and work flow processes, regulatory requirements, perceived financial constraints, etc.);

(2) **verification letters from** two of the New York State nursing homes used in your application to document your organization's and staff's experience designing and conducting research in New York nursing homes. The letters should address the types and quality of interactions between your staff and the nursing home's staff. For example, if applicant's staff conducted in-person interviews with the nursing home's staff, how satisfied was the nursing home with the interview scheduling process and the interview process itself? Did applicant's staff conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner?

(3) **verification letters from** two of the organizations with whom you contracted to design and conduct research projects and which you used to document your experience in program evaluation research in your application. The verification letters ~~of reference~~ should describe the work you contracted to do and the

timeliness and quality of your work products. If either of these organizations is the Department of Health or HRI, the following requirements apply:

To document this experience with either the Department of Health or HRI, prepare a written narrative and label as such, stating the organization with whom you contracted (if Department of Health, you must also provide the office or center as well as the division that managed your contract) and describe the work/research project(s) you contracted to do.

Please note: Reference **Verification** letters must include a contact person at each nursing home/organization who is still employed at that nursing home/organization and who is familiar with the work you did there. Information must be current. Reviewers are not required to track down current contact information if the information in the application is not correct or is no longer current. Failure to provide this information will not work in the applicant's favor.

Questions & Answers:

1. I work for a nursing home that is participating in the project as an Education, Training and Technical Assistance (ETTA) facility. Is my nursing home eligible to apply for this grant, or are we limited to playing a sub-contracting role?

Answer: ETTA facilities are not eligible to apply for this grant award. However, the organization awarded this contract may sub-contract with any ETTA facility for services that the facility is competent to provide.

2. Staff at my facility participated in the work groups that developed and promoted the guidelines for Medical Direction and Medical Care in Nursing Homes. Are we eligible to apply for the evaluation contract?

Answer: Yes.

3. The RFA states that the experimental or treatment sample size is 50 nursing homes. Has sample recruitment been completed? How many nursing homes are actually participating in the project?

Answer: Currently twenty-two (22) nursing homes across the State are participating in the project. We do not anticipate that this number will change by more than plus or minus 3-5 nursing homes. This is the size of the treatment or experimental sample.

4. There may be nursing homes that want to implement the guidelines but do not feel they can participate in the project as an ETTA facility. Can such nursing homes still access any of the education, training and technical assistance provided to ETTA facilities?

Answer: Yes. The ETTA contractor, HANYS/HERF, has posted information on its public website (<http://www.hanys.org/etta/>) dedicated to the ETTA project. Nursing homes that do not wish to participate in the project as ETTA facilities (and thus have access to all of the education, training and technical assistance offered to participating facilities) can still access some of the resources and webinars provided to participating facilities. However, they will not receive technical assistance from project staff tailored to their specific implementation issues or how to use the resources on the ETTA website. They will also not benefit from peer group support and networking.

5. We are a NYS certified WBE law firm. In regard to RFA # 207121030, do you expect that any legal services will be subcontracted in fulfillment of this project? Is there a list of interested subcontractors that we can be added to?

Answer: The Department of Health does not anticipate opportunities for law firms on this project and there is no list of interested sub-contractors. The RFA addresses MWBE requirements in detail so if applicants feel the need to sub-contract any portions of the project, they can go to <https://ny.newnycontracts.com/> to find certified MWBE organizations.

6. Does this require a bidder/subcontractor to be physically present in Albany? I am located in Western New York and have worked extensively with physicians in nursing homes and I may be interested to work as a subcontractor. However, I am not willing to relocate for the project.

Answer: No. Bidders and sub-contractors are not required to be located in Albany. However, the staff of the organization awarded the contract and/or its sub-contractors may be required to travel across the State and may be required to attend in-person meetings located in Albany.

7. Do we have to find someone who has MDS access or do we go to CMS directly?

Answer: That would be at the applicant's discretion. The organization awarded the contract must maintain compliance with all CMS requirements governing access to and use of MDS data.

8. The RFA does not provide guidance on how the contractor is to obtain required data.

Answer: That is correct. The RFA does not provide guidance on this. Pages 23-24 of the RFA address either the contractor's or sub-contractors' experience with these datasets. This experience will be scored during the review process. Applicants who are unfamiliar with the referenced datasets and how to access and use them, are encouraged to sub-contract with organizations that have this knowledge and experience as this will be scored. If the applicant does not have the required experience but a sub-contractor does, the application should state this in the section for sub-contractors.

9. If the project requires IRB review and approval, can we use the Department's IRB?

Answer: No. As stated on page 11 of the RFA, the contractor may not use the Department of Health's IRB.

10. Please explain the difference between Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) and Return on Investment (ROI) analysis.

Answer: Applicants should review literature on cost effectiveness and return on investment analysis to ascertain the difference between the two.

As with experience using such datasets as MDS and RHCF-4, applicants who do not have experience with CEA and ROI are encouraged to sub-contract with organizations and consultants who do.

11. Are we required to address CEA and ROI in our application?

Answer: Yes. Page 26 of the RFA requires applicants to describe CEA, ROI and business case design. The description should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the applicant's (or the applicant's sub-contractor) competence to design and conduct the analysis and prepare a report.

12. Is sample size something the Department has considered?

Answer: Yes. The RFA, which was released prior to recruiting facilities into the project, stated that 50 nursing homes would be recruited for the "treatment" group. The Department anticipates only 17 – 27 nursing homes, however, will actually participate in the project to be evaluated. Applicants should identify any statistical issues and concerns associated with this number and discuss how they will address these issues and concerns.

13. If an applicant has contracted with HRI or the NYS Department of Health to conduct the types of work described on pages 21-23 of the RFA relevant to organizational qualifications and staff qualifications, can this work and these staff be counted and included in the designated sections of the application?

Answer: Yes. If the applicant is awarded the contract and at the time of contract execution is still under contract with the Department or HRI to conduct such work, the Department will require the contractor to implement such steps as are necessary to ensure that funding streams do not overlap.

14. Is it unfavorable if you can't get all of the required letters of support?

Answer: Yes. But please note that this requirement in the RFA has been modified. Refer to the Modification at the beginning of this Q&A document.

15. Page 26 of the RFA states the requirements for letters of reference. Specifically, letters of reference are required from “two of the organizations with whom you contracted to design and conduct research projects and which you used to document your experience in program evaluation research in your application. The letters of reference should describe the work you contracted to do and the timeliness and quality of your work products.”

If the applicant has contracted with the NYS Department of Health or Health Research Incorporated (HRI) to conduct such work, can it request a letter of support from the Department or HRI?

Answer: No. The RFA has been revised to clarify information submission requirements for applicants who use their work with the Department of Health or HRI to meet the organizational and staff qualification requirements. Refer to the Modification at the beginning of this Q&A document.