

New York State Department of Health Questions and Answers for the Healthy Eating and Active Living by Design RFA #0807170154

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions posted by potential bidders and are hereby incorporated into the RFA 0807170154 issued on August 19, 2008. In the event of any conflict between the RFA and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

The questions and answers have been grouped by topic area. In some cases, a question crossed areas but each question is only listed in one. Please read through the entire list of questions and answers.

**Clarification: Please note Question 27 provides definitions not included in the RFA.
The answer to this question is considered a modification of the RFA.**

Questions

- 1 IV. Administrative Requirements H. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire (VRQ), page 15 - Should all applicants submit a VRQ? The paragraph does not explicitly state that this is a requirement of applicants. Also, the RFA document emailed does not include Attachment 10 – Vendor Responsibility Attestation

Answers

All applicants must complete a Vendor Responsibility Attestation. The Attestation is attached at the end of the Questions and Answers.

Fiscal/Budget

- 2 Pg 25 Attachment 1 #3 -Can the funding be used to primarily support staff time to carry out planning, communication and implementation of the project?
- 3 Given all of the recent news, reports, etc. from the Governor's Office regarding the State Budget crisis, would this RFA fall under any category for cuts?

Yes, it's anticipated that a project coordinator would be hired. Reserving some funds for promotional efforts, mini-grants and other non-personnel costs is advisable.

All RFAs are issued stating that awards are subject to availability of funding. Please see page 9, first paragraph of the RFA.

- 4 Would the purchase of bicycles for youth involved in the program be an allowable expense? Bicycle purchases would be acceptable if you can demonstrate that they will help you reach the 1,500 person target. The purpose of the program is policy and environmental change. Each proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the RFA criteria. Please see page 9, section III of the RFA.
- 5 The RFA states you cannot use funding to purchase major depreciable equipment. We would like to know if renting a vehicle (e.g., cargo van) for specific events would be an allowable expense. See the answer to question #4 above. Please see page 9, III - Project Narrative of the RFA..
- 6 Is equipment such as fitness equipment an allowable expense? The proposal would have to explain how the equipment will be used to reach 1,500 people. In addition, interventions established with these grant funds should be sustainable after funding concludes. Please see page 19, #5 of the RFA.
- 7 What are the minimum/maximum amounts that we may request? There is no minimum. Applicants from New York, Brooklyn, Kings, Queens, Bronx, Richmond, Suffolk, Nassau, and Westchester, and organizations working statewide may request up to \$83,000 annually. Applicants from all other counties may request up to \$73,000 annually. Applications involving multiple counties are only eligible for one grant. If collaborating counties are eligible for different amounts, they may request the higher amount. Please see page 8, second paragraph of the RFA.
- 8 Is there an expectation for in-kind funding to be provided in the application? Listing in-kind contributions is not required, but is encouraged.
- 9 Will counties that are collaborating be able to pool monies to hire a regional coordinator for the lead county? Applicants planning to collaborate across counties could apply separately and propose to jointly fund a staff person. An applicant could also propose a project that encompasses more than one county and request the maximum amount for one project. Applications should not request funds exceeding the funding cap listed on page 8, second paragraph of the RFA.
- 10 Will each county in the applying group receive the same amount of money? If multiple counties apply for one grant, the county entering into the contract with the NYSDOH must show how the funding will be distributed among the partnering counties. The NYSDOH must approve of the disbursement strategy.

11 V. Completing the Application, A. Application Content and Format, 7. Budget, page 21 - Should rent, heat, telephone each be listed on a separate line in the budget? Does the above sentence mean that each of these costs can be no more than 5% of direct costs or does it mean that the sum of all of these costs should be a maximum 5% of total direct costs? Does the term total direct costs refer to total project direct costs or total direct costs to be funded by NYSDOH?

Yes, rent, heat, and telephone would each be listed on separate lines. The sum of the costs should be no more than 5% of the direct costs funded by the NYSDOH.

12 Is it acceptable for an applicant to apply for two counties at the \$73,000 rate?

Applicants may apply for as many counties as desired, but the financial request cannot exceed the maximum funding amounts listed. Applicants from New York, Brooklyn, Kings, Queens, Bronx, Richmond, Suffolk, Nassau, and Westchester, and organizations working statewide may request up to \$83,000 annually. Applicants from all other counties may request up to \$73,000 annually. Applications involving multiple counties are only eligible for one grant. If collaborating counties are eligible for different amounts, they may request the higher amount. Please see page 8, second paragraph of the RFA.

13 III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, Pg 11 - Can it be inferred from this sentence that the applicant does not need to include funds for consultant survey services in the project budget?

Although applicants will be expected to evaluate activities (page 11, 5th paragraph of the RFA), the Healthy Heart Program evaluation staff will provide technical assistance on designing evaluation tools and methods. You will need to consider/include staff time for collecting evaluation data.

Reach

14 Pg 25 Attachment 1 #3 - Can the sample objectives "serving 8,000 residents each week by 2014" and "increasing consumption of healthy food by 25%" be altered based on the demographic and population restraints of our community?

Yes, the numbers you propose should reflect the intervention population in the community you will be working.

- 15 Pg 26 Attachment 1 #2 -Would a targeted group, such as home-based childcare providers, be too small of a target for this opportunity?
- We expect the anticipated reach of an intervention to be at least 1,500 people, and that the intervention will increase community-level opportunities for physical activity and/or healthy eating. In addition, interventions established with these grant funds should be sustainable after funding concludes. Please see page 19, #5 of the RFA.
- 16 Pg 26 Attachment 1 #2 - In the sample objective section the proposal suggests fitness classes in 4 YMCAs, would we need to offer classes in four different establishments or just reach 1,000 residents to meet the programs goals?
- This is only an example of what a program might do. Efforts must also be sustainable beyond grant funding.
- 17 Throughout the RFA it emphasizes that the interventions need to be community-level and reaching a significant portion of the target population (page 8, used frequently by a significant portion of the target population). What is the definition of a significant proportion? What kind of numbers is the funding source seeking? In large metropolitan area, even a large number represents a small proportion. Please advise.
- The intervention must reach at least 1,500 people total. Please see page 19, #5 of the RFA.
- 18 Based upon our organization's 33-years of experience, the intervention listed for the creation of 10 community gardens in 5 years that would accommodate 50 plots (i.e., that would be roughly ½ acre of land) is an unrealistic goal. Parcels of land these sizes are very difficult to find in the inner-city and in fact are undesirable as community gardens since they are too large to be effective. Are proposals with these numbers required to be positively considered for this grant?
- Interventions proposed must reach 1,500 people total. Community gardens are not a required intervention. Another intervention listed on Attachment 1 may be selected. Please see page 19, #5 of the RFA.
- 19 Is there a requirement that grant applicants serve a minimum population?
- Yes, the reach must be at least 1500 people total. Please see page 19, #5 of the RFA.
- 20 V. Completing the Application, B. Review & Award Process, 2. Statement of Need, page 22 - What is the definition of "significant proportion"?
- The significant proportion is at least 1500 total people in the target population. Please see page 19, #5 of the RFA.

21 V. Completing the Application Page 19, 2nd bullet - What is the definition of “reaching”?

Reach is defined as the actual number of people who will be using the new opportunity. A reach of 1,500 people is expected. Please see page 19, #5 of the RFA.

Target Population

Questions

22 Our Initiative focuses largely on youth (ages 5 through 19 years) and families. The criterion uses “New Yorkers” as a definer; would you consider our youth and families as part of that scope?

23 May the target audience include people who are already physically active and eat healthy foods?

24 We are considering the development of a youth advocacy program outside of school programs to win physical improvements in underserved neighborhoods. Would this type of activity qualify for the grant when it is stipulated that school sites are excluded? The youth program would be an additional tool to reach our target population. [p. 9 “Interventions targeting worksites and schools (students or staff) are not eligible for funding under this RFA because the HHP provides other funds for school and worksite projects.”]

25 We would like to work in a geographic region (a borough) that has been largely underserved relative to other boroughs. Because of the many different immigrant groups and lack of services, demographic behavioral information may not be available. However there are substantial reasons why this area should receive physical improvements to encourage active lifestyles. How should we define this target population?

Answers

Yes, youth and families can be the target population.

The goal is to increase opportunities to be physically active or make healthful food choices among those populations not currently physically active or not currently optimizing nutrition. The new opportunities should not be ones that just shift where people are physically active or eating healthy foods.

It's acceptable to involve youth as part of a strategy to implement one of the acceptable interventions listed in Attachment 1.

You may discuss the demographic and community details that you are aware of that support your selection of this population and/or geographic region. It's not anticipated that you will have detailed behavioral information about all the subpopulations in the community.

- 26 V. Completing the Application, A. Application Content and Format, 5. Project Narrative, page 20, - In many of New York's rural communities there may be very few minorities. In these areas it may be difficult to address cultural differences in values and norms among ethnic and racial groups. How will that affect the scoring of the application?
- 27 1. I. C. Interventions Sought and Funding Available, page 8, first sentence, second paragraph "Priority will be given to projects that serve a predominately low-income urban or rural area." What criteria should be used to define urban, low-income, and rural?

There could be cultural differences without racial or ethnic differences. Your explanation must show you understand possible sub-groups in your population, e.g., differences based on educational status or income, disability status or age.

For NYS the definition of rural is a county with less than 200,000 population; and a town in a non-rural county that has a population density of less than 200 persons per square mile. Low-income for the purpose of this RFA -- the average income for the target population is less than 185% of the poverty level (consistent with reduced-price school lunch and WIC guidelines). Urban refers to a metropolitan statistical area with a population cluster of at least 10,000. For more details, visit: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/metroareas/aboutmetro.html>.

Workplan/Acceptable Interventions

- 28 How flexible is the 5-year plan considering that new information about the community may be discovered in setting up and implementing interventions?
- 29 Can preparation activities, such as needs assessments, surveys, focus groups, partner training, etc. be included in the work plan and budget? (RFA, pp10-11)
- 30 Are applicants required to include both healthy eating and active living strategies in their proposal and 5-year plan or is it possible to focus on one or the other? (RFA, pp 25-26)
- 31 If a new intervention (that is not listed on the acceptable interventions list) is being planned, what type of documentation would be needed to support its inclusion?

Process evaluation will be ongoing. Changes in the workplan based on new information or changes in the community can be accommodated.

Yes, preparation steps should be included in the workplan and budget. Please see page 20, first bullet of the RFA.

Applicants may select to work in either area – physical activity or nutrition. Please see page 9, Section III, paragraph one of the RFA.

Sufficient evidence is published research studies showing likelihood of success, and/or data you've collected that demonstrates that the proposed intervention results in behavior change in a large group (e.g., 1,500) of people.

32 We are interested in submitting a proposal for a staff person to work on the development and implementation of such financial policies and incentives related to the creation and maintenance of supermarkets, other healthy food premises and physical activity programs and spaces serving affordable housing residents and low-income communities in NYC. We wanted to make sure that such a proposal would be eligible for the Healthy Eating and Active Living by Design RFA grant.

Hiring a person to do the work you outline would be acceptable as long as a commitment from the necessary key partners is included in the application. The application must focus initially on one intervention and must reach at least 1,500 people, see page 19, #5 and page 9, section III, paragraph 3 of the RFA.

33 If an intervention (that is not listed on the acceptable interventions list) is currently a part of an existing Healthy Heart grant, would that be an acceptable intervention to continue? Would that intervention be looked upon favorably to continue work on?

If the proposed intervention is not listed in the RFA, Attachment 1, evidence such as published research studies showing likelihood of success, and/or data you've collected that demonstrates that the proposed intervention results in behavior change in a large group (e.g., 1,500) of people must be presented.

34 Do you look favorably on a multi-pronged approach with various interventions included in a proposal or do you prefer one intervention?

The Healthy Heart Program is looking for one key intervention, with supporting activities to ensure its success, following the "4 P" model (please see page 10 of the RFA). If the project is completed, another intervention may be initiated.

35 III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, Pg 9 - What should be inferred from the use of the word "initially"?

It means that at first, the project should focus on one key intervention. However, based on success and progress in that intervention, the applicant may be able to expand focus over time to other interventions.

36 On page 7 at the bottom and into page 8 it states that HHP is seeking applications that make it easier for residents to be physically active OR to choose a healthy diet. On page 8 it states under the third bullet at the top of the page that, "thus have a likelihood of contributing to an increase in the percentage of the target population meeting physical activity AND nutrition recommendations. So, the question is, is the RFA looking for an applicant to propose in both areas or in one or the other? Can an applicant choose to do one area or the other or choose to do both areas?

The intervention should address either physical activity or nutrition. It need not address both.

37 The Albany County Department of Health has been selected to collaborate with the New York State Department of Health on its application for funding and support of the “Building a Healthy Nation: Strategic Alliance for Health” grant program to address cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity through evidenced-based nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use interventions. As the Albany County Department of Health may apply individually or as part of a coalition for the Healthy Eating and Active Living by Design grant, please indicate how these two grant programs complement one another and would promote economies of effort on the part of our local health department in promoting cardiovascular disease prevention.

It is incumbent upon the applicant to describe how the efforts funded under these two grant opportunities would build on each other and not duplicate efforts.

38 My question refers to page 8, section I-C, paragraph 2 which begins; “Priority will be given to projects...” Is the expansion of the Eat Well Play Hard Program in Child Care Settings able to be considered for this funding? It is indicated as such in the section of the paragraph which states: “...for promoting the use of expanded or newly created resources”?

If the work proposed is not on the list of acceptable interventions in Attachment 1, then evidence must be presented that demonstrates its effectiveness (see answer to question 35). Expansion of work that is not a replacement of other funding will be considered for funding. Please see page 21, #7 of the RFA.

39 We are interested in initiating some worksite wellness projects, an area not addressed in the county. Would this be an area of interest with this RFA?

No. Worksite wellness is already funded under the HHP and not covered under this RFA. Please see page 9 of the RFA.

40 If several counties apply as a group can we work on more than one focus area? Or do we have to have the same one (1) initiative for all the counties in the group?

The project should have one focus that can be implemented in all counties applying together as a group. Applicants from New York, Brooklyn, Kings, Queens, Bronx, Richmond, Suffolk, Nassau, and Westchester, and organizations working statewide may request up to \$83,000 annually. Applicants from all other counties may request up to \$73,000. Applications involving multiple counties are only eligible for one grant. If collaborating counties are eligible for different amounts, they may request the higher amount. Please see page 8, second paragraph of the RFA.

- 41 Is healthy food content in restaurant meals as acceptable in the objective as smaller portions with focus on nutritional content as well as portion size? There is insufficient evidence that just increasing healthy offerings in restaurants will increase consumption of healthy foods by a substantial portion of patrons. Pricing, portion sizes and menu labeling are the only restaurant interventions that have evidence that they modify consumption.
- 42 Attachment 1 - Healthy Eating - 4. "Increasing low-fat milk availability and acceptance" Is it the expectation of the grantor that the application include both objectives the Output and the Impact? Yes, both outcome and impact must be addressed.
- 43 Attachment 1 - Healthy Eating - "Establishing a grocery store in a low-income neighborhood" Does this mean that as part of the grant the applicant would actually open up a grocery store or can it mean enhancing the types of products sold in existing grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods? This funding cannot be used for capital expenses, so it cannot fund the actual opening and operation of a grocery store. It can fund community development activities needed to allow and attract a grocery store owner/investor. Applicants wanting to work to increase healthy options in existing stores, would need to provide evidence that this makes a difference in consumption patterns of the shoppers.
- 44 Could the grant funding be used to encourage cross country skiing in addition to walking and/or biking? Skiing is a more appropriate activity during winter months for residents in our northern region. You would need to provide evidence of environmental or policy efforts that have been used to increase people's activity through cross country skiing, and that you would be able to reach 1500 people total through your interventions.
- 45 Will the grants be awarded to counties which have not had previous Healthy Heart Grants or grants of a similar nature, i.e., Eat Well Play Hard, or will the awards be to areas that have grants in place with a foundation to build upon with the Healthy Living Grant? Each application will be evaluated on its own merit, based on the criteria set forth in the RFA.
- 46 Will the focus of the work plan be one of the five bullets on p3, 2nd paragraph for the entire five years? And are these five bullets the only objectives allowed? The bullets listed on page 3 of the RFA are from the Cardiovascular Health State Plan and are the broad objectives for the RFA; they are not the specific intervention objectives. The focus will be one of the acceptable interventions listed in Attachment 1. If another intervention is proposed, sufficient evidence must be provided to demonstrate that it will achieve increased consumption of healthy foods or physical activity.

- 47 Will goals change each year? The main goal will remain the same, but yearly objectives may change.
- 48 If barriers to the work plan arise that cannot be resolved, can the work plan be modified? Yes. The workplan can be modified based on results of process evaluation.
- 49 Will it be expected of the grantees to move from physical activity to nutrition or vice versa within the five years of the grant period? No. The applicants will not be required to move from physical activity to nutrition or vice versa, but may if initial interventions are successful and there is sufficient time to implement a new intervention.
- 50 III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, Pg 9 - Is the applicant required to identify what other community resources will be used in the Project Narrative? The page 19 list of what should be included in the Project Narrative also does not mention leveraging of other community resources. You do not need to identify sources of leveraged funds in the application.
- 51 I. C. Interventions Sought and Funding Available Pg 8 - Does “supplement an existing similar project” mean that the intervention needs to be different and additive or could it represent undertaking the existing intervention activities in additional locations? The funding can be used to expand existing interventions and activities, but not replace other funding for the program. In addition, the intervention should be selected from those listed in the RFA, Attachment 1, or sufficient evidence of effectiveness must be provided to justify its choice.
- 52 If an applicant is allowed to apply for two counties, does there have to be separate applications/ and/or workplans? If one application is submitted for two counties, there should be just one workplan and budget. Similar interventions should be proposed in both counties. Applicants from New York, Brooklyn, Kings, Queens, Bronx, Richmond, Suffolk, Nassau, and Westchester, and organizations working statewide may request up to \$83,000 annually. Applicants from all other counties may request up to \$73,000. Applications involving multiple counties are only eligible for one grant. If collaborating counties are eligible for different amounts, they may request the higher amount. Please see page 8, second paragraph of the RFA.

Assessment and Evaluation

53 What are the specific evaluation requirements?

Evaluation requirements include: 1) Obtaining background information about the communities and localities where the interventions are planned; understanding and describing the populations targeted by program activities; pre-testing intervention methods and materials (Formative Evaluation). 2) Tracking and describing the implementation of program activities, potential barriers encountered and resources obtained (Process Evaluation). 3) Assessing the consequences of the program, including environmental and policy changes brought about by program efforts; sustained changes in opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating, (Outcome Evaluation) and changes in physical activity and healthy eating behaviors within the communities and populations reached (Impact Evaluation). Please see page 20, bullet 5 of the RFA.

54 If a community assessment is completed, will the work plan be based on findings of the community assessment?

Yes, the workplan should be based on the findings of the community assessment.

55 Will a community assessment be required and if so, which model will be used?

The type of community assessment will depend on the intervention planned. Please see page 10 for assessment activities under "2. Preparation."

56 What types of evaluation methods are expected of us, in addition to the survey? [p.14, Applicants will be expected to evaluate progress toward achieving outcome and impact objectives by conducting baseline, intermediate and final intervention surveys in their communities] Will PMDES continue? What type of evaluation methods will the program use to measure behavioral changes? [p. 11, Evaluation methods used to determine behavior change of targeted audiences will be developed by funded applicants in conjunction with HHP staff.]

57 Are there requirements for baseline data as a part of the application? In other words, will we have to conduct surveys or focus groups in order to apply, or can it be a step of the project process if funding is awarded? [p10. 2) Preparation states "This strategy includes assessing the current environment and relevant policies and practices for opportunities and barriers to physical activity and healthy food choices. Preparation may also involve conducting surveys or focus groups within the community to better understand residents' attitudes and perceptions about physical activity and healthy food choices. Prior to launching a project, local advocates and partners may need training to work effectively with new stakeholders such as local governments or the media. This strategy also entails collecting relevant baseline data for evaluation and program planning, and pursuing financial and other resources."]

Page 20 of the RFA has a detailed description of some of the evaluation expected: *Obtaining background information about the communities and localities where the interventions are planned; understanding and describing the populations targeted by program activities; pre-testing intervention methods and materials (Formative Evaluation). *Tracking and describing the implementation of program activities, potential barriers encountered and resources obtained (Process Evaluation). * Assessing the consequences of the program, including environmental and policy changes brought about by program efforts; sustained changes in opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating, (Outcome Evaluation) and behavior change in physical activity and healthy eating within the communities and populations reached (Impact Evaluation). Funded applicants will work with the HHP to develop appropriate tools to measure outcomes and impacts the community and individual level. We are likely to have some type of electronic reporting system. The methods for evaluating behavior change will be dictated by the types of interventions.

You do not need to complete focus groups or surveys before submitting the application, but you do need to explain how you will complete the tasks of the "preparation" and other Ps in the application (please see page 10). However, if you have baseline data, it would be helpful to use it.

School-Related

58 Much of our work is with schools and youth. What are the programs that DOH is involved with so that we may insure that our program does not compete with what you already have established?

Work with schools is not eligible for funding under this RFA, except for promoting active commuting to school, increasing opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating in after-school activities or settings, and opening the school for community use after school hours. Please see page 9, section III, first paragraph of the RFA.

59 Do after school programs count as an intervention that targets schools? [p. 9, "Interventions targeting worksites and schools (students or staff) are not eligible for funding under this RFA because the HHP provides other funds for school and worksite projects."]

After-school activities that increase opportunities for physical activity and/or healthy eating, especially those open to the community at large, would be acceptable.

60 Could funding be used to start community gardens on school property? In a rural community the school often has the largest amount of land available for gardens and is also the community center.

Yes, only if community members must be included as participants.

61 The RFA states that funding will not be awarded for school projects. Could funding be used for programs that take place after school on school grounds if they benefit the community at large? Our region is rural and the school is often the community center.

Yes, using the school after hours for activities that increase opportunities for physical activity and/or healthy eating for the community at large would be acceptable.

Scoring

62 Do you factor into your scoring the ongoing management of the community gardens beyond their creation, including education provided to gardeners to achieve success? Will the grant fund these expenses?

The types of activities you propose could fall under the partnership "P" or the program "P" and would be considered for funding (see page 10) as long as they are part of a new intervention. Eventually, projects should be self-sustaining.

63 Is it possible for an applicant to the Healthy Eating and Active Living By Design RFP to expand upon the bicycling/walking intervention by adding in other similar interventions such as dance, tai chi, yoga, and other forms of physical activity?

Other physical activity opportunities may be added if you can provide sufficient evidence that they will be used, be sustainable, and reach 1500 people in the target community.

Miscellaneous

64 Would partnering with a statewide agency on a program proposal compromise our competitiveness on other RFAs or RFPs that may be released on Healthy Eating and Active Living?

No, as long as you are not duplicating your efforts on the different proposals.

65 III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes, Page 10 - Does the health-related organization partner for an applicant that is a statewide organization also have to be a statewide organization?

Not necessarily. The health-related partner should be able to assist you with health-related aspects of your program.

66 What is the five-year mission of the grant?

To make a sustainable environmental or policy change that increases opportunities for physical activity and/or healthy eating.

67 Attachment 1 – Physical Activity -2. "Creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach activities (e.g., creating walking trails, building exercise facilities, or providing access to existing, nearby facilities)" The suggested objectives specifically list collaboration with local YMCAs/YWCAs/YHAs - is this an exclusive list or can we develop relationships with other entities?

This list provides examples; it is not exclusive. You may develop relationships with other entities.