

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO RFA

FAU # 0809050859

### “Promoting Recruitment of New Spinal Cord Injury Researchers in New York State”

New York State Department of Health Wadsworth Center  
and  
Spinal Cord Injury Research Board

***NOTE: These questions and answers supersede any previously received written or verbal responses.***

#### **General**

Q1 *Will answers be provided to questions right away?*

A1 Substantive questions may be asked through November 2, 2009. Answers will be provided in a timely manner, but responses are not deemed official until posted on-line on June 25 and December 15, 2009. Technical questions relating to application formatting, etc. will be answered promptly until 2:00 p.m. on February 1, 2010. See Section IV.B. of the RFA, “Question and Answer Phase.”

Q2 *Is this a recruitment proposal or a project proposal?*

A2 The Request for Applications seeks to fund the research project of recently recruited spinal cord injury scientists. The project should facilitate expansion of the body of knowledge/expertise applied to SCI research and be clinical in nature.

Q3 *How much money was allocated for this RFA?*

A3 \$3.6 Million is available to support approximately three awards. See Section I.C. of the RFA, “Available Funds.”

Q4 *Can the Disability and Workers’ Compensation Forms be filed electronically, as is the Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire?*

A4 No, electronic filing of these forms is not available at this time. See Attachment 5 (Sample Contract), Appendix A-1 of the RFA, “Agency Specific Clauses for ALL Department of Health Contracts,” for more information about the Certificate of Disability Benefits Insurance and the Workers’ Compensation forms.

## **Eligibility**

Q5 *Does the applicant institution have to have a new researcher in place before/when applying?*

A5 The recently recruited individual must be listed as Principal Investigator on the application and is expected to write the application. See Section II. of the RFA, "Who May Apply?" for details regarding the status of the new recruit at time of application.

Q6 *Does a tax-exempt research organization qualify as an applicant institution?*

A6 Yes, see Section II. of the RFA, "Who May Apply?"

Q7 *What are the eligibility criteria for the Principal Investigator?*

A7 The PI must hold a doctoral degree, have accepted a position at the applicant institution and must have started work no more the 12 months before the contract start date. See Section II. of the RFA, "Who May Apply?"

Q8 *If a research organization doesn't have tenure track faculty members, is it excluded from applying?*

A8 No, Section II. of the RFA, "Who May Apply?" states "tenure track faculty member or equivalent" [*emphasis added*] is acceptable.

Q9 *Are applications limited to institutions in the state of New York?*

A9 Yes, see Section II. of the RFA, "Who May Apply?"

## **Letter of Intent**

Q10 *Is a Letter Of Intent (LOI) mandatory? If so, when is it due?*

A10 Yes, an LOI is mandatory. It is due November 2, 2009 by 2:00 p.m. See the cover page of the RFA.

Q11 *What information is needed in the LOI? Does the applicant Principal Investigator need to be identified by then? What if there are two possible recent recruits? Can the name of the PI on the LOI be changed before the application is submitted?*

A11 Attachment 4 of the RFA, "Letter of Intent" is all that is to be submitted for the LOI. Yes, the applicant institution may substitute a new Principal Investigator for the application by notifying Extramural Grants Administration staff at Wadsworth.

## **Application Submission**

Q12 *Can the application be hand-delivered?*

A12 Yes. Please make arrangements ahead of time by calling 518-474-7002 to be sure that a staff member is available to accept the application prior to the application deadline. See Section IV.E. of the RFA, "How to File an Application."

Q13 *Can applications be submitted via e-mail?*

A13 No.

Q14 *Can the application be submitted by Fed Ex overnight?*

A14 Yes, courier services such as Fed Ex can be used. To ensure delivery by 2:00 p.m. on the due date, February 1, 2010, be sure to indicate to the courier that morning (not next day) delivery is required. See Section IV.E. of the RFA, "How to File an Application."

Q15 *Why is the delivery time for applications set at 2:00 p.m.?*

A15 Applications must be delivered by 2:00 p.m. to ensure that staff have ample time to complete the required steps before close of business on the due date.

Q16 *On the Application Checklist, Attachment 2 of the RFA, the first three items are not submission items?*

A16 Correct, they are administrative pass/fail items. Any application that does not meet all mandatory pass/fail requirements will not be forwarded for peer review. In addition to the Application Checklist, see Section V.B. of the RFA, "Review and Award Process."

## **Budgets and Expenditures**

Q17 *Are budget modifications necessary for moving funds between lines?*

A17 Yes, a budget modification must be requested of Extramural Grants Administration for any change in approved budget lines.

Q18 *Are budget modifications limited to 10%?*

A18 No, budget modifications are not specifically limited; however any proposed modification to the contract that results in a change of greater than 10 percent to any budget category must be requested of Extramural Grants Administration and submitted to the Office of the State Comptroller for approval. A proposed budget modification resulting in changes of less than 10 percent to any budget category may be approved by the Extramural Grants Administration.

Q19 *Attachment 5 (Sample Contract), Appendix C of the RFA, Section I.G., references Cost Of Living Adjustments. How are those handled?*

A19 Attachment 5 (Sample Contract), Appendix C of the RFA, Section I.G. says “before payment of a COLA can be made, the State shall notify the contractor, in writing, of eligibility for any COLA.”

Q20 How should application budgets be crafted to handle anticipated pay raises and other cost of living adjustments?

A20 The application budget must anticipate and reflect any projected increases in each budget year. Additional funds will not be made available to the contractor for such increases during the contract term.

Q21 *Are recruitment and relocation costs eligible for reimbursement?*

A21 No, allowable expenses as specified in Section V.A. of the RFA are related to the proposed research project and do not include recruitment or relocation costs. Furthermore, expenses incurred before the contract start date are not reimbursable.

### **Contract Terms/Conditions**

Q22 *Have there been any changes to the usual reporting obligations?*

A22 See Section III.C. of the RFA, “Reporting Obligations” for details.

Q23 *Have Intellectual Property policies changed? Do institutions retain the rights?*

A23 See Attachment 5 (Sample Contract), Appendix A-2, Section E. of the RFA, “Publication and Intellectual Property Rights.”

Q24 *The Conflict of Interest attestation on Attachment 5 (Sample Contract), Appendix A-2, Section H.6.c. of the RFA essentially requires compliance with the federal policy?*

A24 Yes, this and all provisions of the contract should be read with care.

### **Evaluation Criteria & Application Scoring**

Q25 *Does the recruited researcher have to come from outside of New York State?*

A25 No, but preference points are awarded in the peer review scoring of the RFA for a PI who is relocating to New York State. See Section V.C. of the RFA, “Review Criteria.”

Q26 *Under Section V.C. of the RFA, "Review Criteria," how and where should Institutional Environment, Support and Commitment be demonstrated?*

A26 It's up to applicant to determine placement (application contents or appendices) and how to provide this information (i.e., letters of support from institutional officials, description of current spinal cord injury research and other plans to develop a robust program and recruit additional researchers, etc.).

Q27 *Is the scoring scheme the inverse of the former NIH model?*

A27 No, similarly to that model, a score of 1.0 is the best and 5.0 is the worst.

### **Spinal Cord Injury Research Board**

Q28 *Are Spinal Cord Injury Research Board meetings webcast?*

A28 Yes, information about board meetings and webcasts can be found at:  
<http://www.wadsworth.org/extramural/spinalcord/events.htm>.

Q29 *Are Board meetings held in Albany?*

A29 Board meetings are held in various locations in New York State, and often provide video conferencing to additional locations. See the web page for details:  
<http://www.wadsworth.org/extramural/spinalcord/events.htm>.