**Health Workforce Retraining Initiative**

**RFA #0907311140**

**Questions and Answers**

*The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions posted by potential bidders and are hereby incorporated into RFA* 0907311140 *issued on August 14, 2009. In the event of any conflict between the RFA and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.*

# I. Eligible Organizations

Q1): Are the following types of organizations eligible to apply?

Healthcare Insurers;
Adult Care Facilities;
Proprietary Schools;
A home care division of a hospital;
Certified Home Care agencies;
Licensed Home Care agencies.

A1): All are eligible with the exception of a health care insurer.

Q2): Should a hospital apply through its 501(c)(3) Foundation or the hospital?

A2): Either would be acceptable as long as they each have a federal employer identification number.

## Letters of Participation

Q3): The RFA states that applicants that have successfully participated in the program in the past may submit letters from trade associations in lieu of letters from individual health care facilities. If we have a lot of different hospitals in our area that will participate, how do we handle that?

A3): A letter from a regional hospital association would be acceptable.

Q4) Is a letter from the Workforce Investment Board necessary?

A4): If the Workforce Investment Board is collaborating with the applicant on a project, then a letter of participation is necessary.

Q5): If an applicant is submitting multiple projects for separate training types, and is planning to use the same participating organizations for both, can one letter from each participating organization listing the separate training types be used twice-once for each project proposal?

A5): Yes. One letter can be used which lists the separate training types. Copies of this letter should be included for each distinct project.

Q6): If a trade association is planning on submitting an application that includes both webinar based trainings and on-site trainings to their member health care facilities must they submit letters of participation from each of our members? For example, would they need letters from all of the community health centers if they were proposing to provide training to each health center?
If the trade association has received a Health Workforce Retraining Initiative in prior years would we still need to submit letters from each of the community health centers we are proposing to provide training for?

A6): The trade association would not need letters of participation if they and the community health centers had participated in the past on a similar project(s), but should provide the Department with other evidence that the health centers are on board and supportive of the project(s).

## II. Eligible Trainees

Q7): Are people with disabilities eligible for training under this program?

A7): Yes – but they would have to currently be working in healthcare or have worked in health care in the past to be eligible as this program targets health industry workers.

Q8): Does the preference for laid-off workers need to focus on the health care industry or can it include other industries?

A8): Laid off workers must have worked in health care in the past in order to be eligible for this program.

Q9): Are dentists eligible for training under this program?

A9): No.

Q10): Can physicians in medical director positions be trained?

A10): No.

Q11): In the past our college trained health care employees in customer service and leadership classes. Some of these employees were in supervisory/management positions. Would this training be approved for this new application?

A11): It is impossible to anticipate whether this project would be approved. However, customer service and leadership training is eligible training. Supervisory/management employees have received training under this program although the vast majority of training has been for non-supervisory/management personnel.

## III. Eligible Activities

Q12): Is training health care providers in customer service and leadership classes an eligible activity?

A12): See A11 above. Customer service and leadership skills are eligible.

Q13): Need is discussed in the context of six categories: training for laid off workers, in shortage occupations, for emerging technologies, for changes in job requirements, to increase diversity, and to expand educational capacity. Please clarify what constitutes an expansion of educational capacity.
A13): Please refer to page 5 of the RFA under Application Review Criteria. Applicants may request funds to expand educational capacity for occupations where training opportunities have been limited by the lack of faculty, clinical instructors or clinical affiliation slots. Projects should ensure that they train participants during the grant cycle, in addition to simply expanding capacity.

Q14): Will HWRI support costs for a project that has already started? For example, would activities that occur later in the project be fundable?

A14): The HWRI cannot provide funding that would supplant an existing funding stream. It may be difficult to justify need for a project which has already begun. Applicants can submit requests to train additional/new participants under an existing project.

Q15): If we are doing training that is not part of routine staff development and we want to use our own staff to train, is that acceptable?

A15): Funds can not be used to supplant an existing funding stream, so funding existing staff with an existing and on-going funding steam would not be acceptable.

Q16): The RFA implies on page 18 that expenses for instruction by in-house trainers are acceptable. The statement reads "Instruction - Include staff members employed by the grantee who perform direct training for the project." Under what circumstances will in-house trainers be supported?

A16): In-house staff supported by existing funding streams that provide in-service and other on-going training will not be supported. The above language is meant to refer to staff hired by the applicant to provide services as a result of grant funding.

Q17): What type of training can be supported under the computer skills training category on page 22 of the RFA?

A17): The program can support any type of computer training as long as the applicant justifies the need for the training and identifies eligible participants.

Q18): Do we have to identify the training category (ies) for the projects we are requesting grant funds for?

A18): No. DOH reviewers will categorize all proposed projects into their proper training types.

Q19): Entry level employees want to participate in LPN programs and we would very much like to have them do so. However, their basic reading and math skills and, in some cases English skills, are so limited they can not qualify unless they are offered an extended preparation program to address these deficiencies. Does the grant permit a one-year skill building program leading to a second year of LPN studies?

A19): Yes.

Q20): Would the Department of Health entertain a proposal from a skilled nursing facility to provide enhanced geriatric training to nurses working in the NYS Department of Correctional Services Regional Medical Units? These trainings are in response to the growing elderly population being treated at the Regional Medical Units. Through a foundation grant, we have implemented a pilot training program offered to nursing staff at Fishkill Regional Medical Unit and Coxsackie Medical Unit. Topics presented were: Aging Process, Polypharmacy in the Elderly, Death and Dying and Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias. We would like to provide additional training in other topics that have been identified through a needs assessment. The facilities are located in 4 regions (Western, Utica/Watertown, Northeast and Northern Metropolitan).

A20): Yes.

Q21): Can we use distance learning?

A21): Yes. We have supported various distance learning projects in the past.

Q22): We may need to bring in new staff to provide EMR training even through we have in-house staff that do other types of training. Is this acceptable?

A22): Yes.

Q23): On page 21, the RFA lists 25 types of training. Is this list exhaustive? If you have a project that does not fit, do you get zero points?

A23): The list is not exhaustive. If you have a project that does not appear to fit into the existing categories, submit it anyway and DOH will properly classify it.

Q24): Can funds be used to provide RNs with master's degrees in nursing?

A24): Yes.

Q25): Can we use funding for 2-year associates' degrees from colleges? Can the funding be used for certificate programs from colleges?

A25): Yes.

Q26): Page 16 of the RFA indicates that, "All anticipated participating organizations must be listed on the project cover sheet, and should include the region in which the organization is listed." Specific only to the training provider, is it required they are geographically located within the NYS Region Codes? May the training provider be out of state?

A26): The trainer may be located out of state.

## IV. Funding/Cost Eligibility

Q27): Preference points are given for leveraging other funds. In what part of the application will leveraging be evaluated?

A27): Applicants should describe any plans by themselves or their partners to leverage resources to make their projects more cost effective as part of their statement of established collaborations/partnerships between applicant and other organizations necessary to implement the project and letters of support in Section 3 of the Project Narrative.

Q28): Can we request the cost of food as an eligible expense?

A28): The costs of feeding participants during training sessions will generally not be reimbursed under this program.

Q29): Are indirect costs allowable?

A29): Yes, however these costs must be broken out and fully justified in the Non-Personnel Services Budget Justification.

Q30): If we are currently receiving HWRI funds and the funding ends at the end of the year, can we request funding under this solicitation for additional funding for the same project?

A30): Yes, but the funding must be requested to support the training of additional healthcare workers.

Q31): Will nursing leadership projects with different lengths of training and therefore different costs be evaluated within the same financial training type?

A31): Yes. The project with the lowest eligible cost will receive the full 20 points.

Q32): Will applicants be penalized for not using in-kind services from a facility to support a project?

A32): Not using in-kind services could inflate your requested costs relative to a similar project submitted by an applicant that contributed services. The applicant with the higher requested per participant costs may not score as well on the financial review.

Q33): Are renovation or equipment costs allowable?

A33): Renovation and major equipment costs are not allowable. Minor equipment costs directly related to a training project may be allowable in some cases.

Q34): To encourage employees to take advantage of training opportunities, can we use HWRI funds to pay lump sum incentives to employees, say in the $500 range?

A34): No.

Q35): Can an applicant utilize New York State agency collaborations to leverage resources and make projects more cost effective? Specifically, can another Division of DOH be this collaborator if it is not involved in this procurement?

A35): Yes, if they have already received a grant award from DOH for another program. Yes, as long as technical assistance is available to all potential applicants.

Q36): On page 19 of the RFA, for the Lost Staff Time calculation, can we use a regional average salary and benefits for the worker type?

A36): Yes, you can use a regional average for budgeting purposes. However if you receive an award, you will have to use actual salaries and benefits for those workers receiving training to report costs.

## V. Funding/Scoring/Award Notification

Q37): Can a project's proposed training address several preferences and result in training in several different training categories? For example, an MSN project may have an established curriculum that addresses training opportunities in three categories:

- nurse specialty (nurse practitioners in adult, family and geriatrics),
- nurse leadership (nursing administration) and
- expansion of educational capacity (nursing education/clinical instructors/faculty)

Will DOH apportion the total budget across types or select one type? All types of MSN graduates are desperately needed in our rural area. However, our primary need is to increase the supply of MSN graduates who then expand our educational capacity to provide faculty for basic nurse training and clinical instructors.

A37): DOH would likely view the above as three discrete projects and would need to see them presented separately. DOH will not apportion budgets across projects. The sponsor should submit a separate technical proposal and budget for each discrete project.

Q38): Do phlebotomists and other technicians belong in category type 10, which is “Clinical Support: Technicians.”

A38): DOH will determine which type of training category a budget will be scored in, depending on the specific content of the training. Phlebotomy training by itself would go in category type 12,

which is “Clinical Support: PCA, medical assistant, phlebotomist.” An applicant does not have to indicate or decide which training category their project(s) belong.

Q39): Is this program funded by Federal or State dollars?

A39): State funds.

Q40): Could you please clarify the points associated with each funding preferences?

A40): Page 20 of the RFA contains a break-down of the points associated with each preference.

Q41): If we ask you in a follow-up question which of 2 projects has the better chance of being supported, will you advise us?

A41): No. We have no way of knowing how any particular project will score.

Q42): Does the financial review take only 1 year of the budget into consideration?

A42): No. The financial review is based on the total length of the project.

Q43): If you added all the points, it looks like 86 is the highest you can get. Is this correct?

A43): The technical review is worth 80 points and the financial review is worth 20 points for a total of 100 points. Refer to page 20 of the RFA.

Q44): Please explain the award methodology described on page 22 of the RFA. Could you translate this section? What is the purpose of the initial maximum awards?

A44): Applicants should carefully read this section starting on page 22 and ending on page 23 of the RFA. The methodology establishes a passing score of 75 which can be lowered in regions where the eligible costs for projects with passing scores are less than the amount available to reach additional acceptable projects. It also establishes initial award amounts within each region to help spread awards out across multiple projects.

Q45): Is the initial maximum award of $140,000 for the Western region for each specific training category or for each facility applying?

A45): The initial maximum award applies to each project within the Western region.

Q46): Regarding the initial maximum awards for each region on page 22, if we submit 3 projects within the Rochester region, would the initial maximum award per project be $180,000?

A46): Yes, that is the initial maximum award for the Rochester region. If there are leftover funds available, an applicant could get more from any balance remaining after the maximum was applied to each fundable project.

Q47): Within a competitive region, if there are 10 projects with scores of 75 or above, would they each get $5,000 if $50,000 was allocated? Would the awards be divided that way?

A47): They would only get that amount if the sum of the total of eligible costs for the 10 passing projects equaled $50,000 which was the award amount in the region and the initial maximum award was $5,000.

Q48): Does it matter if a passing score is more than 75 points?

A48): No. All projects with passing scores of 75 points will get the initial maximum award adjusted as described on pages 22 and 23 of the RFA.

Q49): Should applicants request funds for employees for the regions in which they work, reside or where their training occurs?

A49): Regional funding is based on the region in which the participant is employed, or the region where the participant resides if they are laid off.

Q50): Our organization is located in 3 regions including Western, Rochester and Central NY. Should we submit one centralized application for the Rochester region since we are incorporated in Livingston County?

A50): You should submit one application with three projects, each project specific to one of the three regions, according to the region where the trainees are employed (or where they reside if they are laid off). The project in each region must reflect the needs and costs specific to that region, even if the overarching "multi regional project" and/or the same trainer is providing the same training in each region.

Q51): How do we submit applications that are state-wide for different regions? Do we need to submit separate applications?

A51): One application can include request for funding for multiple projects in multiple regions. We receive many applications with multiple projects in multiple regions. Applicants should refer to the application content on pages 12 through 20 for specific instructions regarding the narrative and forms required for an application and for each project. Please note that most information is required for each project in each region in which funding is requested.

Q52): Our affiliate which is located in the Northern Metropolitan region is interested in seeking HWRI funding to continue a successful pre-LPN preparatory program. Would we be able to have our staff attend the trainings, although we are located in the New York City region?

A52): Yes, if the affiliate in the Northern Metropolitan region proposed a project in the New York region to train participants employed in the New York region. If the affiliate in the Northern Metropolitan region proposed a project to train participants employed solely in the Northern Metropolitan region, that project could not train staff employed in a New York City.

Q53): One of our educational partners is located in another region from us. In Section 2 on the Project Cover Sheet, do we indicate the region in which this partner is located? All students/health care workers to benefit are from our region, but would attend classes in the partner's region.

A53): Yes, indicate the educational partner's region next to their organization name. Indicate your region next to your organization name.

Q54): Are the "Maximum Funding Levels by Region" (listed in Table 1) for the first year of the project or for both years?

A54): Both years.

Q55): Section V, Financial Evaluation, p. 21, lists 25 separate training types used to calculate separate financial evaluation scores (by region and type). Does the DOH evaluator determine the training type?

A55): Yes.

Q56): Section II. Funding Preferences, page 3, lists 7 Funding Preferences. Questions and answers at the Applicants Conference indicated that a project may address more than one Preference and in fact, gains points by doing so. Is this correct?

A56): Yes. A project can accrue up to 20 points if it met all 7 preferences.

Q57): Please confirm that the scoring methodology encompasses the total of both the technical score and the budget score in evaluating the 75 point threshold required for an award. (As opposed to the technical score alone to exceed 75 points in order to be considered for an award).

A57): The passing score of 75 pertains to the combined technical and financial scores.

Q58): Is it correct that the total of the preferences scores (20 points) plus the total of the 5 technical scoring criteria (60 points) equal the 80 total points available for the technical application?

A58): Yes.

Q59): Please confirm how the lowest project cost per participant will be determined. Since technical and budget scoring is done independently, does that mean that even those proposals that may not achieve the 75 point award rating would also be included in the determination of the lowest project cost per participant amount or will it only be programs that meet the 75 point award standard that will be included in the cost per participant determination?

A59): See pages 21 and 22 of the RFA. The cost per participant is the total amount requested for a project over the total budget period divided by the total number of participants over the total budget period. The lowest project cost is the project with the lowest value. Financial reviews are done for all projects irrespective of how they score on the technical reviews.

Q60): Regarding the "Training Types for Financial Evaluation" (p. 21-22); what category would "Training nurses and social workers as certified case managers" fall into?

A60): Applicants do not need to categorize their projects. The Department will do this as part of the application review process.

Q61): If a corporation submitted a request in New York City, would it be limited in its funding to $500,000?

A61): The maximum initial awards apply to individual projects, not applications, so the corporation would not necessarily be limited to $500,000 in New York City.

Q62): If an applicant submits a proposal with more than one project, is it feasible for just one of the projects to be funded?

A62): Yes.

Q63): Regarding the Application Format on page 20 under Need for Training, I do not see any points given to Training for Emerging Technologies. Can you advise what points, if any, are appropriated for this?

A63): There are no preference points for training for emerging technologies. The need for training section itself is worth 15 points. Refer to pages 4 and 5 for guidance to put together a justification for need for training in emerging technologies.

## VI. Labor Union Concurrence

Q64): Do we have to train unionized workers? What if our workers are non-union?

A64): No, you do not have to train unionized workers. You can train workers in non-union titles.

Q65): If, in a previous HWRI award, we had labor union concurrence do we need to submit letters again?

A65): Yes. Labor union concurrence is a preference. You would need to obtain new labor union letters of support if you were training workers in union titles to obtain the preference points.

Q66): Please clarify the following paragraph, "*Preference will be given to projects that, in addition to addressing the above areas, also provide letters of labor union concurrence from the relevant bargaining agent(s). Applicants submitting projects that propose to train non-union health care workers should indicate in the project narrative that the proposed participants are not union members*." As a trade association, we will be proposing an application that will provide training the full community health center community. This includes health centers that are unionized and those that are not. Are we required to provide letters from all unions who represent staff in some of our health centers? If it is only a preference, will we lose points for not providing letters of support from those unions?

A66): To obtain the preference points, you will need to provide union letters of support for those job titles that are unionized in the health centers in which the jobs are located or specify which job titles are not unionized for specific health centers.

## VII. Application Format

Q67): Please clarify the page limits for the budget narrative, page 17 paragraph 2. Are we required to submit up to 5 pages of narrative per region for each budget year? In this case, a two year proposal in one regional could contain a maximum total of 10 pages of narrative.

A67): A complete budget must be submitted for each year of the proposed project for each region in which funding is requested. The 5 page limit for the budget narrative is for each project, for each region, for each year.

Q68): What are spacing, font size and margin requirements for the application?

A68): Applications should be double-spaced. There is no font size or margin size specified. The font size should not be too small where the documents become difficult to read by DOH reviewers.

Q69): Page 10 of the RFA requests that applicants submit a Vendor Responsibility Attestation (and, potentially, the VRQ itself). Where should this be included in the application packet(s)?

A69): As an attachment to the application.

Q70): Regarding the NYS Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire (VRQ), mentioned on page 10 of the RFP and Attachment 8, page 59 of the RFP: If we complete the Vendor Responsibility Attestation on page 60 of the RFP checking the box that a Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire is not required due to an exempt status and provide e-mail correspondence from OSC advising that we are exempt from the requirement to submit this questionnaire, will this be sufficient to explain why we have not enclosed the completed VRQ in our application?

A70): Yes.

Q71): In the sections that describe what is needed for the Budget portion, it states that applicants need a Budget Narrative. I don't see any description of what is required for the narrative. Do I need to reread this section? What am I not finding?

A71): The budget narrative is described on page 17 in the paragraph beginning with “Attachments 4 – Budget Cover Page; 5 – Line Item Budget Request; and 6 – Non-Personnel Services Budget Justification.” The budget narrative should describe how funds requested for each line item were determined for all personnel and some non-personnel lines. Further description is included in the Note section on the same page.

Q72): Can applicants submit a single narrative with regional specifics, rather than complete separate project narratives for each project in each region?

A72): No. Applicants should submit project narratives for each project for each region in which funding is requested. Applicants may feel free to cut and paste and copy narratives as is appropriate.

Q73): Who should sign and date the application cover sheet?

A73): Whoever has the authority to submit the application on behalf of the organization should sign and date the application cover sheet.

Q74): Under Measurable Outcomes on page 16, it states it should be no more than 5 pages per region (2 pages per region plus a one page work plan per year). There are only 2 years. Should it be no more than 4 pages?

A74): Yes. It should be no more than 4 pages. (2 pages plus a 1 page work plan per year)

Q75): Where in the line item budget should indirect costs go?

A75): Indirect costs should go under Project Implementation Non-Personnel Services. You will also need a narrative explaining what specific items are included in these costs.

Q76): Will you accept supplemental information such as bio sketches?

A76): Yes.

Q77): Under the previous RFA, there was an attachment required regarding an overview of participating organizations. We don't see that requirement under this RFA. Is there somewhere we need to address that?

A77): If you feel it would further your case, you can include this information in the statement of capability and commitment of the applicant to implement the program section. However you still may not exceed the maximum number of pages for this section.

Q78): Should an application that proposes multiple projects to be delivered in multiple regions be divided into projects and then subdivided into regions or vice versa? If the former is true, it is our understanding that a separate application is required for each project. Is this correct?
If the latter is true, is a separate application required for each region?

A78): One application can be submitted that contains multiple projects in multiple regions. Most information has to be submitted for each project for each region in which funding is requested. Refer to pages 12 through 20 for specific instructions.

Q79): Can we submit the electronic version of our application on a CD rather than a flash drive? (See page 8).

A79): No. Page 8 indicates that the electronic copy shall be submitted on a flash drive.

Q80): On pages 5-6 "Capability and Commitment of the Applicant to Implement the Program," the RFA states that documentation should include "Measurable prior training success in the area of the proposed projects." Does this section apply to applicants who have received past HWRI grants, or can the applicant cite prior training success of programs they have conducted or are modeling?

A80): The applicant can cite prior training success with prior HWRI awards or from other training experiences.

## VIII. Contracts/Payment

Q81): Page 10 of the RFA states that a standard voucher is to be sent with the quarterly reports. We have used a Journal Voucher system in the past. Is the JV system what we can expect to use should we be awarded monies from this project?

A81): Yes, state agencies must use JVs rather than standard state vouchers.

Q82): Can a 2 year project start later than 1/1/10?

A82): Yes, but a late start may result in less than 24 months to implement the project. Because of future budget uncertainties, we cannot promise at this time that we will be able to extend contracts beyond 24 months, whether they are late starts or simply need more time to complete. We would not expect projects to start later than 4/1/10.

Q83): Will it be possible to move funding from one funded project to another if more than one project is funded after contract execution?

A83): This decision will be made after awards are made.

Q84): Is any additional funding associated with the possible one year extension, or is this just a time extension for project completion? May any unexpended funds be rolled over into the extension year?

A84): No additional funding is expected. This would be a no-cost extension. It is not guaranteed. The Department will likely not be able to roll over unspent funds from one year to the next.

Q85): Appendix A-1, Agency Specific Clauses for All Department of Health Contracts, item #1, page 39 of the RFP states: "For a not-for-profit corporation, the Contractor is requested to furnish a copy of its Certificate of Incorporation." We do not have a Certificate of Incorporation, but instead can provide a copy of our Charter. Will that document suffice for this requirement?

A85): The A-1 clauses refer to rules and documentation that will have to be complied with once an award is made and contract executed. You do not have to submit a Certificate of Incorporation with your application.

## IX. Program Accountability

Q86): On page 26, the work plan indicates measurable outcomes must include, but are not limited to: number of participants selected to enter training; number of participants to complete training; number of participants to move to new positions or number to be retained in existing position; and number of laid off workers to be hired/redeployed. What if some of these categories are irrelevant to a project?

A86): Information should be provided for all categories that are relevant to your specific project.

Q87): Under the work plan and measurable outcomes, if candidates have come out of the larger health care community, we can track them while they are in training until they are licensed but then we may lose touch with them. If we get them this far; is it safe to say they have moved on to new positions even if we don't know?

A87): No, this would not be a reasonable assumption. We would expect that a reasonable effort would be made to find out if participants were able to secure jobs, although we recognize that this can be difficult. We do not want to train workers unless we are reasonably certain that they can secure jobs.

Q88): The measurable outcomes section on page 26 asks for the number of participants to be retained in existing positions and number to move into new positions. Are these mutually exclusive?

A88): Yes, they are mutually exclusive.

## X. Other

Q89): Section IV, Term of Contract, page 10, states that "The department, at its discretion may consider a one year extension to these contracts." The *average training period* under our proposed project for MSN support is likely to be 3 years, since most participants would take the academic courses only part time while continuing to work. However, some participants may complete the MSN program within the regular 2 year period. Regarding outcome measures, the goals of the project will allow for a 3-year education/training period. Any measures of "completion" at the 2-year mark, therefore, will not fairly reflect the project's success. The project can measure entrants and progress towards the goals at the end of the 2-year period, but not final outcomes, for most participants. Will a one year extension be granted and could we base the project's Measurable Outcomes on this period? Or should the project propose only outcomes appropriate for the 2-year period (e.g., participants continuing in training)?

A89): The Department can not guarantee a one year extension. We would expect that the majority of training will be completed during a 2 year period. Applicants that can not complete their training projects within the 2 years should provide participant completion information for the two year and the full training period and explain what other sources of funding will be used to allow the completion of training after the 2 year period ends.

Q90): My organization is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is considering serving as the lead applicant for this initiative. Through our proposed project, we plan to provide relevant training to several long-term care facilities. Would we therefore count as an "educational institution" and be eligible to apply? To put that question a slightly different way, what is the working definition of educational institution as defined within this RFP? And would the effort I described above (training a range of LTC facilities) match it?

A90): See page 3, "Who May Apply" and A1 above for guidance. We do not have a specific definition of educational institutions for purposes of this RFA. We have funded both public and private colleges, nursing schools and BOCES in the past.

Q91): Are applicants required to submit a Letter of Interest? When is the due date to submit these Letters?

A91): No, they are not required. There is no specific due date for these letters. However they are basically an instrument to request notifications of when updates and Q&As will be posted and to request hard copies of the documents, so they should be submitted well in advance of the application due date in order to serve any useful purpose.