

## STEHP RFP 2011-2014 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**STEHP Applications are due August 16<sup>th</sup> by 2pm. Similar questions have been grouped.**

### FORMATTING QUESTIONS

Q: Are there any page limits to this RFP?

Q: Is there a page limit or word limit to the narrative answers to the questions beginning on page 33 of the RFP?

Q: What are the narrative format guidelines (e.g. font size, font type, spacing, page limits, etc)?

**A: There are no page or word limits. Applicants are encouraged to give thorough concise answers. You may single or double space pages. Please repeat the question before giving the answer. Minimally a size 12 font is preferred; you may select the type.**

Q: Is there a format for the linkage agreements to be included in the application? (page 38 end of Section)

Q: Linkage Agreements: On page 35 of the RFP, applicants are asked to include linkage agreements. Is there a prescribed format for this agreement or a sample template that can be provided? Please clarify.

**A: There is not prescribed a format. A letter on the agency's letterhead, copy of a contract, memorandum of understanding or agreement are all acceptable.**

Q: Supportive Services Chart: On page 35 of the RFP, applicants are asked to "include a supportive services chart identifying if services are provided by your agency or another." Is there a prescribed format for this chart or an example that can be provided? Please clarify.

Q: Do you have a sample supportive services chart you want us to use?

**A: There is not a prescribed format. Minimally, it must indicate what services your agency provides and what services other agencies provide.**

Q: Should separate narratives be submitted for each component of the RFP that our agency is requesting funds for or should it just be one narrative with the answer to each question being labeled with the component it corresponds to. For example: If we answer question 1 regarding the NYCFAA component, do we follow that answer with our answer regarding the Prevention component or do we just answer all of the questions as they pertain to the NYCFAA component and then answer all of the questions as they pertain to the Prevention component in a separate narrative?

Q: Can proposals blend the various strategies- ie housing prevention and rapid rehousing- or does each proposal need to focus on one program element?

Q: I am writing on behalf of XYZ Agency in New York City with a question regarding the OTDA STEHP RFP. We are considering submitting an application for our Domestic Violence Shelters. As we operate nine transitional and emergency shelter facilities across the city, could we seek funds for multiple locations in one application – or would we have to submit separate applications for each shelter/facility?

Q: May we apply for all categories – A) Essential Services, B) Maintenance and Operations, C) Rapid Rehousing, D) Prevention, and E) FEPS? If yes, would a separate proposal be required to be submitted for each category or could we propose more than one category in one proposal?

Q: Can agencies submit more than one proposal- ie one for housing prevention and one for rapid rehousing?

Q: Can an agency that does work in NYC and outside of NYC submit one application for NYC and one for another region?

A: Agencies should submit **one** proposal for their program as a whole which may encompass more than one category. If requesting funds from various categories, or for different regions, applicants should be clear about all aspects of their program in the Program Plan section of the application. If an applicant proposes several projects within a program that are very different from each other and believes the projects would be better explained separately, OTDA would prefer the answer to each question in one place rather than having two separate narratives. In that instance, please follow the format of answering each question regarding the first project, then the second project, and then proceed to the next question. An agency will be considered either inside NYC or outside NYC based on “Business Address”. Agencies proposing NYCFAA activities must have a business address in NYC.

Q: When filling-out the narrative sections of the Application, do agencies applying for funding under Prevention need to respond to questions pertaining to (Homeless) Essential Services providers (and vice-versa), e.g.: Gaps Analysis paragraph a) requests shelter inventory data.

Q: On Page 34 of the RFP, under GAPS ANALYSIS, it states that we must “summarize current inventory of emergency shelter beds, transitional housing beds, [and] hotel/motel vouchers”. If we are not proposing to provide any shelter-related activities, are we still required to provide this inventory even though it would not be relevant to our proposed services?

A: Yes, applicants should answer all questions in the GAPS section regardless of proposed activity (prevention vs. essential services, etc.). Failure to thoroughly and completely answer each question may adversely affect the overall competitiveness of the application.

Q: Supporting documentation: Can applicants submit materials that have not been specifically requested in this RFP to help support our application (such as resumes of key staff, newspaper articles, maps, etc.)?

A: Applicants may attach supporting documentation. However, applications will only be evaluated based on the content of answers to questions asked and the materials OTDA has requested.

Q: On page 36 is the staffing chart. Should we fill it in and leave it in this order? On page 38 it says to attach it, that's why we are uncertain if it should be an attachment or left where it is.

A: A: The staffing chart must be completed and returned with the application. Whether it is attached or remains in order is up to the applicant.

Q: Checklist: This is not a question, but a comment that the checklist (page 80) is incomplete. It is missing the organizational status form (page 48) and the contractor/subcontractor questionnaire (page 61).

A: Thank you. A revised checklist is now available on the website.

### BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE EXPENSE QUESTIONS

Q: Reimbursement model: Will reimbursement under this contract be performance-based or cash-based (line-item), or will it be a hybrid? It is not clear from the RFP as to whether contractors will be reimbursed based on the achievement of milestones. Please clarify.

Q: We were a HIP grant recipient during the 2003 -2008 funding cycle. At that time, reimbursement was based on outcomes achieved and not on budgetary expenditures. The STEHP RFP does not state what reimbursement will be based on. Is it going to be based on outcomes or expenditures?

Q: How will financial reporting for the STEHP contract be done?

Q: Would an application based on fee for service milestones (HIP/SHIP model) be fundable under the new program guidelines?

A: STEHP is strictly a line item contract which will reimburse for actual expenses incurred. STEHP contracts will not be performance based (like HIP/SHIP). Agencies will be required to submit reimbursement claims on a quarterly basis along with reported outcomes. The quarterly outcomes may be used in determining future funding levels.

Q: Based on what criteria should we allocate each percentage of each category to each budget line?

A: Budgets (and allocations to lines) should be developed to reflect the proposed program expenses. Applicants are not required to propose/deliver all activities (Essential Services, Maintenance and Operations, Rapid Re-housing, Prevention services, and NYCFAA).

Q: Under FEPS and Prevention, the RFP states that administrative expenses are ineligible. How does OTDA define administrative expenses? Can we allocate toward fiscal/ bookkeeping for vouchering and documenting contract dollars? Can we charge for IT support? Can we charge for indirect: payrolls, HR?

Q: With regard to the Eligible and Ineligible Expenses for *Prevention Services* (pages 8 and 9), when the RFP says that "Administrative expenses" are ineligible, does that include salaries for Case Managers, Program Directors and Executive Directors? What does this include, specifically?

Q: Please define/give more detail on what are considered to be “administrative expenses” that are ineligible for funding under STEHP, e.g.: to successfully execute a contract with OTDA, agencies must monitor expenses, pay bills, prepare vouchers and make claims. Will OTDA reimburse agencies for these staff costs of operating STEHP contracts?

Q: What is meant in the RFP by administrative expenses being ineligible? Does this mean that salaries for employees that are doing direct administrative work within the STEHP grant program are not eligible?

Q: Can administrative employees who provide direct service to the program (such as accountants who process program staff payroll on a weekly basis) be included in the budget? (p. 10)

Q: As I am working on the STEHP application for (XYZ Agency), I was wondering if there is any guidance on administrative costs. It looked to me like they may not be allowable but was hoping to get some clarification from you.

Q: Can administrative staffing costs be included in the budget under personnel?

Q: In the RFP, “administrative expenses” are listed as ineligible expenses in all five program areas. What does the State mean by “administrative expenses”? Running a program requires expenditures of an administrative nature – e.g., fiscal staff, purchasing department staff, human resources staff, payroll staff, an annual audit, a Program Director. Are all of these sorts of expenses considered ineligible or does the prohibition on “administrative expenses” simply mean that an applicant cannot include a budget line, for example, for overhead in accordance with an approved federal indirect rate?

**A: Administrative/indirect costs are not allowed under STEHP. However, employees who provide direct service to clients or who are working for client related needs or requirements may be included in the budget. Also supply, equipment and rental expenses related to operating the program may be included on appropriate lines. **Examples of allowed costs:** The Executive Director attends a weekly case plan meeting related to the status and direction of client cases. This time may be billed to this grant because the Executive Director is working on client related issues. The Administrative Assistant spends 3 hours per week inputting client data into HMIS. The time may be allocated because the Administrative Assistant is working on a client file requirement. The Bookkeeper spends 5 hours per week producing rental assistance checks and tracking distribution. The time may be allocated because it is a client related need. Rental space for the case management office and the project’s portion of the rental expense for the copier are allowed under the “contractual” line. Computer hardware and software necessary to operate the project are allowed under the “equipment” line. **Examples of prohibited costs:** The Executive Director’s time associated with fundraising for a new wing on the shelter. The Bookkeeper’s meeting with auditors for the agency’s annual audit. The Case Manager’s associated time with attending the agency’s staff retreat. The Administrative Assistant’s time with compiling staff evaluations is also ineligible.**

Q: Under the list of ‘ineligible services’ for each program area, administrative expenses are deemed ineligible; does this mean that we are not allowed to charge an indirect cost rate to budgets proposed under this program?

Q: Is a federally approved Indirect Cost Rate considered an ineligible “Administrative Expense”?

**A: Indirect Cost Rate is not eligible under STEHP.**

Q: Could an organization submit a progressive budget that would reflect the anticipated growth of a new program over the next three years?

A: No. Each individual year amount should be the same.

Q: Under the original Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program, we were able to utilize 2-1-1 call center for initial screening for program eligibility and referral to program services. This was very useful in enabling the public easy access to information about the program and in coordinating HPRP services among agencies. Would initial screening and referral by 2-1-1 information and referral call center still be considered eligible for prevention and rapid re-housing services under STEHP funding?

A: Yes.

Q: Our HPRP program currently has a contract extension for remaining funds through the December 31, 2011. In developing our budget for the STEHP grant, how should we present our budget for prevent and rapid re-housing services for the first year with remaining HPRP funds and for subsequent years when this funding has been exhausted?

A: Develop the annual budget based on what you will need for the proposed program over a 12 month period. Each individual year amount should be the same. If any proposed program is maintaining existing services through a current OTDA contract, contractors are expected to exhaust correlating funds on current contracts before utilizing STEHP funds.

Q: I don't see any requirement for 70%/30% split for direct services vs. supports, are you familiar with that??

Q: Is there a maximum percent that can be used for staff salaries etc.?

A: Though there was a requirement for a 70/30 split with OTDA's HPRP ARRA funds, there is not with the STEHP funds. There is a salary limit which pertains to the Maintenance and Operations category only, which is described in the *Eligible and Ineligible Activities and Expenses on page 7 of the RFP*. Applicants are encouraged to develop budgets that will be cost effective for the proposed number of clients served.

Q: Under the Rapid Rehousing and/or Prevention categories, is provision of household items such as bedding, towels, cookware and other kitchen items eligible for funding?

A: Although eligible, given the limited amount of funds available under Prevention and Rapid Re-housing, OTDA suggests applicants find other ways to provide the above household items.

Q: Can an organization apply for maintenance and operations funding for a New York City Department of Homeless Services-funded shelter for adults and/or families?

A: NYC shelters are eligible applicants.

Q: Our agency will be submitting an application to provide families at risk of becoming homeless, financial assistance, family supports etc. I am looking for clarification as to where to charge office space etc and indirect charges for these services. We will not be operating a shelter or drop in center.

A: “Office space” is charged under Contractual Services for the proposed activity. The use of “Indirect charges” is unclear in your question. True approved indirect rates are not eligible for reimbursement under STEHP. However, if costs are related to providing direct services to clients or are necessary for client related needs, they may be included in the budget. Please see the answers above regarding administrative expenses.

Q: The RFP does not mention cost per cases ranges. Will OTDA expect that successful providers project service levels that are in line with past defacto cost per case rates from prior OTDA contracts like HIP, HPP, and SHIP? If so, what were these rate ranges?

Q: Is there a preferred unit cost associated with the proposal?

Q: Is there a preferred % ratio of client costs to program costs?

Q: Would a provider be expected to maintain a certain caseload at a given time?

Q: Agency XYZ would like to know if there is a suggested amount of funding to request for this RFP? Is there a maximum request per resident? Are there any guidelines for total funding amount request? Or, do we simply come up with the most cost effective approach?

Q: Is there a set rate of funding per participant for the different program areas? For example, for a client being served in the prevention program, is there a maximum or suggested rate at which an organization can charge per client or per family?

A: Because of the variety of eligible activities under STEHP, there is not a uniform maximum cost per unit of service. Programs will be reviewed for overall cost reasonableness and effectiveness related to Outcomes which are addressed *in questions C) 5) a-g* of the application. OTDA is prioritizing applications based on an 85% or better positive housing outcome rate. Similar applications may be compared within geographic regions to evaluate cost reasonableness.

Q: In the "Maintenance and Operation" category, can you use the grant to replace lost funding?

A: Yes.

Q: I would like clarification regarding rent standards: The RFP talks about “Rent Reasonableness” – but on the financial instructions it refers to “Fair Market Rent”

Q: What is the maximum amount of money allowed for (up to 6 months of) rental and utility arrears per individual; per family?

Q: What is the maximum amount of money allowed for (up to 12 months of) rental and utility assistance per individual; per family?

Q: Is there a limit on the amount a program can pay in rent arrays (*sic. arrears*) or emergency housing services per participant or per family, according to the variation in housing costs by locality?

A: When preparing your budget, agencies should base their justification for rental assistance on the Fair Market Rent limits established for the area (published by HUD). Applicants may choose the dollar amount they want make available to participants using FMR as a guide. If awarded, at the time of providing services to clients, agencies will need to research and maintain backup documentation in each client's file that the rent is reasonable for the neighborhood or area. If at the time of application you believe Fair Market Rents to be drastically different from what would be considered "Rent Reasonable" in your area or a particular area you are serving, you may explain in the justification section of the budget page that you are basing the budget on a Rent Reasonable standard along with the reason why.

Q: Regarding, on page 6, V. ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES— (A): Essential Services, Can a non-profit organization that provides job related / IT training services be paid as a consultant using STEHP funding?

Q: Under the category of "Essential Services" would job readiness training programs meet the requirements for "employment counseling"?

A: Yes.

Q: Also regarding, on page 6, V. ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES— (A): Essential Services, Approximately 50% of our shelter-based / homeless clients lack a GED – can GED instructors be paid using STEHP funding to provide in-house GED instruction? (As part of a new GED initiative for families at-risk of homelessness).

A: GED instruction is eligible under Essential Services to the homeless population connected with a shelter/drop-in center/transitional housing. If there is a new initiative for the at-risk of homelessness population, that is not an eligible Essential Services expense, but rather an eligible Prevention expense.

Q: Is it possible to include food costs in the essential services category?

A: The cost of food may be included in the essential services category.

Q: Under essential services, are the costs of gas and vehicle maintenance allowable?

A: Gas and vehicle maintenance costs are allowed under Essential Services when they are connected to providing essential services to participants in street outreach/drop-in centers, shelters and transitional housing programs.

Q: What types of repairs and other expenses are eligible under the Maintenance and Operations category? For instance, are purchase of or upgrades to a digital video cameras security system, replacement of specific building systems such as new roof, scraping and painting of an external fire escape allowable?

A: All of the stated examples are allowable. However, substantial costs associated with renovations that can be better served under the capital Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP) are of a lower priority.

Q: Is it acceptable to have an outside contractor for security or must this be performed by a staff person, in the maintenance and operations category?

A: It is acceptable to have an outside security contractor under Maintenance and Operations. The cost would be allocated to the “consultant” line.

Q: Can an agency apply for three categories of service if maintaining the appropriate % rates per agency?

A: An agency may apply for as many categories as desired. There is no cap per category or activity for applicants, but there is a cap on the total funds an agency may receive as described under *Selection Process on page 16 of the RFP*. The percentages illustrated on page 12 of the RFP apply to the overall amount of funds made available by OTDA.

Q: For Local travel we use the \$2.25 per subway ride. Is this allowable?

A: Agencies will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred with documentation that the expenses occurred. When preparing the budget in the application, it is acceptable to estimate the number of subway rides needed by the cost of the fare.

Q: When we prepare the budget justification for each budget line, do we need to justify each line based on percentage category or should it be for the budget line as an entity? For example: Supplies for \$1,200. Should we justify why we are applying a percentage to each category (essential services, maintenance and operations, rapid rehousing, prevention, etc.) or justify as the entire amount for the budget line?

A: The justifications should reflect proposed expenses for each category. Please note that supply expenses are subject to M/WBE requirements.

Q: It appears that the Excel budget spreadsheet is not 100% formula driven. Can we add formulas so the budget is accurate and easy to review? It looks like the budget statement is not linked to the budget summary. Also, not all formulas carry throughout all categories.

A: Applicants may add formulas to the excel spreadsheet.

Q: On page 69 of the RFP, the Personnel Service Expense Detail form is quite complex. Considering that the budget portion of the application is worth 30 out of 100 points, would OTDA consider holding a conference call to provide applicants with more detailed guidance on

how to complete this and the other budget forms? Alternatively, would OTDA consider replacing the current forms with a set of simpler, more user-friendly budget forms?

A: OTDA is unable hold a conference call. Applicants are encouraged to thoroughly read the RFP, budget instructions, and this Question and Answer Document. OTDA strictly adheres to New York State Procurement Guidelines and utilizes the question and answer process for providing information about the RFP after release. To insure consistency among applications OTDA will continue to use the budget pages that have been made available with the initial release.

Q: Under Essential Services (RFP page 6), does psychological services have to be provided by a psychologist or could it be provided by an MSW, licensed art therapist or a counselor with a bachelor degree?

A: All of the above are acceptable.

Q: If the homeless housing agency has tenants with arrears (6 months or less), could RAPID REHOUSING funds be applied for by the agency to cover the arrears of its own tenants?

A: No. As stated in the *Eligible and Ineligible Activities and Expenses section on page 8 of the RFP*, 'operational costs for housing program' is an ineligible expense.

Q: Are "one-time capital expenses, such as security enhancements" eligible for funding?

A: One-time equipment expenses are allowed as described on *Page 65 of the application*. Construction, renovation or rehabilitation expenses are not allowed. Substantial one-time capital expenses are a lower priority given the availability of the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program funds.

Q: It seems that funds for rental arrears, rental subsidies, security deposits and legal services can be included in the budget. Is this correct?

A: All may be included under Prevention and/or Rapid Re-housing. Legal services are also allowed in NYCFAA and in some instances, Essential Services.

#### MATCHING FUNDS QUESTIONS

Q: To fulfill the match of 25%, does the 25% match need to be provided by the agency dedicated to the funded STEHP program expenses, administrative expenses, or just an organizational match?

A: The match should be in support of the proposed STEHP project and the overall service delivery system for the target population.

Q: Does the matching funds requirement apply to all program categories or does it apply only to ESGP-funded activities?

A: The matching funds requirement applies to all STEHP funds. However, the match does not need to be line for line, but rather an overall match of 25%.

Q: Is the Matching requirement of 25% to be included in the request amount or above-and-beyond the request amount (e.g. We request \$100,000 and must provide a match \$25,000 above-and-beyond the \$100,000 and provide a project budget of \$125,000).

A: The 25% match is above and beyond the requested amount. The amount you are requesting from OTDA should appear in *Section A of the application, Applicant Documentation, Executive Summary*. When preparing the budget pages, there are specific columns for the matching funds that should get totaled into the budget columns and rows. A \$100,000 STEHP grant request would indicate a \$25,000 match in the budget section with a total project cost of \$125,000.

Q: For our agency's required match, we would like to cite in-kind staff members who are paid from an administrative budget and who are not associated with any specific contract or grant. How do we document the source of their salaries for the required match? (p. 14)

A: Identifying the funding source for the staff salaries and your agency's audited financial statements would be acceptable. For example, if the salaries are paid by rental income, your agency could circle and identify the amount of rental income in the audited financial statements to suggest that there are sufficient funds to cover the match.

Q: What are the expected reporting requirements for cash match funds? Can cash match come from unrestricted funds?

A: The match can come from unrestricted funds. Documentation of a bank statement noting available cash balance is acceptable.

Q: Can travel expenses be counted towards the 25% match?

A: If travel is being funded by another source and it is ultimately benefiting the proposed STEHP project, then yes the expenses can be counted toward the match.

Q: The instructions made it clear that Stewart B. McKinney or HEARTH Act funds cannot be used as a match for STEHP funds. Question: if we are successful in being awarded Rapid Re-Housing funds in our STEHP application, are there any restrictions on using those STEHP Rapid Re-Housing funds as a match for a homeless assistance program that is funded by McKinney/Hearth funds?(We understand that we could not use STEHP Essential Services and Maintenance/Operations funds as a match for McKinney/Hearth funds because those dollars come from the federal ESGP. However, we are thinking that STEHP Rapid Re-Housing dollars come from the NYS homeless assistance funds appropriated in the State Fiscal Year Aid to Localities budget. If that is correct, we are assuming that STEHP Rapid Re-Housing dollars can indeed be used as a match for programs funded by McKinney/Hearth.)

A: It has not been predetermined which contracts will be funded with state funds and which will be funded with McKinney funds. Once that determination is made, OTDA can assist with determining if STEHP funds can be used as a match for other programs. Please be advised that applicants should match STEHP funds with funds from other sources.

Q: As our offices are based at HRA Job Centers, can our agency use this space cost as an in-kind contribution? (p. 14)

A: Yes, although if your agency is not “paying” for the space and you do not have a lease with a value indicated, HRA will have to document how much the space is worth.

Q: Matching Funds Letter: Page 79 of the RFP provides a sample matching funds letter but does not specify who should sign. Should this letter be signed by the applicant’s Executive Director?

A: The letter should be signed by an authorized signatory for your agency.

## ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS AND DOCUMENTATION

Q: Our Drop-In target population is unaccompanied youth, the majority of whom couch-surf; moving from friends to strangers to ‘who knows where’ every night. We define them as homeless. It appears that the RFP defines them as Homeless (III. Program Description and Definition of Terms, page 4). The HMIS definitions seem to consider them “Housed and at-risk of losing housing”. If we use the HMIS definition, then are the youth ineligible for Drop-In Center Services? Please clarify this apparent incongruity in definitions as the RFP guides our planning and the HMIS guides our evaluation.

A: Unaccompanied youth are considered homeless and eligible for Drop-in Center services under this RFP. OTDA expects the HMIS definition to be amended with the implementation of HEARTH in the near future.

**Q: Page 6, in paragraph A. Essential Services.** I'm unclear about the 2nd sentence where it says that "support services cannot have been provided by the local government during any part of the preceding 12-months, etc." Basically, we have a new Drop-In program where the start-up was partially funded through Federal ARRA HPRP funding which went through NYC's Dept. of Homeless Services (DHS). Does that statement exclude us from applying for our Drop-In program? In that same sentence it says costs are eligible if they "would complement those services." Our Crisis Center is partially funded through the Dept. of Youth & Community Development and our transitional center is partially funded by HUD, but based on that sentence, it looks like we could expand staff in those programs through this funding to provide additional services or open up more beds to our homeless youth. Is that correct?

**A: STEHP funding cannot be used to supplant or replace existing funding for services provided by the local government. Based on the information provided, you would not be excluded from applying for the Drop-In Center. Any proposed program under Essential Services must provide some new services to the community or expand the services you are already providing, (unless currently awarded with ESG or HIP funds). An increase in staff to provide new services to the same number of clients or the same services to additional clients is acceptable. Opening more beds is also acceptable.**

**Q:** I see that prevention activities are limited to households with income of below 30% of AMI, and there is a link to the HUD income limits online. It appears that the income limits listed online are for FY 09. Are there any more recent income limits or should we use the FY 09 amounts?

**A:** The link is [www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html). Click on FY 2011 Income Limits, then scroll to the US map at the bottom and select NY. The current limits for FY 11 were effective May 31, 2011. New limits are generally published by HUD each spring. OTDA intends to notify contractors when new limits are published over the life of the grant.

**Q:** In the description of what is required to document eligibility for homelessness prevention listed on page 13, it makes reference to resumption of payment of rent in the near future. However, we anticipate that some of our prevention activities will involve holdover evictions, such as for nuisance, succession rights, etc. Can you confirm that these funds can be used for eviction prevention activities that involve other than non-payment situations?

**A:** Contractors should be able to document if an eviction is pending, regardless of the reason. In addition, there should be reasonable cause to believe that the client will be able to continue tenancy unassisted by STEHP funds in the near future.

**Q:** Historically, the economic criterion for households to qualify for HIP/SHIP services has been TANF-eligibility. Now, for STEHP, 30% of AMI has been set as the means test. This is a much more restrictive eligibility-setting that will sharply curtail who can be served; that will impact what services are provided and how, and; that will impact the success rate that can be expected

of Prevention services. Will OTDA consider withdrawing the 30% of AMI-setting for eligibility and return to the TANF-standard for STEHP Prevention services? Barring an affirmative reply to Question #1, if the 30% of AMI-setting is sustained for cases where financial assistance is provided to prevent homelessness, can TANF-eligibility be used as the eligibility criterion for cases where prevention services are provided but *no financial assistance* is given?

**A: OTDA has carefully considered your question, however we have determined that Prevention and Rapid Rehousing clients, whether they receive financial assistance or not, must have income at or below 30% of the Area Median Income for the purposes of this RFP.**

Q: Currently, HPP works with clients to obtain other means to pay rental arrears such as one shot deals and charity funds. If our agency is awarded the NYCFAA program, can we continue to provide eviction prevention services other than FEPS? (p. 10)

**A: Yes, as stated in the *Eligible and Ineligible Activities and Expenses section on page 9*, eligible activities include the provision of “diversion services...to keep families out of the FEPS Program.”**

Q: On page 10 of the STEHP RFP, it states, in part, that ineligible NYCFAA expenses include “Services to families that do not have a court proceeding against them”. Does this mean that a provider would not be allowed to prepare FEPS applications for people moving out of the shelter system? Arguably, these clients DID have a court proceeding against them that led them to shelter in the first place. Please clarify. Can a NYCFAA provider prepare FEPS applications for people moving out of shelter? Please advise.

**A: The intent of NYCFAA is to prevent evictions. If a family is in a shelter, they have become homeless. Services for homeless persons and families in shelters are available under STEHP’s Essential Services category. NYCFAA funds should not be used to prepare FEPS applications for families in shelters.**

Q: Will FEPS budget modifications to adjust rent increase due to lease renewals, change of household, HH income, Exception to policies etc., continue to be an eligible activity under NYCFAA category?

Q: What category would a family facing eviction and being assessed for TANF and FEPS eligibility fall into: NYCFAA or homelessness prevention?

**A: OTDA would expect that a program applying for funds would have a clear target population, and clearly outline its program parameters in the application. Should the applicant design a NYCFAA program, all expenses would be categorized under the NYCFAA program. Once a household is determined to be eligible for the NYCFAA program, that household would continue to remain an NYCFAA eligible household, through whatever modification or restoration that**

may be necessary because of changes to that household. Documentation of court involvement would only need to be gathered when determining initial eligibility. Further, maintenance of existing households who are currently enrolled in the FEPS program would be an eligible expense.

Q: On page 13 of the RFP, it states, in part, that “For NYCFAA activities, awardees must obtain written referrals documenting eviction proceedings from HRA or Housing Courts”. This requirement appears onerous both for awardees and for HRA and the Housing Courts. Would OTDA consider eliminating this documentation and, instead, allow awardees to accept as documentation client’s court papers, proof that their FEPS payments have been interrupted, or proof of a change in the household?

Q: If awarded the NYCFAA program, can our agency also offer FEPS modification services to clients even if they do not have an active housing court case? (p. 10)

Q: If our agency is selected to provide NYCFAA, will we only be permitted to receive referrals from the HRA’s Homelessness Diversion Unit and the Housing Court?

Q: Obtaining a referral note from overburdened Housing Court personnel (Court clerk, judge, judge assistant) is not usually possible. Can court papers, stipulations, order to show cause, be sufficient to document the situation is court related?

A: OTDA expects that the primary source of referrals for NYCFAA will be Housing Court and HRA’s Homelessness Diversion Unit. ‘Referrals’ should take the form of court related paperwork, or documentation from HRA at the time of initial intake. In addition, as stated in the answer above, should there be some change to the household, new court documentation will not be necessary to maintain the household as a NYCFAA eligible household.

Q: Lastly, the RFP limits services to families who have a court proceeding against them for an eviction for non-payment of rent. Currently, the HPP contract allows providers to also assist clients who are in court for a holdover. Would the State consider continuing to provide services to these at-risk families?

A: A holdover case may be eligible if it is determined that a FEPS application will satisfy the proceeding.

Q: We currently provide NYCFAA activities under a Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) contract. Pursuant to that contract, we are required to submit a service plan for a client within 10 days from the date the client contacts us. On page 9 of the RFP, it states that we will be required to submit a completed FEPS application within those 10 days. In practice, this is often not possible, for example in cases involving clients who are under sanction, need to come up with a portion of the back rent, etc. Would OTDA consider changing the RFP requirement to submit a completed FEPS application within 10 days and return to the current practice of requiring submission of a service plan within 10 days?

A: OTDA would prefer that the FEPS application be completed within the 10 day time frame. However, OTDA recognizes that factors may exist which would make such time frame impossible. OTDA will accept the submission of a Service Plan within 10 days in those instances where it is not possible to get a completed application in the 10 day time frame.

Q: Is self attestation an acceptable documentation for homelessness?

Q: Under the definition of homelessness (RFP page 4, 3 ii), what is the standard of documentation to show three moves in 90 days?

A: Self attestation when a person is homeless is acceptable in certain circumstances if third party verification and written documentation are not available, such as for a drop-in center or shelter entry situations, and for escaping domestic violence. Current guidelines for documentation required can be found at [www.hudhre.info](http://www.hudhre.info) – ESG Deskguide Section 4 and under HPRP Housing Status: Eligibility and Documentation Requirements. Guidelines may be updated in which case contractors would follow any revised postings. OTDA intends to notify contractors of any updates to the guidelines.

Q: Will the documentation required vary depending on the service provided? Will it be as extensive as the HPRP requirements?

A: Documentation will vary depending on the service provided. Prevention and Rapid Re-housing projects will demand documentation similar to HPRP requirements. Guidelines for documentation required can be found at [www.hudhre.info](http://www.hudhre.info) – ESG Deskguide Section 4 and under HPRP Housing Status: Eligibility and Documentation Requirements.

Q: May we use part of the STEHP funding to provide vouchers to subsidize the homeless person's rent? If yes, is this limited to 6 months? Is there a percentage restriction of subsidy? May we provide a voucher to individuals or families after they complete a program where they received vouchers through our Federally funded transitional housing program? The federal funds are from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

A: A homeless person could receive rental assistance under Rapid Re-housing for up to 12 months, and must be offered supportive services for at least six months. A person at-risk-of-homelessness could receive rental assistance for a period no longer than six months. There is not a percentage restriction that has been set by OTDA. Rental assistance to anyone exiting a homeless Transitional Housing Program is eligible under the Rapid Re-housing category.

Q: May we use the STEHP funding to help domestic violence and human trafficking survivors as they transition from emergency shelter to permanent housing? Besides transitional housing, we currently run a domestic violence emergency shelter program that is reimbursed by the New York City (NYC) Human Resources Administration (HRA). Under the definition of

homelessness (RFP page 4, 1 iii) there is a provision that the person could not have been in government housing for more than 90 days. But, NYC HRA rules allow an extension to 145 days. For a woman to be qualified to receive support using the STEHP funding, would we have to discharge the woman from our shelter at the 90 day mark?

A: No, the 90 day rule applies to institutions, not people currently in shelters. People in shelters are considered homeless and therefore are eligible for STEHP assistance.

Q: Under the definition of homelessness (RFP page 4, 2 i), homelessness is defined as anticipating the loss of permanent residence within 14 days. May we use the STEHP funding to provide services and assistance to women who are anticipating leaving their residence because of abuse (within 14 days)? May we use the STEHP funding to put up a woman (and her children) in a hotel until we have an opening in our shelter? If yes, is there a limitation on the number of days she can be in a hotel?

A: A victim of domestic violence can be assisted under the definition of homeless as described in the *Definitions section on page 5*, first paragraph, #4 (i), (ii) and (iii). Essential Services and Maintenance and Operations funding is intended for agency-owned shelters, and not is to be used for motels. You may want to explore the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP) for capital expenses related to opening a shelter. Information pertaining to HHAP may be found at <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/programs/housing/hhap.asp>.

Q: Under prevention – if domestic violence is increasing because of the pressure of not having money to pay rent or utilities may we offer rent money using STEHP funds under these circumstances? Could this family also be eligible for rapid rehousing?

A: Prevention clients receiving rental assistance must be at or below 30% of Area Median Income and have evidence of at-risk factors listed in the *Documentation of Eligibility section on page 13 of the RFP*. Domestic violence victims qualify as homeless and therefore could be eligible for Rapid Re-housing.

Q: Our Agency operates a Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter for unaccompanied youth 17 years and younger. The overall desired outcome is to reunite youth with their families or other appropriate units with proper support so that youth do not runaway again. The STEHP funding would assist us in increasing the utilization of the shelter through street outreach and decrease the likelihood of future runaway episodes by youth at the shelter by strengthening after care services for youth and their families. Does this fit into the overall objective of the STEHP RFP?

A: Yes, as stated, the program would be eligible for STEHP funds.

Q: How will the 90 day recertification of eligibility work in practice in the context of prevention, given that STEHP is not a performance-based contract, as SHIP and HIP were? (Please see page

14 of the RFP). For example, if a person meets all eligibility requirements at the time his or her case is accepted for legal representation in housing court, but during the course of the court case he or she secures employment and increases his or her income beyond 30% AMI, what would the implications be under STEHP? In such a case, the attorney would be bound by rules of professional conduct to continue representation throughout the case, and the client's increased income would no doubt help ensure a positive outcome, stopping the eviction. Would this person's outcome be considered a positive outcome under STEHP?

**A: Contractors must recertify that participants meet income and eligibility criteria at 90 days to continue receiving assistance under STEHP Prevention. As stated, this person's outcome would be considered a positive outcome.**

### SELECTION PROCESS AND AWARD PROCEDURE QUESTIONS

Q: Is there an award cap per agency? If so, what is that dollar amount? Are there awards caps for each program component? If so, what is that dollar amount?

Q: Is there a minimum award, average award, maximum award - beyond the 5% maximum allocation?

Q: Can you tell us the estimated average grant size, either on the whole, or within the specific categories (Essential Services, Maintenance/Operations, Rapid Re-housing, etc.)?

Q: Is the cap on any one agency 5% of the total pot, per p. 16, based on one application? Or is the cap based on all their applications?

Q: How many awards are you expecting to give out?

Q: What is the dollar range per agency for the grant? Page 16 of the RFP states that no one agency (except for those receiving awards for NYCFAA) will be awarded more than 5% of the total funds available. With 40% of the funds going to NYC, does this mean the maximum award for NYC agencies will be about \$160,000?

Q: What is the median range of grant amounts that OTDA STEHP intends to award?

**A: Agencies should submit **one** application. Agencies are capped at 5% of the total funds made available under STEHP unless the application is from a NYC agency proposing NYCFAA activities in which case the cap is 13% of the funds available. For agencies in NYC and not demonstrating NYCFAA activities the cap remains 5%. There are no caps per category/program component for any one agency. There is not a minimum, median or average award. OTDA has no predetermined number of awards that will be granted. OTDA will be following the *Selection Process on pages 15-17 of the RFP*. Agencies may be funded in one category and not another.**

Q: Page 16, second checkmark. Regarding the 5% award statement if more than one proposal is qualified for funding, is that 5% of the total funds of \$8.3M or 5% of the funds available to NYC or something else?

Q: I am looking at the total amount of funding available, the % that is allocated as not going to NYC (60%) and the statement in the RFP that a single agency cannot receive more than 5% of the funds available. Would that be 5% of the 60% (\$4,980,000) or 5% of the whole 8.3 million?

Q: Funds available for NYCFAA activities: The RFP indicates on page 16 that “An agency receiving an award that demonstrates NYCFAA activities may receive no more than 13% of the total funds available.” Does “total funds available” refer to the funding under Prevention activities (which is projected to be \$4,565,000 based on 55% of the total funds available, in which case, this amount would be no more than \$593,450), or to the total funding available under this solicitation (in which case, this amount would be no more than \$1,079,000)?

Q: How much funding is available under this solicitation for NYCFAA activities?

Q: How much of the 55% distribution is actually being allotted to NYCFAA (NYC)?

A: The maximum amount any one agency may receive is 5% of the total available funds, unless the agency is a NYC applicant that is demonstrating NYCFAA activities, in which case, that applicant could receive up to 13% of the total available funds. The maximum amount available under this solicitation to a NYC agency demonstrating NYCFAA activities is approximately \$1,079,000 (based on the availability of \$8.3 million). The approximate maximum amount an upstate agency or NYC agency which is not demonstrating NYCFAA activities may receive is \$415,000. Should the amount made available be more or less, there will be a direct effect on the maximum award amounts.

Q: On page 16, the RFP states, in part, that “Lower priority will be awarded to applicants that serve entitlement areas receiving ESGP funds directly from HUD in an amount greater than \$245,000 dollars in FFY 2011, with the exception of activities involving NYCFAA.” This would appear to suggest that OTDA does not intend to fund drop-in center or shelter activities in New York City. Is that correct? Does OTDA consider drop-in center and shelter activities in New York City a “lower priority”? Please advise.

Q: Within the 55% of the pot reserved for Prevention and NYCFAA, is the 40% for NYC only within the NYCFAA part of the pot or spread across the whole pot, including the NYCFAA? Alternatively, could NYCFAA projects possibly receive 40% of the total 8.3 million targets towards eviction prevention and therefore leave only 15% of the funds for other homelessness prevention activities?

A: Funding for drop-in center, shelter, Prevention and Rapid Re-housing activities in NYC are lower priority. OTDA will award approximately 40% of STEHP funds to NYC as stated in the *Projected Distribution of Funds section on page 11*. Some of the 40% may be allocated to drop-in center, shelter, Prevention, and Rapid Re-Housing activities; this depends on the overall competitiveness of applications submitted to OTDA.

Q: Does OTDA give priority to or encourage umbrella applications that include requests in more than one category – will such applications receive an aggregate score or will each part be separately scored? In an umbrella application, is it possible that some parts might not be funded?

Q: Will an application that seeks funding in multiple categories (e.g., Prevention AND Rapid Rehousing) be considered a stronger proposal than a proposal that seeks funding in only a single category (e.g., Prevention alone)?

A: OTDA is not prioritizing applications based on number of categories in which funding is requested. It is possible that some parts of an umbrella application might not be funded.

Q: Will the 40/60 split also be allocated within each program area?

Q: Has OTDA designated a portion of the funding under this grant to program proposals in the NYC area? Or is the funding open competitive throughout the state?

A: OTDA will be following guidelines in the *Selection Process section on pages 15-17* when determining awards. The 40% to NYC and 60% split outside of NYC will not be allocated within each category or program area.

Q: Page 16 the RFP states, "If there are additional proposals which qualify for funding no one agency will be awarded more than 5%". What is the definition of "qualify" as used in this sentence? Is it the minimum requirements set forth on page 2?

A: If there is no competition, an agency could receive more than 5%. OTDA anticipates that there will be sufficient competition and funding requests will be capped.

Q: If our agency decides to apply for both the New York City FEPS Application Assistance (NYCFAA) and a second component of the STEHP program, is it possible to be granted more than 13% of funds allocated to NYCFAA? (p. 16)

A: No.

Q: The RFP indicates that awards will not exceed 5% of the total of available grant monies. Our application will be the result of the collaboration of six agencies in the community. Does the award amount mean 5% per application, or 5% per agency? Will these six agencies then have to share the 5% amount? Should applications be limited to the 5% award amount?

Q: Our agency is a legal aid office that serves a 14 county service area. We are the sole provider of civil legal services for homeless/at-risk households in much of our service area. We are involved with housing consortia throughout the area, and we are involved in discussions about STEHP proposals in many of those counties. We note that page 16 of the RFP contains the following language: "no one agency will be awarded more than 5% of the total funds available for STEHP." Our agency will not be seeking more than 5% of the total STEHP funds available in any one proposal. Is this the correct calculation? Or, should we add up our pieces of all the various projects that we are involved with throughout the 14 county area to see if we are exceeding 5%?

A: Collaborations must indicate which agency is the lead, (or in other words, the applicant agency). The lead agency would contract with OTDA should the application be awarded funds. Any other agencies involved in the collaboration would be considered subcontractors of the lead, and their distribution of funds should appear on the "consultant" line. The applicant/lead agency would be subject to the cap, which in the examples above is 5% of the funds made available. The lead agency would be responsible for all subcontractor activity related to STEHP as it pertains to the contract responsibilities.

Q: Can you tell me what a "HUD ESGP Direct Entitlement Area" is, please? I'm uncertain on this. Can you clarify?

Q: Where can we find a list of entitlement areas receiving ESGP funds directly from HUD?

Q: Is South Brooklyn NY an area that does or does not receive ESGP funds directly from HUD?

A: Based on a formula determined by HUD, ESGP funds are distributed to state and local governments, termed entitlement communities. The allocations provided to entitlement communities can be found at [hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/budget/budget11](http://hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/budget/budget11). The amounts posted currently represent Phase I of this year's two phase ESGP allocation. OTDA will be using the full amounts expected in determining the amount of funds an area receives.

Q: Page 16 of the RFP indicates that the \$245,000 level of ESGP funds from HUD in FFY 2011 is a determinant for priority. This in effect provides a ceiling on proposals. Is this the intent?

A: OTDA's intent is to prioritize those areas of the state that receive little or no ESGP funds directly from HUD. The \$245,000 level does not provide a ceiling on proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

Q: Since many programs already receive this funding, what is the level of interest in funding new programs?

Q: What is the likelihood of a new shelter program getting funded?

A: OTDA is not awarding priority to either new or existing programs. The Selection Process section on pages 15-17 of the RFP describes how OTDA will be selecting awards.

Q: We will be applying for a program that meets a need that we have already identified. This program will not be up and running until early 2012. A September 2011 start date is not possible for us. Is this something that can be worked out for this grant?

A: Programs with a start date after September 2011 will be considered. As stated in Section XI., Selection Process of the RFP, the applicant must provide 'assurances that the requested funds will be expended in a timely manner once a contract has been executed between OTDA and the applicant.' The applicant should clearly state the plans for the new program and give a realistic start date. OTDA should be informed of progress before and after the program is implemented in order to avoid a decreased award in subsequent years, as described on *page 18 of the RFP, the Award Procedure section.*

Q: What is the definition of "Positive Housing Outcome"?

Q: Page 18 states "If a contractor does not attain a 75% positive housing outcome rate by the end of the "annual funding cycle, OTDA reserves the right to adjust the award amount for future years. Does the positive outcome include pre-steps to permanent housing ie: complete housing packages, housing interviews etc. Or is it only placement?"

Q: Is the goal of 85% of those exiting a program going to permanent housing applicable to all populations, including youth?

A: A positive or negative housing outcome is the end result of where a client is on the path to permanent housing when he or she exits your program, or at the end of the program year. Each applicant must explain housing outcomes in question C) 5) b) of the application, which includes the rationale for the program's living destinations. Living destinations may be very different for street outreach/drop-in centers than for transitional housing programs. For example, a street outreach/drop-in center may have most of its participants moving to shelter, which is a positive housing outcome on the path to permanent housing. In another example, if a prevention project has most of its participants moving into shelters, this would be viewed as a negative housing outcome. Applicants should explain why destinations are considered positive and negative. Question C) 5) c) asks applicants to calculate the positive housing outcome rate. Applicants may include those still in the program at the end of the year when factoring the rate. Example: 50 families were served in a year with prevention rental assistance. At the end of the year, 10 are still receiving rental assistance, 35 were exited and maintained the permanent housing, and 5 were exited for being unable to maintain the housing and had to move in with friends/family/shelter.  $45/50=.90$  or 90% is the positive housing outcome rate.

Q: In a prevention program, must you meet or exceed an 85% favorable outcome rate; i.e., homelessness prevented through delayed or averted eviction in 85% of those represented in court?

A: If a prevention program is focused on preventing evictions by representing clients in court, the example above describes acceptable positive housing outcomes.

Q: What priority will be given to an applicant whose project includes an entitlement area but will serve a geographic area that is larger than the entitlement area?

A: Entitlement area will be determined by the applicant's "Business Address." As stated in Section XI., Selection Process, priority will be determined based on the geographic area in which the applicant intends to operate its project. If an applicant's business address falls within an entitlement area, the applicant must provide clear and acceptable evidence that the proposed project would only serve areas outside an entitlement area to receive the highest priority.

#### CERTIFICATIONS FROM SOCIAL SERVICES AND CONTINUUM OF CARE

Q: I understand that we must submit a Certification of Approval from the local Social Services District. In the past, New York City applicants were allowed to obtain Certification of Approval from either HRA or DHS. Can we still use DHS certification of approval to satisfy this requirement?

Q: In New York City which agency(ies) must sign off as the Local Social Service District and the Continuum of Care.

Q: Applicants must obtain the approval of the local social service district and the local continuum of care in connection with this RFP. For NYC providers, the local DSS seems to be the NYC Department of Homeless Services

Q: The RFP requires applicants to submit a "Local Social Services District Certification of Approval". In New York City, the Local Social Services District is represented both by the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) and by the New York City Department of

Homeless Services (DHS). For the purposes of this RFP, which agency should we get to certify approval of our proposal, HRA or DHS? Does it matter which agency we use?

Q: Who is the LDSS agency in NYC for this RFP? (e.g. HRA, ACS or DHS) Given the relatively quick turnaround time for this RFP from the date of issue to the proposal deadline, would you consider accepting letters of approval from the LDSS after the proposal deadline? NYC Human Resources Administration, for instance, requires that a full proposal be submitted to them at least 2 weeks prior to issuing any certification.

Q: The RFP states that not-for-profit corporations must receive approval for the project from the local social service district. Is the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) the social service district for all applicants in New York City? Or is Human Resources Administration (HRA) considered the local social service district for domestic violence shelters in New York City?

A: As indicated on Page 44 of the application, one Certification of Approval from the local Social Services District is requested at the time of application. NYC applicants may submit approval from Human Resources Administration (HRA), Administration of Children's Services (ACS), Department of Homelessness Services (DHS) or HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) depending on source of referrals and target population. Should an applicant not submit the certification with the application, and score high enough to be awarded funds, OTDA will not finalize a contract without the certification. Applicants should also submit a certification from the Continuum of Care. Please see below.

Q: Regarding pages 33&34- Community description: If there is a Continuum of Care in my geographic area, and my agency does not participate in the Continuum of Care, do we answer question Bi or Bii?

Q: What if the area to be served has no Continuum of Care or one that is completely inactive or has no leadership structure?

A: As indicated on page 45 of the application, one Continuum of Care Approval is requested at the time of application. If there is an active Continuum of Care in your area, you **should** have that Continuum's approval of your project as indicated by submitting a signed certification form on Page 45 of the application, and you **should** answer the B) 1) b) i) set of questions in the application. If there is not an active Continuum in your area, you should answer the B) 1) b) ii) set of questions in the application and the Continuum of Care Approval certification form could be substituted with a similar planning body's acceptance of the proposed project.

- **Special note:** The Social Service District and Continuum of Care certifications are different, and applicants should submit one of each.

Q: Please provide the name and contact information for the local continuum of care in New York City.

Q: What is the local Continuum of Care body and the local social services district, for a program in South Brooklyn, NYC area (Boro Park, Kensington)?

A: The NYC Coalition on the Continuum of Care website address is [www.nychomeless.com](http://www.nychomeless.com) which has contact information and instructions posted.

Q: Given the short turn-around time before the due date of this proposal to continue our HIP/SHIP activities, it will be difficult to offer the local CoC our complete program plan for their approval. Is it possible to make the final award contingent on that approval, rather than requiring it at the time of application?

A: The Continuum of Care certification is due at the time of application. Should an applicant not submit the certification with the application, and score high enough to be awarded funds, the contract will not be executed without certification.

Q: Does OTDA require that all applicant agencies be current members of the Continuum of Care Coordinating body?

A: STEHP contractors should be part of their Continuums of Care as stated on *page 13, Program Requirements*. If an agency has not been part of the Continuum, it is a requirement upon award of STEHP funds that the agency participate.

Q: What if the CoC will not fully support a project, particularly if members of the CoC are proposing competing proposals for the same or similar services? Can the CoC simply agree to support competing proposals?

A: OTDA cannot answer what a particular Continuum will choose to do under the circumstances presented above. However, Continuums can support multiple applications.

Q: Do Local District applicants require CoC approval?

A: Yes, see previous responses for further guidance.

Q: LDSS letter of support: Can applicants submit a tailored letter of support from our local social services district, or should applicants only submit the form required on page 44?

A: You may submit a tailored letter of support. Please label it at the top “LSDD Certification of Approval”.

\*Note: You may also submit a tailored letter from the COC; please label it at the top “COC Approval”

Q: Do you want letters of support in addition to the DSS certifications and linkage agreements?

A: OTDA is not requesting additional letters of support other than DSS and COC.

Q: What if the local DSS will not support an application due to disputes with a local non-profit?

A: The Social Service District certification is due at the time of application. Should an applicant not submit the certification with the application, and score high enough to be awarded funds, the contract will not be executed without the certification.

### HMIS and REPORT QUESTIONS

Q: We don't understand what HMIS is. Can you please explain?

A: The Homeless Management Information System is a web based data collection system, the purpose of which is to collect information about homeless or at-risk of homelessness populations on a community or regional level. There is not "one system". There are many providers of HMIS systems. More information about HMIS can be obtained at HUD's Homelessness Resource Exchange website, ([hudhre.com](http://hudhre.com)) and generally, from your local Continuum of Care. Also, a list of HMIS contacts has been posted on the website.

Q: What criteria will OTDA follow in considering applications to use a comparable database rather than the HMIS system and what type of systems will OTDA consider to be comparable? For example, could a provider use their own case management system?

Q: What providers other than those whose primary mission is "serving victims of domestic violence/sexual assault/date rape/stalking" will be permitted to use a comparable database rather than HMIS?

Q: Are contractors awarded under Prevention programs/NYCFAA activities required to participate in the HMIS system?

A: Yes, all STEHP contractors are required to participate in HMIS, with the exception of only those primarily serving a domestic violence population. A comparable database must comply with all current HUD HMIS Data and Technical standards. For further information on HMIS please refer to HUD's resource exchange at [http://www.hudhre.info/documents/FinalHMISDataStandards\\_March2010.pdf](http://www.hudhre.info/documents/FinalHMISDataStandards_March2010.pdf).

Q: For New York City providers, which HMIS providers (or City agency) will we have the opportunity to join when entering HMIS data? At which agency does this database reside?

A: The NYC HMIS is administered by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS).

Q: Since HMIS database expenses are permitted under the contract, can you advise what the average cost of these expenses may be?

Q: Is there a limit in the allocation for the cost for HMIS in the budget?

A: OTDA cannot advise on the average cost or a limit of HMIS expenses. Expenses differ between Continuums depending on the HMIS provider. Please develop the budget based on your research and needs.

Q: What specific client-level fields will we be required to provide in HMIS?

Q: What will be involved or required for the quarterly program reporting?

A: The current minimal HMIS data standards were finalized in March 2010 published at the HUD Homelessness Resources Exchange ([hudhre.com](http://hudhre.com)). Your Continuum may include additional data fields. HUD's data standards change occasionally. It is required that HMIS providers and users implement changes as they occur. OTDA informs contractors of data standard changes when they occur. Reports will also include tracking of outcomes from *Section C, Program Plan of the application*.

Q: What protections will be built into such as system for client confidentiality given attorney-client privilege and social worker confidentiality?

A: Applicants should consult their HMIS vendor regarding confidentiality safeguards and what information sharing can exist between chosen entities. Each HMIS vendor has developed their product based on HUD's data standards. Applicants may use the following link to contact the local administrator - <http://www.hmis.info/Communities/IjList.aspx?state=NY> (please select your Continuum of Care or the area of interest to view contact information).

Q: What specific HMIS costs can we build into the budget---personnel costs associated with data collection and entry into such as system? Anything else?

A: After researching what the needs will be, applicants may allocate all STEHP HMIS costs to appropriate lines in the budget. For example: staff time associated with data collection is allocated to Personnel, payment to an HMIS provider is allocated to Consultants etc. Should an applicant be requesting funds under more than one category, please show HMIS costs associated proportionally within each category based on projected numbers served in each category.

Q: Current HPP offices are based at HRA Job Centers and utilize HRA computers. In the past, our agency has not been allowed to install programs or access various websites on these machines. Will OTDA and HRA make arrangements to provide access to HMIS on the Job Center computers?

A: OTDA will consult with HRA regarding the feasibility of access to HMIS at the Job Centers. OTDA recommends applicants consult with DHS to determine the best way to handle the HMIS requirement. HMIS costs, including equipment, are eligible expenses under STEHP.

Q: Would HMIS be reimbursable for providers who already use the system for the purposes of other contracts?

A: HMIS expenses related to STEHP are reimbursable. However, please be reminded that STEHP funds cannot supplant any existing resources. In addition, agencies are prohibited from

submitting reimbursement requests that have been paid for by another source of funding for any expenses, including HMIS.

Q: Would a provider's existing HMIS system e.g. compatible with HUD's reporting requirements, require interface changes for the purposes of STEHP?

A: Please consult with your HMIS administrator. OTDA expects HUD's data standards may change as the HEARTH Act is fully implemented. As changes are made, the HMIS system must be able to capture any new data fields required and ideally produce a report for your agency that can be used to report to OTDA. Applicants may use the following link to contact the local administrator - <http://www.hmis.info/Communities/IjList.aspx?state=NY> (please select your Continuum of Care or the area of interest to view contact information).

Q: Will the quarterly reports for this grant be submitted through the CMS system? If not, how?

A: No, the STEHP program will have an excel based report. Agencies should be able to produce figures for the report from their HMIS system. Agencies would then complete the excel report that would be electronically transmitted (email) to the STEHP program manager.

Q: HPP providers have not been required in the past to use HMIS, so our organization has not used HMIS for our HPP program. Instead, we use a database management system which manages our client data and allows us to create program and administrative reports. Can this program be used to comply with HMIS requirements?

A: HMIS is a requirement for all contractors under STEHP unless an agency otherwise meets HUD's definition that permits the use of a comparable database. Successful applicants under this RFP including those agencies awarded under NYCFAA will be required to comply with the HMIS standard.

Q: We see many homeless youth in our Drop-In Center who we have counted as "Brief Contacts" in the past. These youth may only receive information and referral to another service. We don't have Social Security numbers for these youth, and thus don't know how to capture them on HMIS.

A: OTDA is committed to working with successful STEHP applicants with regard to implementing HMIS. The question is best directed to your HMIS provider/administrator on how to handle the absence of Social Security numbers. Applicants may use the following link to contact the local administrator - <http://www.hmis.info/Communities/IjList.aspx?state=NY> (please select your Continuum of Care or the area of interest to view contact information).

Q: Will HAMS no longer be used as the database system for what were formerly HIP/SHIP programs? If this is not the case, will use of the HAMS system be considered in compliance with HMIS?

Q: Will grantees be required to utilize HAMS for any purpose?

Q: Is the *Homeless Management Information System* (HMIS) the same as the HAMS system that we use for our OTDA service data collection? If not, is it comparable? If not, is training to use HMIS an allowable cost in a project budget?

A: HAMS will not be used under STEHP for client level data, HMIS replaces this function. OTDA anticipates that the use of HMIS will eliminate duplication of effort that may have occurred in the past. There is no substitute for HMIS unless services are primarily being provided to a DV population, such as a DV shelter. Any cost that is associated with HMIS as it relates to STEHP is reimbursable under STEHP.

Q: Considering that the contract period begins September 1, what will the reporting periods be?

A: The reporting periods are expected to be quarterly and annually based on the start date of the contract.

Q: Do electronic records of clients meet the requirement for record keeping?

A: Yes, as long as they are accessible at time of monitoring and for the six year period following the end of a contracted year.

Q: Throughout the RFP, reference is made to “individuals” and “participants” served. (Please see pp. 37-38 of RFP). In calculating the number a prevention provider will serve in a given year or quarter, the emphasis appears to be on total number of individuals served rather than households. For confirmation - a family of four would count as four individuals (i.e. outcomes) for the purposes of the contract and reporting? Further, no distinction seems to be drawn between adult or minor persons in the household – is that correct? (i.e., a 15 year old child would count as an individual for these purposes?)

A: For the purpose of the application, OTDA has requested total number of individuals served. Children count as individuals in the application. A family of four would count as four individuals. There will be some aspects of reporting that require contractors to describe single individuals and individuals in those families.

### MWBE QUESTIONS

Q: On page 20 of the RFP, are there established goals for this contract? All of the fields are blank.

Q: On page 64, is it essential to meet MWBE requirement goals for this contract?

Q: Does Appendix Z apply to local district applicants?

A: Applicants who do not request funds in areas that offer MWBE opportunities, (i.e. those in which all contract funds will support direct personnel or contractual relationships with other NFPs or units of local government) will have a 0% participation goal. These applicants should label MWBE forms “Not Applicable, as all contract funds will support personnel or contract with other NFP/units of local government”. Contracts which request expenses that have MWBE purchasing opportunities will be subject to meeting the goals listed in the Established OTDA Goals on page 20 of the RFP. Appendix Z will clearly state ‘Established Goals for this Contract’ at time of contract development and execution.

Q: In the STEHP Application Packet there is an OTDA Form 4937 M/WBE Subcontractor Utilization Plan. This form is listed on the Application Checklist as one that is required to be completed and submitted. The form asks for information about sub-contractors. If we are not planning to sub-contract how do you complete this form?

A: Please write “Not Applicable” on it. Please remember if applicants are requesting funds in support of supplies, equipment, etc. than MWBE goals are invoked and the Subcontractor Utilization Plan is required to be completed.

Q: Our agency plans to alter its current staffing in order to better host the STEHP program. How do we reflect unstaffed positions in the Equal Employment Opportunity Staffing Plan? (p. 51)

A: In the case where applicants reflect only staff funded under STEHP, check the “Work force to be utilized on this contract” box in the upper right section of the form. The other option is to list your agency’s total workforce and check the “Contractor/Subcontractor’s total work force”.

#### MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Q: Are there minimums or maximums regarding the number of clients in each program area that a proposer can propose to serve? Or is there an expected number of clients OTDA wishes to serve in each program area?

A: There are no minimums or maximums. Applications will be evaluated based on the cost effectiveness of the number served.

Q: Is there a place where we can access the Community Description information requested on page 33, Section B.1.)a), since the information will be the same for all applicants in New York City?

A: OTDA cannot recommend from where an applicant would gather this information. OTDA understands that Community Descriptions from like geographic regions may be similar.

Q: If our agency does not propose housing services to clients in conjunction with this program, are we required to have a fair housing policy? (p. 27)

Q: Applicants must provide a Fair Housing Policy, according to the directions on page 27. Does this apply to legal services providers that are not providers of supportive housing?

Q: Fair Housing Policy: Are applicants required to provide a Fair Housing Policy Statement if our organization does not provide housing? Please clarify.

A: Yes. Since all activities funded by STEHP are connected in some way to housing, applicants should have a policy which indicates you will not discriminate among eligible clients.

Q: The description of page 27 of the requirement of a Fair Housing Policy states, among other items, that services must be made available regardless of the sex of an individual. Does this requirement exclude from consideration agencies whose mission is solely to work with women (and their families)?

A: No applicant is excluded. Applicants can serve specific target populations. Within the population, Fair Housing Policies apply.

Q: Do the housing inspectors have to have any specific certification?

A: The “housing habitability standards” inspection may be conducted by agency staff and there is not a certification process. A sample checklist may be found at - <http://www.hudhre.info/documents/HabitStandardsChecklist.doc> .

Q: As all agency funding sources will be submitted as part of the Audited Financial Report, is it necessary to provide the information (noted on page 40) for all agency funding sources for the past 3 years or just those that pertain to activities under this funding application?

A: Please submit all sources of agency funding. Agencies are not required to use the form provided as long as the information is submitted in a chart format with the five column headings.

Q: Please clarify your definition of Transitional Housing - specifically does this include individuals or families temporarily residing in motels?

Q: Can you offer a more explicit definition of transitional housing? Are individuals or families residing in temporary housing such as a residential drug treatment program or ¾ houses or considered either homeless or at risk of homelessness? If the ¾ house does not comply with building code or certificate of occupancy requirements, does that impact homeless or at-risk housing status?

A: Transitional housing does not include anyone temporarily residing in a motel. If you are requesting funds under Essential Services and Maintenance and Operations for the purpose of providing transitional housing or case management services, it would not include funds for anyone to reside in a motel even temporarily. Transitional housing programs are of a longer term nature, generally 3-18 months. Essential Services and Maintenance and Operations funds may include facility-based or agency owned/rented scattered site apartment transitional housing models. A residential drug treatment program is generally considered an “institutional” stay, and

the definition of homelessness depends on whether the individual was homeless before the stay and if the stay is 90 days or less. Applicants proposing to work with an eligible target population temporarily residing in hotels/motels may apply under Rapid Re-housing activities.

Q: The Program Plan Section of the RFP Application Packet contains a *living destinations* chart (Subsection Number 5) which requests projected numbers for individuals served. For eviction prevention, we assume that the number of individuals and families we propose to serve who maintain permanent housing for six months should be entered under the category of “Permanent Destinations”, and those who we are unable to successfully track for six months should be entered under “Miscellaneous” or some other category. Is this correct?

A: No, “we assume the number of individuals and families we propose to serve who maintain permanent housing for six months should be entered under the category of “Permanent Destinations” is not necessarily correct. As shown in the upper left hand box, The Living Destinations Chart **applies to the living destination of the client upon his/her completion of the program.** For example, you may assist someone for two months and services are complete. Miscellaneous includes “don’t know” which describes those you are unable to successfully track during their time in the program. For example, they never turned up to recertify at the 90 day mark and the apartment is vacant. **After someone has exited the program, you must attempt to determine his/her housing status after six months, as indicated in question C) 5) f of the application.**

Q: What type of follow up is expected of program participants six months after homelessness has been prevented and their case has been closed? Email follow-up? Post card with request that they call? Letter?

A: All projects must perform follow-up contact with participants to verify housing status six months after exiting your program or services. How this is accomplished can be determined by your program based on what would work best for you and your clients. All of the above are acceptable and may include a variety of other contacts, such as by telephone.

Q: The directions for the *living destinations* chart state that families should be counted by the number of persons in the family. We believe that this way of counting recipients of our services may be confused for the number of court interventions we propose to do; for example, if we represent a family of four in court and stop an eviction, by counting all members of the family it may appear we propose to provide legal representation for four eviction proceedings instead of one. Should we also state the (smaller) number of eviction proceedings we will successfully resolve, and if so, where should we list that information?

Q: Could you clarify the number of individuals versus number of families mentioned on page 37? We are applying for eviction prevention and provide services to households, that may be individuals or families. For example, if we prevent 100 evictions, the number of individuals assisted would vary. Should we estimate to the best of our ability?

A: The chart does ask for individuals as OTDA wants to know how many people will be assisted. In the first example above, even though there was only one legal representation, your agency

prevented eviction for four people. The actual number of eviction proceedings that you propose to resolve could be described in the Program Plan narrative section of the application. Please estimate to the best of your ability the number of individuals that would be served, based on the estimated number of households you expect to serve.

Q: What is OTDA expecting in the Living Destinations upon completion of program chart in the Program Plan description area for the Maintenance and Operations area? The programs we are requesting will all be housed in the same buildings and those numbers are being considered in the other categories. So what is OTDA looking for in that component?

A: Even though the numbers are being considered in other categories, (i.e. duplicated), please fill in the column based on how many are proposed to be served in Maintenance and Operations if you are requesting funding from the category. In the *Total Unduplicated Persons* column, a person should be counted only once even if s/he appeared in more than one category.

Q: We are considering linkages with community partners to deliver follow-up services for six months after successful eviction prevention. If we list the not-for-profit agencies and personnel who will perform follow-up services in our Program Staff and Supportive Services Charts, may we include the cost of these services in our own budget?

A: In the proposed scenario of including a cost for a service in the budget, and then presumably passing it on to the partner, OTDA would not consider this a linkage, but rather a subcontract. Subcontracts are allowed; costs should be allocated under the consultant line of the budget. Your agency would be the lead agency which holds the STEHP contract with OTDA and therefore responsible for all fiscal management, reporting and oversight related to your subcontracted partner.

Q: Can you suggest a few other expected outcomes for participants in a prevention program beyond the hoped for prevention of homelessness? Should we be predicting how many evictions will be delayed? How many households qualify for shelter-related public assistance?

Q: What does OTDA consider to be a prevention “outcome” for the purposes of this contract, and how will outcomes be tracked? For what length of time, if any, would an outcome/individual be tracked? Are outcomes tracked by milestones, numbers?

Q: ... does OTDA have any expectations with regards to how organizations should develop quantifiable program outcomes relating Maintenance and Operations funding? Can the outcomes reflect the number of individuals/families housed and/or moved into permanent housing?

A: “Other expected outcomes”, requested in *question C) 5) g) of the application*, must be developed based on what the program proposes to accomplish. OTDA is not suggesting outcomes for any program. Examples given in the question are only intended to show the format of how your outcomes should be phrased to include total number of participants, number to achieve results and how you will know results were achieved. It is up to the applicant to decide

how milestones will be tracked. Successful applicants should be prepared to report on the outcomes during quarterly and annual reporting in a narrative and/or chart style format.

Q: If an applicant proposes to serve homeless households under Rapid Rehousing, the service period must extend to 6 months after housing is located, but there is no similar requirement for services to eviction prevention households. Is this correct?

A: Correct.

Q: What is the defined age range for unaccompanied youth?

A: There is currently no age range defined.

Q: Under the category E) FEPS, would STEHP accept, with HRA approval, a virtual presence (by videoconferencing over the internet using webcams) at the HRA job centers allowing us to provide assistance in a variety of Asian languages and dialects? So no actual staff would be physically at the centers but arrangements would be made for the HRA job centers to connect us virtually when an Asian person requests help.

A: OTDA recognizes the value of technology and accepts the value of virtual presence. However, some staff should also be located in the job center.

Q: Of the number the agency contracted to serve in a given year or quarter, would OTDA expect, for instance, that full services, such as legal representation in housing court be provided to 85% of clients, and that brief services or advice and referral would comprise 15% of the contracted number?

A: OTDA does not have an expectation regarding the level of intensity with regard to service delivery. However, cost reasonableness in comparison to proposed services will be considered during the evaluation of each application. In addition, OTDA may adjust award amounts in future years based on the achievements of housing outcomes and/or expended amount.

Q: Which agencies on Long Island received dollars from this program in the past?

A: STEHP is a new procurement. To see a list of agencies that currently receive OTDA funding, please refer to our website at [www.otda.ny.gov/programs/housing/locations.asp](http://www.otda.ny.gov/programs/housing/locations.asp)

Q: With regard to the NYCFAA program, could you provide some examples of the expected duties and performance indicators for the staffer embedded at NYC/HRA?

A: Duties and responsibilities should relate to the eligible activities under NYCFAA. Please refer to page 9 and 10 of the RFP.

Q: As a new non-profit, ABC agency does not have audited financial statements from the previous year. ABC was incubated at XYZ agency for the past 4 years and was awarded a

HIP/SHIP contract under XYZ. Should ABC submit XYZ's audited financial statement from last year since it does not have its own? This is what we have done for other grant applications.

**A: Yes. Please include an explanation about the situation with a copy of the financial statement.**