

Response to Human Trafficking Program (RHTP) RFP

Bidder's Conference Q and A

7/29/2021

Important reminders:

- Applications due by 2:00 PM on 8/23/2021.
- The term of the new contracts will be 5 years 2021-2026.
- The program was restructured: the contracts are switching from performance-based to line-item contracts.
- All applications must be submitted thought the Grants Gateway system. Please use Internet Explorer – not Chrome or Microsoft Edge. Internet explorer is the e with the yellow halo icon, not the dark blue e icon.
- Save often!
- Follow Grants Gateway instruction section of the RFP (starting on page 24) along with the instructions on Grants Gateway screens.
- Tasks and objectives screen in Grants Gateway:
Full objective set includes an objective, a task and a performance measure. Please enter two tasks and two performance measures per objectives. If greater than two additional tasks or two performance measures are entered, they will need to be deleted to successfully complete the Workplan Properties page. See page 27 of the RFP for more information.
- When you select the 500-character text box in the performance measure description, if you have existing information in the box, the information will disappear. You must click 'Save' at this point. Then type your information in and save it again. To reiterate, you will select the 500-text box option, click 'Save' immediately, type in your information, and click 'Save' again.
- If the budget is not entirely personnel, fringe and direct services, and shows opportunities for purchase of goods and services, then an MWBE utilization plan is completed by the contractor.
- Upon submission of any budget not falling within the maximum guidelines set forth in the Request for Proposals, OTDA may, in its discretion, allow for increased value over the 10% maximum for one-time non-personal service direct client costs. The application must demonstrate need and justify this increase. Justifications may include, but are not limited to, increased housing costs due to geographic location, relocation costs anticipated by applicant based on experience of clients served, history of serving clients with enhanced needs not covered elsewhere, and history of supporting applicants through direct payment of immigration filing fees.

Q and A

Q – What kind of services should the organization be prepared to provide?

A –The services strategy for the Response to Human Trafficking Program (RHTP) consists of program costs for providing comprehensive services, as well as costs for a Survivor Advisory Board (elective) to help inform the work of the organization in providing these services.

Such services shall be culturally competent, to the extent practicable, and shall include, but are not limited to, case management, emergency temporary housing, health care, mental health

counseling, drug addiction screening and treatment, language interpretation and translation services, English language instruction, job training and placement assistance, post-employment services for job retention, and services to assist the individual and any of his or her family members to establish a permanent residence in New York State or the United States. See Section VII subsection A through D of the RFP.

Q – What is the Survivor Advisory Board?

A – The Survivor Advisory Board is a new elective service (applicants may include this, but they are not required to do so), which aims to provide the community in which the board operates with the experiences and knowledge that trafficking survivors have to facilitate effective anti-trafficking policy. See Section VII subsection B of the RFP for more information.

Q – Who are the eligible participants?

A – Eligible Participants are trafficked persons who have been confirmed as a trafficking victim by OTDA and DCJS through the NYS Human Trafficking Victim Referral Process with an emphasis on those trafficking victims who would otherwise have no access to needed services because a lack of qualifying immigration status for benefits through their local district. See Section VIII of the RFP for more information.

Q – Can you provide more information about the NYS Trafficking Victim Confirmation Process?

A - The confirmation process was established under New York State's 2007 anti-trafficking law to rapidly connect trafficking survivors with services. This process, outlined in Article 10-D of the Social Services Law, is jointly administered by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Referrals for confirmation can be made by law enforcement representatives and established legal or social services providers that reasonably believe a client is a human trafficking victim. This process is completed in a matter of days so that victims can access services in a timely manner. Those victims confirmed through the referral process may access state programs and other services to help them meet their needs. See [OTDA website](#) and [OTDA Human Trafficking Handbook](#) for more information and for a link to the electronic submission form.

Q- What is the amount of funding available for this contract? Is it in line with prior years?

A - OTDA anticipates distributing funding annually for five-year contracts under this procurement. OTDA estimates that \$2,397,000 per budget period may be available for the RHTP program through this procurement; however, the amount of funding may be adjusted annually based on funding. Anticipated subsequent allocations and continuation of contracts are subject to continued availability of state funds and appropriation thereof.

The level of funding has increased over the past several years and has been at the current level for the last two years. See Section IX of the RFP for more information.

Q – How is funding distributed and awarded throughout the state?

A – Funds are awarded to three geographical regions in the state: 1) New York City Region; 2) Metro Region; and 3) Upstate Region. There can be multiple providers per region, and no one provider will be awarded more than 50% of the available funding. Applicants will be competing with other organization in their respective region. Funding allocation are based on the number of victims that were historically confirmed in each region. See Section IX of the RFP for more information.

Q- How many current providers are there and who are they? What is the projected number of awards for the 2021-2026 contract?

A - Currently, there are six providers across the state. A list and map of current RHTP providers are available on the [OTDA website](#). OTDA does not have a projection on the number of awards that may be made for this procurement.

Q –Could you provide more information on the budget requirement and breakdown?

A –Contractors will be reimbursed for line-item expenses and are required to submit quarterly reports of units of services provided. Details on reporting requirements under NYS law will be given to awardees during our on-boarding process. It is not anticipated this reporting will require any additional information than what is kept by your organization with respect to providing services in the normal course of business.

An applicant may choose to allocate 100% of the funding towards personnel costs. Focus is on providing services to victims. There is no time limit on how long a victim may receive services through a provider organization imposed by these contracts. Work Plan and Attachment B-1 Budget Summary will be required for the first 12-month budget period.

a. A **minimum of 70%** of the grant must be allocated for costs directly associated with the provision of personal services for serving trafficking victims. (i.e., personnel and fringe). Include employees that will be paid in full or in part from contract funds. Grant funds for personal and direct non-personal services shall be used to permit staff to provide the following eligible services:

- Case Management
- Shelter/Rental Assistance/Safe House Placement
- Health Assessment
- Medical Care (including prescriptions)
- Mental Health Counseling
- Legal Services
- Food
- Other Identified service needs as indicated by the proposal, including Survivor Advisory Board

b. A **maximum of 10%** of the grant may be allocated for direct non-personal services. These are costs that are associated with the provision of services to trafficking victims. Costs for non-personal support services are subject to compliance with OTDA's overall goal of 30% for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise(M/WBE) participation.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- office supplies/equipment;
- security supplies/equipment;

c. A **maximum of 10%** of the award amount may be allocated for administrative costs. Administrative costs are considered to be non-personal services and may be only up to 10% of the total award. Some examples include the RHTP portion of audit fees, associated payroll costs, and staff salary/fringe costs related to their percentage of time spent:

- preparing a program budget and schedule;
- developing systems to assure program compliance;

- developing agreements (interagency/sub-recipient/contractors) to carry out program activities;
- monitoring program activities;
- preparing reports and other documents directly related to the program;
- evaluating program results against objectives;
- managing/supervising RHTP direct service staff; and/or
- other administrative costs.

Administrative costs should be included in the ‘Other’ expenses category.

A survivor advisory board, if elected, should be identified, and explained in the category of “other identified service needs” and cost should not exceed 10% of the award. Any personal service costs or staff travel should be included in personal service costs.

An applicant may choose not to allocate any funding to non-participant specific deliverables. In that case, 100% of the funding may be allocated towards program costs.

See RFP on pages 25-26 for more information on completing the budget screens.

Please calculate the annual costs of your proposed program in the Budget Screens in Grants Gateway following the instructions on the screens and on pages 25-27 of the RFP in Part B- Instructions for Completing the Application.

Q –May we allocate all funds towards Personal Services (payroll & fringe)?

A – Yes. Should an organization forgo providing elective services, then 100% of the funding may be directed to Personal Services (payroll for employees providing case management etc.), not subject to MBWE requirements.

Q – Our organization uses a large amount of the funding towards direct client assistance: rent, storage, utilities. Since now there will be a maximum of 10% of funding allocation towards non- personal services, will the contract be more restrictive? Is direct client assistance included in the 10% cap?

A - The non-personal services are costs that are associated with the provision of services to trafficking victims, for example office supplies and security equipment. You may allocate up to 10% of funds towards it.

Organization may also choose to allocate 100% of funds towards personal services.

The focus of this contract is on providing services to victims. In a change from prior years of this program, there are no client caps and no phased time limitations anymore, which allows to serve victims for a longer time or re-enroll a client who used services in the past but reappeared. The provider would be able to continue serving them under the new contract.

This contract is no longer funding Task Forces and Community Education deliverables because all those associated costs, travel and space, are now covered under non-personal service, or the salaries of those working with RHTP clients. Organizations may need to adjust and reallocate how they were internally apportioning the funds under prior contracts.

Q - Are letters of support and MOUs required with the application?

A –Letters of support are not required but can strengthen the application. However, in the Work Plan narrative section please describe any established relationships with community service

providers, as well as local and state law enforcement, victim service providers, and others in order to provide comprehensive services to victims or refer them for assistance. If your organization will subcontract or partner with other agencies to provide services, their roles and responsibilities in the program must also be described.

Q - We are an organization that does not currently work with existing confirmed victims, but we may develop a program in the future. Our program is in early stages with just a few clients. Are we eligible to apply?

A –All eligible grant applicants are encouraged to apply for this competitive grant opportunity. The Work Plan narrative should include relevant experience with victim services, and/or labor and sex trafficking victim services, and/or supportive services for crime victims such as domestic violence victims, or ability to acquire such experience. Applicants may also describe their expansion plan for developing a program, reaching trafficked persons and the ability to effectively engage this population, especially in underserved areas. Organizations with limited experience working with victims of trafficking are not barred from submitting an application. See Section VI of the RFP for more information.

Q - Taking into account the shift from performance based to line-item contract what are the reporting requirement for this contract?

A - NYS law reporting requirements for state-funded programs for victims of human trafficking may be found in New York State Social Services Law Section 17. Details on reporting requirements under NYS law will be given to awardees during our on-boarding process. It is not anticipated this reporting will require any additional information than what is kept by your organization with respect to providing services in the normal course of business. This reporting exists independent of whether the program utilizes a line-item budget or performance-based budget.

OTDA will monitor projects on a regular basis throughout the life of the contract to ensure that the terms of the contract are being met. Records and documentation may be revised during the visit to monitor the contractor's performance. See section XIII of the RFP for more information.

Q – Our organization serves Metro area but with a focus on some counties only. Are we eligible to apply?

A - Eligible applicants must be located in and do business in New York State. Your organization may focus services towards a specific geographic area or specific counties, but you should also be open and have a capability to serve clients from outside of your service area if an eligible program participant should seek services at your organization. However, funding will only be provided based on the region in which they are located.

Q – Are there any extra score points awarded for organizing the Survivor Advisory Board?

A – Because this is an elective portion of your application, extra points are not awarded, but you may discuss in your workplan how the survivor experience positively impacts your programs, which may result in a higher score.

A survivor advisory board, if elected, should be identified, and explained in the category of “other identified service needs” and cost should not exceed 10% of the award. Any personal service costs or staff travel should be included in personal service costs.

Q - Where can we find statistics on the trafficking victims in NYS.

A- The New York State Interagency Task Force that includes members from key state agencies who work in the area of human trafficking, collects and organizes data detailing the nature and extent of human trafficking throughout the state. The Task Force publishes an [annual report](#) that includes a summary of data on NYS confirmed victims, their demographics and breakdown by region.

Q - Do I need to include organizational charts for partner organizations?

A – Organization charts for partner organizations are not required but can be included for completeness.

Q – Do you anticipate doing a reissue if funds are not distributed?

A- OTDA will not comment on any potential reissue in the event of remaining funds. However, in prior years we have completely distributed funding for this program in one round of bids.

Q – Where should any other expenses related to providing client services be located?

A-At least 70% of expenses must be allocated to personnel costs related to providing case management services for victims of human trafficking. Any additional expenses your organization deems appropriate to complete the goals of the program must be allocated according to the guidelines in the RFP.

See RFP on pages 25-26 for more information on completing the budget screens in Grants Gateway.

Q - I am looking to submit my application for the Response to Human Trafficking Program. I am already a member of Grants Gateway. Can I just submit my proposal with my business plan and description? Are there other documents I would need to submit?

A - Applications must be submitted electronically via Grants Gateway at <https://grantsgateway.ny.gov> by 2:00pm on 08/23/2021. Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the electronic application submission process several days before the application due date to ensure the application is successfully accepted by the Grants Gateway System.

Applicants must take this processing time into consideration by allowing enough time to enter submissions so that the application is submitted error-free by the deadline. OTDA will not accept mailed proposals, faxed proposals, or proposals sent via electronic mail. Please see Section II of the RFP for detailed instructions on how to complete your Prequalification Application and submit a proposal in Grants Gateway.

Q - Can you confirm the per-region, per-grantee funding maximums for these awards? How much funding is NYC expected to receive at maximum? Across how many providers, if known?

A - There is no maximum/minimum award for any grantee. The percentages of the awards by region and the rationales for each are explained in Section IX of the RFP.

Q - In previous cycles, OTDA required that we submit full copies of clients' legal records (e.g. green card applications) if providing legal services under the grant. Because of concerns about client privacy, we declined to provide legal services under this program since we were not able/willing to share that protected information. Can you confirm whether a similar requirement will be in place for

this grant? What client-specific documents or information are required to be shared with OTDA throughout reporting?

A - The only requirement for enrolling the client in the RHTP program is a confirmation letter from the NYS Victim Referral Process overseen by OTDA/DCJS. No immigration documentation is required to be submitted to be confirmed as a victim of trafficking in NYS. To see the electronic submission form, visit the OTDA website at: [Assistance for Victims of Human Trafficking | Refugee Services | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](https://www.ny.gov/otda/assistance-victims-human-trafficking-refugee-services)

During monitoring visits, any sensitive client information not relevant to client services provided under the contract can be redacted before sharing with OTDA. See Section XIII od the RFP for additional information.

Q –Would OTDA consider a more flexible requirement where the personnel services 70% minimum could instead be “personnel services and direct client assistance”?

A – While completing your budget, please carefully review our statement regarding budget allocation waivers at the top of this document and the following language in our A-1 Attachment:

A maximum of 10% of the grant may be allocated for direct non-personal services. These are costs that are associated with the provision of services to trafficking victims. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- office supplies/equipment;
- security supplies/equipment;

Grant funds for personal and direct non-personal services shall be used to permit staff to provide the following eligible services:

- Case Management
- Shelter/Rental Assistance/Safe House Placement
- Health Assessment
- Medical Care (including prescriptions)
- Mental Health Counseling
- Legal Services
- Food
- Other Identified service needs as indicated by the proposal, including Survivor Advisory Board

Requests for direct non-personal services should not exceed 10% of the award.

Requests for survivor advisory board should not exceed 10% of award.

Personnel costs could also be used to pay for the percentage of attorneys, social workers at housing facilities, any percentage of outsourced services that clients receive. The providers may partner with organizations to provide the needed services and may describe such partnerships in their application.

Also, note that there is no limit to the time to serve clients.

Please place any one-time client costs that are generally anticipated in the “other” service category.

Should service needs change following an award, a contractor may request a modification to the original budget proposal to OTDA. Please note depending on the nature of the modification, outside approval by the Office of the New York State Comptroller and Attorney General may be required.

Q - How long is a person allowed to stay in the program? USCIS is now taking very long to approve a T visa and ICE not always will provide the work authorization. Are there any limitations?

A – Under the 2021-2026 RFP, the client could be served for the extent of the contract. In a change from prior years of this program, there are no client caps and no time phases.

Q - Understanding that this is a Line-Item budget, however also understanding that all of the funding will be used towards personnel and direct assistance, why are the Minority and Women Owned Business forms required?

A – Organizations may choose to allocate 100% of funds towards personal services. If the budget is entirely personnel and fringe then there are no opportunities for MWBE allocation. Should you wish to expand your budget into the additional service categories, please complete the MWBE forms.

Q - Survivor Advisory Board: If our agency is interested in setting up an Advisory Board, are we required to submit an approved plan? Is this information required as part of the RFP application? Or just mentioned that this is something we are considering enough?

A – A pre-approved plan for the survivor advisory board is not required. However, the thoroughness of your explanation for including the survivor advisory board in your budget and how survivor input will be utilized by your organization may affect your applications score.

Q - On page 26 of the RFP under Non-Personal Services (NPS) – Other Expenses, it says: “A survivor advisory board, if elected, should be identified, and explained in the category of “other identified service needs” and cost should not exceed 10% of the award.”

Does this mean that if we are not doing the Survivor Advisory Board we can budget 10% for “Other Identified Service Needs”?

A-The Survivor Advisory Board, if elected, should not be more than 10% of the total budget, and does not effect the 10% maximum in the “other identified service needs” category. Thus, some budgets may have up to 20% of the award in the “other identified service needs” category.

Q - On page 26 of the RFP under Non-Personal Services – Other Expenses, it says, in part: “Any personal service costs or staff travel should be included in personal service costs.” And on page 25 of the RFP under Personal Services, it says: “Personal Services – Salary and Fringe Screens - A minimum of 70% of the award request must be allocated for costs directly associated with the provision of personal services to trafficking victims (i.e. personnel and fringe). Include employees that will be paid in full or in part from contract funds.” Does this mean that, in addition to salary and fringe, staff travel expenses should also be included under Personal Services?

A – Regular costs related to staff travel, if part of the staff's job description, for example staff travel associated with client services for a case manager, may be included with regular personnel costs and budgeted accordingly. Special travel, such as travel anticipated for conferences, or travel that is not associated with a particular staff member may be listed in the separate “travel” category.

Thank you for your service to victims of human trafficking in New York!