

ORR Shelter Exit Services Questions and Answers

1. Please provide clarification regarding the rental assistance component outlined on Page 12 of the RFP. Specifically, the RFP does not provide guidance on key variables such as:
 - i. Anticipated funding levels per contractor.
 - A. There are no predetermined grant levels other than the geographic considerations outlined in the RFP. Per page 11 of the RFP, the 18-month allocation is up to \$10,000,000 and will be divided among two regions of New York State as indicated below:
 - New York City (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island, Queens) 70% (NYC)
 - Rest of State (all areas outside of New York City) 30% (ROS)Proposals to provide services in NYC will be reviewed competitively only with other NYC applications and ROS with other ROS applications. Additionally, per page 14 of the RFP, projects will be awarded by region in descending order, beginning with the highest ranked proposal, until the available funding is exhausted. Funding requests should be based on the proposed number of families applicants will serve and the costs associated with relocating them and providing rental assistance for up to one year.
 - ii. Expected number of clients to be served per award.
 - A. The number is established by each applicant, according to their funding request, their capacity to serve eligible clients, and the needs of the community which they must demonstrate in their proposal.
 - iii. Typical household sizes or apartment types.
 - A. Per page 6 of the RFP, successful proposals will demonstrate the need in the community for the SES program, including an estimated number of eligible individuals and families currently residing in the public shelter system. Additionally, page 14 states that high priority will be awarded to applicants showing strong evidence of need and demonstrating a program appropriately responsive to the need.
2. Without clear guidance on the number of clients or household sizes we are expected to serve, it is proving difficult, if not impossible, to develop an accurate budget that accounts for potential landlord reimbursements and other rental assistance costs. Could you please provide any available information or guidance on these parameters, or clarify how we should approach budgeting in the absence of such specifics?
 - A. Applicants are encouraged to develop a budget based on proposed number of eligible participants that is established by each applicant

according to their funding request, needs of the community which they must demonstrate in their proposal (e.g., anticipated rental assistance), and their capacity to serve eligible clients (e.g., staffing levels needed to support the proposed program).

3. I am seeking clarification regarding the landlord guarantee described on Page 13. Specifically, the RFP states, "Should the landlord be forced to evict the tenant for non-payment of the tenant's share of rent, the landlord will be reimbursed for losses accrued prior to the date of eviction for the first year of the lease." Could you clarify whether this means the contractor is expected to cover the tenant's entire year's rent in such situations?

- A. To clarify, if the lease is a multi-year lease, and the client is evicted any time during the first year, the contractor would reimburse the landlord for the rental arrears that accrued prior to the date of eviction. If the lease is one year or less, and the client is evicted at any time during the lease period, the contractor would reimburse the landlord for the rental arrears that accrued prior to the date of eviction.

4. I would like to seek clarification regarding the long-term rental assistance plan for clients served by the SES program. Specifically, will these clients be eligible for Section 8 or NYC FHEPS vouchers at some stage during or after their participation in the program? Without access to such long-term assistance, the incentives currently outlined in the RFP, while helpful, may be insufficient to encourage landlords to rent units to these clients initially or on any sustained basis. In the absence of these subsidies, is it OTDA's expectation that units be sourced from within the fair market, de-controlled inventory?

- A. The SES eligible population is otherwise eligible for Section 8 and NYC FHEPS vouchers. The household would need to discontinue SES when the Section 8 or FHEPS starts.

Applicants may source units from de-controlled inventory within the fair market, however, they are encouraged to connect eligible clients with any and all subsidies where possible in order to provide them long term stability.

5. How many awards in each region does OTDA anticipate making? Could all ~\$7 million go to one contractor in NYC?

- A. Per page 11, we anticipate a minimum of 1 award in each region, however, projects will be awarded SES funds in descending order, beginning with the highest ranked proposal, until the available funding is exhausted.

Yes, potentially, one contract for \$7 million could be awarded in NYC and one for \$3 million in ROS.

6. Is there a maximum funding level per award made?

- A. No. Geographical considerations for awards are described in the RFP and furthered in this question and answer document.
7. Do New York City contractors have to provide services throughout all five boroughs?
- A. No.
8. The RFP makes reference to client households contributing 30% of their income toward rental payments after the first 30-days of relocation. For budgeting purposes, can OTDA please provide a reasonable estimate of average income per household to be served?
- A. OTDA does not maintain this information. Agencies experienced with the target population are best positioned to understand the average income of households.
9. We understand that this is an 18-month, one-time award, with no expectation of continued funding. If that's the case, what is OTDA's long-term strategy to prevent homelessness among participants once the funding is depleted?
- A. SES aims to connect participants with additional ORR-funded services, including employment resources, as well as other mainstream public benefits and supports. The goal is for participants to have secured stable housing and reliable income by the end of their enrollment.
10. Are New York City contractors permitted to make housing placements outside of the five boroughs? If so, what are the budgetary implications?
- A. Yes.
- Contractors are responsible for facilitating all aspects of the relocation of eligible participants regardless of whether the move is to the region in which the contractor intended to serve or to the other region.
11. Based upon the SES program eligibility criteria, can you please confirm which types of cash assistance programs and public benefits would participants qualify for?
- A. ORR eligible populations are categorically eligible for mainstream public benefits. Contractors must make referrals as necessary for on-going supports for assistance in obtaining appropriate benefits and other social services.
12. Can OTDA please provide a suggested unit cost per client/family served?
- A. No, applicants must estimate the unit costs. Per page 8 of the RFP, rental cost must approximate local Fair Market Rent (FMR). FMR is regularly [published](#) by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and represents the cost to rent a moderately-priced dwelling in the housing market.

13. Will budget modifications be allowed post-award? For example, if the contractor underspends in a particular category of expense, can the underspent line be reallocated to another line item?

A. Yes, per page 18 of the RFP.

14. Are broker's fees included in rent assistance funding?

A. Yes, per page 12 of the RFP, Rental Assistance includes expenses made on behalf of program participants which must be made directly to third parties such as landlords and utility companies for rental application fees, broker fees, security deposits, last month's rent, utility deposits, utility payments and ongoing monthly rental payments.

15. Can this rent assistance program be coupled with other financial assistance like one shot deals or NYC's Asylee One-Time Move Assistance (AMA) program?

A. Yes, so long as the participants meet all eligibility requirements, and there is not duplication of services.

16. Is the admin fee based on the total budget or total budget minus rent assistance?

A. Per page 13 of the RFP, administrative expenses OR Indirect costs totaling up to 15% of the contract value may be allocated to this grant.

17. From where are referrals coming? Can a selected provider recruit applicants from their own shelter facilities that serve potentially eligible households? From where are referrals coming? Can a selected provider recruit applicants from their own shelter facilities that serve potentially eligible households?

A. Per page 7 of the RFP, contractors will be expected to perform targeted outreach, in coordination with the local social services agency, to identify potential participants currently residing in the public shelter system;

18. Can we hire temp or per diem staff to ramp up?

A. Yes.

19. Is there a cap on rent amount for office space?

A. Per page 12 of the RFP, necessary and reasonable real estate, rental and utilities costs required for the operation of the program, may be proportionally allocated.

20. If the program is funded for 18 months, is lease-up activity limited to the first 6 months into the program?

A. Per page 8 of the RFP, permanent housing is defined as community-based dwellings, typically apartment/houses, for which a lease is established not less than 6 months, so leases may be signed for the first 12-months of the program.

21. If a lease is signed 12 or 15 months into the program, is the provider expected to issue monthly rent assistance payments for the entire 12 months? If so, would the contract be extended by 6 – 9 months to cover the full 12-month lease term?
- A. Per page 18 of the RFP, no cost time extensions are allowable for the program should OTDA and contractor determine that is in the best interests of participants and the State.
22. Is there any criteria or protocol we need to follow to determine the appropriate rental subsidy?
- A. Per page 6 of the RFP, SES rental costs approximate local Fair Market Rent (FMR). FMR is regularly published by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and represents the cost to rent a moderately-priced dwelling in the housing market.
23. Are we providing the material (clothing, grocery, etc.) needed in the beginning or throughout the year?
- A. Per page 8 of the RFP, upon enrollment, the contractor must provide initial essential furnishings; appropriate food, food allowances; necessary clothing other necessities; and subsequently, for the duration of enrollment, the contractor must make referrals as necessary for on-going supports for assistance in obtaining appropriate benefits and other social services.
24. How many support letters do we need?
- A. Per page 14 of the RFP, applicants are required to be endorsed by the local social services district as evidenced by a letter of support.
25. Is there any limit on how much we can ask for a landlord's incentive?
- A. Per page 12 of the RFP, the landlord incentives are limited to:
- Landlord bonus – up to 15% of the total rent for the lease term, payable upon signing the lease.
 - Security deposit and first three months paid upfront.
 - \$5,000 multiple dwelling bonus for landlord commitments of 5 or more units.
 - Landlord guarantee - should the landlord be forced to evict the tenant for non-payment of the tenant share of rent, the landlord will be reimbursed for losses accrued prior to the date of eviction for the first year of the lease.
26. Can you please specify the costs that can be excluded from the MWBE calculation/goal? For example, can expenses like rent and broker incentives be excluded?
- A. Exempted MWBE items are - salary, fringe, utilities, some travel, administrative salary, and rent. All other items are subject for MWBE opportunity. Contractual services are also reviewed for

MWBE opportunities. A budget breakdown is required on how the contractual will be spending grant funds.

27. Instead of using Fair Market Rent can it be based on rent reasonableness due to high rents on Long Island?
- A. Rental amounts above the FMR may be approved by OTDA on a case-by-case basis.
28. What does the RFP mean when it states coordinating “physical relocation of household”?
- A. Per page 8 of the RFP, Coordinating the “physical relocation of the household” includes:
- Coordinating transportation from shelter residence to the permanent housing, provide culturally appropriate services as necessary.
 - Coordinating furniture delivery, assembly and apartment set-up, as needed.
 - Confirming the activation of utility services not included in the lease agreement (electricity, water, sewage, etc.)
 - Coordinating the move of household belongings.
29. Though we will be housing individuals in Suffolk County, can we service individuals throughout New York State that plan to move into Suffolk County?
- A. Yes, families may relocate to anywhere in the state.
30. Are there any residency requirements for households (i.e., must have been residing in county for 90 days)?
- A. No.
31. After 6-month lease, can it be month to month lease?
- A. Yes.
32. Can the 30-day reviews be completed via teleconferencing or must they be conducted face-to-face?
- A. Yes, they may be conducted virtually via teleconference or video conference.
33. For landlords providing 5 or more units, does the incentive need to be given after the 5 units are provided or does it need to be done once one of the units is provided?
- A. Per page 13 of the RFP, the incentive may be provided when the landlord commits to 5 or more units.
34. Regarding landlord losses prior to an eviction date, what do losses entail? Would this be for rent arrears and any potential damages to the unit? Is there a cap for the amount of losses that we can guarantee?

- A. Rental losses would entail rental arrears only. The security deposit would presumably cover the damages.
35. Can we continue to offer services in the event a client loses asylum status? If another household member has pending status can the case be switched to them?
- A. Only ORR eligible clients may be served. Per page 10 of the RFP, eligible households must consist of at least one adult household member who holds an eligible immigration status listed in Section VIII. Eligible Immigration Status.
36. Does the client determine who is in the household or would household be based on DSS case or sponsorship case?
- A. Per page 10 of the RFP, Eligible participants are required to be residents of the New York City Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) shelter system, the Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRC) or any department of social services' shelter system in NYS. The individuals residing in shelter as a household may be relocated together.
37. Is the BRS system used for tracking post follow ups?
- A. Yes. The 6 and 12-month follow up reports are completed directly in the BRS Information Network which is BRS's online database.
38. Is it envisioned that the housing secured for eligible individuals and families under this RFP would be in NYC or elsewhere? The effective vacancy rate for affordable housing in NYC is currently at or near zero. If outside of NYC, must the housing be located in New York State? If the best relocation plan is out of state, would these individuals and families maintain eligibility under this program considering that they will no longer be NYS residents?
- A. All relocations must be completed within NYS.
39. The RFP notes that eligible participants must be residents of the NYC shelter system, but once relocation occurs as intended and outlined in the RFP, they are no longer shelter residents but will still be participants in the program. Please clarify that initial eligibility is based on shelter residency but subsequent to relocation, this is no longer relevant.
- A. Eligible participants are required to be residents of the New York City Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) shelter system, the Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRC) or any department of social services' shelter system in NYS. However, subsequent to relocation, this is no longer relevant.
40. Can BRS/OTDA please share the full list of eligible shelter facilities and approximate bed count of each?
- A. Applicants should work with their local departments of social services to obtain this information.

41. What are the implications if the contractor is not successful in meeting the stated goals due to lack of available housing, lack of willingness of landlords to engage with the program, or other significant challenges?
- A. Implications may be determined on a contract-by-contract basis. For example, OTDA may implement a no-cost extension for an underperforming contractor, reallocate funds from an underperforming contractor to a satisfactory or over performing contractor or terminate a contact.
42. On page 27 of the RFP, there is a list of approximately 20 forms that applicants must complete and upload into SFS as part of the application; however, there are no hyperlinks to these forms in the RFP, and these forms are not available in SFS. Could OTDA please provide links to these forms for applicants to complete?
- A. To access the required attachments, navigate to the Event Details page within the SES Bid Event. On this page you will find a link to the Event Comments and Attachments where you will find the required attachments. Part B, Section I. of the RFP provides instructions for accessing the Event Comments and Attachments page. If more assistance is required, refer to page 55 of the SFS Grantee User Manual.
43. If an applicant wishes to apply to provide services in NYC as well as outside of NYC, is the applicant required to submit a separate and complete application for each area (one for NYC and one of Rest of State)?
- A. Per page 13 of the RFP, Proposals to provide services in NYC will be reviewed competitively only with other NYC applications and ROS with other ROS applications. Therefore, two separate applications would need to be submitted in this case.
44. It looks like the program-specific questions are answered in narrative form and uploaded as a single PDF. Are there formatting requirements we should be aware of like charter, word, or page limits per question or for the full document?
- A. The only formatting requirements are that it be uploaded as a non-fillable PDF.
45. Is there any information regarding process, protocols and procedure that your office can share that can help us navigate the contract procurement process?
- A. Page 16-23 of the RFP discusses the contract development process and other procurement information. Also, please see the [SFS Grantee User Manual](#).
46. Are local governments/local county's eligible for this opportunity?
- A. Per page 6 of the RFP, eligible grant applicants include non-governmental organizations: nonprofit corporations, including charitable organizations incorporated, registered and in good standing with the Charities Bureau of the Attorney General in the

State of New York; faith-based organizations, tribal organizations, local governmental organizations and educational institutions.