

Addendum #1

December 8, 2021

RFA # 18682/ Grants Gateway # DOH01-WIC2LA-2022 & DOH01-WIC2VM-2022

New York State Department of Health

Center for Community Health/Division of Nutrition

Bureau of Supplemental Food Programs

Request for Applications (RFA)

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Please note: This RFA contains two components with each component listed in a separate Grants Gateway opportunity. All attachments applicable to Component A: WIC Local Agency are included in the Local Agency opportunity within the Grants Gateway. All attachments applicable to Component B: WIC Vendor Management Agency are included in the Vendor Management Agency opportunity within the Grants Gateway. A list of attachments applicable to each component is included below.

Component A: WIC Local Agency

Attachment 1: **Letter of Interest Template

Attachment 2: **Application Coversheet

Attachment 3: **Agency Type Attestation

Attachment 4: **WIC Site and Planning Area Information

Attachment 5: **WIC Local Agency Assessment Data

Attachment 6: *WIC Local Agency Budget Instructions

Attachment 7: **WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet

Attachment 8: **WIC Local Agency Additional Budget Form

Attachment 14: *WIC and VMA Staffing Data

Attachment 15: *WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps

Attachment 16: *WIC Program Participation Data

Attachment 19: *WIC Program Workplan

Attachment 21: **Vendor Responsibility Attestation

Attachment 22: **Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms

Attachment 23: *WIC Breast Pump Historical Costs

Attachment 24: *NYS WIC Breast Pumps

Attachment 25: *NYWIC Workstation configuration guide

Attachment 26: *NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)

Attachment 27: *NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual Policy Supplements

Component B: WIC Vendor Management Agency

Attachment 1: **Letter of Interest Template

Attachment 9: *VMA Budget Instructions

Attachment 10: **VMA Budget Worksheet

Attachment 11: **VMA Additional Budget Form

Attachment 12: **VMA Geographic Service Area(s) Selection

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Attachment 17: *WIC Vendor Management Agency Geographic Service Area Program Planning Tables

Attachment 18: *VMA Staffing Positions and Duty Descriptions

Attachment 20: *VMA Program Workplan

Attachment 21: **Vendor Responsibility Attestation

Attachment 22: **Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms

Attachment 25: *NYWIC Workstation configuration guide

Attachment 26: *NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)

Attachment 27: *NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual Policy Supplements

*These attachments are provided for informational use and are located/included in the Pre Submission Upload section of the Grants Gateway online application.

**These attachments are required to be completed as part of the applicant's submission and are located/included in the Pre Submission Upload section of the Grants Gateway online application

**RFA # 18682/ Grants Gateway #
DOH01-WIC2LA-2022 & DOH01-WIC2VM-2022**

New York State Department of Health
Center for Community Health/Division of Nutrition
Bureau of Supplemental Food Programs

Request for Applications (RFA)

*Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants
and Children (WIC)*

This is a procurement which encompasses two (2) components. In order to apply for any of the two (2) components, eligible applicants must be prequalified in the New York State Grants Gateway and must submit an application via the New York State Grants Gateway. Each individual component must be applied for separately.

Component A: Local Agency

Component B: Vendor Management Agency

KEY DATES:

Release Date:	12/7/2021
Letter of Interest/Intent Due:	12/20/2021
Questions Due:	12/28/2021
Questions, Answers and Updates Posted (on or about):	1/18/2022
Applications Due:	2/3/2022 by 4:00 PM
NYSDOH Contact Name & Address: <i>FMS.Procure@health.ny.gov</i>	<i>Corie Nadzan (BSFP-</i>

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I. Introduction

The New York State Department of Health (DOH), Division of Nutrition, Bureau of Supplemental Food Programs, announces the availability of state and federal funding to promote and maintain the health and well-being of nutritionally at risk pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children by providing nutritious food, nutrition and health education, and referral services to categorically and income eligible individuals found to be at substantial nutritional and/or medical risk. The Division of Nutrition is seeking applications from agencies wishing to sponsor a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Local Agency program to provide WIC services. WIC is a federally sponsored program through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Division of Nutrition is also announcing the availability of funding for contractors to authorize and oversee retail food stores and pharmacies (vendors) responsible for the delivery of prescribed, nutritious foods to women, infants and children who participate in the WIC program. Applicants applying to provide WIC services can also apply to manage the retail food delivery system and provide WIC vendor management services as Vendor Management Agencies (VMAs).

A. Description of Program

Component A: WIC Local Agency Program

The WIC Local Agency Program offers participant-centered nutrition assessment and education, breastfeeding promotion, and support, including Breastfeeding Peer Counseling and breast pumps, referrals to other services, and a variety of nutritious foods to meet the unique nutritional needs of lower income, pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum women, infants, and children up to five years of age. Nutrition education, including individualized contacts and facilitated group discussions, is provided by qualified nutrition staff and is personalized to meet the needs, interests and learning style of each participant. Breastfeeding education, promotion, and support is provided to assist participants in reaching their breastfeeding goals. The foods in the WIC food packages are specifically selected to include key nutrients to supplement the dietary needs of participants to positively influence good health, growth, and development. WIC's participant centered approach promotes partnerships with participants allowing for services to be tailored to meet nutrition and cultural needs, concerns, and preferences. This close collaboration enables families to make lifelong healthy eating and lifestyle choices and attain positive health outcomes.

Component B: WIC Vendor Management Agency Program

Vendor Management Agencies (VMAs) solicit, review, and process vendor applications to ensure that an adequate number of retail food stores and pharmacies become WIC-authorized, thus providing participants convenient access to a variety of nutritious WIC prescribed foods. VMAs are also responsible for vendor oversight and management, to include providing comprehensive training and technical assistance and monitoring vendor activities to ensure compliance with contractual and regulatory state and federal requirements.

B. Background

The NYS WIC Program currently provides more than \$300 million per year in benefits to approximately 370,000 participants through 88 Local Agencies operating approximately 400 service sites that employ more than 1,500 staff. The benefits are redeemed at approximately 2,800 retail food

vendors and pharmacies.

The retail food vendors and pharmacies serve as WIC-authorized stores where participants may redeem benefits. These vendors are an integral part of the WIC food delivery system and ensure that WIC families have access to safe and nutritious foods. By offering a variety of high-quality foods at competitive prices, WIC vendors also help ensure that the NYS WIC program can reach the greatest number of eligible women, infants, and children. WIC vendors help promote dignity and respect by offering WIC participants a positive shopping experience.

The overall goal of the WIC Program is to promote and maintain the health and well-being of nutritionally at risk pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children. The WIC Program seeks to address the following priority areas for the target population that include, but are not limited to reducing and preventing obesity, improving food security, promoting positive maternal and infant birth outcomes, increasing breastfeeding rates, and promoting racial and health equity to reduce health disparities and the risk for chronic disease.

WIC is well positioned to protect against obesity through its participant-centered approach of providing tailored food benefits, breastfeeding promotion and support, nutrition and healthy lifestyle education, and referrals to health services. Maternal pre-pregnancy weight, weight gain, and diet quality increase the risk of the child's chances of obesity. Lifestyle choices and social determinants of health also play a role. Obesity is more prevalent in low-income families, and where racial/ethnic minority disparities persist. Research has shown that the WIC Program has made moderate strides in decreasing obesity in children.

Studies show that foods provided for WIC program participants have enormous potential to positively influence nutrition and diet, both now and in the future. Research shows that poverty and food insecurity have detrimental short and long-term impacts on infant, child, and maternal health. The WIC food packages are based on the nutritional needs of individual participants. Providing resources to purchase these nutritious foods also helps decrease food insecurity in vulnerable populations. The NYS WIC Program currently provides nutritious foods each month to approximately 370,000 low income pregnant, post-partum, or breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to five years of age.

WIC plays a vital role in helping at risk pregnant women through its food, nutrition, and breastfeeding services, and strong referral system. The number of women entering pregnancy with chronic medical conditions has increased, impacting maternal morbidity and mortality. Contributing factors include older maternal age, pre-pregnancy obesity, and pre-existing chronic medical conditions, all of which have associated adverse health effects. Research shows that WIC participants are more likely to receive adequate prenatal care. WIC has been shown to be a key resource throughout pregnancy, after birth, and throughout the first year of life, and has also been shown to improve birth outcomes.

Breastfeeding reduces numerous health risks for both infants and mothers. Breastfeeding provides infants with disease fighting antibodies that can help protect them from illness and may also reduce obesity risk. Among the many benefits for breastfeeding mothers are lower risks for obesity, certain cancers, and diabetes. Therefore, unless medically contraindicated, WIC staff provide education and anticipatory guidance to women about breastfeeding, specifically exclusive breastfeeding, encourage women to breastfeed for as long as possible, and provide appropriate support for the breastfeeding dyad.

The WIC Program recognizes that improving the ability of all individuals and families to achieve optimal health, irrespective of their identity, race, ability, or other characteristics reduces health disparities and the risk for chronic disease.

The WIC Program supports all families and ensures that appropriate referrals are provided for prenatal

care, infant, and children well-care. This is to ensure that participants receive individual and age-appropriate health screenings, immunizations, and overall preventive care.

The USDA and NYS DOH have longstanding policies and procedures in place to address all types of discrimination and civil rights. However, long-standing systemic health and social inequities and implicit bias have put many racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk for detrimental health outcomes. **Acknowledging this:** all applicants must incorporate strategies to address both the social and delivery system factors driving inequity and address the adverse impacts of systemic racism in the provision of WIC services.

II. Who May Apply

The applicant must be eligible to conduct business in New York State and be either a not-for-profit organization, a nonprofit organization, governmental organization, or a tribal organization.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicants must be prequalified in the Grants Gateway, if not exempt, by the date and time the application is due.
- Must attest to incorporate strategies to address both the social and delivery system factors driving inequity and address the adverse impacts of systemic racism in the provision of WIC services. The attestation statement is part of **Attachment 3 – Agency Type**.
- Applicants must meet the criteria of one of the priority levels in WIC Regulations ([7 CFR 246.5](#)). This priority system is used to identify potential Grantees. The system is based on the relative availability of health and administrative services, outlined below:

First consideration shall be given to a public or a private nonprofit health agency that will provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care and administrative services.

Second consideration shall be given to a public or private nonprofit health or human service agency that will enter into a written agreement with another agency for either ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care or administrative services.

Third consideration shall be given to a public or private nonprofit health agency that will enter into a written agreement with private physicians, licensed by New York State, in order to provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care to a specific category of participants (women, infants or children).

Fourth consideration shall be given to a public or private nonprofit human service agency that will enter into a written agreement with private physicians, licensed by New York State, to provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care.

Fifth consideration shall be given to a public or private nonprofit health or human service agency that will provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care through referral to a health care provider.

- Applicants applying for the Vendor Management Agency (VMA) component must apply and be selected as a WIC Local Agency.

A strong applicant will have experience providing services for large populations over different geographic areas. This experience should help increase access to services by providing economies of scale through shared administrative costs and improved customer service through flexible staffing.

Preference will be given to Applicants that propose sites in areas with a high number of estimated eligible participants and to those demonstrating an ability to serve a greater number of participants and improve access to the program. Refer to Attachment 15, WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps.

A strong applicant will have the ability to provide quality services to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Strong applicants will be able to serve multiple languages in person. Strong applicants will identify the unique characteristics of the participants in the planning area(s) and demonstrate the ability to provide nutrition and breastfeeding support services to those participants.

For applicants also applying to become a vendor management agency (VMA), a strong applicant will have experience providing management, oversight, and support services to vendors over different geographic areas. Strong applicants will have the ability to provide services to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse vendor populations in the selected geographic service area(s).

All prospective Grantees must submit an application to be considered for award of a WIC Local Agency Program and/or VMA Program. Only one application will be allowed per applicant per component. The anticipated contract start date is October 1, 2022.

Grantees who do not currently have a WIC contract will also have a contract start date of October 1, 2022 with a built-in transitional period prior to site opening to provide new grantees time to build infrastructure and staffing. The Applicant must identify in their application if all sites/staff will be available on the contract start date. If not please identify in your application when the program will be fully operational.

III. Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

Component A: WIC Local Agency Program

Available Funding and Designated Planning Areas

The WIC Local Agency Program is not an entitlement program; available funding is limited. Through this solicitation approximately \$805 million funding will be made available to support the WIC Program over a five-year period. It is anticipated that approximately 100 awards will be made through this solicitation. Approximately \$150 million will be available in total for all awards for the first year with an anticipated 4% increase each subsequent year. It is anticipated that contracts will be renewed annually during a five-year contract term from October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2027.

Each award will be made up of three subawards to fund a WIC Local Agency Program's activities: WIC Services, Breastfeeding Peer Counseling, and Breast Pumps. Approximately \$144 million of the total award will be made available for WIC Services, \$6 million will be available for Breastfeeding Peer Counseling, and \$400,000 will be available for breast pumps.

Awards will be granted based on designated planning areas. A minimum of one award will be made per planning area. A Grantee can apply for more than one planning area and may be awarded more than one planning area. In the upstate regions, planning areas are counties. In the New York City Metropolitan Area, planning areas typically include contiguous neighborhoods. The New York City Metropolitan planning areas are designated by DOH based on zip-code data that identifies the population eligible for WIC services. DOH also has statewide data by zip-code identifying areas where eligible individuals are not receiving WIC services. (Please reference Attachment 15, WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps.)

Successful applicants will be eligible for a maximum yearly funding amount based upon the applicant’s target caseload volume. Requested funding should not exceed the eligible annual award as outlined in Table 1 and Table 2 below. The requested funding must be consistent with the scope of services proposed and be reasonable and cost effective.

Table 1: Maximum Eligible WIC Award Amounts for the Metropolitan Region

Band	Target Caseload Range	Maximum Eligible Annual WIC Award Amount	Maximum Eligible Annual Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Award Amount
1	>20,000	\$10,500,000	\$800,000
2	10,000-19,999	\$6,000,000	\$500,000
3	5,000-9,999	\$4,300,000	\$300,000
4	0-4,999	\$2,000,000	\$130,000

Table 2: Maximum Eligible WIC Award Amount for the Rest of State

Band	Target Caseload Range	Maximum Eligible Annual Award Amount	Maximum Eligible Annual Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Award Amount
1	>15,000	\$6,000,000	\$250,000
2	10,000-14,999	\$3,600,000	\$200,000
3	5,000-9,999	\$2,700,000	\$150,000
4	0-4,999	\$1,400,000	\$90,000

What are Breast Pump Funds?

In 1989, Congress authorized states to purchase breast pumps with Nutrition Services Administration funds. In 1998, Congress authorized the use of WIC food funds to purchase breast pumps. The two funding options made it possible for all state agencies to provide breast pumps to participants. Each NYS WIC local agency must have hospital grade electric, personal grade electric, and manual breast pumps available so that an appropriate pump may be provided based on participant need. To serve WIC participants requiring breast pumps in the most effective way, WIC agencies will find it invaluable to have well-designed and well managed breast pump programs.

How should an Applicant Budget for Breast Pump Funds?

Applicants must budget for the Breast Pump Costs in the WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet. Applicants should budget for the cost of obtaining/maintaining an appropriate stock of the required pumps to support a well-managed breast pump program for the estimated number of women and infants they are proposing to serve.

Applicants must only budget to purchase or lease breast pumps that are identified on the NYS WIC Breast Pumps List as outlined in **Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM) Policy 1225**. Please see **Attachment 24 NYS WIC Breast Pumps** for a list of approved breast pumps that meet New York State WIC technical specifications.

The ratio of required pumps per caseload varies depending on the population served. Please reference **Attachment 23 WIC Breast Pump Historical Costs** for information regarding the expenditure

history of Breast Pump Funds in NYS by region as a basis for developing a reasonable budget.

Applicants who are current NYS WIC Local Agency providers are encouraged to propose a reasonable budget based on their historical spending within this budget category.

Applicants who are applying for the first time are encouraged to contact the WIC Breast Pump Manufacturer Representative to obtain current WIC Breast Pump pricing to develop a reasonable budget.

Breast Pumps Defined

Hospital grade electric pump - a type of multi-user electric pump that has a motor that is sturdy, durable, and operates on a closed system that prevents the milk from reaching the motor. It is recommended for regular use by mothers who need to pump several times a day to initiate, increase, or maintain their milk supply long term.

Personal grade electric pump - a breast pump designed and warranted for use by one mother. They may allow for single or double pumping. Some are for occasional or short-term use and others are for regular, long-term use.

Manual pump - a breast pump powered by the user (usually through arm and hand movements); also called a hand pump. Manual pumps are intended for one user only.

1. Program Model Description

Grantees funded through this RFA must provide services as described below and in accordance with the WIC 2023 RFA Work Plan. The Grantee is also responsible for supporting all WIC Program functions and for compliance with fiscal and operational requirements as established by federal Regulations ([7 CFR 246](#)), and the WIC Program Manual (**Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)** and **Attachment 27 - NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual Policy Supplements**).

Applicants should describe a comprehensive WIC services program model that incorporates participant-centered nutrition education/high risk counseling, breastfeeding support and education and the promotion of positive health outcomes. Utilization of subcontractors or MOUs with a community-based service provider to support your program model are encouraged. The applicant should demonstrate that the proposed program model is based on a programmatic assessment of the health needs of nutritionally at risk pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children. The program model should be tailored to provide for both individual and family-centered services. Applicants must be experienced with the many aspects of poverty and food insecurity that impact families with dependent children. At a minimum, care coordination, strong patient support services and peer counseling are often needed to enable people to overcome barriers to care, maintain benefits and access services. Funded applicants are required to provide:

a. Access to Services

The Grantee will ensure WIC sites and services are accessible to potential participants, including working families. WIC services must be available to the community every week of the year. Program site operating hours should be developed to allow for reasonable and equitable access to program services for all participants. Grantees will collaborate with DOH to ensure the operating hours meet the

needs of all participants and the culture of the community. Site operating hours must be approved by DOH. **Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)** Section #1020 outlines some best practices for agencies to provide alternate hours based on the caseload the Grantee will serve. DOH will allow reasonable accommodations for agency scheduling requirements for religious and cultural reasons. Site locations should be located in community areas accessible by public transportation and preferably near available public parking. Site locations must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines. To ensure continuity of services for WIC participants, preference will be given to locations where WIC participants currently receive WIC services.

b. Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Non-English Proficient (NEP)

An estimated two and one-half million New Yorkers have limited-English proficiency which means they do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English, thereby presenting potential barriers to accessing important government programs or services. Currently, the six most common non-English languages spoken in New York State are Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Haitian Creole, Bengali and Korean.

The Grantee program model must ensure that Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Non-English Proficient (NEP) applicants and participants have equal access to WIC Program information, services, and benefits. The proposed program model should demonstrate an understanding of the languages spoken in the geographic region in which services will be offered.

WIC staff must make every effort to be able to communicate in the language(s) primarily spoken by the participants served in order to assess program eligibility and provide effective nutrition and breastfeeding education and counseling. Bilingual staff are the preferred means of meeting the language access needs of LEP/NEP individuals. When bilingual staff are not available the Grantee's staff must have access to language interpretation services.

c. Equal Treatment and Nondiscrimination

The Grantee must ensure that equal treatment for all qualifying applicants, participants, and employees is provided in compliance with all federal and state regulations and policies concerning civil rights and nondiscrimination. The regulations are referenced in **Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)** Section #1040. WIC staff must advise applicants and participants of their right to file a complaint, how to file a complaint, and the complaint procedures, and process complaints in a timely manner. In addition, the Grantee must implement a commitment to Racial Justice through policies and practices.

d. Space Requirements

The Grantee will ensure that adequate space is available for the provision of high-quality services, including conducting complete nutrition assessments for determination of program eligibility, providing confidential participant-centered nutrition education and counseling, providing breastfeeding support and education, and offering facilitated group discussions.

The Grantee must designate a private area in the site for WIC mothers and staff to breastfeed or express breast milk. Adequate space will also be required for completing anthropometric measurements and when applicable, hematological screenings in a confidential and safe manner and with standard, NYS WIC-approved equipment for data collection.

All WIC sites, permanent and temporary, are required to have internet access. Further guidance about internet access can be found in the NYWIC Workstation configuration guide which can be referenced in the Bidder's Library.

e. Target Caseload and Program Eligibility

The Grantee is responsible for maintaining the assigned target caseload of WIC participants. The Grantee will be required to develop an annual plan outlining outreach and retention strategies for increasing enrollment and participation of eligible individuals in the WIC Program. The plan must demonstrate efforts to reach underserved populations and connect with other health and community organizations or services. The Grantee must ensure a minimum number of outreach hours, based on assigned target caseload, are completed each month, as per **Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)** Section #1240.

The Grantee must ensure that WIC Program Eligibility is determined by evaluating the four required criteria for WIC Program participation:

i. Categorical Requirement

The WIC Program is designed to serve certain categories of women, infants, and children. Therefore, the following individuals are considered categorically eligible for WIC:

- Pregnant (during pregnancy and up to 6 weeks after the birth of an infant or the end of the pregnancy)
- Postpartum (up to six months after the birth of the infant or the end of the pregnancy)
- Breastfeeding (up to the infant's first birthday)
- Infants (up to the infant's first birthday)
- Children (up to the child's fifth birthday)

ii. Residential Requirement

WIC program applicants must live in New York State. Applicants served in areas where WIC is administered by an Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) must meet residency requirements established by the ITO. WIC program applicants are not required to live in the state or local service area for a certain amount of time in order to meet the WIC residency requirement.

iii. Income Requirement

Household income must be less than 185 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines. Please reference **Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)** Section 1134 for the most recent guidelines.

iv. Nutrition Risk Requirement

A WIC program applicant must have at least one of the medical or dietary conditions on the state's list of WIC nutrition risk criteria. "Nutrition risk" means that an individual has medical-based or dietary-based conditions. Examples of medical-based conditions include anemia (low blood levels), underweight, or history of poor pregnancy outcome. A dietary-based condition includes, for example, a poor diet.

f. Adequate Qualified Staff to Provide Required Services

The Grantee is responsible for ensuring that an adequate number of qualified WIC staff, including Qualified Nutritionist (QN) and Competent Professional Authority (CPA) staff, are available to conduct nutrition assessments, certify WIC participants, provide participant-centered nutrition

education/high risk counseling, breastfeeding support and education and promote positive health outcomes. Please refer to **Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)** Section #1460 for the minimum qualifications required for the different levels of local agency staff.

The Grantee must ensure that participants are offered the minimal number of nutrition education contacts during their period of eligibility, with visits typically scheduled every three months. Please refer to Federal Regulations ([7 CFR 246.11 – Nutrition education.](#))

The Grantee must ensure their staff are responsible for tailoring WIC food packages for participants. The Grantee must ensure that their staff provide WIC participants with guidance on the use of WIC benefits, including orienting participants on the WIC Acceptable Foods Card, and training them on the proper procedures for redeeming benefits at authorized WIC vendors. Grantees are expected to work cooperatively and collaboratively with the WIC VMA(s) in their designated planning area(s) to ensure that participants in need of special food packages are accommodated, and that participant/vendor related problems are resolved in a timely manner.

The Grantee is also responsible for referring participants to other needed health and human services, and for conducting outreach within the designated planning area(s) to ensure that WIC services are publicized in communities and among health and human service providers that serve the WIC population.

g. Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program

The Grantee is responsible for ensuring the management of the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program based on the [USDA WIC Breastfeeding Model Components for Peer Counseling](#) and associated curriculum including an adequate number of Peer Counselor staff are available to provide Peer Counselor Program Services. Details about the peer counseling program can be found at [Peer Counseling Training for WIC Managers | WIC Works Resource System \(usda.gov\)](#). The [additional handouts](#) provide some more guidance on staffing and other aspects of the program.

h. WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

The Grantee must ensure WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks are issued to eligible WIC participants during the State designated issuance period. Federal regulation ([7 CFR Part 248](#)) implements the mandates of the Farmers Market Nutrition Act of 1992. The New York State WIC FMNP is designed to provide the nutritional benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables to WIC families and to promote the purchase of New York State grown fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers at authorized farmers' markets and roadside stands throughout the State.

i. Confidentiality

All information that individually identifies WIC Program applicants, participants, and vendors is confidential. The Grantee is responsible for ensuring that applicant, participant, and vendor information with individual identifiers must not be released without the written consent of the applicant, participant, or vendor, except as required by law.

j. Financial Management System

The Grantee is responsible for maintaining a financial management system that ensures accountability for all WIC Program funds received. It is expected that the Grantee will assume responsibility for oversight and management of WIC Program operations.

k. Subcontracting

Grantees may subcontract components of the scope of work (no more than 50%). For those Grantees that propose subcontracting, it is preferable to identify subcontracting agencies during the application process. Applicants that plan to subcontract are expected to state in the application the specific components of the scope of work to be performed through subcontracts. Applicants should note that the lead organization (Grantee) will have overall responsibility for all contract activities, including those performed by subcontractors, and will be the primary contact for the NYSDOH. All subcontractors must be approved by the Department of Health.

l. Local Agency Compliance and Self-Assessment (LACASA)

During the life of the contract, the Grantee will be required to complete a comprehensive self-assessment and undergo NYDOH evaluation through the annual Local Agency Compliance and Self-Assessment (LACASA) process, to ensure that WIC Program services are provided in accordance with federal and state regulations, and to establish a performance improvement plan, as directed by the state. The LACASA process is used to identify agency-specific areas needing improvement, develop performance improvement initiatives, collaborate with NYSDOH staff to develop an annual management plan, and to measure local agency performance. This includes setting goals, establishing and implementing action steps, monitoring and evaluating data, and providing periodic reports on agency progress. The LACASA also includes State-designated focus areas, which receive a heightened review statewide, and must be addressed in each agency's management plan. The LACASA documents are included as part of the Bidders Library.

m. Grantee Divestment and the Transition of Services

In the event that a Grantee is unable to continue providing WIC Program Services, the Grantee will be required to provide full support and assistance in the transition of operations to a successor Grantee, to provide for an orderly and controlled transition to a successor Grantee and minimize any disruption of WIC services as outlined in the Workplan. Grantees must continue to provide services and notifications to WIC participants as directed by the DOH, while maintaining staffing adequate to meet obligations under the Contract during the transition period. An orderly transition may take up to nine months to complete.

n. Anticipated Outcomes

Funded applicants are expected to achieve the following:

- Increase the number of nutritionally at risk pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children that receive WIC services.
- Reduce the barriers individuals and families face by identifying systematic ways to improve access to care.
- Reduce and prevent obesity and food insecurity through providing tailored food benefits, breastfeeding promotion and support, nutrition and healthy lifestyle education, and referrals to health services.
- Increase positive maternal and infant birth outcomes through the provision of key WIC program resources throughout pregnancy, after birth, and throughout the first year of life.
- Increase breastfeeding rates by providing education and anticipatory guidance to women about breastfeeding, specifically exclusive breastfeeding, encourage women to breastfeed for as long as possible, and provide appropriate support for the breastfeeding.
- Reduce health disparities and the risk for chronic disease by ensuring that all participants, irrespective of their identity, race, ability, or other characteristics receive individual and age-

appropriate health screenings, immunizations, and overall preventive care.

2. Selection

The applicant will designate one or more planning areas from **Attachment 15 - WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps** for which the applicant proposes to provide WIC Program services. All evaluated applications will then be ranked highest to lowest for each planning area according to point total.

The highest scoring Applicant in each planning area will receive an award. An Applicant may receive a contract to provide services in multiple planning areas. To the extent that funding is available, multiple awards may be made in each planning area in order to:

- Increase level of service in planning areas where service is below 50 percent of the estimated eligible individuals,
- Ensure that current service level is maintained in planning areas where service is at or above 50 percent of the estimated eligible individuals.
- Strategically locate sites to best serve the eligible population in each planning area with no duplication of services and provide sufficient capacity.
- Ensure continued service to meet the needs of the population(s) in the planning area.

Awards will be made to maintain service levels or to serve a minimum of 50 percent of the estimated eligible individuals. The number of estimated eligible individuals are defined in **Attachment 15 WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps**. If the highest scoring Applicant cannot serve at least 50 percent of the eligible population or current service level (whichever is higher) within a given planning area, more than one award will be made until 50 percent service target is met or current service level (whichever is higher) with no duplicated services.

3. Target Caseload Assignment

Caseload assignments will be based on the number of planning areas where the Applicant is approved to provide WIC services, the number of WIC sites to be operated, the number of estimated eligibles in each planning area, and the Applicant's verified caseload capacity.

Caseload capacity will be verified based on the information provided on the **Attachment 4 WIC Site and Planning Area Information** and the *Space: Site Detail* pages of **Attachment 7 WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet** - sheets including:

- Applicant's proposed staffing plan,
- An evaluation of proposed sites and square footage.
- Historical participation

DOH will adopt a conservative approach to caseload for new WIC Local Agencies. Historically, new WIC Local Agencies need time to develop an infrastructure that can support a full caseload assignment in the out years. New Contractors will be limited to caseloads of approximately 1,000 to 1,500 participants per planning area for the first six months to a year. This allows the Contractor sufficient time to develop the infrastructure required to provide services to participants including site development, staff development, and outreach activities. Subsequent year caseload may be modified based on the total caseload served at the end of the first year.

Should a contractor not attain their target caseload by the end of an annual funding cycle, DOH reserves the right to adjust the target caseload assignment and amend the corresponding financial award for future years.

4. Basis of Award

The final award will be made up of three subawards: WIC Services, Breastfeeding Peer Counseling, and breast pumps.

WIC Services

Funding provided by NYS is intended to support direct service provision with a primary goal of funding Local Agency WIC personal services costs. Factors considered in Local Agency staffing levels are:

- Anticipated caseload;
- Number and type of sites, permanent vs. temporary; and
- Hours of operation.

Funding is based on the planning area(s) and anticipated caseload, the information provided on the **Attachment 7 – WIC Budget Form** and the **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** of the Application, and an evaluation of Budget requirements for cost reasonableness (with unallowable costs removed).

Funding for one-time expenditures may be added to the Local Agency's Budget in the initial Contract year or in subsequent years. Such costs may include site renovation costs, equipment purchases, moving expenses, advertising, etc. One-time expenses must be listed in **Attachment 8 – WIC Local Agency Additional Budget Form**.

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling

Breastfeeding Peer Counselor funding will be awarded based on estimated number of pregnant and breastfeeding women awarded to an agency. This estimate will be based on the details in **Attachment 15 WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps**. Agencies will be awarded funding based on assigned caseload and may take into consideration historical costs of serving WIC eligible in that planning area and the amount of funding available.

Breast Pump

Breast pump funding will be added to the grant award based on the requested amount in **Attachment 7 – WIC Budget Form**. Applicants who fail to budget for Breast Pump Costs will be awarded a minimum award value of \$1500 to ensure the local agency can purchase at least one hospital grade electric pump, one personal grade electric pump, and one manual breast pump. NYS WIC may reduce the final award of Breast Pump Funds if the budgeted Breast Pump Costs are deemed unreasonable for the proposed caseload.

Component B: Vendor Management Agency Program

The WIC Vendor Management Agency Program is not an entitlement program; available funding is limited. Approximately \$29 million in funding is available for vendor management functions during

the following time period: October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2027. NYS DOH anticipates awarding between 5 and 15 awards. Approximately \$5.4 million will be available in total for all awards for the first year with an anticipated 4% increase each subsequent year.

The WIC Vendor Management Agency Program seeks to enhance the WIC retail food delivery system by establishing access to safe and nutritious foods, including geographic locations that have been identified as having participant access issues. The Vendor Management Agency Program provides vendors with guidance, education, and technical assistance on WIC redemptions with an emphasis on how to provide participants with a positive and dignified shopping experience. In addition, the Vendor Management Agency Program ensures that vendors are compliant with state and federal regulations, that WIC-approved foods are of good quality and available in sufficient quantities and aims to contain costs to ensure that the maximum number of eligible participants is served.

The WIC VMA reviews applications, provides training and technical assistance, and oversees WIC vendors (retail food stores and pharmacies) responsible for the delivery of prescribed foods to WIC participants. Vendor management activities include:

- Recruiting, training and orienting qualified personnel to perform vendor management functions
- Accepting and processing vendor applications
- Initiating and renewing vendor contracts
- Providing training and technical assistance to vendors
- Maintaining vendor records and ensuring their confidentiality
- Reviewing, monitoring, and auditing of vendor contract compliance on an ongoing basis
- Participating in fair hearings
- Establishing a financial management system to ensure fiscal accountability
- Ensuring and promoting program integrity and cost containment

The Grantee will be responsible for supporting all WIC Program vendor management agency functions (as outlined in **Attachment 20: VMA Program Workplan**) and for compliance with fiscal and operational requirements as established by Federal Regulations (7 CFR 246), the WIC Program Manual (**Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)**), and the Workplan.

The Grantee will be responsible for performing on-site vendor monitoring activities using prescribed tools such as the Vendor Monitoring Dashboard (through the WIC management information system “NYWIC”) and through the use of iPad devices that are loaded with specific vendor monitoring software. The activities of VMAs and their close collaboration with vendors promotes assures that vendors remain in compliance with contractual and regulatory state and federal requirements.

The Grantee will be responsible for submitting all reports as required below in Section IV Administrative Requirements H. Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardees #3 and in the Workplan, responding promptly to all DOH requests for information, and cooperating fully with the DOH Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) staff and all other authorized persons, agencies, and entities.

The Grantee will be responsible for maintaining a financial management system that ensures accountability for all WIC VMA Program funds received. It is optional for the Grantee to provide in-kind services and support as may be necessary to develop and support a viable WIC VMA program operation.

The Grantee will ensure that the WIC VMA is in an appropriate and convenient location with adequate space. Consideration must be given to the location of the vendor population to be served as well as space for vendor training sessions. In addition, the Grantee will ensure that an adequate number of qualified staff, including VMA Director, VMA Liaison(s), VMA Auditor, and VMA Program Support staff are available to perform vendor management activities. Refer to **Attachment 18 – VMA Staffing Positions and Duty Descriptions**.

All Vendor Management sites are required to have Internet access. Further guidance about internet access can be found in **Attachment 25 - NYWIC Workstation configuration guide**.

The Grantee will be required to maintain a vendor database in NYWIC, the WIC Program's management information system (MIS). NYWIC allows the issuance of benefits through an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system known as *eWIC*. The *eWIC* card is used by participants, or their designated WIC shopper, to purchase approved foods at WIC authorized vendors. The *eWIC* card serves as a payment instrument that allows transactions between a cardholder and a vendor's point-of-sale (POS) device. The NYS WIC Program will maintain a database of the Universal Product Codes (UPC) and Price Look Up Codes (PLU) associated with WIC-approved foods.

The Grantee will be expected to conduct outreach and enroll an adequate number of vendors within their geographic service area(s) to ensure participant access to prescribed foods. The Grantee will also be expected to develop cooperative working relationships with all WIC Local Agencies located within their designated planning area(s) so that participants in need of special food packages are accommodated and that participant/vendor-related problems are resolved promptly (refer to **Attachment 17 - WIC Vendor Management Agency Geographic Service Area Maps**.) Additionally, the Grantee will be responsible for ensuring vendor compliance with all contractual and regulatory requirements.

Staff in the WIC VMAs are expected to make every effort to communicate in the language(s) primarily spoken by the Vendors they serve in order to assess program eligibility, provide information, and ensure compliance. Bilingual staff are the preferred means of meeting this requirement. When bilingual staff are not available the Grantee's staff must have access to language interpretation services.

The Grantee will be responsible for participating in fair hearings regarding the denial of Vendors for enrollment in the WIC Program and termination of existing vendors. This may include testifying using the pre-recorded results of Vendor monitoring visits, including price stock surveys; statements taken from the vendor; information contained in statistical formats and supplied by the Program; other relevant information; and consultations with staff of the Bureau of Special Investigations.

During the life of the contract, the Grantee will be responsible for completing an annual self-assessment of program operations through the Vendor Management Agency Compliance and Self-Assessment (VCASA) process. This self-assessment is a collaborative process between the VMA and its respective contract manager at DOH to ensure that WIC VMA services are provided in accordance

with regulations. The VCASA involves several components, to include a review of information entered the MIS during the application and reapplication process; participation in vendor training and monitoring activities; completion of an annual voucher trace; and providing periodic reports upon request. The state and contract manager provide ongoing training and technical assistance to improve VMA operations and the provision of services.

In the event that a Grantee is unable to continue providing WIC Vendor Management services, they will be responsible for ensuring that the WIC VMA provides full support and assistance in the transition of operations to a successor, provides for an orderly and controlled transition to a successor, and minimizes any disruption of WIC vendor management services as outlined in the Workplan. The Grantee will be required to continue to provide WIC VMA services and notifications to WIC vendors as directed by the DOH until all transition activities have been completed. The Grantee will be responsible for maintaining adequate staffing to meet obligations under the contract during the transition period.

Grantees may subcontract components of the scope of work (no more than 50%). Vendor Management Agency Directors may not be subcontracted positions. For those applicants that propose subcontracting, it is preferable to identify subcontracting agencies during the application process. Applicants that plan to subcontract are expected to state in the application the specific components of the scope of work to be performed through subcontracts. Applicants should note that the lead organization (contractor) will have overall responsibility for all contract activities, including those performed by subcontractors, and will be the primary contact for the NYSDOH. All subcontractors must be approved by the Department of Health.

1. Selection

The applicant will designate one or more planning areas from **Attachment 17 - WIC Vendor Management Agency Geographic Service Area Program Planning Tables** for which the applicant proposes to provide VMA Program services. All evaluated applications will then be ranked highest to lowest for each service area according to point total.

The highest scoring Applicant in each service area will be awarded the service area.

2. Basis of Award

Awards will be calculated using a cost per WIC vendor (retail food stores and pharmacies) formula. The cost per WIC vendor is derived using the total amount of available funding (\$5.4M) and the total number of active vendors at the time of award. Final maximum awards will be based on available funding and the number of vendors in each geographic service area that the applicant wins. The number of vendors can be found in **Attachment 17 - WIC Vendor Management Agency Geographic Service Area Program Planning Tables**. An estimate of the maximum award per geographic service area can be found below.

Geographic Service Area	List of Counties:	Annual Award Amount
1	Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming	\$ 335,600

2	Allegany, Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates	\$ 254,600
3	Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Tioga, Tompkins	\$ 241,600
4	Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, St. Lawrence	\$ 182,600
5	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, Saratoga, Warren, Washington	\$ 158,600
6	Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady	\$ 123,600
7	Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster	\$ 178,600
8	Orange, Rockland	\$ 190,600
9	Putnam, Westchester	\$ 254,600
10	Bronx	\$ 680,600
11	New York (Manhattan)	\$ 370,600
12	Queens	\$ 662,600
13	Kings (Brooklyn)	\$ 963,600
14	Richmond (Staten Island)	\$ 119,600
15	Nassau, Suffolk	\$ 682,600

Optional Vendor Management Website Funding

An established WIC Vendor website provides important information to interested and authorized vendors and WIC participants. It is critical that the site content operates optimally and remains current.

One grantee funded under this RFA to provide core vendor management agency requirements as described above, may be awarded up to an additional \$10,000 annually to maintain the vendor website. Applicants are not required to apply for this additional funding.

The Vendor Website serves to provide a convenient and effective means for vendors to access forms, training materials, and updates regarding the delivery of WIC food benefits and assist participants in identifying WIC retail food stores and pharmacies.

The Grantee will be responsible for:

- Maintaining the existing/established vendor website and a web-hosting company contract and payment schedule
- Maintaining or posting vendor-related materials (i.e., forms, vendor policies and procedures, training materials, and other communication tools)
- Adding necessary upgrades and features (i.e., security, speed optimization, etc.), as needed
- Performing minor design changes, as needed
- Routine website maintenance, checking the site for issues, and keeping it updated and relevant
- Upholding all NYS security requirements, standards, and policies (Refer to **Attachment 13 - VMA Website Security Requirements and Attestation**).

Note: The optional website funding section of the RFA will be scored separately from the VMA component application. It will not be scored with the core RFA components, but this information will be evaluated to determine if website funding will be awarded. The Department reserves the right to award funds based on this optional information from applicants at its discretion. To receive the award, the applicant must be selected for an award to provide VMA services and be the top scoring organization for the optional website funding. Only applicants who apply for the Vendor Management Agency component can apply for this optional funding.

IV. Administrative Requirements

A. Issuing Agency

This RFA is issued by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Division of Nutrition, Bureau of Supplemental Food Programs. The Department is responsible for the requirements specified herein and for the evaluation of all applications.

B. Question and Answer Phase

All substantive questions must be submitted in writing or via email to:

BSFP-FMS.Procure@health.ny.gov

To the degree possible, each inquiry should cite the RFA section and paragraph to which it refers. Written questions will be accepted until the date posted on the cover of this RFA. This includes Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) questions and questions pertaining to the MWBE forms.

Questions of a technical nature can be addressed in writing or via telephone by contacting *James Browning* by phone at (518) 402-7163 or by email at *BSFP-FMS.Procure@health.ny.gov*.

Questions are of a technical nature if they are limited to how to prepare your application (e.g., formatting) rather than relating to the substance of the application.

Some helpful links for questions of a technical nature are below. Questions regarding specific opportunities or applications should be directed to the NYSDOH contact listed on the cover of this RFA.

- <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/resources-grant-applicants>
- Grants Gateway Videos: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/videos-grant-applicants>
- Grants Gateway Team Email: grantsgateway@its.ny.gov
Phone: 518-474-5595
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 4pm
(Application Completion, Policy, Prequalification and Registration questions)
- Agate Technical Support Help Desk

Phone: 1-800-820-1890
Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 8pm
Email: helpdesk@agatesoftware.com
(After hours support w/user names and lockouts)

Prospective applicants should note that all clarifications and exceptions, including those relating to the terms and conditions of the contract, are to be raised prior to the submission of an application.

This RFA has been posted on the NYS Grants Gateway website at: https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx and a link provided on the Department's public website at: <https://www.health.ny.gov/funding/>. Questions and answers, as well as any updates and/or modifications, will be posted on the Grants Gateway. All such updates will be posted by the date identified on the cover of this RFA.

C. Letter of Interest

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to complete and submit a letter of interest (see **Attachment #1 - Letter of Interest Template**). Prospective applicants may also use the letter of interest to receive notification when updates/modifications are posted, including responses to written questions. Letters of interest should be submitted via the Grants Gateway under the Pre-Submission Uploads section of the online application. Please note that you will receive an error message when uploading the letter into the application as other Pre-Submission uploads are not due until the application is submitted. A copy should also be emailed to BSFP-FMS.Procure@health.ny.gov. The Letter of Interest should be submitted by the date posted on the cover of the RFA. Please ensure that the RFA number is noted in the subject line.

Submission of a letter of interest is not a requirement or obligation upon the applicant to submit an application in response to this RFA. Applications may be submitted without first having submitted a letter of interest.

D. Applicant Conference

An Applicant Conference will not be held for this project.

E. How to file an application

Applications must be submitted online via the Grants Gateway by the date and time posted on the cover of this RFA. Reference materials and videos are available for Grantees applying to funding opportunities on the NYS Grants Gateway. Please visit the Grants Management website at the following web address: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/> and select the “Apply for a Grant” from the Apply & Manage menu. There is also a more detailed “Grants Gateway: Vendor User Guide” available in the documents section under Training & Guidance; For Grant Applicants on this page as well. Training webinars are also provided by the Grants Gateway Team. Dates and times for webinar instruction can be located at the following web address: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/live-webinars>.

To apply for this opportunity:

1. Log into the [Grants Gateway](#) as either a “Grantee” or “Grantee Contract Signatory”.
2. On the Grants Gateway home page, click the “View Opportunities” button”.
3. Use the search fields to locate an opportunity; search by State agency (NYSDOH) or enter the Grant Opportunity name: **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**
4. Click on “Search” button to initiate the search.
5. Click on the name of the Grant Opportunity from the search results grid and then select the “APPLY FOR GRANT OPPORTUNITY” button located bottom left of the Main page of the Grant Opportunity.

Once the application is complete, prospective grantees are **strongly encouraged** to submit their applications at least 48 hours prior to the due date and time. This will allow sufficient opportunity for the applicant to obtain assistance and take corrective action should there be a technical issue with the submission process. **Failure to leave adequate time to address issues identified during this process may jeopardize an applicant’s ability to submit their application.** Both NYSDOH and Grants Gateway staff are available to answer applicant’s technical questions and provide technical assistance prior to the application due date and time. Contact information for the Grants Gateway Team is available under Section IV. B. of this RFA.

PLEASE NOTE: Although NYSDOH and the Grants Gateway staff will do their best to address concerns that are identified less than 48 hours prior to the due date and time, there is no guarantee that they will be resolved in time for the application to be submitted and, therefore, considered for funding.

The Grants Gateway will always notify applicants of successful submission. If a prospective grantee does not get a successful submission message assigning their application a unique ID number, it has not successfully submitted an application. During the application process, please pay particular attention to the following:

- Not-for-profit applicants must be prequalified on the due date for this application submission. Be sure to maintain prequalification status between funding opportunities. Three of a not-for-profit’s essential financial documents - the IRS990, Financial Statement and Charities Bureau filing - expire on an annual basis. If these documents are allowed to expire, the not-for-profit’s prequalification status expires as well, and it will not be eligible for State grant funding until its documentation is updated and approved, and prequalified status is reinstated.
- Only individuals with the roles “Grantee Contract Signatory” or “Grantee System Administrator” can submit an application.
- Prior to submission, the system will automatically initiate a global error checking process to protect against incomplete applications. An applicant may need to attend to certain parts of the application prior to being able to submit the application successfully. Be sure to allow time after pressing the submit button to clean up any global errors that may arise. You can also run the global error check at any time in the application process. (see p.68 of the Grants Gateway: Vendor User Guide).
- Grantees should use numbers, letters and underscores when naming their uploaded files. There cannot be any special characters in the uploaded file name. Also, be aware of the restriction on file size (10 MB) when uploading documents. Grantees should ensure that

any attachments uploaded with their application are not “protected” or “pass-worded” documents.

The following table will provide a snapshot of which roles are allowed to Initiate, Complete, and Submit the Grant Application(s) in the Grants Gateway.

Role	Create and Maintain User Roles	Initiate Application	Complete Application	Submit Application	Only View the Application
Delegated Admin	X				
Grantee		X	X		
Grantee Contract Signatory		X	X	X	
Grantee Payment Signatory		X	X		
Grantee System Administrator		X	X	X	
Grantee View Only					X

PLEASE NOTE: Waiting until the last several days to complete your application online can be dangerous, as you may have technical questions. Beginning the process of applying as soon as possible will produce the best results.

Late applications will not be accepted. **Applications will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, hard copy, or hand delivery.**

F. Department of Health’s Reserved Rights

The Department of Health reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all applications received in response to this RFA.
2. Withdraw the RFA at any time, at the Department’s sole discretion.
3. Make an award under the RFA in whole or in part.
4. Disqualify any applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFA.
5. Seek clarifications and revisions of applications.
6. Use application information obtained through site visits, management interviews and the state’s investigation of an applicant’s qualifications, experience, ability or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the applicant in response to the agency’s request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFA.
7. Prior to application opening, amend the RFA specifications to correct errors or oversights, or to supply additional information, as it becomes available.

8. Prior to application opening, direct applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFA amendments.
9. Change any of the scheduled dates.
10. Waive any requirements that are not material.
11. Award more than one contract resulting from this RFA.
12. Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible applicant, should the Department be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected applicant.
13. Utilize any and all ideas submitted with the applications received.
14. Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, every offer is firm and not revocable for a period of 60 days from the bid opening.
15. Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification to the applicant.
16. Require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an offeror's application and/or to determine an offeror's compliance with the requirements of the RFA.
17. Negotiate with successful applicants within the scope of the RFA in the best interests of the State.
18. Eliminate any mandatory, non-material specifications that cannot be complied with by all applicants.
19. Award grants based on geographic or regional considerations to serve the best interests of the state.

G. Term of Contract

Any contract resulting from this RFA will be effective only upon approval by the New York State Office of the Comptroller.

It is expected that contracts resulting from this RFA will have the following time period: October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2027. The budgets for these contracts must be submitted annually for DOH review and approval.

Continued funding throughout this five-year period is contingent upon availability of funding and state budget appropriations. NYSDOH also reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

A sample New York State Master Contract for Grants can be found in the Forms Menu once an application to this funding opportunity is started.

H. Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardees

1. The Department may, at its discretion, make an advance payment to not-for-profit grant contractors in an amount not to exceed 17 percent.
2. The grant contractor will be required to submit invoices and required reports of expenditures to the State's designated payment office (below) or, if requested by the Department, through the Grants Gateway:

Payments must be submitted through the NYS WIC Management Information System, NYWIC, at <https://nywic.health.ny.gov/nywic/NYWIC.aspx>

Grant contractors must provide complete and accurate billing invoices in order to receive payment. Billing invoices submitted to the Department must contain all information and supporting documentation required by the Contract, the Department, and the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). Payment for invoices submitted by the CONTRACTOR shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with OSC's procedures and practices to authorize electronic payments. Authorization forms are available at OSC's website at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm>, by email at: epayments@osc.state.ny.us or by telephone at 855-233-8363. CONTRACTOR acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any claims for reimbursement submitted under this contract if it does not comply with OSC's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

Payment of such claims for reimbursement by the State (NYS Department of Health) shall be made in accordance with Article XI-A of the New York State Finance Law. Payment terms will be: Contractor will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred as allowed in the Contract Budget and Workplan.

3. The grant contractor will be required to submit the following reports to the Department of Health at the address above or, if requested by the Department, through the Grants Gateway:

WIC Program

Report	Frequency
Monthly Budget Statement and Report of Expenditure (BSROE) and Voucher	Monthly
Personnel Vacancy Report	Monthly

Local Agency Compliance and Self-Assessment Report (LACASA)	Annually
LACASA Record Review	Quarterly
LACASA Quality Assurance Progress Report	Quarterly
Nutrition Services and Administration Local Agency Time Effort Study - Employee Time and Effort report	Quarterly
Nutrition Services and Administration (NSA) Local Agency Time Effort Study - Expenditure Report	Annually
2 CFR Part 400 Single Audit Report	Annually
Voter Registration Transmittal Form	Weekly
EBT Card Inventory	Quarterly
Annual User Account Review	Annually
NYWIC Agency Demographic Information Review	Annually

Vendor Management Agency Program

Report	Frequency
Monthly Budget Statement and Report of Expenditure (BSROE) and Voucher	Monthly
Personnel Vacancy Report	Monthly
Vendor Complaint Log	Monthly
Vendor Management Agency Compliance and Self-Assessment Report (VCASA)	Annually
2 CFR Part 400 Single Audit Report	Annually
Annual User Account Review	Annually
NYWIC Agency Demographic Information Review	Annually

All payment and reporting requirements will be detailed in Attachment D of the final NYS Master Contract for Grants.

I. Minority & Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Requirements

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, the New York State Department of Health (“NYSDOH”) recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of NYSDOH contracts.

In 2006, the State of New York commissioned a disparity study to evaluate whether minority and women-owned business enterprises had a full and fair opportunity to participate in state contracting. The findings of the study were published on April 29, 2010, under the title "The State of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises: Evidence from New York" (“Disparity Study”). The report found evidence of statistically significant disparities between the level of participation of minority- and women-owned business enterprises in state procurement contracting versus the number of minority- and women-owned business enterprises that were ready, willing, and able to participate in state procurements. As a result of these findings, the Disparity Study made recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the statewide certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises program. The recommendations from the Disparity Study culminated in the enactment and the implementation of New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, which requires, among other things, that NYSDOH establish goals for

maximum feasible participation of New York State Certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises (“MWBE”) and the employment of minority groups members and women in the performance of New York State contracts.

Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

For purposes of this solicitation, the New York State Department of Health hereby establishes a goal of **0%** as follows:

- 1) For Not-for-Profit Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include any subcontracted labor or services, equipment, materials, or any combined purchase of the foregoing under a contract awarded from this solicitation.
- 2) For-Profit and Municipality Applicants: Eligible Expenditures include the value of the budget in total.

The goal on the eligible portion of this contract will be 0% for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (“MBE”) participation and 0% for Women-Owned Business Enterprises (“WBE”) participation (based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs and outreach efforts to certified MWBE firms). A contractor (“Contractor”) on the subject contract (“Contract”) must document good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by MWBEs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Contract and Contractor agrees that NYSDOH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. For guidance on how NYSDOH will determine “good faith efforts,” refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8.

The directory of New York State Certified MWBEs can be viewed at: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. The directory is found on this page under “NYS Directory of Certified Firms” and accessed by clicking on the link entitled “Search the Directory”. Engaging with firms found in the directory with like product(s) and/or service(s) is strongly encouraged, and all communication efforts and responses should be well documented.

This RFA does not establish minimum goals for participation of minority or women-owned business. Therefore, completion of the MWBE Utilization Plan is optional (Attachment 22). Funded applicants are encouraged to engage with firms found in the directory for the acquisition of required product(s) and/or service(s) associated with this grant.

In addition, successful awardees will be required to certify they have an acceptable Equal Employment Opportunity policy statement.

J. Vendor Identification Number

Effective January 1, 2012, in order to do business with New York State, you must have a vendor identification number. As part of the Statewide Financial System (SFS), the Office of the State Comptroller's Bureau of State Expenditures has created a centralized vendor repository called the New York State Vendor File. In the event of an award and in order to initiate a contract with the New York State Department of Health, vendors must be registered in the New York State Vendor File and have a valid New York State Vendor ID.

If already enrolled in the Vendor File, please be sure the Vendor Identification number is included

in your organization information. If not enrolled, to request assignment of a Vendor Identification number, please submit a New York State Office of the State Comptroller Substitute Form W-9, which can be found on-line at: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/vendors/2017-11/vendor-form-ac3237s-fe.pdf>.

Additional information concerning the New York State Vendor File can be obtained on-line at: http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor_management/index.htm, by contacting the SFS Help Desk at 855-233-8363 or by emailing at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

K. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

The New York State Department of Health strongly encourages that vendors file the required Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire online via the New York State VendRep System. The Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire must be updated and certified every six (6) months. To enroll in and use the New York State VendRep System, see the VendRep System Instructions available at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/file-your-vendor-responsibility-questionnaire> or go directly to the VendRep system online at <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/vendrep-system>.

Vendors must provide their New York State Vendor Identification Number when enrolling. To request assignment of a Vendor ID or for VendRep System assistance, contact the Office of the State Comptroller's Help Desk at 866-370-4672 or 518-408-4672 or by email at itservicedesk@osc.ny.gov.

Applicants opting to complete online should complete and upload the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (**Attachment 21 Vendor Responsibility Attestation**) of the RFA. The Attestation is located under Pre-Submission uploads and once completed should be uploaded in the same section.

Applicants opting to complete and submit a paper questionnaire can obtain the appropriate questionnaire from the VendRep website, www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep, and upload it with their Application in the Pre-Submission uploads section in place of the Attestation.

L. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits

All not-for-profit vendors subject to prequalification are required to prequalify prior to grant application and execution of contracts.

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated July 16, 2014, New York State has instituted key reform initiatives to the grant contract process which requires not-for-profits to register in the Grants Gateway and complete the Vendor Prequalification process in order for applications to be evaluated. Information on these initiatives can be found on the [Grants Management Website](#).

Applications received from not-for-profit applicants that have not Registered and are not Prequalified in the Grants Gateway on the application due date listed on the cover of this RFA cannot be evaluated. Such applications will be disqualified from further consideration.

Below is a summary of the steps that must be completed to meet registration and prequalification requirements. The [Vendor Prequalification Manual](#) on the Grants Management Website details the

requirements and an [online tutorial](#) are available to walk users through the process.

1) Register for the Grants Gateway

- On the Grants Management Website, download a copy of the [Registration Form for Administrator](#). A signed, notarized original form must be sent to the NYS Grants Management office at the address provided in the submission instructions. You will be provided with a Username and Password allowing you to access the Grants Gateway..

If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please email grantsgateway@its.ny.gov . If you do not know your Password, please click the [Forgot Password](#) link from the main log in page and follow the prompts.

2) Complete your Prequalification Application

- Log in to the [Grants Gateway](#). **If this is your first time logging in**, you will be prompted to change your password at the bottom of your Profile page. Enter a new password and click SAVE.
- Click the *Organization(s)* link at the top of the page and complete the required fields including selecting the State agency you have the most grants with. This page should be completed in its entirety before you SAVE. A *Document Vault* link will become available near the top of the page. Click this link to access the main Document Vault page.
- Answer the questions in the *Required Forms* and upload *Required Documents*. This constitutes your Prequalification Application. Optional Documents are not required unless specified in this Request for Application.
- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your agency representative or to the Grants Gateway Team at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov.

3) Submit Your Prequalification Application

- After completing your Prequalification Application, click the **Submit Document Vault Link** located below the Required Documents section to submit your Prequalification Application for State agency review. Once submitted the status of the Document Vault will change to *In Review*.
- If your Prequalification reviewer has questions or requests changes you will receive email notification from the Gateway system.
- Once your Prequalification Application has been approved, you will receive a Gateway notification that you are now prequalified to do business with New York State.

Vendors are strongly encouraged to begin the process as soon as possible in order to participate in this opportunity.

M. General Specifications

1. By submitting the "Application Form" each applicant attests to its express authority to sign on behalf of the applicant.
2. Contractors will possess, at no cost to the State, all qualifications, licenses and permits to engage in the required business as may be required within the jurisdiction where the work specified is to be performed. Workers to be employed in the performance of this contract will possess the qualifications, training, licenses and permits as may be required within such jurisdiction.
3. Submission of an application indicates the applicant's acceptance of all conditions and terms contained in this RFA, including the terms and conditions of the contract. Any exceptions allowed by the Department during the Question and Answer Phase (Section IV.B.) must be clearly noted in a cover letter included with the application.
4. An applicant may be disqualified from receiving awards if such applicant or any subsidiary, affiliate, partner, officer, agent or principal thereof, or anyone in its employ, has previously failed to perform satisfactorily in connection with public bidding or contracts.
5. Provisions Upon Default
 - a. The services to be performed by the Applicant shall be at all times subject to the direction and control of the Department as to all matters arising in connection with or relating to the contract resulting from this RFA.
 - b. In the event that the Applicant, through any cause, fails to perform any of the terms, covenants or promises of any contract resulting from this RFA, the Department acting for and on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate the contract by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Applicant.
 - c. If, in the judgement of the Department, the Applicant acts in such a way which is likely to or does impair or prejudice the interests of the State, the Department acting on behalf of the State, shall thereupon have the right to terminate any contract resulting from this RFA by giving notice in writing of the fact and date of such termination to the Contractor. In such case the Contractor shall receive equitable compensation for such services as shall, in the judgement of the State Comptroller, have been satisfactorily performed by the Contractor up to the date of the termination of this agreement, which such compensation shall not exceed the total cost incurred for the work which the Contractor was engaged in at the time of such termination, subject to audit by the State Comptroller.

V. Completing the Application

A. Application Format/Content

Please refer to the Grants Gateway: Vendor User Guide for assistance in applying for this procurement through the NYS Grants Gateway. This guide is available on the Grants Management

website at: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/vendor-user-manual>. Additional information for applicants is available at: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/resources-grant-applicants>.

Also, you must use Internet Explorer (11 or higher) or Microsoft Edge to access the Grants Gateway. Using Chrome or Firefox causes errors in the Work Plan section of the application.

Please respond to each of the sections described below when completing the Grants Gateway online application. Your responses comprise your application. Please respond to all items within each section. When responding to the statements and questions, be mindful that application reviewers may not be familiar with the agency and its services. Therefore, answers should be specific, succinct and responsive to the statements and questions as outlined.

- Pre-Submission Uploads

As a reminder, the following attachments need to be uploaded under the Pre-Submission Uploads section of the Grants Gateway in order to submit an application in the system.

- Attachment 1: Letter of Interest Template*
- Attachment 2: Application Coversheet*
- Attachment 3: Agency Type Attestation*
- Attachment 4: WIC Site and Planning Area Information*
- Attachment 5: WIC Local Agency Assessment Data*
- Attachment 7: WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet*
- Attachment 8: WIC Local Agency Additional Budget Form*
- Attachment 10: VMA Budget Worksheet*
- Attachment 11: VMA Additional Budget Form*
- Attachment 12: VMA Geographic Service Area(s) Selection*
- Attachment 13: VMA Website Security Requirements and Proposal*
- Attachment 21: Vendor Responsibility Attestation*
- Attachment 22: Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms*

- Program Specific Questions

The RFA will be broken down into two components: WIC Local Agency Program and WIC Vendor Management. Each component will be evaluated and scored independently. The Vendor Management component includes an optional Vendor Management Website funding which will also be evaluated and scored independently

Component A: WIC Local Agency Program

1. Demographics and planning areas (Total Weight 6%)

The purpose of this section is for the applicant to demonstrate knowledge of the population eligible for WIC Services, including any unique characteristics of the population; the ability to provide services to participants in areas of unmet need; and an ability to increase the percentage of participants who remain on the NYS WIC Program for the duration of their eligibility period.

1.1. Provide 2 examples of how the agency provides services to community members in different geographic areas in the proposed planning area(s). Include a detailed description of how the

services are coordinated.

- 1.2. Describe 2 relationships your agency has with organizations that serve WIC-eligible participants in the community and how each of these relationships will support WIC program enrollment and participation.
- 1.3. Applicants will be scored based on their answers in **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** where the applicant describes the population eligible for WIC services in the proposed planning areas.

2. Caseload Management, Retention, and Outreach (Total Weight 9.5%)

The purpose of this section is for the applicant to demonstrate how the agency proposes to: identify the eligible populations that are not being serviced in the community; increase WIC participation in areas with identified unmet needs; implement, monitor, and evaluate innovative strategies to increase WIC participation in areas with identified unmet needs; and implement, monitor, and evaluate innovative retention activities (including those required by WIC policy)

- 2.1. Describe 3 successful strategies your agency has used to identify an unmet need (eligible populations that are not being served) in the community.
- 2.2. Review **Attachment 15 - WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps** and **Attachment 16 - WIC Program Participation Data** and view the unmet need (eligible populations who are not being served) in your proposed planning area(s). Describe 3 strategies you would use to increase WIC participation in those areas.
- 2.3. Current providers: Describe 2 successful innovative outreach activities and describe the monitoring and evaluation process used. Include why these activities were classified as successful, using data if available. New providers: Describe 2 successful outreach activities performed in the past for similar programs. If not applicable, provide plans to implement outreach activities in the future and how these plans will be evaluated to determine success.
- 2.4. Current providers: Describe 2 successful retention activities you have performed and describe why these activities were successful. New providers: Describe 2 successful retention activities you have performed in the past for similar programs and why they were successful. If not applicable, provide plans to implement retention activities in the future.
- 2.5. Current providers: How does the agency monitor and evaluate retention activities (including those required by WIC policy)? New providers: How will the agency monitor and evaluate retention activities (See **Attachment 26 - NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM) Policy 1240**)?

3. Clinic Operations: Sites, Services, and Staff (Total Weight 24.5%)

The purpose of this section is for the applicant to provide information on activities that are required under the Workplan and WIC Program Manual to provide WIC Program services. The applicant will demonstrate how they propose to: optimize access for the community, including the use of non-traditional settings and/or co-location with other service providers; maximize accessibility to services for WIC participants (including working families), and meet the cultural/language needs of the population by detailing specific information regarding sites, staffing, schedules, and space; employ qualified and diverse staff, and ensure appropriate and consistent staffing levels, to ensure the provision of high-quality WIC services; provide a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment for WIC services; and utilize community resources.

- 3.1. Describe in 1-2 short paragraphs what measures are in place to provide a safe, welcoming and engaging environment for WIC services. Include details on physical space layout, security,

staff skills, etc.

- 3.2. Describe 3 successful strategies your agency has used to recruit qualified and diverse staff, to fill vacancies in a timely manner, to meet the needs of participants, and minimize gaps in service
- 3.3. Upload an organizational chart for the WIC agency and include the WIC Coordinator's supervisor. Identify the relationship, if applicable, of IT staff/unit to the WIC agency.
- 3.4. Staff to participant ratio will be calculated from your answers in **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** & Attachment 7 - **WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet**. A guide for staffing ranges is included in **Attachment 14 – WIC and VMA Staffing Data**.
- 3.5. CPA and Qualified Nutritionist to participant ratio will be calculated from your answers in **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** & #7 - **WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet**. The ideal staffing ranges are included in **Attachment 14 – WIC and VMA Staffing Data**.
- 3.6. Applicants will be scored based on their answers in **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** about how the sites' schedules best meet the needs of the community the site is intended to serve.
- 3.7. Applicants will be scored based on their answers in **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** about how each proposed WIC site in relation to the cultural/language needs of the estimated eligible population in that location AND how the location meets the needs of working families (such as alternate hours, location in an area where participants conduct business, transportation, etc.).
- 3.8. Applicants will be scored based on their answers in **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** & **Attachment 5 – WIC Local Agency Assessment Data** about services provided on-site during site hours.
- 3.9. Applicants will be scored based on their answers in **Attachment 4 - WIC Site and Planning Area Information** & **Attachment 7 - WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet** about overall site quality based on site permanence, space size, hours of operation, staffing ratios.
- 3.10. Discuss/explain your ability to operate the program for the full contract term. If all sites/staff will not be available on the contract start date, discuss when the program will be fully operational.

4. Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Services (Total Weight 30%)

WIC is dedicated to the promotion and support of nutrition education and breastfeeding to help WIC moms, infants, and children achieve positive health outcomes. The purpose of this section is to provide a description of how the applicant will provide high quality participant-centered nutrition and breastfeeding services to WIC participants.

- 4.1. Describe in 2-3 paragraphs the methods the agency uses to ensure staff are trained and competent to perform role-based services and meet continuing education requirements.
- 4.2. Describe in 2-3 paragraphs how the agency identifies the target population's needs in relation to nutrition and breastfeeding education.
- 4.3. Describe in 2-3 paragraphs the agency's approach to conducting participant-centered nutrition and breastfeeding assessments, including methods to obtain relevant assessment data
- 4.4. Complete **Attachment 5 – WIC Local Agency Assessment Data**. Applicants will be evaluated on how staff will obtain the required hematology data within required time frames with no cost or barriers for participants.
- 4.5. Applicants will be scored on the answers in **Attachment 5 – WIC Local Agency Assessment Data** on how staff will view and assess participant immunization status.
- 4.6. Describe in 2-3 paragraphs the agency's approach to provide nutrition education to the target

population including delivery methods and details on Participant Centered Nutrition Services skills, trainings, and monitoring.

- 4.7. Describe in 2-3 paragraphs how the agency will ensure WIC program priority areas are consistently incorporated into program activities and education provided to participants. Examples of priority areas include obesity prevention, breastfeeding promotion and support, positive birth and maternal outcomes, and food security.
- 4.8. In 1-2 paragraphs, describe how the agency will provide and document individualized high-risk care for high-risk WIC participants.
- 4.9. In 2-3 paragraphs describe the agency's referral process. Include details on how the agency partners and coordinates with other programs to ensure effective referrals and how staff provide appropriate referrals to health and public assistance programs.
- 4.10. In 2-3 paragraphs explain how the agency will provide culturally appropriate breastfeeding education and support to assist participants in reaching their breastfeeding goals including efforts to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration.
- 4.11. In 2-3 paragraphs describe how the agency will implement and manage the WIC breastfeeding peer counseling program.

5. Program Administration and Management (Total Weight 10%)

The purpose of this section is to provide a description of the applicant's services, and any experience the applicant has in providing WIC services or providing other services to the WIC-eligible population. Applicants should demonstrate that they have the capacity and willingness to provide responsible management of the WIC Program.

- 5.1. Describe the agency's continuous quality improvement and quality assurance procedures to ensure program quality and integrity. Include a description of any peer-review process, staff performance reviews, and other processes the agency uses for quality assurance and quality improvement.
- 5.2. What are the primary methods for gathering feedback from participants (e.g., self-created surveys, using a company like Press Ganey, etc.)? How is this feedback utilized to improve program performance or processes?
- 5.3. Does your agency have an Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Plan?
- 5.4. Does your agency have a unit or staff dedicated exclusively to information technology support such as hardware installation, data communication, installation of software, training or troubleshooting?
- 5.5. Agencies are required to maintain compliance with state and federal financial management policies and regulations which govern the NYS WIC Program (See **Attachment 26 NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)** and [2 CFR part 200.302](#)). Describe how your agency evaluates its financial management systems for compliance with WIC program policies and procedures (e.g., periodic reviews, established policies, audits, etc.)
- 5.6. WIC local agencies will be reimbursed for expenditures which support the WIC program and services. These must be actual expenditures which are reasonable, necessary, allowable, and justified. In 1-2 short paragraphs, describe the agency's processes or procedures for ensuring claims for reimbursement (vouchers) meet this requirement.
- 5.7. In 1-2 paragraphs, describe how your agency purchases property, equipment, and services in accordance with state and/or federal regulations. At minimum, include details on: how federal, state, and local laws and regulations are reflected in purchasing procedures; identification of responsible contractors; competitive procurements vs. non-competitive procurements; methods of purchasing (e.g., sealed bids, informal quotes, etc.); use of preferred vendors, minority/women owned or small businesses; and oversight of contractors.

- 5.8. Upload the agency's Purchasing policy and procedure.
- 5.9. Upload your agency's Cost allocation methodology for how space is allocated, how staff time and salaries are allocated between WIC and non-WIC programs; how shared equipment or supplies are allocated between programs.
- 5.10. Upload a document showing your Fringe benefit rate calculation or methodology.
- 5.11. Upload a document showing your Indirect cost rate calculation or methodology. If your agency does not have an Indirect cost rate methodology, please upload a document indicating that your agency does not have an Indirect cost methodology.

6. Budget (Total Weight 20%)

The budget questions are will be evaluated for cost reasonableness and scored and calculated based on pre-submission **Attachment 7 - WIC Budget**. Applicants will complete Year 1 of the budget using Attachment 7 and then transfer the details to the Grants Gateway Budget. Use **Attachment 8 - WIC Local Agency Additional Budget Form** to describe any additional one-time expenses for years 2-5.

Applicants can include indirect costs. The DOH will limit indirect administrative costs to 15 percent of the total direct costs. Direct costs are the sum of the Personal Service, Fringe Benefits, Space, Program Operations, Travel, Equipment, Audit, Breastfeeding Peer Counseling, and Other budget costs in the WIC Budget Requirements Worksheet (found in the pre-submission uploads section of the Grants Gateway). All indirect cost rates are subject to review and approval as set forth in federal and/or program regulations. Applicants requesting to charge for indirect costs must have a federally approved indirect rate or qualify for the federal de minimis rate outlined in 2 CFR 200.414(f). Applicants utilizing a Federal indirect cost rate (ICR) are expected to upload to the Pre-Submission Upload section of Grants Gateway, a completed Certification of Indirect Costs. If not using a Federal Indirect Cost rate, applicants must limit indirect costs to no more than 10% of total direct costs.

Any ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items.

7. Workplan

The Workplan for this RFA is set by NYSDOH and is found in the Grants Gateway.

For the Grants Gateway Work Plan Project Summary, applicants are instructed to copy and paste the Project Summary as it is listed on page 1 of **Attachment 19 - WIC Program Workplan**. In the Grants Gateway Work Plan Organizational Capacity section, applicants are instructed to enter "not applicable." Any additional information entered into these areas will not be considered or scored by reviewers of the application.

Component B: Vendor Management Agency Program

Geographic Service Areas (not scored)

In this section, the Applicant is given the opportunity to select the geographic service area for which they are applying (Refer to **Attachment 12: VMA WIC Geographic Service Area Selection**). More than one geographic service area may be selected. In considering service areas,

the Applicant should assess its ability to appropriately manage and staff the WIC vendor population located in the area(s). For guidance, refer to **Attachment 17 - WIC Vendor Management Agency Geographic Service Area Maps and Program Planning Data Tables**, and **Attachment 20 - VMA Workplan**.

Program Activities – (Total Weight 80%)

In sections 1 through 8, the Applicant will provide information on a variety of activities required under the Workplan to provide WIC VMA services.

1. Personnel (Total Weight 16.3%)

- 1.1. Upload an organizational chart that shows all WIC VMA staff (at a minimum, VMA Director, Vendor Liaison and Auditor positions and any dedicated VMA Program Support staff) and reflects the proposed reporting structure.
- 1.2. Briefly describe the agency's experience in providing management, oversight, and support services to vendors over different geographic regions.
- 1.3. To provide required services in the geographic areas selected, agencies must ensure adequate staffing. Core staff include: VMA Director, Vendor Liaisons, Vendor Auditor, Program Support staff and a designated supervisor to back-up the VMA Director. Describe how the agency will be staffed and how staffing levels were developed or calculated. Provide job descriptions for all titles. (Note: the average Vendor to Liaison ratio is 112 to 1).
- 1.4. Describe how the agency will train staff and ensure competency and proficiency in performing their duties. Include in the response how cross-training will be accomplished.
- 1.5. Describe how the agency will ensure that VMA staff have access to all current materials, manuals, and policies and procedures provided by the NYS WIC Program.
- 1.6. Describe how the agency will monitor and evaluate the following: staff performance and attendance; quality of vendor training activities; and quality of vendor monitoring activities.
- 1.7. The agency has a duty to ensure that no conflicts of interest occur between VMA staff and applicant or authorized vendors. Describe the process the agency will use to identify, review, and prevent actual or apparent conflicts of interest between staff and vendors.
- 1.8. Describe the recruitment and hiring processes for program vacancies and explain how leaves of absence and vacancies are managed.

2. Space (Total Weight 3.7%)

- 2.1. The agency should select physical space that will be adequate and appropriate to conduct vendor management activities and tasks. Describe the agency's proposed physical space(s) - office space, vendor training site, etc. If a separate training site is used or required, describe how the arrangement will be effective for VMA staff and the vendor population.
- 2.2. How does this location optimize staff time and costs for the following activities: communication, vendor certification, training, and monitoring?
- 2.3. Describe why satellite site(s) are or are not necessary to serve the vendor population in the selected geographic service areas.

3. Vendor Application Processing (Total Weight 13.8%)

- 3.1. Describe how the agency will receive, and timely respond to, inquiries from vendors seeking information on enrolling and participating in the WIC Program.
- 3.2. Describe how the agency will monitor the status of vendor applications from start to

completion of the enrollment process, ensuring applications are processed and milestones are met within prescribed time frames.

- 3.3. In addition to procedures prescribed by the DOH, describe two (2) ways that the agency will assess the needs of the service area, taking into account unique participant demographics (i.e., ethnic and religious factors), to ensure adequate participant access.
- 3.4. All vendors are assigned to a vendor contract period (VCP) and must submit a new application and required documents (and go through a new contracting process) every three years. Describe how the agency will track vendors through the various contract periods to determine when a vendor's contract will expire.

4. Vendor Training (Total Weight 13.6%)

- 4.1. VMAs are required to conduct mandated initial, routine, and ad hoc vendor training, in accordance with WIC Program rules and regulations, using standardized materials provided by the DOH. What processes or steps will the agency implement to ensure that all mandated trainings are provided to vendors and properly documented?
- 4.2. Agencies must demonstrate the ability to deliver training to (and verify attendance for) attendees who are unable to attend training at the agency's training site due to travel distances or other issues. Describe how the agency will accommodate such training requests.
- 4.3. Describe how the agency will provide remote interactive web-based training. Responses should address how attendance will be verified, how attendee questions will be received and addressed, and also include the experience of the staff conducting the remote training.
- 4.4. Using NYS WIC-approved training materials, describe how the agency will accommodate the predominant language and communication needs of vendors participating in training programs. Responses should address how the agency will assess and ensure that vendors comprehend the training material provided.

5. Vendor Monitoring and Auditing (Total Weight 13.5%)

- 5.1. Vendor monitoring is required at prescribed intervals and usually involves unannounced on-site visits to authorized vendors to ensure compliance with WIC Program regulations by verifying that minimum stock requirements for WIC approved foods are met, items are fresh/unexpired, and prices are clearly marked. Describe how the agency will ensure that vendor monitoring visits are scheduled and completed within required timeframes using NYS WIC Program prescribed tools (see Section III Component B).
- 5.2. Describe how the agency will perform on-site monitoring activities using NYS WIC Program prescribed tools (see Section III Component B), observations and interviews, to ensure vendor compliance with the NYS WIC Program requirements.
- 5.3. Describe the quality assurance process that the agency will utilize to detect vendor deficiencies, fraud, and non-compliance. Responses should address how the agency will ensure continual vendor compliance with program policies, procedures, and rules and regulations.
- 5.4. Agencies will participate in formal vendor inventory audits, as identified by the DOH, during a vendor's 3-year contract cycle. The audit process involves requesting documentation and comparing vendor purchases to redemption patterns to identify possible fraud. Describe how the agency will track the various activities involved in a vendor audit.

6. Fair Hearing and Communication (Total Weight 8.7%)

- 6.1. In certain circumstances, vendors who are denied participation in or are terminated from the

WIC Program may be entitled to request a fair hearing. The fair hearing process allows the vendor to appear before an Administrative Law Judge to dispute a prior determination.

Describe the steps the agency will take to prepare for the fair hearing process and describe any experience providing similar services.

- 6.2. For each geographic service area, list the predominant languages.
- 6.3. Describe how the agency plans to address the language and communication needs of the vendors during required program activities. The response should address the conduct of email and phone communications, as well as training and monitoring activities.
- 6.4. At least one VMA staff member must be available to handle inquiries from vendors, local agencies, participants, and state staff during core business hours. Describe how the agency will meet this requirement. Include hours of operation in your response.
- 6.5. Describe how the agency plans to maintain ongoing contact with WIC local agencies and vendors in the geographic service area, DOH staff, and the frequency in which those interactions will occur.
- 6.6. Describe how the agency will respond to WIC local agency and participant questions, comments, and complaints regarding vendors and product availability within the service area.

7. Confidentiality, Quality Assurance, Records and Reports (Total Weight 8.7%)

- 7.1. Describe how the agency will ensure that all files are complete with full documentation (i.e., file review process). Include in the response how the agency's system permits ready access and cross-referencing.
- 7.2. Agencies must ensure that applicant and vendor information remain confidential and secure. Describe the systems the agency will implement to ensure that both paper and electronic records are protected when accessed, stored, or destroyed.
- 7.3. Agencies are required to maintain vendor files for the year in which they were created, plus six additional years, and establish a record disposition schedule. Describe how the agency will maintain vendor files, including paper and electronic - for the timeframe indicated - and describe the agency's record disposition schedule.
- 7.4. Agencies may be responsible for the security of sensitive or valuable items and equipment (i.e., eWIC cards, iPads, computers, vehicles). Describe how the agency will maintain inventory records of all tangible items supplied by the NYS WIC Program.
- 7.5. Describe how the agency will evaluate self-compliance with WIC Program policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Describe how performance will be measured and how the agency will identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.

8. Budget (Total Weight 22%)

The budget questions are scored and calculated based on pre-submission **Attachment 10 – VMA Budget Worksheet**. Budget proposals will be evaluated for cost reasonableness; unallowable items will be removed from the budget. Applicants would complete Year 1 of the budget using **Attachment 10 - VMA Budget Worksheet** and then transfer the details to the Grants Gateway Budget. Use **Attachment 11 - VMA Additional Budget Form** to describe any additional one-time expenses for years 2-5.

Applicants can include indirect costs. The DOH will limit indirect administrative costs to 15 percent of the total direct costs. Direct costs are the sum of the Personal Service, Fringe Benefits, Space, Program Operations, Travel, Equipment, Audit, Breastfeeding Peer Counseling, and Other

budget costs in the WIC Budget Requirements Worksheet (found in the pre-submission uploads section of the Grants Gateway). All indirect cost rates are subject to review and approval as set forth in federal and/or program regulations. Applicants requesting to charge for indirect costs must have a federally approved indirect rate or qualify for the federal de minimis rate outlined in 2 CFR 200.414(f). Applicants utilizing a Federal indirect cost rate (ICR) are expected to upload to the Pre-Submission Upload section of Grants Gateway, a completed Certification of Indirect Costs. If not using a Federal Indirect Cost rate, applicants must limit indirect costs to no more than 10% of total direct costs.

Any ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items.

9. Workplan

The Workplan for this RFA is set by NYSDOH and is found in the Grants Gateway. The applicant does not need to make any changes to the workplan.

For the Grants Gateway Work Plan Project Summary, applicants are instructed to copy and paste the Project Summary as it is listed on page 1 of **Attachment 20 - VMA Program Workplan**. In the Grants Gateway Work Plan Organizational Capacity section, applicants are instructed to enter “not applicable.” Any additional information entered into these areas will not be considered or scored by reviewers of the application.

Optional Funding: Vendor Management Website

10. Program Activities (Total Weight 80%)

In this section, the Applicant will provide information on its experience and a variety of activities required under the Work Plan to provide vendor website services.

- 10.1. Describe any experience related to website development. If the sponsor agency subcontracts for these services, please also describe the experience of the subcontractor and the duration of the relationship between the subcontractor and sponsor agency.
- 10.2. Describe any experience related to performing website maintenance and upgrades. If the sponsor agency subcontracts for these services, please also describe the experience of the subcontractor and the duration of the relationship between the subcontractor and sponsor agency.
- 10.3. Describe where the staff responsible for maintaining the VMA website will be in the organization's hierarchy. If activities are subcontracted describe who within the VMA staff is responsible for oversight of the contractor's activities.
- 10.4. Website maintenance encompasses performing upgrades (as needed), checking the site for issues, and keeping it updated and relevant. At times, information may need to be posted to the site with little advance notice. Describe, in general terms, how the agency will dedicate resources to maintain the WIC vendor website. Include in the response the frequency of site review and how time-sensitive information will be handled.

11. Budget (Total Weight 20%)

If applying for the optional website component, complete the Website Component section in **Attachment 10 - VMA Budget Worksheet**, in the Pre-submission Upload section of the Grants Gateway.

Submit a 12-month budget with consideration given to all costs necessary to fully support the vendor management website operations as described in this Application. Include a description of all one-time costs requested and any shared costs that are not expected to pass through to the grant budget. All costs submitted must be justified with an accompanying narrative.

Allowable costs include personal service, fringe, website hosting/maintenance fees and other expenses necessary to support this activity.

Budget proposals will be evaluated for cost reasonableness; Any ineligible budget items will be removed from the budget prior to contracting. The budget amount requested will be reduced to reflect the removal of the ineligible items.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all materials to be included in the application have been properly prepared and submitted. Applications must be submitted via the Grants Gateway by the date and time posted on the cover of this RFA. The value assigned to each section is an indication of the relative weight that will be given when scoring your application.

B. Freedom of Information Law

All applications may be disclosed or used by NYSDOH to the extent permitted by law. NYSDOH may disclose an application to any person for the purpose of assisting in evaluating the application or for any other lawful purpose. All applications will become State agency records, which will be available to the public in accordance with the Freedom of Information Law. **Any portion of the application that an applicant believes constitutes proprietary information entitled to confidential handling, as an exception to the Freedom of Information Law, must be clearly and specifically designated in the application.** If NYSDOH agrees with the proprietary claim, the designated portion of the application will be withheld from public disclosure. Blanket assertions of proprietary material will not be accepted, and failure to specifically designate proprietary material may be deemed a waiver of any right to confidential handling of such material.

C. Review & Award Process

Component A: WIC Local Agency

Applications meeting the guidelines set forth above will be reviewed and evaluated competitively by the NYSDOH Division of Nutrition, Bureau of Supplemental Food Programs.

The value assigned to each section indicates the relative weight that will be given in scoring the Application.

Section Title	Maximum Points	Relative Weight
Cover Page	Not Scored	Not Scored
Executive Summary	Not Scored	Not Scored

Program Activities		80%
Demographics and Planning Areas	600	6.0 %
Caseload Management, Retention, and Outreach	950	9.5 %
Clinic Operations	2450	24.5 %
Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Services	3000	30.0 %
Program Administration and Management	1000	10.0 %
Budget	2000	20%
Total	10,000	100%

In the event of a tie within a planning area, the Department will use prior experience and then caseload capacity as the determining factor.

Should there be no viable applicant to serve particular planning area or special population, the DOH will first solicit interest from grant award winners in neighboring planning areas. The planning area will be awarded to the highest scoring applicant who expressed interest in serving the planning area or special population. If no Awardees that were solicited express interest, DOH reserves the right to set aside funding to make separate awards through the release of a targeted procurement.

DOH will modify Grant awards to reflect cost reasonableness, anticipated caseload at each approved site, location of sites, and necessary staffing levels to support WIC Program operations (based upon historically effective staffing ratios.)

The DOH reserves the right to award more than one Contract for each planning area and modify the grant award as noted above.

The DOH reserves the right to negotiate with funded grantees to adjust their service areas to minimize gaps or duplication of services. Funding may be reduced if there is overlapping catchment/service areas among applicants.

If changes in funding amounts are necessary for this initiative or if additional funding becomes available, funding will be modified and awarded in the same manner as outlined in the award process described above.

Component B: WIC Vendor Management Agency

To qualify to be a vendor management agency, an applicant must first be selected to be awarded a WIC Local Agency contract. If an applicant is not selected to be awarded a WIC Local Agency contract, they will not be considered for a WIC Vendor Management Agency award.

The points value and relative weight of each section that will be given in scoring the Application:

Section Title	Maximum Points	Relative Weight
Cover Page	Not Scored	Not Scored
Geographic Service Area(s)	Not Scored	Not Scored
Program Activities	720	78%
Personnel	150	16.3%
Space	34	3.7%

Vendor Application Processing	127	13.8%
Vendor Training	125	13.6%
Vendor Monitoring & Auditing	124	13.5%
Fair Hearing & Communication	80	8.7%
Confidentiality, Quality Assurance, Records & Reports	80	8.7%
Budget	200	22%
	TOTAL 920 points	100%

A team of trained Department staff will review and score applications meeting minimum eligibility requirements using a standardized review tool developed specifically for the RFA. Applications will be ranked according to their review scores. Awards will be made to the highest scoring applicants until all Geographic Service Areas are accounted for.

In the event of a tie score within a geographic service area, the Department will select the applicant with a higher score in the Program Activities section of the application to break the tie.

Should there be no viable applicant to serve particular geographic service areas, the DOH will first solicit interest from grant award winners in neighboring service areas. The service areas will be awarded to the highest scoring applicant who expressed interest in serving the service area. If no Awardees that were solicited express interest, DOH reserves the right to set aside funding to make separate awards through the release of a targeted procurement.

Grant awards may be reduced to reflect changes in available funding or changes in the number of active WIC authorized vendors.

Vendor Management Website Funding

To qualify to be awarded the vendor management website funding, an applicant must first be selected to be a Vendor Management agency. If an applicant is not selected to be awarded a vendor management agency contract, they will not be considered for a Vendor Management website funding. The Vendor Management Website funding will be awarded to one applicant. The eligible application with the highest score on the Vendor Management Website component of the application will receive the award.

The points value and relative weight of each section that will be given in scoring the optional website component of the application is as follows:

Section Title	Maximum Points	Relative Weight
Program Activities	64	80%
Budget	16	20%
Total	80	100%

In the event of a tie score for the Vendor Management Website Component, the Department will

use prior experience and then the score from the Vendor Management Component of the application as the determining factor.

All Components

Applications that do not meet the minimum requirements will not be evaluated.

Applications with minor issues (missing information that is not essential to timely review and would not impact review scores) MAY be processed, at the discretion of the State, but all issues need to be resolved prior to time of award. An application with unresolved issues at the time award recommendations are made will be determined to be non-responsive and will be disqualified.

Applications failing to provide all response requirements or failing to follow the prescribed format may be removed from consideration.

Applications must have a minimum score of 60% to be considered for funding. DOH reserves the right to award scores below 60% if there are no passing applications in a planning area.

Applicants will be deemed to fall into one of three categories: (1) not approved, 2) not funded due to limited resources, and 3) approved and funded. Not funded applications may be awarded should additional funds become available.

Once an award has been made, applicants may request a debriefing of their application (whether their application was funded or not funded). Please note the debriefing will be limited only to the subject application and will not include any discussion of other applications. Requests must be received no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from date of award or non-award announcement.

To request a debriefing, please send an email to BSFP-FMS.Procure@health.ny.gov. In the subject line, please write: *Debriefing Request (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC))*.

In the event unsuccessful applicants wish to protest the award resulting from this RFA, applicants should follow the protest procedures established by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). These procedures can be found on the OSC website at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/guide/MyWebHelp>. (Section XI. 17.)

VI. Attachments

Please note that certain attachments are accessed under the “Pre-Submission Uploads” section of an online application and are not included in the RFA document. In order to access the online application and other required documents such as the attachments, prospective applicants must be registered and logged into the NYS Grants Gateway in the user role of either a “Grantee” or a “Grantee Contract Signatory”.

- Attachment 1: **Letter of Interest Template
- Attachment 2: **Application Coversheet
- Attachment 3: **Agency Type Attestation
- Attachment 4: **WIC Site and Planning Area Information
- Attachment 5: **WIC Local Agency Assessment Data
- Attachment 6: *WIC Local Agency Budget Instructions
- Attachment 7: **WIC Local Agency Budget Worksheet
- Attachment 8: **WIC Local Agency Additional Budget Form
- Attachment 9: *VMA Budget Instructions
- Attachment 10: **VMA Budget Worksheet
- Attachment 11: **VMA Additional Budget Form
- Attachment 12: **VMA Geographic Service Area(s) Selection
- Attachment 13: *VMA Website Security Requirements and Attestation
- Attachment 14: *WIC and VMA Staffing Data
- Attachment 15: *WIC Program Planning Area Data and Maps
- Attachment 16: *WIC Program Participation Data
- Attachment 17: *WIC Vendor Management Agency Geographic Service Area Program Planning
Tables
- Attachment 18: *VMA Staffing Positions and Duty Descriptions
- Attachment 19: *WIC Program Workplan
- Attachment 20: *VMA Program Workplan
- Attachment 21: **Vendor Responsibility Attestation
- Attachment 22: **Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Requirement Forms
- Attachment 23: *WIC Breast Pump Historical Costs
- Attachment 24: *NYS WIC Breast Pumps
- Attachment 25: *NYWIC Workstation configuration guide
- Attachment 26: *NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual (WPM)
- Attachment 27: *NYS WIC and VMA Program Manual Policy Supplements

*These attachments are provided for informational use and are located/included in the Pre Submission Upload section of the Grants Gateway online application.

**These attachments are required to be completed as part of the applicant's submission and are located/included in the Pre Submission Upload section of the Grants Gateway online application