

Title: SOI # 1017 Residential Services for Individuals Who Are Legally Blind

Agency: Children & Family Services, NYS Office of Bureau of Contract Management

Contract Number: TBD

Contract Term: 7/1/2020 – 6/30/2025

Date of Issue: 1/6/2019

Due Date/Time: 2/18/2020 by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Location: Nationwide

Counties: All NYS Counties

Background

New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) announces a Solicitation of Interest (SOI) for qualified organizations that currently provide a residential services program for individuals who are legally blind (hereafter also referred to as participants) that develops and expands the participant's abilities to help them achieve self-reliance and independence in both daily life and the workplace.

The New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) is the state entity designated to provide services to New York residents who are legally blind. NYSCB has recognized the need for residential services programs that provide more intensive, around-the-clock services for participants who are legally blind and need more individualized attention and structure to make progress towards their goals of independence.

Generally, residential services programs are limited to participants meeting one or more of the three criteria below (*note: the final clinical decision is always made by a licensed vocational rehabilitation counselor who holds a master's degree and an advanced certificate in evaluating participant needs. These licensed vocational rehabilitation counselors are referred to hereafter as a counselor or NYSCB counselor*):

1. The service is only available in a residential setting.
2. The counselor identifies something in the participant's current environment that will make community-based vocational rehabilitation training ineffective.
3. The participant requires intensive services or needs to acquire skills in a very short period.

NYSCB limits residential services to a small subset of the participant population as rehabilitation training should generally take place in the most integrated community setting available.

There is currently only one entity in New York State that provides a residential services program to individuals who are legally blind. To meet the diverse needs of the population of participants, NYSCB must utilize out-of-state service providers to expand its network of providers who offer new and/or different types of residential services. The intent of this SOI is to identify residential services programs offered throughout the United States so that NYSCB can ultimately offer a broad array of programs to its participants who will make informed choices on a residential services program(s) that truly meets their individual needs.

This SOI is being released for the purpose of gathering information on existing residential services programs that currently operate nationwide. A response to this SOI **may** result in a non-competitive procurement and award of a contract or agreement with NYSCB. Any future award of a contract or agreement that may be issued from the compiled list of residential services program providers responding to this SOI is anticipated to have a contract or agreement end date no later than 6/30/2025.

Any future award of a contract or agreement would be contingent upon one or more of the following factors:

1. NYSCB identifies a participant(s) who would best benefit from a residential program.
2. A NYSCB participant chooses a particular residential program per informed choice or a history of NYSCB participants choosing that particular residential program.
3. Estimated residential program costs that exceed the NYS discretionary spending limits and therefore, a need exists for a contract or agreement between the residential program and NYSCB.

Residential services program(s) proposed in response to this SOI must be pre-existing and have pre-established an all-inclusive daily/weekly rate, per participant, for the services proposed. This requirement will be referred to as the “program rate.”

Please be aware that NYSCB believes in participant informed choice and ultimately the usage of any future contract or agreement will be determined by NYSCB participants. NYSCB estimates that statewide 30-50 participants will require residential services annually. There is no guarantee of referrals and/or revenues pursuant to this SOI.

To facilitate informed choice NYSCB reserves the right to post any non-financial programmatic information received from an applicant to the OCFS website. This information may then be used by potential participants to understand the full array of residential services offered by the various applicants through NYSCB and make the best-informed choice. NYSCB reserves the right to modify/change or not post any applicant’s responses received from this SOI.

Please see the **Eligibility Criteria** section for additional information.

This advertisement is public notice that OCFS is seeking to contract with organizations to provide residential services to residents of New York State who are legally blind. Please see the **Activities/Work to be Performed** section for additional information.

The purpose of this SOI is to invite any eligible and interested entities that believe they can satisfy this program’s needs to inform OCFS by a Letter of Interest (LOI). To be considered responsive, your organization’s LOI must be received no later than the deadline specified on the first page of this announcement. Please see the **How to Apply** section for additional information and submission requirements.

Activities/Work to be Performed

Funded applicants will:

Provide services to participants in a residential setting. The proposed program(s) should be specifically tailored to individuals who are legally blind and have more intense training needs. Although all participants can benefit from services and training provided once or twice a week at a non-residential facility, some require more intensive, around-the-clock services and instructional regimen.

Residential services programs provide participants with immersion services that will help them achieve self-reliance and independence in daily life and in the workplace. Participants will gain independence through guided instruction from trained staff and learn to manage the demands of independent living and expectations of real-world experiences. The program(s) should be individualized to meet the needs of each participant.

Residential Services Program Requirements

The proposed program(s) can take many forms and have varying goals. The proposed residential services program(s) must seek to develop and expand the participant's abilities in **one or more** of the following areas:

- Vocational rehabilitation
- Academic instruction/college prep
- Workplace readiness
- Specific job training skills
- Independent living
- Self-advocacy
- Use of assistive and/or adaptive technology
- Financial literacy

Please note: Proposed program(s) that are solely of a recreational nature will not be accepted under this SOI.

The proposed program(s) should emphasize integrating what the participant learns each day into his/her life at the dorm each evening, including, but not limited to, care of the dorm room, laundry, grooming, refinement of table manners while dining in the cafeteria, and other skills necessary to facilitate the integration of skills learned, into the participant's daily routine.

Housing and Meal Requirements

Applicants agree to provide all meals and provide safe, comfortable lodging and sleeping accommodations for each participant for the duration of the program. Applicants will also provide on-site, overnight supervision that is accessible to all participants each night of the program. All program areas must be accessible to, and accommodated for, participants who are legally blind.

NYSCB participants must be assigned to single gender rooming arrangements, with male and female bedrooms on opposite sides of the dormitory. NYSCB prefers that participants, aged 17 and younger, not be housed in the same dormitory as other individuals who are age 18 and older, and who are not part of the qualified staff providing services under the program. It is understood that this is not always possible as some programs may have space limitations. If your program does not have separate housing for participants age 17 and younger, please provide a narrative within your LOI that explains the housing arrangement in detail, including staffing and supervision.

The applicant agrees to provide, three (3) meals per day, seven days per week, to all NYSCB-referred participants. The applicant further agrees to meet any special dietary needs of any NSYCB-referred participants, as defined in the participant's referral materials. All meal costs for participants will be included in the program rate submitted in response to this SOI.

A minimum of one staff member/dormitory supervisor must remain on duty, in each dormitory, during all non-training hours on weekdays, and 24 hours/day on weekends and holidays, unless the dormitory is officially closed. A staff member/dormitory supervisor must be available to participants in the dormitory during these times.

If any incident occurs that is detrimental to a participant's well-being (including but not limited to health, safety and other incidents), applicant staff must contact the office of the associate commissioner of NYSCB immediately to provide notification of the incident and must submit a written report describing the incident to the NYSCB associate commissioner within three (3) calendar days.

Staff Qualification Requirements

Staff of the applicant must be capable of working with the unique needs of participants who are legally blind. As the residential services being provided and backgrounds of the providers may vary significantly, it is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate and explain in their LOI how their staff meet this requirement. Any contract(s) that **may** result from information provided in response to this SOI will contain specific staff qualifications tailored to the applicants' specific program offering.

Referrals and Program Termination

Applicants agree to accept all participants referred by NYSCB who meet the program's established requirements. If, after starting the program, the applicant determines that a participant is incapable of benefiting from the program, the applicant may not refuse services or terminate participation in the program without first contacting the NYSCB counselor who referred the participant to the program **and** obtaining agreement from the NYSCB counselor that termination of the participant from the program would be in the best interest of the participant and/or the other participants.

Please be aware that NYSCB believes in participant informed choice and ultimately the usage of any future contract or award that **may** result from the information provided in this SOI will be determined by NYSCB participants. **There is no guarantee of referrals and/or revenues pursuant to this SOI.**

Integrated Programs

While NYSCB encourages integration of children who are legally blind into programs with sighted children, the applicant must notify the NYSCB Central Office children's services coordinator no later than 30 calendar days in advance of any programs in which children who are legally blind are to be integrated with children who are sighted and are not family members.

No program that integrates children who are legally blind with non-family members who are 18 years or older will be allowed. However, children with multiple disabilities may be referred into the program up to age 22. These individuals may be integrated into the program as if they are under 18.

Multiple disabilities according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA) refers to *"concomitant [simultaneous] impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness."*

Confidentiality

The applicant will safeguard the confidentiality of all information relating to all NYSCB participants and shall maintain the confidentiality of all such information in conformity with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws and regulations.

Transportation

NYSCB will provide transportation for each participant to the program's location at the program's commencement and home from the program following completion. NYSCB will not pay for weekend

visits home. Transportation to and from program activities is the responsibility of the applicant and must be included in the program rate and may not be charged separately to NYSCB.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) – Breakdown

In the State of New York, Pre-ETS services are available to students with a disability age 14 to 21 (up to the 22nd birthday) who are enrolled in an educational setting. For administrative purposes, NYSCB requires a breakdown that shows what portion of a program rate is allocated to Pre-ETS and Non-Pre-ETS.

Pre-Employment Transition Services - components of the residential services program rate that directly relate to the following criteria are classified as Pre-ETS:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
4. Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring
5. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living

See CFR – Title 34 → Subtitle B → Chapter III → Part 361.48(A)(2) for the full list of allowable Pre-ETS services.

Non-Pre-Employment Transition Services - Any services that are part of the proposed program and do not meet the Pre-ETS criteria, as stated above, are classified as Non-Pre-ETS. If the program does not allow participants who are under the age of 22, the full cost should be classified as Non-Pre-ETS.

Non-Pre-Employment Transition Services - Any services that are part of the proposed program and do not meet the Pre-ETS criteria, as stated above, are classified as Non-Pre-ETS.

Room and Board are currently not considered Pre-ETS but must be tracked as their own category.

Example: XYZ Services for the Blind conducts a three-week residential services program that teaches legally blind participants to diagnose and repair computer hardware. The program rate is \$2,500 per participant, which includes room and board (\$750 weekly) and travel expenses (which are not Pre-ETS eligible) for field trips (\$250 weekly).

The residential services program breakdown in this case would be:

Pre-ETS	\$1,500.00
Non-Pre ETS	\$250.00
Room and Board	\$750.00
Total Program Rate	\$2,500.00

A breakdown is required for each program submitted.

When completing the Pre-ETS/Non-Pre-ETS breakdown, assume 100 percent of the participants are Pre-ETS eligible students. It is NYSCB’s responsibility to determine if a participant is Pre-ETS eligible and adjust coding accordingly.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants who meet the following mandatory requirements are eligible to apply:

1. Have experience administering the proposed residential services program(s) for participants who are legally blind for at least one program cycle. (i.e., for a program with a duration of six-months, the applicant has administered the program for six months.) This must be documented by the provision of a completed **Attachment 1 – Submission Checklist** and **Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest**.
2. Propose a residential program(s) that seeks to develop and expand the participant's abilities in **one or more** of the following areas:
 - Vocational rehabilitation
 - Academic instruction/college prep
 - Workplace readiness
 - Specific job training skills
 - Independent living
 - Self-advocacy
 - Use of assistive and/or adaptive technology
 - Financial literacy

Provide a detailed narrative in the **Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest** explaining how the proposed residential program(s) meet this requirement.

Please note: Proposed program(s) that are solely of a recreational nature will not be accepted under this SOI.

3. Have a pre-established, all-inclusive daily/weekly program rate per participant for the proposed program. If proposing more than one program, provide this information for each of the proposed programs. This proposed rate(s) must be at or below the currently published program rate at the time this SOI was released (see Date of Issue on first page of this SOI). This proposed rate is for the period from **7/1/2020 – 6/30/2025**. If a program requires a cost of living adjustment (COLA) during this period, the methodology of any price increase must be spelled out in the SOI response. Any costs increase that are not spelled out in the SOI will not be allowed. If an organization has official rates that are approved by a third part entity, NYSCB will pay the official approved third-party entity rates for the program at the time of referral. No additional fees will be allowed to be charged to NYSCB or to program participants (including family members) for services delivered under any awards that may result from a response to this SOI. **Provide this information in the Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest.**

Note: NYSCB will entertain additional upfront costs that are integral to the proposed program. Such costs like tuition at a local college would need to be clearly broken down and a detailed explanation of the costs would need to be provided within your LOI.

4. Agree to provide NYSCB with a “Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) – Breakdown,” if applicable. This applies to applicants who provide services to participants who are age 14 to 21.
5. Employ staff capable of working with the unique needs of participants who are legally blind as required by the **Staff Qualifications** section of this announcement. Explain how you meet this requirement in the **Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest**.

6. If the state in which the applicant's proposed program resides requires the program to be licensed or certified in some way, **specifically for the purpose of providing residential services to participants who are legally blind**, the applicable license and/or certification is required to be in good standing. If applicable: provide a copy of the required license, certification or other relevant supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with your state's requirement(s).
7. Agree to accept all participants who are legally blind that are referred by NYSCB to the proposed program.
8. Be eligible to do business with New York State before any services are provided under any contract that may result from a response to this SOI. If you are not currently eligible, you must agree to become eligible prior to contracting with New York State.

Funding Details

This SOI is being released for the purpose of gathering information on existing residential services programs that currently operate nationwide. A response to this SOI **may** result in a contract or agreement with NYSCB in the future. OCFS/NYSCB does not guarantee any specific level of income or any specific level of referrals as a result of responding to this SOI.

Funding for this project is contingent upon the availability of funds in the state and/or federal budgets, the number of eligible applicants that respond to this SOI and the number of participants in need of residential services.

Term of Contract

Contract(s) that may result from a response to this SOI will be for a term of up to five (5) years. The anticipated start date is **7/1/2020**, and the anticipated end date is **6/30/2025**. Funding is anticipated to be available for the first year of the contract. The award of a contract does not guarantee that funding will be available for subsequent years. Contractors may not begin providing services before the contract start date; OCFS has no obligation to pay for services rendered before the New York State Office of the State Comptroller and the Office of the Attorney General approve the contract.

How to Apply

To be considered eligible, interested parties must complete and submit all required documents to this SOI in conformance with the format and content requirements as explained. A response that does not provide all the information requested may be subject to rejection. The response should contain sufficient information to assure OCFS of its accuracy. The information provided should, wherever possible, verify that your organization meets the requirements in the **Eligibility Criteria** section of this SOI.

Each applicant is **required** to complete and provide the following documents:

- **Attachment 1 – Submission Checklist**
- **Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest**
- **If applicable: a copy of the required license, certification or other relevant supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the requirement(s) of the state in which the applicant's program resides.**

Additionally, each applicant should provide the following documents at the time of application:

- [OCFS-2647, EO 177 Certification](#)
- [OCFS-4821, CMS User Authorization](#)

Applicants must submit these documents via email to RFP@ocfs.ny.gov no later than the deadline specified on the first page of this announcement.

Please enter “**SOI # 1017 Residential Services**” in the subject line of the email submission of your application and identify the name of the applicant in the body of the email and in the filenames of attached documents to ensure your submission is processed efficiently. **Early submissions are encouraged as late responses may be subject to rejection.**

Please limit your Letter of Interest to a maximum of fifty (50) page(s), Arial 12-point font, single line spacing and one-inch margins. Please see the **Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest** provided for your reference. If applicable, Letters of Interest should attempt to conform to the guidance outlined in **Attachment 3 – Guidelines for Preparing Letters of Interest.**

Questions

Questions must be submitted via e-mail to RFP@ocfs.ny.gov before the due date and time of this SOI. Please submit your question with adequate time for response. OCFS recommends allowing at least five (5) business days. Be sure to put “**SOI # 1017 Residential Services**” in the subject line. **Late questions may not be addressed.**

Evaluation Process

An internal review by OCFS will confirm eligibility. This solicitation of interest is not a guarantee or promise of funding. Available funding to support this initiative will be limited to the amount(s) appropriated in the enacted budget for this purpose and will be awarded among those interested organizations who are deemed to meet the eligibility requirements.

OCFS may require additional information from an organization before deciding whether the interested organization is eligible and can supply the requested commodities or services. If OCFS requests additional information, it must be provided within five business days from request.

OCFS Reserved Rights

OCFS reserves the right to withdraw, amend or postpone this SOI, without notice, and without liability, to any applicant, or other party, and may exercise these rights at any time. In addition, OCFS reserves the right to:

- place a monetary cap on the funding amount made in each contract award;
- change any of the schedule date stated in the SOI;
- make an award under the SOI in whole or in part;
- disqualify any applicant whose conduct and/or LOI fails to conform to the requirements of the SOI;
- reject any LOI if, in the sole discretion of OCFS, it determines the applicant is not a responsible vendor;
- request all applicants who submitted LOI to present supplemental information clarifying their proposals either in writing or by formal presentation;
- direct all organizations who submitted LOIs to prepare modifications addressing SOI amendments;
- make funding decisions that maximize compliance with and address the outcomes identified in this SOI;

- fund only one portion, or selected activities, of the selected applicant's LOI and/or adopt all or part of the selected applicant's LOI based on federal and state requirements;
- eliminate any SOI requirements unmet by all applicants, upon notice to all parties that submitted LOIs;
- waive procedural technicalities, or modify minor irregularities, in LOI received, after notification to the applicant involved;
- correct any arithmetic errors in any proposal, or make typographical corrections to LOIs, with the concurrence of the applicant;
- negotiate with the eligible applicant(s) prior to contract award;
- require that all LOIs be held valid for a minimum of 180 days from the closing date for receipt of applications, unless otherwise expressly provided for in writing;
- fund any or all of the LOI received in response to this SOI. However, issuance of this SOI does not commit OCFS to fund any proposals. OCFS can reject any proposals submitted;
- use the LOI submitted in response to this SOI as part of an approved contract. At the time of contract development, awardees may be asked to provide additional budget and program information for the final contract;
- utilize any and all ideas submitted in the LOI received where an award is ultimately made;
- make inquiries of third parties, including but not limited to applicant's references, regarding the applicant's experience or other matters deemed relevant by OCFS. By submitting an LOI in response to this SOI, the applicant gives its consent to any inquiry made by OCFS;
- where applicable, require contractors to participate in a formal evaluation of the program to be developed by OCFS. Contractors may be required to collect data for these purposes. The evaluation design will maintain participants' confidentiality and recognize practical constraints of collecting this kind of information;
- when applicable, consider statewide distribution and regional distribution within New York City, including borough distribution methodology, in evaluating proposals; and
- reject any extraneous terms, alternate activities/work to be performed, added conditions, or exceptions stated by applicants within their LOI. This includes, but is not limited to, proposed changes to the standard terms and conditions of the resulting contract(s).

Contract Documents

The applicant must review the contract terms and conditions of the contract template provided below.

The contract documents consist of the following:

1. Face Page
2. Signatory Page
3. NYS Standard Terms and Conditions (State of New York Master Contract for Grants)
4. Master Contract Attachment A-1 (Agency-Specific Terms and Conditions)
5. Master Contract Attachment A-2 (Federally Funded Grants)
6. Master Contract Attachment B: Budget and Instructions
7. Master Contract Attachment C: Work Plan
8. Master Contract Attachment D: Payment and Reporting Schedule
9. Master Contract Attachment E: Federal Fund Vendor Determination
10. Attachment MWBE: Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises

A copy of the NYS Standard Terms and Conditions (State of New York Master Contract for Grants) and a sample grant contract is available for review at the following link:

<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2018/09/sample-complete-nys-mcg.pdf>

In addition, the following documents will be required prior to contracting:

- [Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire](#) (if applicable)
- [Proof of Workers Compensation Insurance](#) (if applicable)
- [Proof of Disability Benefits Coverage](#) (if applicable)
- [Attachment A-2, Federal Assurance and Certifications](#) (if applicable)
- [OCFS-4631, MWBE Utilization Plan Form](#) (if applicable)
- [OCFS-4629, Project Staffing Plan Form](#)
- [OCFS-3460, Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) Policy Statement](#)

State Finance Law §139-I; Statement on Sexual Harassment in Bids

New York State Finance Law §139-I, effective January 1, 2019, requires, in relevant part, that “[e]very bid . . . made to the state or any public department or agency thereof, where competitive bidding is required by statute, rule or regulation, for work or services performed or to be performed or goods sold or to be sold, shall contain [a] statement subscribed by the bidder and affirmed by such bidder as true under the penalty of perjury. . . [that] ‘[b]y submission of this bid, each bidder and each person signing on behalf of any bidder certifies, and in the case of a joint bid each party thereto certifies as to its own organization, under penalty of perjury, that the bidder has and has implemented a written policy addressing sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and provides annual sexual harassment prevention training to all of its employees. Such policy shall, at a minimum, meet the requirements of section two hundred one-g of the labor law.’” The Contractor must provide the foregoing certification before any award being made by OCFS. For additional guidance on drafting an appropriate sexual harassment policy and developing appropriate training please refer to State Finance Law §139-I and <https://www.ny.gov/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace/employers#top>

Other Contracting Requirements

1. Not-for-profit organizations must be registered in the NYS Grants Gateway and complete the Vendor Prequalification process before contract execution per [New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032 Revised](#), dated July 16, 2014.
2. Executive Order 177, signed on February 3, 2018, by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, directs New York State agencies and authorities not to enter into any contracts with entities that have institutional policies or practices that fail to address the harassment and discrimination of individuals on the basis of their age, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, military status, or other protected basis. The Contractor must provide the [EO 177 certification statement](#) before any award being made by OCFS.
3. Sections 57 and 220 of the Workers’ Compensation Law (WCL) and section 142 of the State Finance Law require that businesses contracting with New York State have and maintain and [provide evidence of appropriate workers’ compensation and disability benefits insurance coverage](#). If an award is made from this SOI, updated proof of coverage must be provided during contract development. Failure to submit the proof will delay the contract development process and may result in the award being rescinded. Municipalities are not required to show proof of coverage.
4. Section 163(9)(f) of the NY State Finance Law requires that a state agency determine that a bidder is responsible before awarding that bidder a state contract. Vendor responsibility will be determined based on the information provided by the bidder, on-line, through the [New York State VendRep System Questionnaire](#) or through a paper copy of the [Vendor Responsibility](#)

[Questionnaire](#). OCFS will review the information provided before making an award.

5. By submitting an LOI in response to this solicitation or by assuming the responsibility of a contract awarded hereunder, bidder/contractor (or any assignee) certifies that it is not on the "Prohibited Entities List," as defined by the *Entities Determined To Be Non-Responsive Bidders/Offerers Pursuant to The New York State Iran Divestment Act of 2012* (the Act), which is posted on the OGS website at <http://www.ogs.ny.gov/about/regs/docs/ListofEntities.pdf> and further certifies that it will not utilize on such contract any subcontractor that is identified on the "Prohibited Entities List." Bidder/contractor is advised that should it seek to renew or extend a contract awarded in response to the solicitation, it must provide the same certification at the time the contract is renewed or extended.
6. All offerers and their employees must be aware of and comply with the requirements of the New York State Public Officers Law, and all other appropriate provisions of New York State law and all resultant codes, rules and regulations from state laws establishing the standards for business and professional activities of state employees and governing the conduct of employees of firms, associations and corporations in business with the state. In signing the proposal, each offerer guarantees knowledge and full compliance with those provisions for any dealings, transactions, sales, contracts, services, offers, relationships, etc. involving the state and/or state employees. Failure to comply with those provisions may result in disqualification from the bidding process and in other civil or criminal proceedings as required by law: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBO>
7. Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A and Parts 140-145 of Title 5 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, OCFS is required to promote opportunities for the maximum feasible participation of New York State-certified Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of OCFS contracts. If applicable, a contractor on any contract resulting from this procurement must document its good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by MWBEs as subcontractors and suppliers in the performance of the contract. To that end, by submitting a response to this opportunity, the respondent agrees that OCFS may withhold payment pursuant to any contract awarded as a result of this announcement pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. The directory of MWBEs can be viewed at: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. OCFS will request any necessary completed MWBE documents from the contractor during the contract development process.
8. Not-for-profit vendors must be registered with the New York State Office of the Attorney General as a charitable organization, and the registration must be up-to-date at the time of contracting. Vendors must be sure all their documents are up-to-date and comply with the vendor responsibility requirements as outlined below. To determine the status of your charity's registration information, contact:
https://www.charitiesnys.com/RegistrySearch/search_charities.jsp

Contact Information

Primary contact:

Director of Contracts
Office of Children & Family Services
52 Washington Street
Room 202S – RFP Unit
Rensselaer, NY 12144
RFP@ocfs.ny.gov

Submit to contact:

Director of Contracts
Office of Children & Family Services
52 Washington Street
Room 202S – RFP Unit
Rensselaer, NY 12144
RFP@ocfs.ny.gov

Attachments

Please see the following attachments to this SOI, which are available on the NYS Contract Reporter website at <https://www.nyscr.ny.gov/login.cfm>.

Attachment 1 – Submission Checklist*

Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest*

Attachment 3 – Guidelines for Preparing Letters of Interest (for reference only)

* Attachments marked with an asterisk must be completed and included with your bid proposal.

ATTACHMENT 1

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Solicitation of Interest (SOI) #1017 Residential Services for Individuals Who Are Legally Blind

Applicant: _____ FEIN/TIN: _____

Please indicate whether the following statements described in the solicitation apply to your organization:

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>		<p>Does the applicant have experience administering the proposed residential services program(s) for participants who are legally blind for at least one program cycle? (i.e., for a program with a duration of 6 months, the applicant has administered the program for 6 months.) This <u>must be documented by the provision of a completed Attachment 1 – Submission Checklist and Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest.</u></p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>		<p>Does the applicant propose a residential program(s) that seeks to develop and expand the participant’s abilities in <u>one or more</u> of the following areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational rehabilitation • Academic instruction/college prep • Workplace readiness • Specific job training skills • Independent living • Self-advocacy • Use of assistive and/or adaptive technology • Socialization skills • Financial literacy <p><u>Provide a detailed narrative in the Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest explaining how the proposed residential program(s) meet this requirement.</u> <i>Please note: Proposed program(s) that are solely of a recreational nature will not be accepted under this SOI.</i></p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>		<p>Does the applicant have a pre-established, all-inclusive daily/weekly program rate per participant for the proposed program? If proposing more than one program, provide this information for each of the proposed programs. This proposed rate(s) must be at or below the currently published program rate at the time this SOI was released (see Date of Issue on first page of this SOI). This proposed rate is for the period from 7/1/2020 – 6/30/2025. If a program requires a cost of living adjustment (COLA) during this period, the methodology of any price increase must be spelled out in the SOI response. Any cost increases that are not spelled out in the SOI will not be allowed. If an organization has official rates that are approved by a third-party entity, NYSCB will pay the official approved third-party entity rates for the program at the time of referral. No additional fees will be allowed to be charged to NYSCB or to program participants (including family members) for services delivered under any awards that may result from a response to this SOI. <u>Provide this information in the Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest.</u></p> <p><i>Note: NYSCB will entertain additional upfront costs that are integral to the proposed program. Such costs like tuition at a local college would need to be clearly broken down and a detailed explanation of the costs would need to be provided in your LOI.</i></p>

ATTACHMENT 1

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Does the applicant agree to provide NYSCB with a “Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) - Breakdown,” if applicable? This applies to applicants who provide services to participants who are age 14 to 21. <i>(If this checklist item does not apply to your organization, please choose “N/A.”)</i>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>		Does the applicant employ staff capable of working with the unique needs of participants who are legally blind as required by the Staff Qualifications section of this announcement? <u>Explain how you meet this requirement</u> in the Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest .
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	If the state in which the applicant’s proposed program resides requires the program to be licensed or certified in some way, specifically for the purpose of providing residential services to participants who are legally blind , are the applicable license(s) and/or certification(s) in good standing? <u>If applicable: provide a copy of the required license, certification or other relevant supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with your state’s requirement(s).</u> <i>(If this checklist item does not apply to your organization please choose “N/A.”)</i>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>		Does the applicant agree to accept all participants who are legally blind who are referred by NYSCB to the proposed program?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>		Is the applicant eligible to do business with New York State? If you are not currently eligible, do you agree to become eligible prior to contracting with New York State?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		The applicant certifies under penalty of perjury that, by submission of this proposal, each proposer and each person signing on behalf of any proposer, and in the case of a joint proposal each party thereto as to its own organization, has and has implemented a written policy addressing sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and provides annual sexual harassment prevention training to all of its employees and that such policy does, at a minimum, meet the requirements of section two hundred one-g of the labor law. Please note that a proposal will not be considered for award nor will any award be made to a proposer who is not able to make this certification in compliance with State Finance Law section 139-l; provided, however, that if the proposer cannot make the foregoing certification, such proposer shall so state and shall furnish with the proposal a signed statement that sets forth in detail the reasons therein.

*** A response of “No” to any question marked with an asterisk will disqualify the applicant.**

Submit the following completed documents before the deadline via email to RFP@ocfs.ny.gov:

- Attachment 1 – Submission Checklist
- Attachment 2 – Letter of Interest
- If applicable: a copy of the required license, certification or other relevant supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with your state’s requirement(s)**

By signing below, I attest that I have express authority to sign these statements on behalf of the applicant and am authorized by law to bind the applicant contractually.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT 2
LETTER OF INTEREST

Solicitation of Interest (SOI) #1017
Residential Services for Individuals Who Are Legally Blind

Date: _____

Director of Contracts
Office of Children & Family Services
52 Washington Street
Room 202S – RFP Unit
Rensselaer, NY 12144
RFP@ocfs.ny.gov

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of my organization, I hereby inform you of our eligibility and interest in the above-referenced Solicitation of Interest (SOI).

Provide NYSCB with a detailed listing of all residential services programs for individuals who are legally blind that your organization is proposing and that meet the criteria as stated in the “**Residential Services Program Requirements**” subsection of the SOI. The detailed listing should include each of the following:

- The location of the service.
- The target population.
- The skills gained and expected results.
- The duration of the program(s).
- The times the program will be offered.
- Plan for supervision of participants including overnight supervision. (NYSCB prefers that participants, aged 17 and younger, not be housed in the same dormitory as other individuals who are age 18 and older and who are not part of the qualified staff providing services under the program. It is understood that this is not always possible as some programs may have space limitations. If your program does not have separate housing for participants age 17 and younger, please provide a narrative that explains the housing arrangement in detail, including staffing and supervision.)
- Any other critical information you would like NYSCB to know about your program(s).
- Sample of any reporting documentation being used for written evaluations, assessments, reports, etc.
- Any brochures or promotional items that detail the proposed program (if available).
- History of the program including how many legally blind participants previously attended the program in the last calendar year and what were the achieved outcomes.

ATTACHMENT 2

LETTER OF INTEREST

This LOI must include a narrative explaining how your organization meets each of the following eligibility criteria:

If you are proposing multiple programs, please address the items below separately for each individual program. Only one LOI is required but for clarity each program should be in its own section.

1. Explain how you meet the requirement that the applicant has experience administering the proposed program(s) for at least one program cycle. (i.e., for a program with a duration of 6 months, the applicant has administered the program for 6 months.) Include relevant dates in your explanation.
2. Provide a narrative detailing how the proposed residential program(s) meets the requirement that the proposed program(s) must seek to develop and expand the participant's abilities in one or more of the following areas:
 - Vocational rehabilitation
 - Academic instruction/college prep
 - Workplace readiness
 - Specific job training skills
 - Independent living
 - Self-advocacy
 - Use of assistive and/or adaptive technology
 - Socialization skills
 - Financial literacy
3. Provide an all-inclusive daily/weekly program rate, per participant, for the proposed program or each of the proposed programs if your organization is proposing more than one. The rate must be at or below the currently published rate at the time this SOI was released. No additional fees will be allowed to be charged to NYSCB or to program participants (including family members) for services delivered under any awards that may result from a response to this SOI. This requirement will be referred to as the "program rate."

NYSCB will also entertain upfront costs that are integral to the proposed program, in addition to the program rate. Those costs should be clearly broken down. Upfront costs would include such the cost of tuition at a local college, for example.
4. Applicable programs that provide services to participants who could be in the age range of 14 to 21 (up to 22nd birthday), must also include a breakdown of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), Non- Pre-ETS and Room and Board costs for the program. These amounts must add up to the program rate.

ATTACHMENT 2
LETTER OF INTEREST

Residential programs should refer to CFR – Title 34 → Subtitle B → Chapter III → Part 361.48(A)(2) for the full list of allowable Pre-ETS services. Room and board currently cannot be counted as a Pre-ETS and must be included as its own line. For more information refer to the SOI section entitled “Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) – Breakdown.”

5. Explain how you meet the requirement that the applicant employs staff capable of working with the unique needs of participants who are legally blind as required by the **“Staff Qualifications”** subsection of the SOI.

6. If the state in which your organization’s proposed program resides requires the program to be licensed or certified in some way, **specifically for the purpose of providing residential services to participants who are legally blind**, the applicable license and/or certification is to be in good standing. **Indicate whether this requirement is applicable to you. If applicable, explain how your organization is compliant with this requirement and provide a copy of the required license, certification, or other relevant supporting documentation that demonstrates compliance with your state’s requirement(s).**

7. Explain how you meet the requirement that the applicant is eligible to do business with New York State before any services are provided under any contract that may result from a response to this SOI. If not currently eligible, please provide your plan for obtaining eligibility to do business with New York State upon notification of the award and before providing services under a contract that may result from this SOI.

I hereby certify the information contained in our Letter of Interest is correct and in compliance with all applicable State and Federal laws, and rules and regulations, and that I am the authorized representative to submit this Letter of Interest.

Sincerely,

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

FEIN/TIN: _____

Date: _____

Guidelines for Preparing Letters of Interest

Presented below are general guidelines for you/your firm to prepare a letter of interest (LOI) for submission to the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). These guidelines will assist you with the content of your letter. Format and/or organization of your letter is up to you.

We ask that you carefully review the New York State Contract Reporter advertisement prior to submitting the LOI.

General Instructions

1. Please limit your letter of interest(s) to the number of pages, font size, line spacing and margins as stated in the Contract Reporter notice. Please insure that you are submitting the requested number of copies.
2. Please include all pertinent information in your letter of interest.
3. All firms listed in the LOI must be registered (and the registration must be current) with the NYS Department of State (www.dos.ny.gov) and must be able to conduct business in New York State under the names stated in the LOI. If any of the firms listed in the LOI are not registered in New York State, the LOI will not be reviewed and the firm will not be considered for selection.
4. If your team is going to submit a LOI as a joint venture, please insure that the joint venture itself is registered to practice and do business in New York State. If the joint venture is not registered in advance of the LOI submission, the LOI will not be reviewed and the team will not be considered for selection.
5. When submitting your letter of interest, please do not use binders, covers, etc. A staple in the upper left corner is sufficient.
6. Please refer to the Solicitation/Letter of Interest announcement reference number in your letter of interest.
7. Please submit your letter of interest to the individual indicated in the "Submit to" section of the Contract Reporter notice. Do not submit them to the person listed under the "Contact" section of the notice.

Instructions on Specific Elements

Please note that these instructions provide general guidance. If you/your firm feel as though additional information is needed based upon the Contract Reporter notice (Notice), you will not be penalized as long as the letter is no longer than what is stated in the notice. Further, the order of the sections presented below does not infer how you should organize your letter of interest. As stated earlier, format and organization of your letter is up to you.

1. Firm's Understanding of the Services Required

Each firm's letter will be evaluated to determine if they have an understanding of the Services Required, including any special/unique needs of the Services Described. Please ensure that your firm addresses any special needs stated in the Notice and state why your firm is uniquely qualified to provide services for this program.

2. Firm's Experience

Please provide information on recent and relevant experience providing the same of similar services as described in the Notice completed within the last five years. For each service/program provide the following:

- Brief description
- Firm's role (prime, sub) and what specific services were provided
- Completion date
- Dollar value
- Client's name
- If sub-consultants are proposed, clearly indicate assignments the sub-consultant completed.

In addition, please address the following:

- If a sub-consultant(s) is proposed, please clearly state their role and what they will be doing. Also state the percentage of the work they will complete.
- Address any special services as stated in the Notice.
- Please address any necessary certifications, software requirements, and other technical requirements.
- Location from which office the service(s)/program(s) will be managed. Also, indicate which office will complete a majority of the service.
- If there are M/W/DBE or SDVOB goals, please name the firms and indicate what they will be doing for the program. Also indicate the percentage of work they will complete. Please note that if the firm submitting the letter of interest is a M/W/DBE, they are still required to meet the M/W/DBE goals stated in the Notice.

3. Proposed Key Personnel

Provide the following information for each key staff member:

- Proposed role (title) for this program
- Brief description of their recent (within the last five years) and relevant experience
- Individual's role on each of the previous program(s)
- Completion date of the previous program(s)
- Value of program of the previous programs
- Client's name of the programs
- Certifications and licenses of the key staff members, if applicable

Because some of the programs listed under an individual's experience could also be listed under the firm's experience, we understand some of the detail on each program may not be restated. It is recommended that a cross reference be provided.

4. Staff Availability

For each of the proposed key staff members, please list the individuals' current programs that require twenty (20) percent or more of their time. If a staff member is working on fewer than two programs that meet the 20 percent threshold, the firm shall list at least two of that person's largest programs. For each of the programs, please provide the program's description, the person's role, percentage of the person's time, and completion date of the person's work on that program.

If you have any questions concerning the Contract Reporter Notice, please refer to NYS Contract Reporter Notice for a contact person.