

NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives
2012 200% of Poverty Request for Proposals
Questions & Answers

As stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP), and in the interest of fairness to all prospective applicants, DCJS is posting the following answers to substantive questions received through Aug. 27, 2012 on the 200% of Poverty RFP. Some of the questions have been restated for clarity. We have attempted to group responses to related questions, however we encourage bidders to read all questions and answers.

Applicants with Current Contracts

1. I am assuming that this RFP is not directed at programs that already have 200% of Poverty contracts.

Answer: Current 200% of Poverty programs that are on target to achieve their milestones and outcomes *and* that have remaining optional renewals on their current contracts after December 31, 2012, do not need to reapply. Current grantees that do *not* have optional renewals remaining on their current contracts may respond to this solicitation.

2. Our agency currently has an OPCA 200% of Poverty contract which runs from Jan. 1, 2011 to Dec. 31, 2015. Can we submit a proposal under this RFP for an **expansion or enhancement of our current contract?**

Answer: A program may apply with a new proposal that meets the requirements of the RFP released August 13, 2012. A program might submit such a proposal to expand the size of the current contract and/or to significantly alter the program design from the current operation of the program. The alteration or expansion must ensure the new application/program proposed will address the population targeted in the new RFP. A new proposal would be limited to a maximum value of \$200,000 annually. Should the new proposal result in the awarding of a new contract, the agency receiving the award will be required to end the existing contract with the current contract year ending December 31, 2012. It is not the intention of DCJS-OPCA to have more than one concurrent 200% of Poverty contract with any grantee.

3. Currently, my agency has a \$115,000 per year contract. Under this new RFP, if we apply to expand our existing contract, are we allowed to apply for an additional \$200,000 or are we restricted to \$85,000?

Answer: A new proposal to expand existing services should address this RFP and its requirements in its entirety. The maximum value is \$200,000. If awarded, the new contract will supercede the current contract, which will be terminated December 31, 2012, regardless of any remaining optional renewals. New awards under this RFP will be for 12 months with two one-year renewal options.

4. Is this funding new money or a rebid of currently held grants?

Answer: This is **not** a rebid of currently held grants. It is anticipated that current grantees that are performing satisfactorily and still have remaining optional renewals after December 31, 2012, will be able to exercise those renewal options without a new application. See #1.

Applicant Eligibility

5. I would like to know whether one of our ATI contract agencies, a for-profit agency, is eligible to apply. This ATI is fully funded by the county to provide day reporting services which include *Ready, Set, Work!*, cognitive groups, educational and vocational services and uses COMPAS. The question of eligibility arises from the fact that they are not a not-for-profit.

Answer: For profit agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding. See #6.

6. May a county apply for this funding as the contractor and sub-contract with another agency, including a for-profit agency?

Answer: Yes, a county may apply as the grantee and state its intention to sub-contract to another agency. In hiring the subcontractor, the applicant/grantee must follow all applicable competitive procurement requirements of the state or the applicable county. If the named subcontractor has been hired competitively in the recent past in compliance with state or county requirements, the contractor may be hired through single or sole source procurement with appropriate justification. Note: The grantee may NOT allow for any profit margin in the sub-contract, even if the sub-contractor is a for-profit organization. DCJS will pay for costs based on achievement of performance milestones and outcomes, and those milestones and outcome costs are based on an applicant's operating budget that reflects actual costs of services with no profit margin included. The DCJS procurement rules are outlined in Appendix A-1 of DCJS contracts and can be found on our website at: <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/ofpa/forms.htm>

Delinquent Child Support Requirement

7. May a program only enroll eligible participants with delinquent child support obligations or may it enroll participants who are owed child support?

Answer: It is not necessary that an individual have a child support order or be owed child support to enroll in a program provided under this RFP. Non-custodial parents, including those who may be the custodial parent of one child but who are also the non-custodial parent of other children, are required to complete the LDSS-4728 included in Attachment E of the RFP. All individuals enrolled who are non-custodial parents and have one or more child support orders should receive services to assist them in meeting those obligations, including assistance with seeking modifications to obtain a child support obligation commensurate with their ability to pay. Custodial parents who are owed child support but who do not have an order payable through the local social services district support collection unit should complete a child support application for services.

8. Are all individuals enrolled in the program required to have "delinquent child support obligations?"

Answer: See #7.

9. The RFP Introduction states that programs must target individuals involved in the criminal or family court who have delinquent child support obligations. Is this meant to exclude from program participation individuals involved in the family court who are custodial parents of minor children, or non-custodial parents who are meeting child support obligations, or can those individuals receive services as well?

Answer: These individuals are not excluded if they meet eligibility requirements.

COMPAS

10. Our program serves women. COMPAS has a risk and needs assessment called COMPAS Women that is specifically designed for the female population. Can we use this assessment instead of NYCOMPAS?

Answer: Yes. COMPAS Women may be used. However, a successful bidder will need to contract directly with the vendor to use this instrument and will need to ensure that staff are properly trained in its use.

11. Does a nonprofit agency need to purchase a license for COMPAS and conduct the assessment itself, or is it sufficient to get the results of the Reentry COMPAS assessment completed by DOCCS through communication with that agency, and use the results in case planning?

Answer: If an agency is going to enroll a reentry population and use Reentry COMPAS, it will need to work with NYS DOCCS to obtain a copy of the Reentry COMPAS assessment. It would not be necessary to redo the assessment if completed within the previous 30 days.

12. Must agencies budget for training and use of the COMPAS (including purchase of software suite), or will DCJS assume these costs directly?

Answer: It is expected that the agencies who are awarded contracts will apply for access to NY Probation COMPAS through DCJS eJustice, and will therefore not need to include software costs in the budget submitted. DCJS has an enterprise agreement that provides for the use of NY Probation COMPAS by probation departments and other criminal justice agencies including jails and alternative to incarceration programs.

Training costs of \$500 per staff member trained plus transportation, lodging and per diem for 1-2 nights (depending upon travel distance) for one day of training in Albany should be budgeted.

13. The RFP states that use of the NYCOMPAS risk and needs assessment is required. Can providers propose to use a supplement to the COMPAS that identifies, for example, risk and needs that have been shown to be gender-specific?

Answer: See #10.

14. May our local jail use NY COMPAS to assess individuals who have not been sentenced to probation but who are to be enrolled in a 200% of Poverty program?

Answer: Yes. See #12.

OWDS

15. Is DCJS going to offer OWDS training in 2013?

Answer: Yes. See #16.

16. Where will the Offender Workforce Development Specialist training be conducted?

Answer: It is expected that this training will be conducted in Albany beginning in the first quarter of 2013.

17. Are all organizations required to send staff to the NIC OWDS training, even if staff has had similar training and/or years of experience?

Answer: OPCA is not aware of similar comprehensive training designed to address the employment of offenders or ex-offenders and has trained individuals with prior experience in the employment of offenders. The proposal should commit to staff attending the training as stated in the RFP.

18. One of our current employees is a certified Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) instructor. Could that employee conduct all the required OWDS trainings for our program staff?

Answer: An individual instructor cannot provide OWDS training. The program is designed to be delivered by a team. The intensity and complexity of the program requires different skill sets. A training team shares this workload and provides different perspectives and a variety of training styles.

19. Are applicant agencies that are awarded contracts required to pay for the OWDS training? How many staff would be required to attend the training?

Answer: It is not anticipated that there will be any charge for the training. The budget may include lodging and transportation expenses at the applicable federal rate currently at \$104 for lodging plus taxes if applicable and \$61 per diem for 15 days. (Additional lodging nights may be budgeted if return travel after 5pm at the end of each of the three weeks is not practical.) Transportation costs may also be budgeted for the least expensive transportation alternative. Similarly, Attachment C may include OWDS training as a performance outcome reimbursable at the cost per staff member trained as outlined above.

It is expected that two or more staff would attend the 2013 training to allow for presentation of the *Ready, Set, Work!* group curriculum and delivery of other employment related services.

Ready, Set, Work!

20. Is the *Ready, Set, Work!* curriculum the required curriculum for job readiness training, or may other curricula be used?

Answer: As stated in the RFP under *Required Employment Focus*, it is required that staff lead *Ready, Set, Work!* groups after completion of the OWDS training. (Prior to completion of the training another curriculum may be utilized.) *Ready, Set, Work!* is based on the National Institute of Corrections' OWDS competencies. Other material may be utilized to supplement *Ready, Set, Work!* if desired.

21. Is completion of the 20- hour *Ready, Set, Work!* curriculum a requirement in order for clients to be considered program completers?

Answer: Completion of the *Ready, Set, Work!* group would be an appropriate task for the program completion milestone. Other appropriate tasks could include employment or the completion of three job interviews.

22. Is the *Ready, Set, Work!* curriculum available for applicants' review? Or is there a summary of the curriculum available for applicants' review?

Answer: The *Ready, Set, Work!* curriculum is designed to be delivered in ten sessions of 2 to 2.5 hours each, and is most often presented over a period of 5 or 10 weeks. (The local business community or other appropriate resources may be included in presenting some of the modules.) The groups are closed, i.e., are sequential and build upon the information in prior sessions. Therefore, clients are expected to attend all sessions. In special circumstances, one or two sessions may be made up if the participant's absence is excused. Following is the list of the modules:

Ready, Set, Work!

Table of Contents

Module 1.....	Career Assessments
Module 2.....	Legal Issues and Financial Incentives
Module 3.....	Applications
Module 4.....	Interviews
Module 5.....	Budget and Spending Plan
Module 6.....	Employer Expectations
Module 7.....	Barriers and Resources
Module 8	Job Retention
Module 9.....	Job Search
Module 10.....	Using the Local One Stop

Ready, Set Work! is intended for use by Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS) who have completed the National Institute of Correction's (NIC) OWDS training. The OWDS Training Program addresses the essential competencies that meet the requirements for certification as a Global Career Development Facilitator as specified by the Center for Credentialing and Education, Inc.

Client Transportation/Incentives/Stipends

23. Can we include weekly subway Metrocards as incentives for our clients during their job search?

Answer: Metrocards or bus passes to be used for program participation or documented job search efforts can be listed in the applicant's operating budget as client transportation costs, not as incentives. However, note that these awards will result in performance-based contracts where payment will not reimburse expenditures; rather payment will be based on the achievement of performance milestones and outcomes as indicated in the RFP budget guidelines.

24. Is it permitted to budget for program participants' travel costs?

Answer: See #23.

25. Is it permitted to budget for stipends and/or incentives for program participants? And in general, what kind of incentives would be permissible and how much could we spend on them to promote our clients securing and retaining employment?

Answer: Cost effective incentives may be included in the applicant's operating budget as a reward for achievement of program milestones or outcomes, or for progress toward achieving treatment or service plan goals. Incentives should not be provided in cash, but may be provided in the form of job attire or retail gift cards that could be used toward employment needs. Stipends are not prohibited, but should be used as payment for services rendered or for a short-term internship that would not be otherwise paid by an employer.

Authorized Signatures

26. On our current GMS account, our senior VP is the authorized signatory. Must s/he sign the transmittal letter or could our president & CEO sign?

Answer: The transmittal letter must be signed by the individual authorized to make contractual commitments on behalf of the organization. If the president and CEO is also authorized by the Board of Directors to make contractual commitments, that person may sign the transmittal letter.

27. Must the individual signing the transmittal letter also be registered as a signatory in GMS by the date of the submission, or do they only need to be authorized to make contractual commitments on behalf of the organization by that date?

Answer: In order to submit an application on GMS, the applicant must have an individual registered as a signatory in GMS. Failure to have an authorized signatory with eSignature rights will prevent submission of the application. Registration can take up to 5 business days, so you are advised to register *at least* 5 business days prior to the application submission date. The signatory must be authorized to make contractual commitments on behalf of the agency. The person who signs the transmittal letter must also be authorized to make contractual commitments on behalf of the agency, but need not be the same person as the GMS signatory if both have the proper authority.

Letters of Agreement

28. For required letters of agreement/memoranda of understanding (MOU), will OPCA accept agency linkages that are currently in place, or do you expect agencies to obtain new linkages that are specific to the proposed project?

Answer: Letters of agreement or MOUs must be obtained specifically for the new proposal and delineate roles and responsibilities.

29. The RFP states that letters of agreement/MOUs from all service providers named in the application must be submitted using the GMS attachments module. Do we need to include letters from all potential social service organizations that we anticipate referring clients to or just those that are formal partners, i.e. those that are subcontractors?

Answer: Yes, the applicant must attach letters of agreement/MOUs from all agencies that are named in the RFP and anticipated to provide services to program participants.

Program Requirements

30. Does a client need to receive all of the required services to count as a completion? Or can the completion milestone be that a client has gotten 2 or 3 of the required services as long as every one of the required services is offered to every client and each of the services are provided to some clients.

Answer: A client must receive and satisfactorily complete all appropriate services that are indicated as required in Section II, E, "Project Services," in order to be counted for the program completion milestone.

31. Is it a requirement that a minimum of 25 program participants are successfully employed?

Answer: The RFP does not require that a minimum of 25 participants obtain employment during a 12 month contract period. However, employment is among the most desirable program results of this RFP, and high scoring proposals can be expected to include substantive employment results.

32. At what point does job placement have to occur?

Answer: There is not one set point for job placement as it is necessarily based on the individual participant's level of job readiness. However, it would be desired as part of program completion.

33. The RFP (Sec II, E(b)) states that the following is a **required** component of the proposed program: “pre-employment training, job preparation, job placement, and job retention services; emphasis is placed on job placement and retention and measured 90 and 180 days from inception and/or program completion.”

A - Is the 180 day follow-up absolutely mandatory, as our program only runs for 120 days?

B – If yes, would this be a required outcome for post-program completion?

Answer: The RFP states under Section II, A that projects will be designed to include certain goals. Among the goals is job retention measured at 90 and 180 days in order to demonstrate participant change. These would both be appropriate reimbursable program outcomes. Commitment from the program participants to cooperate in providing the desired information to track job retention should be obtained at program enrollment. Payment for the 180 day job retention can be made even after the client has completed the program, as long as the 180 day milestone is achieved within the contract period or in a subsequent optional renewal contract period.

34. To be funded at \$200,000 is it necessary to have 50 successful participants that are employed?

Answer: It is not required by the RFP. However, employment is among the most desirable program results, and high scoring proposals can be expected to include substantive employment accomplishments.

35. After an appropriate job readiness assessment, can we place participants in the service for which they are most ready, based on their skills and work history? For example, can a participant go directly into job readiness training or job placement services if they are determined to be ready for these?

Answer: Yes. Programs should be designed not only to obtain employment, but also importantly to achieve job retention leading to a law abiding lifestyle. Other required services to support lasting change and avoid recidivism include cognitive behavioral training and assumption of familial responsibility.

36. If program participants are able to secure a job before they complete the full program, can these participants still be counted as having completed the program as well as passed through all the intermediate milestones?

Answer: No. If a participant obtains employment but is unable to complete other program activities, reimbursement could be claimed for the milestones completed up to the time of

leaving the program, as well as any outcomes obtained prior to employment or subsequently, including job retention outcomes. Milestones not completed would not be eligible for reimbursement.

37. Is "program completion" defined by each applicant?

Answer: Program completion is defined by the applicant taking into account the program requirements as indicated in section II, A and E and otherwise in the RFP.

38. Section II, E includes parenting skills training is listed as a required service:

a. Must applicants propose to offer parenting skills training directly, or can these services be provided via referral?

Answer: Parenting skills may be provided either by the grantee, sub-grantee, or via referral to another agency.

b. Is parenting skills training a requirement for all participants, or only for those assessed as needing to further develop those skills?

Answer: Parenting skills training is required by RFP section II, E "Project Services."

39. Our organization currently operates a grant-funded, six-week parenting skills/job-training program, and we are interested in applying for OPCA funding to support an enhanced program component for participants who complete this program. If funded, could program participants' involvement in our current six-week program be counted toward the RFP's requirement of provision of a minimum of 90 days of services? Or as part of our proposed program enhancement, would we be required to provide an additional 90 days of services?

Answer: A proposal submitted in response to this RFP must be for a distinct, separate program enhancement that responds to all required elements delineated in the RFP, including minimum program duration of 90 days. Time spent under a different grant cannot be counted toward milestone achievement in a new grant awarded under this RFP.

Criminal Justice Advisory Board

40. How can an agency find out who serves as the chair of the Criminal Justice Advisory Board or the County Alternatives to Incarceration Advisory Board?

Answer: You may contact DCJS- Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA) at 518-485-2393 to obtain contact information for the County Criminal Justice and/or Alternatives to Incarceration Advisory Board in your jurisdiction.

41. Can you provide more detail on the requirement for a letter of support from the chair of the County Criminal Justice Advisory Board or County Alternatives to Incarceration Advisory Board? In NYC, would this be the NYC Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, or some other body?

Answer: A letter of support from the County Criminal Justice or Alternatives to Incarceration Advisory Board would indicate support of the application and that the services being proposed are relevant to promote public safety and reduce recidivism within that county/jurisdiction. Yes, in NYC it would be the Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator. The phone number in New York City is (212) 788-6833.

Evidence-based Cognitive Behavioral Treatment

42. The RFP states that applicants must incorporate an evidence-based cognitive behavioral treatment program. The RFP mentions four examples. Is the applicant required to use one of the mentioned curriculum or can another evidence-based curriculum be used instead?

Answer: Programs are not limited to those named in the RFP. See response to #43.

43. Is the list of cognitive behavioral interventions listed on page 5 meant to be exhaustive, or can providers propose to use a different CBT so long as they provide a rationale and evidence to support that selection?

Answer: Applicants are not limited to using the evidence-based programs listed in this RFP, as long as sufficient evidence demonstrating the effectiveness in achieving measurable and definable public safety outcomes such as reduced recidivism can be provided. If another program is proposed other than one of the programs identified in RFP, the applicant should identify the evaluation design and results proving effectiveness, or provide the source identifying the program as evidence-based, including adequate citation.

Other

44. Our county submitted an application for a very similar RFP in July of 2010. We did not receive funding for this and would like to re-submit. Is there any information available that would help us so we could submit a more thorough RFP?

Answer: We cannot provide individual guidance during the pendency of an open, competitive RFP process. Our best advice for all applicants is to answer all RFP questions as fully as possible within the 3,000 word limit.

45. The RFP says that these services can operate as “wraparound” services with existing probation or community-based alternative to incarceration programs. We have a current grant

funded ATI Program. If, in addition to what we provide clients in that ATI program, clients also receive a COMPAS assessment, employment services, CBT, parent training and family reunification advocacy; can they also be counted as clients under this 200% of Poverty initiative?

Answer: Clients can be reimbursed for milestone and outcome achievement of wraparound services in a new 200% of Poverty contract award *only if* they were NOT services also provided and reimbursed under the existing grant funded ATI program. The grantee must be willing to provide a copy of the existing contract, as well as other documentation requested showing that services and performance payment are separate, discrete, and not duplicative.

46. May organizations submit more than one proposal?

Answer: Due to the limited funds available, an organization may submit only one proposal.

47. Will awards be made solely on the basis of the scoring criteria and process set forth in the RFP, or may other factors, such as geographical distribution of grants, be employed?

Answer: Awards will be made in accordance with the scoring criteria and process set forth in the RFP.

48. Do the Milestones, Outcomes & Costs form (Att. C), the Program Work Plan (Att. D), and the Budget (Att. B) fall *outside* the 3,000 word limit for the RFP Questions? Is it sufficient for us to reference these attachments in our answer to Question #5?

Answer: Attachments B, C and D fall outside the 3,000 word limit. However, it is not sufficient to only reference attachments in response to question #5. A discussion and narrative response is required for all five questions.

49. Given that programs are only expected to serve a relatively small number of individuals (minimum 25 per year), what kind of “system impacts” would OPCA expect providers to be able to demonstrate?

Answer: A proposal could discuss the impact on neighborhoods through the establishment of familial responsibility, the employment of a custodial or non-custodial parent and the reduction of criminal justice involvement. Twenty five or more individuals could be an important number employed and otherwise engaged in their communities in many localities. Please also see the discussion under scoring proposal section VI.3.

50. If awarded, are clients that are enrolled under other DCJS-OPCA ATI contracts able to also be enrolled in the 200% ATI contract as well since the proposed 200% ATI program would be providing separate services to clients? If so, can we include housing as a milestone on the 200% contract if it is also included under another ATI contract?

Answer: Grantees that have contracts under other DCJS OPCA ATI funding streams may also respond to this RFP to serve the appropriate target population with the required services. While the same clients may receive enhanced services under a 200% of Poverty grant, all services must be separate and discrete. That means that a client may be counted only once for each service received. If housing is reimbursed as a milestone on one grant, it cannot also be counted and reimbursed under the 200% contract. A grantee may be reimbursed for each service or milestone only once, under only one of the contracts. No double billing is permitted.

51. With rolling participant admission over the contract year, a number of program participants who begin the program later in the year will not be able to meet the retention milestones during the contract year. Therefore, can we collect payment for outcomes, such as retention milestones, that happen after the contract year is up?

Answer: Yes, if a program has rolling participant admission over the course of the contract year, reimbursement for achievement of retention or other milestones or outcomes which occur in a subsequent contract year would be allowed, contingent on the continuation of that program's operation and an approved renewal term by the state for the subsequent contract term.

