



State of New Hampshire
Department of Health and Human Services

REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATION

FOR

Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Home and Community Based Services

RGA-2025-DLTSS-01-WORKF

RELEASE DATE: February 23, 2024

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Home and Community Based Services

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1. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

1.1. Introduction

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Long Term Supports and Services (“Department”), is seeking responses to this Request for Grant Applications (“RGA” or “solicitation”) from eligible Applicants to develop and implement new and innovative workforce solutions, statewide, to increase recruitment and retention of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) direct care workforce. HCBS are defined in Section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act.

Eligible Applicants must provide HCBS direct care services to one (1) or more of the following populations:

- Individuals/children with developmental disabilities;
- Adults/seniors with physical disabilities;
- Adults with an acquired brain disorder; and
- Adults/children served by the behavioral health system.

This RGA is open to recipients of funding through RGA-2024-DLTSS-02-WORKF - Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Home and Community Based Services. Recipients of funding through RGA-2024-DLTSS-02-WORKF - Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Home and Community Based Services are permitted to submit an application for consideration.

Funding in this RGA cannot be used to replace, supplement or supplant existing efforts and expenses or efforts and expenses funded through RGA-2024-DLTSS-02-WORKF - Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Home and Community Based Services.

The Department anticipates awarding multiple Grant Agreements for new solutions, initiatives, and/or activities that meet the objectives in this solicitation. Applicants may propose multiple solutions; however, Applicants must submit a separate Application for each project.

1.2. Key Information

The information in the table below is as anticipated by the Department and is subject to change. Grant Agreements are contingent upon the availability of funds and/or approval by the Governor and Executive Council.

Anticipated Grant Agreement Effective Date	August 2024
Grant Agreement End Date	March 31, 2025
Renewal Option	N/A
Funding for the resulting agreement(s) is anticipated to be approximately:	\$6,556,572

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Funding Source	The Department anticipates using Federal funds for resulting grant agreement(s).	
	Assistance Listing Number	93.778
	American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)	
Match Requirements	N/A	
Point of Contact	Kathleen Vattes, Senior Contract Specialist Kathleen.b.vattes@dhhs.nh.gov 603-271-0198	
<p>From the date of release of this solicitation until an award is made and announced regarding the selection of an Applicant, all communication with personnel employed by or under contract with the Department regarding this solicitation is prohibited unless first approved by the Point of Contact listed above. Department employees have been directed not to hold conferences and/or discussions concerning this solicitation with any Applicant during the selection process, unless otherwise authorized by the Point of Contact. Applicants may be disqualified for violating this restriction on communications.</p>		

1.3. Procurement Timetable

All times are according to Eastern Time. The Department reserves the right to modify these dates and times at its sole discretion.		
Item	Action	Date
1.	Solicitation Released	February 23, 2024
2.	Letter of Intent Submission Deadline (optional)	March 4, 2024
3.	RGA Questions Submission Deadline	March 4, 2024 12:00 PM
4.	Department Response to Questions Published	March 18, 2024
5.	Applicant Solicitation Response Due Date	March 25, 2024 12:00 PM

1.4. Background

1.4.1. New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Long Term Supports and Services

The Department is responsible for promoting the health, safety and well-being of the citizens of New Hampshire. To achieve that goal, the Department provides services for children, families, individuals and seniors in areas such as public assistance, housing supports, mental health, developmental disabilities, brain injury, substance abuse and public health services. The Department does this work with the assistance of New Hampshire citizens and through partnerships with families, community groups and providers as well as other state and local entities.

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1.4.2. Objective

The Department recognizes that HCBS providers are experiencing HCBS direct care workforce challenges that result in a reduced ability to serve individuals eligible for services and that focus and support in the area of direct care recruitment and retention will assist HCBS providers in obtaining and maintaining employees that provide HCBS direct care to their population base. The objective of this RGA is to enable HCBS providers to implement new and innovative direct care workforce solutions to increase direct care workforce recruitment and retention through a one-time only funding grant, as long as the proposed solutions do not replace, supplement or supplant current and existing direct care recruitment and retention efforts.

1.5. Grant Agreement Requirements

1.5.1. The selected Applicants must implement new and innovative direct care workforce solutions to increase recruitment and retention of the HCBS direct care workforce. Proposed solutions may be agency specific, sector specific or regionally based; and may be short-term, long-term and/or a one-time initiative.

1.5.1.1. **Funding awarded under this RGA is one-time only funding. The selected Applicant is responsible for funding long-term, direct care workforce solutions beyond March 31, 2025.**

1.5.1.2. **Applicant's proposed solutions and funding awarded under this RGA cannot be used to:**

1.5.1.2.1. Replace, supplement, or supplant any and all:

1.5.1.2.1.1. Existing recruiting and retention related expenses, including ongoing and/or current training and development initiatives (see Subparagraph 1.5.2.5., for training and development restrictions and considerations).

1.5.1.2.1.2. Existing direct care workforce programming, strategic or initiative related expenses.

1.5.1.2.1.3. Expenses funded through RGA-2024-DLTSS-02-WORKF – Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Home and Community Based Services.

1.5.1.2.1.4. Administrative costs and contributions related to staff expenses (see Subparagraph 1.5.2.9., regarding exception to overtime expenses for non-exempt direct care employees and Subparagraph 1.5.2.10., regarding exception to overtime expenses for non-exempt administrative recruiting employees).

1.5.1.2.2. Purchase motor vehicles.

1.5.1.3. **The Department reserves the right to reject any Application that does not meet the requirements set forth in Subparagraph 1.5.1.2., above at its sole discretion.**

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- 1.5.2. New and innovative direct care work force solutions eligible for funding under this RGA may include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.5.2.1. New pipeline strategies or programs, including new direct care positions.
 - 1.5.2.2. New marketing strategies or programs.
 - 1.5.2.3. New collaborations with other agencies, organizations and/or educational institutions for direct care.
 - 1.5.2.4. New apprenticeships for direct care.
 - 1.5.2.5. Direct care work force retention training and development initiatives. If funding is requested to be used for this purpose, the selected Applicant must designate this request: “Retention Training and Development.”. Proposed solutions that include training and development, may not qualify for this grant if not identified as “Retention Training and Development.” (see Subparagraph 1.5.1.2.1.1.).
 - 1.5.2.6. New targeted recruitment for direct care.
 - 1.5.2.7. New focused retention.
 - 1.5.2.8. Travel expenses for direct care.
 - 1.5.2.9. Overtime expenses for non-exempt direct care employees.
 - 1.5.2.10. Overtime expenses for non-exempt administrative recruiting employees.
- 1.5.3. Reporting Requirements
 - 1.5.3.1. The selected Applicants must provide Work Plan update reports to the Department on a monthly basis, which must include:
 - 1.5.3.1.1. Progress, to date, on the solutions and activities outlined in the Work Plan.
 - 1.5.3.1.2. Updated estimated completion dates for all programs, strategies, initiatives outlined in the Work Plan.
 - 1.5.3.1.3. Identify barriers to completing programs, strategies and initiatives included in the Work Plan and a corrective action plan to meet desired outcome(s).
 - 1.5.3.2. The selected Applicants must provide a Final Report to the Department no later than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the Grant Agreement completion date, which must include:
 - 1.5.3.2.1. Program, strategies or initiatives status and/or completion dates.
 - 1.5.3.2.2. An impact statement on the success of the project(s), which must include supporting documentation.
 - 1.5.3.2.3. Aggregated and de-identified/de-identifiable information only.
 - 1.5.3.3. The selected Applicants must ensure that no individual can be directly or indirectly identified by the data submitted or the content of the reports.

2. APPLICANT INFORMATION

2.1. Application, Work Plan and Budgets

- 2.1.1. Applicants must submit a separate Application with all of the Application Content specified in Section 2.5. and 2.6. below for **each** proposed new direct care workforce solution. Multiple solutions cannot be submitted in one (1) application.
- 2.1.2. Applications, work plans, budget sheets, and budget narratives must be completed and submitted in accordance with Section 2.5. and 2.6.
- 2.1.3. Each Application will be subject to the Certification and Award Process as set forth in Section 2.3.

2.2. Compensation

- 2.2.1. The total anticipated available funding, inclusive of all Grant Agreements awarded through this RGA is approximately \$6,556,572.
- 2.2.2. Applicants must request a funding amount by submitting Appendix E – Budget Sheet, with budget narrative, for State Fiscal Year 2025 (August 1, 2024, through March 30, 2025). Requested funding must not exceed an eight (8) month budget period and must not extend beyond March 30, 2025, for proposed project(s) related to new direct care workforce recruitment and retention strategies for HCBS.

2.3. Certification and Award Process

- 2.3.1. The Department will review applications for completeness, to assign an overall **“Pass/Fail”** rating based on the following criteria:
 - 2.3.1.1. The Application is complete;
 - 2.3.1.2. The Applicant is eligible as specified in Subsection 1.1.;
 - 2.3.1.3. The Applicant’s proposed project(s) meet one (1) or more of the qualifying project criteria specified in Subparagraph 1.5.2.;
 - 2.3.1.4. The Applicant’s Work Plan (Appendix F – Work Plan) meets the requirements as specified in Subparagraph 1.5.3.; and
 - 2.3.1.5. The Applicant’s Appendix E – Budget Sheet meets the applicable budget requirements specified as specified in Subparagraph 2.2.2.
 - 2.3.1.6. Applicant’s proposed solutions and funding awarded under this RGA cannot be used to replace, supplement or supplant existing efforts and expenses as specified in Subparagraph 1.5.1.
 - 2.3.1.7. The Applicant meets all other requirements as specified in this RGA.

2.4. Award Methodology

- 2.4.1. The available funding will be divided by the total number of selected Applications that receive a “Pass” rating, in accordance with Subsection 2.2., Certification and Award Process, to determine the initial maximum threshold allotment to be awarded to each selected Application. However, if any requested amount of funding in any selected Application is less than the threshold allotment, those selected Applicants will be awarded only the amount requested in their application(s). The remaining available funding will then be divided by the number

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of selected Applications that includes a requested amount higher than the initial threshold allotment. Any remaining funding will be awarded using the same methodology until all funds are awarded. Selected Applicants will be notified by the Department of the award amount.

- 2.4.2. All Grant Agreements awarded by the Department as a result of this RGA are subject to approval by the Governor and Executive Council.

2.5. Application Email

- 2.5.1. Applications must be submitted electronically to contracts@dhhs.nh.gov and the Contract Specialist at the email address specified in Subsection 1.2.
- 2.5.2. The subject line must include the following information: **RGA-2025-DLTSS-01-WORKF.**
- 2.5.3. The maximum size of file attachments per email is 25MB. Attachments that exceed the limit must be submitted via multiple emails with the subject line indicating the number of emails (**i.e., x of x**).
- 2.5.4. Applications will be accepted until the date and time indicated in the Procurement Timetable in Subsection 1.3.

2.6. Grant Application Content

- 2.6.1. **Grant Application Narrative** must include:
 - 2.6.1.1. Completed Appendix D – Transmittal Letter and Applicant Information.
 - 2.6.1.2. Completed Appendix E – Grant Budget Sheet, including Budget Narrative.
 - 2.6.1.3. Completed Appendix F – Work Plan. Work Plan, must be in accordance with Paragraph 1.5.3., and must include:
 - 2.6.1.3.1. Detailed process(es) or plan(s) to perform the proposed project in accordance with the Work Plan, to meet the Grant Agreement solutions as specified in Paragraph 1.5.1., to increase HCBS direct care workforce recruitment and/or retention;
 - 2.6.1.3.2. Timeline for the proposed project must not to extend beyond March 31, 2025;
 - 2.6.1.3.3. Geographic area(s) impacted;
 - 2.6.1.3.4. Estimated number of employees impacted; and
 - 2.6.1.3.5. Measurable outcomes that align with the objectives of this RGA.
 - 2.6.1.4. Narrative of what your organization is currently doing to address HCBS direct care workforce recruitment and/or retention;
 - 2.6.1.5. Description of your organization’s current work capacity to perform and complete the proposed project, including sufficient equipment and human resources necessary to perform the proposed project;

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- 2.6.1.6. Description of your organization’s experience with recruitment and retention; and
- 2.6.1.7. Explanation how proposed new and innovative project can **improve and expand** your organizations’ existing direct care recruitment and retention initiatives.

2.7. Applicant’s Questions and Answers

- 2.7.1. All questions about this RGA, including but not limited to requests for clarification, additional information, or any changes to the RGA, must be made in writing citing the RGA page number and section, Subsection, etc., and submitted by email to the Contract Specialist identified in Subsection 1.2.
- 2.7.2. The Department may consolidate and/or paraphrase questions received for efficiency and clarity. Questions that are not understood will not be answered. Statements that are not questions will not receive a response.
- 2.7.3. Questions must be received by the deadline provided in Subsection 1.3. Procurement Timetable.
- 2.7.4. Department responses to questions received will be published on the Department’s website on or about the date indicated in Subsection 1.3. Procurement Timetable.

2.8. Validity of Application

Applications are valid for one hundred eighty (180) days following the deadline for submission in the Procurement Timetable above, or until the Effective Date of any resulting Grant Agreement, whichever is later.

3. NOTICES

3.1. Exceptions

- 3.1.1. To the extent that an Applicant believes that exceptions to the standard form Grant Agreement, General Provisions, which is attached as Appendix A, will be necessary for the Applicant to enter into an Agreement, the Applicant must note those issues during the RGA Questions period specified in Procurement Timetable at Subsection 1.3. above. The Department will review requested exceptions to the Grant Agreement, General Provisions (Appendix A) and Standard Exhibits (Appendix B) and accept, reject, or note that it is open to negotiation of the proposed exception at its sole discretion. If the Department accepts an Applicant’s exception, the Department will, at the conclusion of the RGA Questions & Answers period, provide notice to all potential Applicants of the exceptions that have been accepted and indicate that exception is available to all potential Applicants by publication of the Department’s responses on or about the date indicated in Subsection 1.3. Procurement Timetable. Any exceptions to the standard form Grant Agreement, General Provisions, and standard exhibits that are not raised by an Applicant during the RGA Questions period may not be considered. In no event is an Applicant to submit its own standard grant terms and conditions as a replacement for the Department’s terms in response to this solicitation.

3.2. RGA Amendment

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- 3.2.1. The Department reserves the right to amend this RGA, as it deems appropriate, prior to the Application submission deadline on its own initiative or in response to issues raised through Applicant questions. In the event of an amendment to the RGA, the Department, at its sole discretion, may extend the Application submission deadline. The amended language will be posted on the Department's website.

3.3. Compliance

- 3.3.1. The selected Applicants must comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and applicable policies and procedures adopted by the Department currently in effect, and as they may be adopted or amended during the contract period.
- 3.3.2. The selected Applicants may be required to complete a contract monitoring questionnaire, to be provided by the Department, to determine risk of noncompliance and appropriate monitoring activities, including but not limited to:
 - 3.3.2.1. Site visits.
 - 3.3.2.2. File reviews.
 - 3.3.2.3. Staff training.

3.4. Public Disclosure

- 3.4.1. Pursuant to RSA 21-G:37, all responses to this RGA shall be considered private until the award of a grant agreement. The content of an Applicant's application must remain confidential until the Governor and Executive Council have approved any grant agreement(s) as a result of this RGA. An Applicant's disclosure or distribution of the contents of its application, other than to the State, will be grounds for disqualification at the State's sole discretion.
- 3.4.2. The content of each Application and addenda thereto will become public information once the Governor and Executive Council have approved a grant agreement. Any information submitted as part of an Application in response to this RGA may be subject to public disclosure under RSA 91-A. In addition, in accordance with RSA 9-F:1, any grant agreement entered into as a result of this RGA will be made accessible to the public online via the website Transparent NH (www.nh.gov/transparentnh/). Accordingly, business financial information and proprietary information such as trade secrets, business and financials models and forecasts, and proprietary formulas may be exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV.
- 3.4.3. Insofar as an Applicant seeks to maintain the confidentiality of its confidential commercial, financial or personnel information, the Applicant must clearly identify in writing the information it claims to be confidential and explain the reasons such information should be considered confidential. This must be done by separate letter identifying by page number and Application section the specific information the Applicant claims to be exempt from public disclosure pursuant to RSA 91-A:5.
- 3.4.4. Each Applicant acknowledges that the Department is subject to the Right-to-Know Law New Hampshire RSA Chapter 91-A. The Department shall maintain the confidentiality of the identified confidential information insofar as it is consistent with applicable laws or regulations, including but not limited to New Hampshire

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RSA Chapter 91-A. In the event the Department receives a request for the information identified by an Applicant as confidential, it will notify the Applicant and specify the date it intends to release the requested information. Any effort to prohibit or enjoin the release of the information shall be the Applicant's responsibility and at the Applicant's sole expense. If the Applicant fails to obtain a court order enjoining the disclosure, the Department may release the information on the date specified in its notice to the Applicant without incurring any liability to the Applicant.

3.5. Non-Commitment

3.5.1. Notwithstanding any other provision of this RGA, this RGA does not commit the Department to award a grant. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all Applications or any portions thereof, at any time, and to cancel this RGA and to solicit new Applications under a new Application process.

3.6. Request for Additional Information or Materials

3.6.1. The Department may ask any Applicant to provide additional information or materials needed to clarify information presented in the Application. Such a request will be issued in writing and will not provide an Applicant with an opportunity to change, extend, or otherwise amend its Application in intent or substance.

3.7. Liability

3.7.1. By submitting an Application in response to this RGA, an Applicant agrees that in no event shall the State be either responsible for or held liable for any costs incurred by an Applicant in the preparation or submittal of or otherwise in connection with an Application, or for work performed prior to the Effective Date of a resulting grant agreement.

3.8. Successful Applicant Notice and Grant Award Negotiations

3.8.1. If an Applicant(s) is selected, the Department will notify the successful Applicant(s) in writing of their selection and the State's desire to enter into grant award negotiations. Until the Department successfully completes negotiations with the selected Applicant(s), all submitted Applications remain eligible for selection by the Department. In the event negotiations are unsuccessful with the selected Applicant(s), the evaluation team may recommend another Applicant(s). The Department will notify Applicant(s) that are not initially selected to enter into negotiations.

3.9. Scope of Award and Grant Award Notice

3.9.1. The Department reserves the right to award a service, part of a service, group of services, or total services and to reject any and all Applications in whole or in part. A grant award is contingent on approval by the Department.

3.9.2. If a grant is awarded, the Applicant must obtain written consent from the Department before any public announcement or news release is issued pertaining to any grant award.

3.10. Protest of Intended Award

- 3.10.1. Any challenge of an award made or otherwise related to this RGA shall be governed by RSA 21-G:37, and the procedures and terms of this RGA. The procedure set forth in RSA 21-G:37, IV, shall be the sole remedy available to challenge any award resulting from this RGA. In the event that any legal action is brought challenging this RGA and selection process, outside of the review process identified in RSA 21-G:37, IV, and in the event that the State of New Hampshire prevails, the challenger agrees to pay all expenses of such action, including attorney's fees and costs at all stages of litigation.

3.11. Contingency

- 3.11.1. Aspects of the award may be contingent upon changes to state or federal laws and regulations.

3.12. Ethical Requirements

- 3.12.1. From the time this RGA is published until a grant agreement is awarded, no Applicant shall offer or give, directly or indirectly, any gift, expense reimbursement, or honorarium, as defined by RSA 15-B, to any elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of any such official or employee who will or has selected, evaluated, or awarded an RGA, or similar submission. Any Applicant that violates RSA 21-G:38 shall be subject to prosecution for an offense under RSA 640:2. Any Applicant who has been convicted of an offense based on conduct in violation of this section, which has not been annulled, or who is subject to a pending criminal charge for such an offense, shall be disqualified from submitting an application to this RGA, or similar request for submission and every such applicant shall be disqualified from responding to any RGA or similar request for submission issued by any state agency. An Applicant that was disqualified under this section because of a pending criminal charge which is subsequently dismissed, results in an acquittal, or is annulled, may notify the Department of Administrative Services, which shall note that information on the list maintained on the state's internal intranet system, except in the case of annulment, the information, shall be deleted from the list.

3.13. Records

- 3.13.1. The selected Applicants must maintain the following records during the resulting Grant Agreement term where appropriate and as prescribed by the Department:
- 3.13.1.1. Books, records, documents and other electronic or physical data evidencing and reflecting all costs and other expenses incurred by the selected Applicants in the performance of the resulting Grant Agreement(s), and all income received or collected by the selected Applicants.
- 3.13.1.2. All records must be maintained in accordance with accounting procedures and practices, which sufficiently and properly reflect all such costs and expenses, and which are acceptable to the Department, and to include, without limitation, all ledgers, books, records, and original evidence of costs such as purchase requisitions and orders, vouchers, requisitions for materials, inventories, valuations of in-kind contributions, labor time cards, payrolls, and other records requested or required by the Department.

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3.13.2. During the term of the resulting Grant Agreement(s) and the period for retention hereunder, the Department, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and any of their designated representatives shall have access to all reports and records maintained pursuant to the resulting Grant Agreement(s) for purposes of audit, examination, excerpts and transcripts. If, upon review of the Final Expenditure Report the Department shall disallow any expenses claimed by the selected Applicants as costs hereunder the Department shall retain the right, at its discretion, to deduct the amount of such expenses as are disallowed or to recover such sums from the selected Applicants.

3.14. Credits and Copyright Ownership

3.14.1. All documents, notices, press releases, research reports and other materials prepared during or resulting from the performance of the services of the resulting Grant Agreement(s) must include the following statement, “The preparation of this (report, document etc.) was financed under a Grant Agreement with the State of New Hampshire, Department of Health and Human Services, with funds provided in part by the State of New Hampshire and/or such other funding sources as were available or required, e.g., the United States Department of Health and Human Services.”

3.14.2. All written, video and audio materials produced or purchased under the Grant Agreement must have prior approval from the Department before printing, production, distribution or use.

3.14.3. The Department will retain copyright ownership for any and all original materials produced, including, but not limited to:

3.14.3.1. Brochures.

3.14.3.2. Resource directories.

3.14.3.3. Protocols.

3.14.3.4. Guidelines.

3.14.3.5. Posters.

3.14.3.6. Reports.

3.14.4. The selected Applicants must not reproduce any materials produced under the Grant Agreement without prior written approval from the Department.

4. APPENDICES

4.1. Appendix A – Grant Agreement, Form G-1 (for reference)

4.2. Appendix B – Standard Agreement Exhibits (for reference)

4.3. Appendix C – RESERVED

4.4. Appendix D – Transmittal Letter and Applicant Information

4.5. Appendix E – Budget Sheet

4.6. Appendix F – Work Plan