

**NYS Department of State
Office for New Americans
Professional Pathways for High-Skilled Immigrants
RFA #22-ONA-35**

The responses to questions included herein are official responses by the Department of State (DOS) to questions submitted by potential proposers and are hereby incorporated into the Request for Applications RFA # 22-ONA-35 issued on September 21, 2022. In the event of any conflict between the Request for Proposals and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

Section VII, Required Activities – Part B, #1. ONA Job Coach, second paragraph is amended to read:

“ONA Job Coaches should possess the following minimum requirements prior to being hired or repurposed:”

Section VIII. Eligible Costs is hereby amended to add the following:

“13. Contractual services to hire translation/interpretation vendors.”

Questions and Answers

Q1. What is the anticipated award date

A1. Awards are anticipated to be made in late 2022.

Q2. When is the grant period start date

A2. Grant contracts are anticipated to start in early 2023.

Q3. What is the grant period

A3. As stated in Section II of the RFA, grant contracts are anticipated to be executed for one year with two optional one-year renewals.

Q4. We have a question about the size of the regional structure as described in this RFA. Might there be consideration of possibility of dividing Brooklyn and Queens into two separate regions due to the exceptionally large number of recent immigrants arriving in these two NYC counties as compared to other regions in NYS?

A4. For the purposes of this RFA, Brooklyn and Queens will remain as one region.

Q5. Regarding Page 6 of RFA, “The grantee organization will be required to provide and/or procure language translation/interpretation and accessibility services for non-English proficient immigrant clients and immigrant clients with communication-related disabilities. Staff funded under this grant must have language ability or access to confidential language access and/or effective communication accommodation services when assisting clients. It is expected that every client who receives assistance from staff funded under this grant will be served in the language of the client’s choice, including sign language, and materials in braille.”

Comment/Question: We have staff speaking multiple languages in our current team (Spanish, Portuguese, French, Hebrew, Korean), and language ability is always something essential to us when hiring new staff. We also always create spaces inclusive of all levels of English proficiency in our programs – our Bridge to LEAD program, in particular, is facilitated along a translanguage model using both English and Spanish for beginner English learners. At the same time, we don’t currently provide any translation/interpretation services nor have access to confidential language access, and we’re unable to serve clients in the language of their choice except when it’s one of the languages spoken by our team. Would there be any ability to receive assistance to build our capacity in that field, similarly to the assistance that could be received to build our capacity in making our programs accessible to individuals with disabilities?

A5. DOS cannot provide direct assistance with translation and interpretation services; however, translation/interpretation costs are an eligible cost under this RFA. Through its Language Access Coordinator, DOS can assist with identifying qualified vendors if a grantee requires a contractor to assist with the provision of translation/interpretation services under this grant.

Q6. Regarding Page 9 of RFA on the minimum requirements of ONA Job Coaches prior to being hired or repurposed.

Comment/Question: Currently, three out of our four program staff are immigrant women themselves and graduates of our workforce development programs. They come with strong knowledge and experience that is highly relevant to their role, and they have performed extremely well so far. At the same time, they lacked deep knowledge and hands-on experience specific to the NYS/NYC economy when they first joined our organization, and gained it as they started working in their role. If we were selected under Part B of the RFA, we would be very interested in hiring one of our workforce development graduates or in repurposing one of our existing staff, with professional experience that would be of course highly relevant to the role, but without necessarily yet deep knowledge and hands-on experience specific to the NYS/NYC economy. I am wondering to what extent this criterion of possessing deep knowledge of the NYS/NYC economy is essential with regard to the recruitment of ONA Job Coaches.

A6. Per the RFA, ONA Job Coaches should possess the minimum qualifications as outlined on page 8, Section VII, part 1. Successful applicants for this RFA will demonstrate in their application how the candidate(s) they have identified for the ONA Job Coach position would meet these qualifications or

provide a justification for any additional criteria they are using to determine the best candidate(s) for the ONA Job Coach position(s).