

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**Request for Applications  
RFA0367**

**Statewide Financial System Opportunity # AGM-CSA25**

**New York State  
Department of Agriculture and Markets**

***FreshConnect CSA for SNAP Program 2025***

Release Request for Applications (RFA)	March 4, 2025
Informational Webinar	March 18, 2025
Deadline for Questions	July 8, 2025
Questions and Answers Posted	Updated weekly starting March 27, 2025
Deadline for Applications	July 22, 2025
Announcement of Grant Awards	On a Rolling Basis



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## 1. APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (the “Department”) is pleased to announce the availability of funds for the FreshConnect CSA for SNAP Grant Program.

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED via the Statewide Financial System (SFS)** to be considered for funding. Faxed, mailed, or e-mailed applications will not be accepted. The name for this opportunity is “**FreshConnect CSA for SNAP**” and the **Grant Opportunity ID is AGM-CSA25**

**Applications will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. on July 22, 2025.** Late applications will not be accepted.

## 2. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

All questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing (fax or e-mail) to:

Attn: “**FreshConnect CSA for SNAP Program**”

Alison Nickford  
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets  
10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235  
Fax: (518) 457-8398  
E-mail: [farmersmarkets@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:farmersmarkets@agriculture.ny.gov)

All questions must be submitted by **4:00 p.m. on July 8, 2025**. Applicants must note that all clarifications are to be resolved prior to the submission of a proposal. A list of questions about the program which are received from potential applicants, and answers to those questions, as well as any changes, additions or deletions to the RFA, will be posted in the Funding Opportunities section of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets website (<https://agriculture.ny.gov>) by **March 27, 2025** and updated on a regular basis until **July 11, 2025**. Such official addenda are the only authorized method used to communicate substantive information, including the clarification or modification of the timeline, terms, or other requirements of this RFA.

All applicants are responsible for keeping informed of any revisions to this invitation. All addenda shall be incorporated into the RFA which will be part of the awarded contract.

### 3. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

#### A. Definitions

For the purposes of this grant the below are defined as follows.

1. **Traditional CSA:** A form of direct marketing where a community of individuals pledge support to a single/specific farm operation so that the producer and consumers share the risks and benefits of food production.
2. **CSA Share:** is a weekly portion of a farms' food products that a member receives in exchange for paying a membership fee
3. **Modern CSA/Food Box:** Where an organization or community directly supports multiple producers by aggregating resources to share the risks and benefits of food production. For example, this may look like a Food Box program where food is aggregated in an area where producers do not direct market CSA shares.
4. **Producer:** Producer shall mean any person or persons who grow, produce, or cause to be grown or produced any farm or food products in New York State.
5. **SNAP:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is a federal program that provides monthly food benefits to low-income households and individuals. The program's goals are to improve nutrition and increase the purchasing power of food for low-income families.

#### B. Program Description

The FreshConnect CSA for SNAP program will allow SNAP participants to access the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model by partially subsidizing the cost of share purchases. The goals of this program are to:

1. Support producers in New York State by allowing greater access to their products statewide;

2. Allow SNAP participants in New York State the opportunity to access shares of fresh, locally grown farm food products; and
3. Strengthen the bonds between the farming and SNAP communities to raise awareness of the bounty of New York farm products across the state.

### **C. Funding Available**

Awards for this opportunity will be made on a rolling basis to eligible and to qualified applicants until funds are depleted. A total of \$250,000 in funding is available through this round of Request for Applications.

Applications may request a minimum of \$25,000 and a maximum of \$50,000 for the project to be considered.

Once a contract is fully executed, grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Awardees may request, at the discretion of the Department, an advance of up to 25 percent of the total grant award. The Department may retain 10 percent of the budget the final report is completed and accepted.

### **D. Number of Applications**

Applicants may submit one application for this funding opportunity.

### **E. Awards**

Awards will be made to applicants with eligible, qualifying projects, in order of receipt of complete application, until funding is exhausted or the submission deadline has passed. A complete application includes applicant registration and pre-qualification in the State Financial System (SFS). If there is insufficient funding available to fund all eligible and complete applications received on the same day and time, those applications will be placed in a lottery and chosen for funding at random.

### **F. Match Funding Requirement**

No matching funds are required.

## **4. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY**

### **A. Program Scope**

The FreshConnect CSA for SNAP opportunity will support the goals of the program by funding eligible organizations to partially subsidize the cost of CSA shares purchased by SNAP participants. The applicant or third-party organization will award New York State producers up to 50% of the cost of CSA shares purchased by a SNAP recipient using their SNAP benefits.

For a modern CSA model, all proposals should identify the producers providing items for the program's shares and/or the beneficiaries of the reduced cost share, as applicable to the project. By subsidizing CSA shares, the FreshConnect CSA for SNAP program aims to connect producers and SNAP participants and increase the consumption of fresh, New York state farm food products thereby supporting producers in New York State.

## B. Applicants

1. Eligible Applicants Include:
  - Not-For-Profit Organizations
  - Indian Tribal Organizations
  - Public Educational Institutions
  - Local or Municipal Governments
2. Applicants must identify all farm producers involved in the CSA opportunity.
3. Applicants must also identify who is directly accepting SNAP payments under this grant program for CSA shares.
4. Applicants acknowledge as a condition of submitting a proposal that they are agreeing to abide by all current and future Federal rules and regulations that govern SNAP payments for CSAs.
5. Community-led groups can work with an eligible fiscal sponsor to apply.
6. **All applicants will need to be registered and prequalified in prior to submitting their application. Please use this link to register and prequalify.**  
<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization-sfs>
7. Ineligible Applicants include:
  - For-Profit Organizations
  - Individuals

**Please Note:** It is highly recommended that applicants register and begin the pre-qualification process in SFS as early as possible. This process may take several weeks to complete.

## C. Eligible Costs

Grant funds may be used for any of the following purposes directly related to the completion of an eligible project. Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- A. Reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost of each individual CSA share sold to consumers using their SNAP benefits.
  - a. CSA shares must consist of SNAP eligible foods from producers as defined in Section 3A.
2. Administration, which can be no more than 30% of the total award. Examples include
  - Lease or rent of vehicles
  - Salaries and wages including fringe benefits directly related to the project
  - Supplies or equipment for food storage, preparation, or distribution under \$5,000 directly related to the project
  - Transportation of food

## D. Non-Eligible Costs

Grant funds may not be used for the following:

- Using SNAP scrip (i.e. tokens) to pay for CSA

- General purpose equipment exceeding \$5,000, eg. walk-in refrigerator
- Construction
- Purchase of cell phones
- Purchase of computer hardware and office equipment
- Purchase of SNAP tokens or other scrip
- Salaries and wages unrelated to the proposal
- Cost associated with preparing an application
- Cost incurred prior to the award of a grant
- Costs supported in whole, or in part, by other State or federal funding
- Indirect Costs
- Food or food products sourced from outside New York State

#### **E. Project Duration**

Awarded contract term will be February 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

### **5. HOW TO APPLY**

#### **A. Application Format**

Applications must be submitted through the the Statewide Financial System Grants Management System (SFS GMS), <https://www.sfs.ny.gov/>. All sections of the application must be completed to submit your digital application.

All applications must be submitted online through the SFS by **3:00 p.m. on July 22, 2025**. Applicants and not computers or servers are responsible for the timely submission of applications. Applications received after the scheduled sdate and time will not be accepted. Faxed, mailed or e-mailed applications will not be accepted.

#### **B. Application Content**

Applicants must respond to each of the sections as provided in the State Financial System Grants Management System (SFS GMS), <https://www.sfs.ny.gov/>. Each application is comprised of responses to Program Specific Questions, a plan of work for the proposed project, and a project budget. Please be advised that there are space limits for your response to each question in the online application. Evaluation of your application will be limited to review and consideration of only the information contained in your responses comprising your application. Material that is not required or otherwise specifically requested to be included in the application should not be submitted.

For information regarding how to navigate the online application, please refer to the “SFS Application Submission Instructions” document available on the State Financial System associated with this grant opportunity or as posted on the Department’s web site (“[Funding Opportunities](#)” web page).

#### **C. Accessing SFS**

Applicants must be **registered and pre-qualified** in the SFS GMS to submit an application. **Please use this link to register and prequalify.**

<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization-sfs>

If you have access to login to the SFS Vendor Portal and are interested in applying for this grant, click the Log into SFS and Apply for Grant button to access the SFS Vendor portal.  
<https://www.sfs.ny.gov/>

If you do not have access to the SFS Vendor Portal and if your organization is already established within the SFS Vendor portal, an SFS Delegated Administrator has been authorized within your organization to provision user login credentials, unlock accounts, or reset passwords. Please reach out to your SFS Delegated Administrator directly.

If your organization is not currently doing business with New York State, you will need to submit a Substitute W-9 Form to obtain a New York State SFS Vendor ID, in addition to the Registration Form for Administrators, to register.

If the entity is new to the SFS Vendor portal, does not have a login, and would like to establish an account for the purposes of doing business with the State of New York, contact the SFS Help Desk at 518-457-7717, 855-233-8363 or [HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov](mailto:HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov) for more information.

The NYS SFS GM offers a Vendor Manual, training videos and webinars for applicants requiring assistance.

Please visit <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/transition-SFS>.

**Please Note:** Waiting until the last several days to complete your application online is not recommended, as you may have technical questions. Beginning the process of applying as soon as possible will produce the best results. Late applications will not be accepted. Applications will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, hardcopy, or hand delivery.

#### **D. Project Plan of Work and Budget**

Applicants will enter a plan of work and budget in SFS. The project plan of work is comprised of objectives, tasks, and performance measures. See below for examples.

**One objective of this grant program is:** to expand SNAP participant's access to New York-grown CSA shares by reducing the cost to the participant while supporting producers named in the application providing products to the CSA share.

See program description in Section 3B for more examples of program goals your organization can use to model grant objectives.

Example **tasks** for this objective are:

1. Identify regionally available CSA programs that accept SNAP benefits as payment.
2. Identify SNAP-eligible participants in the region and provide outreach regarding the program.
3. Facilitate pickup locations easily accessed by SNAP participants.
4. Provide transportation of shares to designated pickup locations.

**5. Collect SNAP transaction reports associated with share purchases for reimbursements after pickups.**

Each task must be accompanied by one or more **performance measures**. Performance measures should be clearly defined results against which the project can be evaluated. Reporting requirements outlined in Section 9 of this document should be considered when writing performance measures.

Example **performance measures** can include:

1. The number of CSA shares purchased by SNAP participants.
2. The number of pick up locations available to SNAP participants getting the CSA.
3. The number and value of SNAP transaction reports for shares that were purchased with SNAP EBT.

**Budget**

**Enter the project budget using the required categories:**

- Personnel (staff salaries of the primary applicant)
- Fringe
- Contractual
- Travel
- Equipment
- Space/Utilities
- Operating expenses
- Other

**6. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

All complete applications will be awarded funding on a first-come, first-serve basis if the project meets the following criteria:

**A. Project's Scope is eligible and aligns with the objectives of the program defined by the scope in Section 4.**

- Expand SNAP participant's access to NY-grown CSA shares by reducing the cost to the participant while providing the total value to the producer providing the CSA share.

**B. Workplan**

- Project workplan provides adequate detail on activities to achieve project goals.

**C. Budget Details**

- Budget is between \$25,000 - \$50,000
- Expenses are eligible and reasonable

All eligible, awarded projects will be required to fulfill the reporting requirements detailed in Section 9. This includes SNAP transaction reports.

## **7. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTING WITH NEW YORK STATE**

### **A. Worker's Compensation and Disability Insurance**

New York State Workers' Compensation Law sections 57 and 220 require that the Department of Agriculture and Markets not enter into a contract unless proof of Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance in a form satisfactory to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board has been secured.

Please visit the New York State Workers' Compensation Board website: [www.wcb.ny.gov](http://www.wcb.ny.gov), for more information. You may contact the Board's Bureau of Compliance with any questions related to workers' compensation or disability insurance at (866) 298-7830.

### **B. New York State Charities Bureau Registration**

All not-for-profits organizations contracting with New York State or serving as a fiscal agent must be registered with the New York State Charities Bureau unless a proper exemption is obtained. All applicants must therefore provide either:

1. The organization's charitable registration number and written documentation from the Office of the Attorney General that the charitable organization is currently up to date with its Charities Registration; or
2. A statement from the applicant that the organization is exempt pursuant to one of the categories indicated on the Office of the Attorney General's Request for Registration Exemption (Schedule E). The statement must identify the specific category under which the charitable organization is exempt.

To obtain written documentation of an organization's charities registration status, or if you have questions regarding the statutory requirements for registration, contact the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Charities Registration, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271-0332, or call (212) 416-8402, email [charities.bureau@oag.state.ny.us](mailto:charities.bureau@oag.state.ny.us) or visit their website at [www.charitiesnys.com/home.html](http://www.charitiesnys.com/home.html)

Eligible 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations acting as the applicant must have a New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau Registration number or an Exemption Certificate issued by the New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau explaining why the organization is exempt from registering with the Charities Bureau.

## **8. CONTRACT & PAYMENT TERMS**

### **A. Contracts**

A contract defining all terms and conditions and responsibilities of the awardee will be developed by the Department after funds have been awarded. The contract will incorporate the work plan and budget included in the awardee's project proposal, among its provisions.

Upon execution of the contract by the awardee and the Department, it will be submitted for approval to the Attorney General of the State of New York and the Comptroller of the State of New York.

### **B. New York State Master Contract For Grants**

New York State has developed a standard "Master Contract For Grants" containing standard clauses required in all State Contracts. The Master Contract For Grants will be executed for all projects awarded under the RFA, and awardees are responsible for complying with the terms and conditions contained therein.

The Master Contract For Grants can be found at:

<https://www.budget.ny.gov/guide/bprm/h/h-1032-nys-contract-for-grants-2024.pdf>

Attachments to the Master Contract For Grants will include: NYS Standard Terms and Conditions; (A-1) "Agency Specific Terms and Conditions"; (A-2) "Program Specific Terms and Conditions"; (B-1) "Expenditure Based Budget"; (C) "Work Plan"; and (D) "Payment and Reporting Schedule".

### **C. Payment**

Once the contract is fully executed, grant funds will be disbursed by reimbursement only. Awardees may request, at the discretion of the Department, an initial payment of up to twenty- five percent (25%) of the total grant award.

The Department may retain ten percent (10%) of the budget amount to be disbursed to the contractor until such time as the final report is accepted.

A New York State Claim for Payment Form must be submitted to the Department for reimbursing the contractor for funds expended.

Payment to the contractor shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, at the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment

shall be made in accordance with ordinary state procedures and practices. The Contractor shall comply with the State Comptroller of New York's procedures to authorize electronic payments. The contractor acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any Claim for Payment Form submitted under this agreement if it does not comply with the State Comptroller of New York's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

The Department and State Comptroller's Office reserve the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to six years after the completion of the project.

## **9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Recipients will be required to collect and report data necessary to document program activities and results:

### **A. Claim for Payment Report**

Vendors must outline expenses by budget category with documentation showing payments made.

Each claim for payment report must include a SNAP transaction report clearly noting each SNAP transaction requesting reimbursement.

### **B. Final Report**

A Final Report will be required within sixty (60) days following completion of the project. A Final Report template will be provided by the Department to generate the report. The Final Report shall include a detailed description of the work completed; an assessment of the potential for future viability of the project; and a description of problems encountered, if any, which affected completion of the project. In addition to the Final Report, the Department reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts. The Department reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project.

## **10. LIABILITY**

The Department shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by any party for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

## **11. OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE)**

CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR PARTICIPATION BY NEW YORK STATE- CERTIFIED MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS AND WOMEN ACCORDING TO NEW YORK STATE LAW.

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 the Department of Agriculture and Markets (Department) 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 the Department contracts.

#### Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

For purposes of this solicitation, the Department hereby establishes an overall goal of 30 percent for MWBE participation, 15 percent for New York State-certified Minority-owned Business Enterprise (“MBE”) participation and 15 percent for New York State-certified Women- owned Business Enterprise (“WBE”) participation (based on the current availability of MBEs and WBEs). A contractor (“Contractor”) on any contract resulting from this procurement (“Contract”) 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 RFP, the respondent agrees that the Department may withhold payment pursuant to any Contract awarded as a result of this RFP pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. The directory of MWBEs can be viewed at: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. For guidance on how the Department will evaluate a Contractor’s “good faith efforts,” refer to 5 NYCRR § 142.8.

The respondent understands that only sums paid to MWBEs for the performance of a commercially useful function, as that term is defined in 5 NYCRR § 140.1, may be applied towards the achievement of the applicable MWBE participation goal. [FOR CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS – The portion of a contract with an MWBE serving as a supplier that shall be deemed to represent the commercially useful function performed by the MWBE shall be 60 percent of the total value of the contract. The portion of a contract with an MWBE serving as a broker that shall be deemed to represent the commercially useful function performed by the MWBE shall be the monetary value for fees, or the markup percentage, charged by the MWBE]. [FOR ALL OTHER CONTRACTS - The portion of a contract with an MWBE serving as a broker that shall be deemed to represent the commercially useful function performed by the MWBE shall be 25 percent of the total value of the contract.]

In accordance with 5 NYCRR § 142.13, the respondent further acknowledges that if it is found to have willfully and intentionally failed to comply with the MWBE participation goals set forth in a Contract resulting from this RFP, such finding constitutes a breach of contract, and the Department may withhold payment as liquidated damages.

Such liquidated damages shall be calculated as an amount equaling the difference between: (1) all sums identified for payment to MWBEs had the Contractor achieved the contractual MWBE goals; and (2) all sums actually paid to MWBEs for work performed or materials supplied under the Contract.

By submitting a bid or proposal, a respondent agrees to demonstrate its good faith efforts to achieve the applicable MWBE participation goals by submitting evidence thereof through the New York State Contract System (“NYSCS”), which can be viewed [at https://ny.newnycontracts.com](https://ny.newnycontracts.com), provided, however, that a respondent may arrange to provide such evidence via a non-electronic method by contacting the Department’s MWBE

Liaison at 518-485-8740 or [SupplierDiversity@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:SupplierDiversity@agriculture.ny.gov). All MWBE Forms and Instructions are included in the Submission Documents.

Additionally, a respondent will be required to submit the following documents and information as evidence of compliance with the foregoing:

- a. An MWBE Utilization Plan with their bid or proposal. Any modifications or changes to accepted MWBE Utilization Plan after the Contract award and during the term of the Contract must be reported on a revised MWBE Utilization Plan and submitted to the Department for review and approval.

The Department will review the submitted MWBE Utilization Plan and advise the respondent of the Department acceptance or issue a notice of deficiency within 30 days of receipt.

- b. If a notice of deficiency is issued, the respondent will be required to respond to the notice of deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt by submitting to the Department of Agriculture and Markets, a written remedy in response to the notice of deficiency. If the written remedy that is submitted is not timely or is found by the Department to be inadequate, the Department shall notify the respondent and direct the respondent to submit, within five (5) business days, a request for a partial or total waiver of MWBE participation goals. Failure to file the waiver form in a timely manner may be grounds for disqualification of the bid or proposal.

The Department may disqualify a respondent as being non-responsive under the following circumstances:

- a. If a respondent fails to submit an MWBE Utilization Plan;
- b. If a respondent fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
- c. If a respondent fails to submit a request for a waiver; or
- d. If the Department determines that the respondent has failed to document good faith efforts.

The successful respondent will be required to attempt to utilize, in good faith, any MBE or WBE identified within its MWBE Utilization Plan, during the performance of the Contract. Requests for a partial or total waiver of established goal requirements made subsequent to Contract Award may be made at any time during the term of the Contract to the Department but must be made no later than prior to the submission of a request for final payment on the Contract.

The successful respondent will be required to submit a quarterly M/WBE Contractor Compliance and Payment Report to the Department, by the 10th day following each end of quarter over the term of the Contract documenting the progress made toward achievement of the MWBE goals of the Contract.

#### Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements

By submission of a bid or proposal in response to this solicitation, the respondent agrees with all the terms and conditions of Appendix A – Standard Clauses for All New York State Contracts including Clause 12 - Equal Employment Opportunities for Minorities and Women.

The respondent is required to ensure that it and any subcontractors awarded a subcontract for the construction, demolition, replacement, major repair, renovation, planning or design of real property and improvements thereon (the "Work"), except where the Work is for the beneficial use of the respondent, undertake or continue programs to ensure that minority group members and women are afforded equal employment opportunities without discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status. For these purposes, equal opportunity shall apply in the areas of recruitment, employment, job assignment, promotion, upgrading, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, and rates of pay or other forms of compensation. This requirement does not apply to: (i) work, goods, or services unrelated to the Contract; or (ii) employment outside New York State.

The respondent will be required to submit a Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement, (See Submission Documents, Form MWBE EE01), to the Department with its bid or proposal.

If awarded a Contract, the respondent shall submit a Workforce Utilization Report and shall require each of its Subcontractors to submit a Workforce Utilization Report, in such format as shall be required by the Department on a quarterly basis during the term of the Contract.

Further, pursuant to Article 15 of the Executive Law (the "Human Rights Law"), all other State and Federal statutory and constitutional non-discrimination provisions, the Contractor and subcontractors will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, creed (religion), color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, age, disability, predisposing genetic characteristic, marital status or domestic violence victim status, and shall also follow the requirements of the Human Rights Law with regard to non-discrimination on the basis of a prior criminal conviction and prior arrest.

Please Note: Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in a finding of non-responsiveness, non-responsibility and/or a breach of the Contract, leading to the withholding of funds, suspension or termination of the Contract or such other actions or enforcement proceedings as allowed by the Contract.

## **B. Participation Opportunities for New York State Certified Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses**

Article 17-B of the New York State Executive Law provides for more meaningful participation in public procurement by certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses ("SDVOB"), thereby further integrating such businesses into New York State's economy. The Department recognizes the need to promote the employment of service-disabled veterans and to ensure that certified service-disabled veteran-owned businesses have opportunities for maximum feasible participation in the performance of Department contracts.

In recognition of the service and sacrifices made by service-disabled veterans and in recognition of their economic activity in doing business in New York State, Contractors are expected to consider SDVOBs in the fulfillment of the requirements of the Agreement. Such participation may be as subcontractors or suppliers, as protégés, or in other partnering or supporting roles.

- I. Contract Goals
  - a. The Department hereby establishes an overall goal of 6% for SDVOB participation, based on the current availability of qualified SDVOBs. For purposes of providing meaningful participation by SDVOBs, Contractor should reference the directory of New York State Certified SDVOBs found at: <https://online.ogs.ny.gov/SDVOB/search>. Questions regarding compliance with SDVOB participation goals should be directed to the Department's Supplier Diversity Liaison at [supplierdiversity@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:supplierdiversity@agriculture.ny.gov). Additionally, following Contract execution, Contractor is encouraged to contact the Office of General Services' Division of Service- Disabled Veterans' Business Development at 518- 474-2015 or [VeteransDevelopment@ogs.ny.gov](mailto:VeteransDevelopment@ogs.ny.gov) to discuss additional methods of maximizing participation by SDVOBs on the Agreement.
  - b. Contractor must document "good faith efforts" to provide meaningful participation by SDVOBs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of the Agreement (see clause IV below).
- II. SDVOB Utilization Plan
  - a. In accordance with 9 NYCRR § 252.2(i), Contractor agrees to submit a completed SDVOB Utilization Plan on Form SDVOB 100 at such time as shall be required by the Department.
  - b. The Utilization Plan shall list the SDVOBs that Contractor intends to use to perform the Agreement, a description of the work that Contractor intends the SDVOB to perform to meet the goals on the Agreement, the estimated dollar amounts to be paid to an SDVOB, or, if not known, an estimate of the percentage of Contract work the SDVOB will perform. By signing the Utilization Plan, Contractor acknowledges that making false representations or providing information that shows a lack of good faith as part of, or in conjunction with, the submission of a Utilization Plan is prohibited by law and may result in penalties including, but not limited to, termination of the Agreement for cause, loss of eligibility to submit future bids, and/or withholding of payments. Any modifications or changes to the agreed participation by SDVOBs during the term of the Agreement must be reported on a revised SDVOB Utilization Plan and submitted to the Department.
  - c. The Department will review the submitted SDVOB Utilization Plan and advise Contractor of the Department's acceptance or issue a notice of deficiency within 20 days of receipt.
  - d. If a notice of deficiency is issued, Contractor agrees that it shall respond to the notice of deficiency, within seven business days of receipt, by submitting to the Department a written remedy in response to the notice of deficiency. If the written remedy that is submitted is not timely or is found by the Department to be inadequate, the Department shall notify Contractor and direct Contractor to submit, within five business days of notification by the Department, a request for a partial or total waiver of SDVOB participation goals on SDVOB 200. Failure to file the waiver form

in a timely manner may be grounds for a determination of non-responsibility by the Department.

- e. The Department may deem Contractor non-responsive if:
  - 1. If Contractor fails to submit an SDVOB Utilization Plan;
  - 2. If Contractor fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
  - 3. If Contractor fails to submit a request for waiver; or
  - 4. If the Department determines that Contractor has failed to document good faith efforts.
- f. Contractor certifies that it will follow the submitted SDVOB Utilization Plan for the performance of SDVOBs on the Agreement pursuant to the prescribed SDVOB contract goals set forth above.
- g. Contractor further agrees that a failure to use SDVOBs as agreed in the Utilization Plan shall constitute a material breach of the terms of the Agreement. Upon the occurrence of such a material breach, the Department shall be entitled to any remedy provided herein, including but not limited to, a finding of Contractor non-responsibility.

### III. Request for Waiver

- a. Prior to submission of a request for a partial or total waiver, Contractor shall speak to the Department's Supplier Diversity Liaison for guidance. In accordance with 9 NYCRR § 252.2(m), a Contractor that is able to document good faith efforts to meet the goal requirements, as set forth in clause IV below, may submit a request for a partial or total waiver on Form SDVOB 200, accompanied by supporting documentation. Contractor may submit the request for waiver at the same time it submits its SDVOB Utilization Plan. If a request for waiver is submitted with the SDVOB Utilization Plan and is not accepted by the Department at that time, the provisions of clauses II (C), (D) & (E) will apply. If the documentation included with Contractor's waiver request is complete, the Department shall evaluate the request and issue a written notice of acceptance or denial within 20 days of receipt.
- b. Contractor shall attempt to utilize, in good faith, the SDVOBs identified within its SDVOB Utilization Plan, during the performance of the Agreement. Requests for a partial or total waiver of established goal requirements may be made at any time during the term of the Agreement to the Department but must be made no later than prior to the submission of a request for final payment on the Agreement.
- c. If the Department, upon review of the SDVOB Utilization Plan and Monthly SDVOB Compliance Report (SDVOB 101), determines that Contractor is failing or refusing to comply with the contract goals and no waiver has been issued in regard to such non-compliance, the Department may issue a notice of deficiency to Contractor. Contractor must respond to the notice of deficiency within seven business days of receipt. Such response may include a request for partial or total waiver of SDVOB contract goals. Waiver requests should be sent to the Department.

IV. Required Good Faith Efforts

In accordance with 9 NYCRR § 252.2(n), Contractors must document their good faith efforts toward utilizing SDVOBs on the Agreement. Evidence of required good faith efforts shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Copies of solicitations to SDVOBs and any responses thereto.
2. Explanation of the specific reasons each SDVOB that responded to Contractor's solicitation was not selected.
3. Dates of any pre-bid, pre-award or other meetings attended by Contractor, if any, scheduled by the Department with certified SDVOBs whom the Department determined were capable of fulfilling the SDVOB goals set in the Agreement.
4. Information describing the specific steps undertaken to reasonably structure the Agreement scope of work for the purpose of subcontracting with, or obtaining supplies from, certified SDVOBs.
5. Other information deemed relevant to the waiver request.

V. Monthly SDVOB Contractor Compliance Report

In accordance with 9 NYCRR § 252.2(q), Contractor is required to report Monthly SDVOB Contractor Compliance to the Department during the term of the Agreement for the preceding month's activity, documenting progress made towards achieving the Contract SDVOB goals. This information must be submitted using form SDVOB 101 and should be completed by Contractor and submitted to the Department Supplier Diversity Liaison, by the 10th day of each month during the term of the Agreement, for the preceding month's activity to: [supplierdiversity@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:supplierdiversity@agriculture.ny.gov).

VI. Breach of Contract and Damages

In accordance with 9 NYCRR § 252.2(s), any Contractor found to have willfully and intentionally failed to comply with the SDVOB participation goals set forth in the Agreement, shall be found to have breached the contract and Contractor shall pay damages as set forth therein. ALL FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT: <https://ogs.ny.gov/veterans/>

## 12. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### A. The Departments reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all proposals received with respect to this program.
2. Waive or modify irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and concurrence of the applicant.
3. Request from an applicant additional information as deemed necessary to more fully evaluate its proposal.
4. Amend the program's specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice.
5. Select only certain portions of the proposal for funding.
6. Negotiate the terms of any agreement proposed by the applicant.
7. Make all final decisions with respect to the amount of funding and the timing of payments to be provided to the applicant.

All eligible proposals submitted in response to this solicitation will become the property of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

### **13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

All proposals submitted and all related contracts and reports may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law.

### **14. DEBRIEFING**

Pursuant to section 163(9)(c) of the State Finance Law, an unsuccessful bidder has the right to a debriefing regarding the reasons its application was not selected for award. Upon request, the Department will provide a debriefing to any unsuccessful applicant as to the reasons that the proposal submitted was not selected for an award. To request a review of an unsuccessful application, contact Alison Nickford, via e-mail at [farmersmarkets@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:farmersmarkets@agriculture.ny.gov). A review should be requested by an unsuccessful applicant within 15 calendar days of the date of the notice that its proposal was not selected for an award.

### **15. BID PROTEST PROCEDURES**

Bidders who receive a notice of non-award may protest the award decision subject to the following:

- A. The protest must be in writing and must contain specific factual and/or legal allegations setting forth the basis on which the protesting party challenges the contract award by the Department.
- B. The protest must be filed within ten (10) business days of receipt of a debriefing, or ten (10) business days of receipt of the notice of non-award, whichever is later. The protest letter must be filed with:

Alison Nickford  
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets  
10B Airline Drive Albany, NY 12235  
Fax: (518) 457-8398  
E-mail: [farmersmarkets@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:farmersmarkets@agriculture.ny.gov)

- C. The Department's Division of Fiscal Management will convene a review team that will include at least one staff member from each of: the Department's Counsel's Office, the Department's Division of Fiscal Management, and the Department's Division of Agricultural Development. The review team will review and consider the merits of the protest and will decide whether the protest is approved or denied. Counsel's Office will provide the bidder with written notification of the review team's decision within fourteen (14) business days of receipt of the protest. The original protest and decision will be filed with OSC when the contract procurement record is submitted for approval, and Fiscal

Management will advise OSC that a protest was filed.

- D. Fiscal Management in consultation with Counsel's Office may summarily deny a protest that fails to contain specific factual or legal allegations, or where the protest only raises issues of law that have already been decided by the courts. An unsuccessful bidder may also protest the award by filing a protest, in writing, with:

The Office of the State Comptroller  
Bureau of Contracts  
110 State Street, 11th Floor  
Albany, New York 12236

More information on the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC) Contract Award Protest Procedures can be found in OSC's Guide to Financial Operations (GFO), Chapter XI.17, available on the internet at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/guide/MyWebHelp/>.