COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
regarding the
Request for Applications for HCBS and Human Services Workforce Grant Program

EOHHS DOCUMENT #: FY23HCBSGRANTRFA

COMMBUYS BID #: BD-23-1039-EHS01-EHS01-80148

ISSUED: October 21, 2022

This document contains responses to questions received from interested Bidders regarding the Request for Applications for HCBS and Human Services Workforce Grant Program issued by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) on September 30, 2022.

The questions included herein were drawn from written questions submitted to EOHHS. Answers have been provided to those questions which are of general interest and relevant to the preparation of a response to the RFA.

Application

1. **Q: What is the HCBS and Human Services Workforce Grant Program?**
   A: This grant is designed to fund recruitment, retention, or training efforts for the Commonwealth's Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and Human Services workforce.

2. **Q: How do I log in and apply for Grants on MassGRANTS?**
   A: Please refer to the MassGRANTS App Guide, available as RFA Attachment C on COMMBUYS, for application instructions

3. **Q: How do I submit an application?**
   A: Fill out the online application: https://maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage

4. **Q: What is the deadline to submit the grant application?**
   A: Grant applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on 11/4/2022.

5. **Q: Will there be another application in the future?**
   A: We expect all funds to be distributed during this first round.

6. **Q: How will I know if my application was received?**
   A: The person designated as the primary and secondary points of contact in your

organization's application should receive a confirmation email which states that your organization's application was received. If you did not receive a confirmation email, please contact MassGrantsSupport@mtxb2b.com or (866) 406-2170.

7. **Q: Does my organization have to be registered with SAM.gov before I can submit my application?**
   A: Your organization can submit its application without being registered on SAM.gov, but your organization will need to have an *active* SAM.gov account to receive program funds. Registering with SAM.gov is free and is required for your organization to receive federal funds.

8. **Q: Does my organization have to be registered with the Massachusetts Management Accounting & Reporting System (MMARS) before I can submit my application?**
   A: Your organization can submit its application without being registered with MMARS, but your organization will need to have an *active* MMARS account to receive program funds. MMARS requires a SAM.gov ID (Unique Entity ID (UEI) Number).

9. **Q: How do I find my MMARS vendor code?**
   A: Vendor codes begin with "VC" followed by 10 digits. Your MMARS vendor code is the same code that you use to log in to [VendorWeb](#). If you do not know, or are unable to remember your vendor code, please contact the Commonwealth agency you are currently doing business with and ask them for your VC (vendor code) number. The department will ask for your tax identification number (TIN) which was provided on the business' Form W-9 or 1099 form.

10. **Q: What if my organization does not have a Vendor Code?**
    A: If your organization does not have a Vendor Code, you can use a temporary code to create an account and submit your application. You can request a temporary code by emailing EOHHSGrantsInbox@mass.gov. You will need to provide the following:
    - Your organization's legal name and business address
    - A complete Massachusetts Substitute Form W-9
    - The name, email, and phone number for the primary contact on your application

    Once you have received your temporary code, complete the steps listed in the MassGRANTS App Guide to register and access the application.

    Please note, if your grant is chosen for funding, your organization will need to have an active MMARS Vendor Code to receive program funds, which will be established for your organization using the Form W-9 submitted with your application.

11. **Q: Can my organization apply for more than one program?**
    A: No. You may submit an application for only one program. The program may span multiple sites.

12. Q: Can my organization partner with another organization?
   A: Yes, your organization can partner with another organization. On the application, you will be asked to identify and describe any partnerships or working relationships with other organizations and to identify points of contact at the partner institution(s). The submitting organization will be the organization to receive all program funds and will be required to submit all required reporting information.

   Any partnerships will need to submit, as part of the application, a corresponding letter of intent signed by all parties of the respective leadership teams.

Eligibility Requirements

13. Q: Who is eligible to submit an application?
   A: As described in Section 3 of the Request for Applications for Home and Community Based Services and Human Services Workforce Development Grant Program (RFA), an eligible Applicant must be at least one of the following:
   - A Massachusetts provider of one of the services listed in the Answer to Question 14,
   - A collaboration of multiple Massachusetts providers of one of the services listed in the Answer to Question 14,
   - A Massachusetts education/training institution,
   - A Massachusetts community-based organization,
   - A Massachusetts private foundation,
   - An owner of an existing workforce program, or
   - A regional workforce or training partnership with the capacity to develop and run a workforce program focused on and benefiting employers in Massachusetts.

   An application should be submitted on behalf of an organization only by those with the delegated legal authority to apply. All applications will require a primary and secondary point of contact.

14. Q: Which workers can benefit from Applicant's proposed program?
   A: As described in Section 4.A.2 of the RFA, proposals must benefit HCBS or Human Services workers who fall into at least one of the following categories:
   - **Direct Care (DC) Staff**, defined as:
     o Staff that provide hands on care or direct support to consumers or patients. DC staff typically need a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent.

     o DC staff includes:
       ▪ Care Coordinators,
       ▪ Companions,

- Developmental Specialists,
- Family Partners,
- Home Care Aides,
- Home Health Aides,
- Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs),
- Homemakers,
- House Managers,
- Job Coaches,
- Member Services,
- Peer Specialists,
- Peer Workers,
- Personal Care Aides,
- Personal Care Homemakers,
- Recovery Coaches, Recovery Support Navigators, Therapeutic Mentors,
- Residential Counselors,
- Resource Coordinators,
- Outreach Workers,
- Enabling Technology Advocates,
- Harm Reduction Specialists,
- Other Unlicensed Direct Support Professionals and other DC staff job titles.
- **Nursing:** This category includes:
  - Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs),
  - Registered Nurses (RNs),
  - Independent Nurses,
  - Nurse Practitioners (NPs),
  - Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners/Advance Practice RNs.
- **Behavioral Health Staff:** This category includes:
  - Case Workers/Case Managers,
  - Mental Health Counselors,
  - Social Workers,
  - Substance Use Disorder Workers (e.g., counselor, CADC, LADC),
  - Or other mental health providers.
- **Community Health Workers:** (CHWs), includes:
  - Certified CHWs,
  - Other front-line public health workers.
- **Home- and Community-Based Long-Term Services and Supports Workers**: This category includes:
  - Schedulers,
  - Care Coordinators,
  - Functional Skills Trainers,
  - Case/Care Managers,
  - Community Health Workers,

- o Social Workers,
- o Supervisors.

15. Q: Which settings should the target workforce groups provide services or care in?
   A: As described in Section 4.A.1 of the RFA, workers must provide services or direct care in the following settings:

- Short or Long-Term Outpatient, Community, School, or Home-Based Mental Health Treatment for Youth and Adults, including but not limited to: PACT for Youth, Adult, and Forensic Populations; Flexible or Intensive Community Services [FSS, ICS]; Day Treatment; Adult Community Clinical Services [ACCS]; Clubhouses; Respite; or Safe Havens.
- Residential Mental Health,
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services,
- Habilitation and Rehabilitation Services,
- DPH-funded programs, including syringe, street outreach, and mobile outreach services, and harm reduction drop-in centers and recovery support services,
- DCF-funded programs, including Comprehensive Foster Care and Support and Stabilization Services,
- Group Adult Foster Care and Adult Foster Care,
- Youth Intermediate-term Stabilization Services (known as Child/Adolescent Congregate Care Programs, including Residential Schools),
- In-home Basic Living Supports,
- Independent Living Centers
- Home Health Services,
- Children's Behavioral Health Services,
- Home and Community-Based Services Waivers programs serving older adults, individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder, Acquired Brain Injury, Traumatic Brain Injury, Moving Forward, and Frail Elder,
- Continuous Skilled Nursing Services,
- Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) and Behavioral Health (BH) Community Partners (CPs),
- EOEA-funded Homecare home- and community-based programs,
- Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, Recovery Support, Harm Reduction, or Co-Occurring SUD/MH services, in any of the following settings: community-based, home-based, school-based, outpatient, residential (short and long term, including, but not limited to ATS, CSS, TSS)

16. Q: What activities are grant eligible?
   A: As described in Section 4.A.3 of the RFA, the following activities are grant eligible:
- A. <u>Pipeline development and recruitment efforts</u>

    i.   Partnerships/pilot programs with secondary/post-secondary institutions, including technical and vocational schools/high schools, to develop workforce pipeline programs such as paid internships and externships, and scholarships.

    ii.   Initiatives to diversify the workforce, such as advertising/marketing open roles in multiple languages.

    iii.   Initiatives that increase cultural/linguistic competence of workers to reflect the characteristics of the population served.

    iv.   Funding internships, stipends, apprenticeships, preceptorships, fellowships, or related programs with a clear path to permanent employment.

B. Professional development and retention efforts

    i.   Designing training or simulation labs that are linked to a path to employment.

    ii.   Initiatives that create or increase participation in formal or informal on the job skills training (e.g., communication, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), time management, soft skills, Medical Administration Program (MAP)).

    iii.   Conversion of existing in-person trainings to online training.

    iv.   Expanding existing training into evening classes or multiple language offerings.

    v.   Educational advancement opportunities providing career ladders and a career pathway for the current and future workforce (e.g., HHA to CNA to LPN), including but not limited to tuition remission, certification, testing, and licensing fees.

    vi.   Offering wrap-around services for workers, such as case management, child-care vouchers, transportation assistance, technology purchases to ease situations that hinder scheduled assignments, education, or training, and bridges to a permanent solution.

    vii.   Funding innovation to support supervisors (mentorship, training, supervision time) and to significantly improve onboarding processes.

C. Workforce-Impacting Information Technology (IT) Improvements

    i.   Innovative uses of technology to communicate and provide additional clinical support for workers in community-based settings.

    ii.   Scheduling solutions to support flexibility and predictability in scheduling and allow for employees to choose their own shifts and swap shifts more easily.

iii. Building, supporting, and/or enhancing innovative technology solutions to improve and optimize current recruitment processes, time-to-hire, scheduling, administrative tasks, and to allow for more flexible staffing models.

Grant Priorities

17. Q: DOES EOHHS intend to prioritize any particular grant eligible activities?
A: As described in Section 4.B of the RFA, grant proposals that meet one or more of the following conditions may be prioritized for the eligible ARPA funding:

A. Diversifying the workforce, with a focus on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) staff and individuals with disabilities.

B. Creating new or expanding existing regional workforce partnerships to recruit, train, or advance existing workers.

C. Supporting existing workforce with enhanced training/education opportunities that support career ladder advancements.

D. Expanding existing educational capacity and, through partnerships with employers, creating opportunities for students to enter the workforce post-graduation.

18. Q: Can I use the funding to expand an existing project?
A: As described in Section 5 of the RFA, yes, you may propose funding to expand an existing project. Awarded funding may not be used to duplicate benefits with funding from another federal program
and cannot be used for programs and initiatives that overlap with CMS waiver extension proposals.

19. Q: Are there any exclusions on spending?
A: As described in Section 4.D of the RFA, funds cannot be used for:
- MassHealth-funded Personal Care Attendants under the MassHealth consumer directed program and EOEA's Consumer Directed Care Program.
- Loan repayment, retention bonuses, referral bonuses, or recruitment bonuses.
- Temporary rate increases
- Programs benefiting state and municipal employees.
- Durable and/or Specialized Medical Equipment providers.
- Temporary wage increases.
- Capital Expenditures.

20. Q: Can my organization use the funds for a capital expenditure to a support grant eligible activity?
A: No, capital expenditures are not eligible as part of this program.

Grant Award

21. **Q: How will I know if my grant program is chosen?**
   A: Grant recipients (or "Awardees") will be notified via email that their program has been chosen to be funded. The Awardee must complete, sign, and return any attached forms, and comply with any conditions for receipt of award included in the notice. Upon completion of all required forms and conditions, EOHHS and the Awardee will execute a grant agreement which, accompanied by the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form and Commonwealth Standard Terms and Conditions, will serve as a contract between EOHHS and the Awardee. The contract will specify the portion of funds that support the program as well as any proposed and approved reasonable direct costs associated.

22. **Q: How soon can I expect award funding to arrive?**
   A: Provided you have approved spending and metrics plans, funds will be released when your organization: 1) completes all required documentation, including an executed contract; 2) has an active SAM.gov account; and 3) has a MMARS account.

23. **Q: Will our organization receive all funding up front?**
   A: Yes, your organization will receive all obligated funding for your program up front.

24. **Q: How will my organization receive funding from this grant?**
   A: Your program should already have a vendor code registered through MMARS. Upon receipt of all required documentation, including the signed and completed grant agreement, funds will be electronically transferred into the provided account.

25. **Q: Under what circumstances will our organization have to repay funding? How do we repay funding?**
   A: Funding will need to be repaid if:
   - The Awardee does not complete the approved scope of work.
   - The Awardee does not follow program guidelines, such as failing to comply with reporting requirements.
   - The Awardee completes their scope of work for less than the obligated amount, in which case the cost underrun would need to be returned.

   If any of the above occurs, funding will need to be returned in the manner directed by EOHHS within 4 weeks.

Reporting

26. **Q: What are the reporting requirements?**
   A: As described in Section 6.2.B of the RFA, Awardees will be responsible for proposing and tracking two custom metrics that will capture the impact or success of their specific program.

For each of the reporting metrics, Applicants will need to provide:

- A baseline report covering January 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022, that will be due prior to receipt of funds

- An initial report 6 months after receiving funds

- A final report at the conclusion of the program

The reporting template below is included for reference.

Custom Metric A

Description of Metric A:

How Metric A is calculated:

Inputs for Metric A	Value
Final Value for Metric A:	

Custom Metric B

Description of Metric B:

How Metric B is calculated:

Final Value for Metric B:	

27. Q: For how long does our organization have to retain program documents?
A: Per the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, grant recipients are required to retain program documents and records for six years from the date they submit the final

expenditure report.

Who to Contact?

28. **Q: Who should I contact if I need assistance with the following items:**
    A. For technical assistance with the Grant Portal, contact:
    MassGrantsSupport@mtxb2b.com

    For programmatic and eligible uses of funds questions, contact:
    MAHCBSGrants@pcgus.com

    For vendor code questions, contact: EOHHSGrantsInbox@mass.gov

Administrative

29. **Q: When will applicants be notified of their application status and when will award decisions be announced?**
    A: Grant recipients (or "Awardees") will be notified via email that their program has been chosen to be funded. Award notifications are expected to be sent in January 2023.

30. **Q: Will COMMBUYS be the site where all updates, amendments and the answers to the questions are posted?**
    A: Yes, all updates will be posted to the COMMBUYS RFA.
    https://www.commbuys.com/bso/external/bidDetail.sdo?docId=BD-23-1039-EHS01-EHS01-80148&external=true&parentUrl=close

31. **Q: May Applicants include supplemental materials with their applications?**
    A: Yes, any relevant materials that support the application may be included.

32. **Q: When is the deadline to expend grant funding?**
    A: As stated in Section 4.D of the RFA, all funds must be spent by March 1, 2025, unless otherwise directed by EOHHS.

33. **Q: For the purposes of determining ineligible expenses, is there a generally applicable definition of capital expenditures?**
    A: The United States Office of Management and Budget defines "capital expenditures" and the related term, "capital assets" (codified at 2 CMR 200), as follows:

    Capital expenditures means expenditures to acquire capital assets or expenditures to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life.

    Capital assets means:

(1) Tangible or intangible assets used in operations having a useful life of more than one year which are capitalized in accordance with GAAP. Capital assets include:

(i) Land, buildings (facilities), equipment, and intellectual property (including software) whether acquired by purchase, construction, manufacture, exchange, or through a lease accounted for as financed purchase under Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) standards or a finance lease under Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) standards; and

(ii) Additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life (not ordinary repairs and maintenance).

(2) For purpose of this part, capital assets do not include intangible right-to-use assets (per GASB) and right-to-use operating lease assets (per FASB). For example, assets capitalized that recognize a lessee's right to control the use of property and/or equipment for a period of time under a lease contract. See also § 200.465.

EOHHS provides these definitions as guidance to Applicants, but not as an exhaustive or exclusive definition of the terms for the purposes of ineligible expenses. Ineligible or impermissible expenses are as determined by EOHHS.

Partner Organization

34. Q: Do organizations applying individually need to submit a partnership letter of intent or is that requirement only valid for partnerships?
A: Organizations who will not use partner organizations do not need a partnership letter of intent, as outlined in the application form.

35. Q: Does the lead organization need to provide a letter of intent from any organization that it plans to subcontract with for staff trainings that are part of an overall professional development program?

A: Yes.

36. Q: Can an organization be the lead on one application and a partner on another application?
A: Yes, an organization can. If the organization is a partner on another application, it will need to supply a partnership letter of intent to the lead organization.

37. Q: Are multiple federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) allowed to apply under one entity via a joint application and pool resources? If a joint application is allowed, may the applicant be an accountable care organization that all the FQHCs participate in? If the application involves multiple organizations but is not a formal partnership require a partnership letter of intent?

A: One entity must apply. The applying organization may partner with another organization. On the application, you will be asked to identify and describe any partnerships or working relationships with other organizations and to identify points of contact at the partner institution(s). The submitting organization will be the organization to receive all program funds and will be required to submit all required reporting information. Any partnerships will need to submit, as part of the application, a corresponding letter of intent signed by all parties of the respective leadership teams.

To be eligible the program must meet all eligibility requirements detailed in Section 4 of the RFA.

38. **Q: Is an accountable care organization (ACO) an eligible entity? If not, may it serve as a partner organization?**
A: An ACO alone is not an Eligible Organization, as that term is defined in Section 2 of the RFA. However, an ACO may partner with an Eligible Organization and the application must be submitted by an Eligible Organization.

39. **Q: Can an institution of higher education apply with a school partner?**
A: Yes, an Eligible Organization may partner with another Eligible Organization. On the application, you will be asked to identify and describe any partnerships or working relationships with other organizations and to identify points of contact at the partner institution(s). The submitting organization will be the organization to receive all program funds and will be required to submit all required reporting information. Any partnerships will need to submit, as part of the application, a corresponding letter of intent signed by all parties of the respective leadership teams.

The organization that submits the application must be an Eligible Organization as that term is defined in Section 2 of the RFA.

Proposal Structure

40. **Q: Can an organization submit a proposal that meets any or all of the purposes (i.e., pipeline development and recruitment, professional development and retention, workforce impacting IT improvements) or must an organization choose only one of those purposes for its program?**
A: Eligible Organizations should select the proposal type that best defines its program. The program can incorporate multiple purposes.

41. **Q: Is it permissible to submit a broad proposal with several goals targeting different levels of staffing? For example, internal and external staff, or an organization that has several different departments focused on different workers. If not, can an organization submit multiple proposals?**

A: Organizations may submit only one proposal for one program, but the program may encompass more than one group of eligible workers, activities, or settings.

42. **Q: May an organization request funds for several smaller needs that are not interconnected in meeting a coherent goal? In other words, may an organization have multiple goals in their request with funding solutions to meet all of them?**
A: No.

43. **Q: Can a proposal to train a certain number of eligible workers be broken out over a three year-period? For example, there may be 100 eligible workers total, who are trained separately over the next three years.**
A: Yes, provided that the proposal meets the requirements of Section 4 of the RFA.

44. **Q: How are intern stipends paid? How flexible can stipends be awarded? Do organization have latitude on how to administer stipends?**
A: Organizations may propose how they would like to administer the stipends.

Funding

45. **Q: What is the grant duration? When do contracts begin and when must funds be spent?**
A: Organizations may propose a funding duration. Provided you have approved spending and metrics plans, funds will be released when your organization: 1) completes all required documentation, including an executed contract; 2) has an active SAM.gov account; and 3) has a MMARS account. Contracts are anticipated to begin on or before March 6, 2023, and all funds must be spent by March 1, 2025. See Section 11 of the RFA for the grant timetable.

46. **Q: Are there financial match requirements?**
A: No.

47. **Q: What are the accounting requirements of the grant funding? Is the funding cost reimbursement?**
A: Awardees will be notified of their grant award. Funds will be paid prospectively, not on a cost reimbursement basis.

Organizations will receive the full grant award up front. Provided you have approved spending and metrics plans, funds will be released when your organization: 1) completes all required documentation, including an executed contract; 2) has an active SAM.gov account; and 3) has a MMARS account.

48. **Q: Is this one-time funding?**
A: Yes. We expect all funds to be distributed during this first round.

49. Q: Should the program budget be multiyear or only for Year 1 of the program?
A: The budget should reflect the duration of the program, which may be for more than one year. The budget should include all program costs.

50. Q: Can funding be used to support an existing program that is not reimbursable through Medicaid?
A: Funding may not be used to supplant existing funding for an existing program. Funding may be used launch a new program or to expand an existing program. To be eligible the program must meet all eligibility requirements detailed in Section 4 of the RFA.

51. Q: Should personnel expenses be included in the project budget, e.g., expenses for administration, supervision, training?
A: This grant is not intended to fund ongoing salaries of direct care workers. However, administrative costs and training expenses (including staff time) may be included.

52. Q: Can applicants include indirect cost in the project budget? If yes, is there a cap on indirect costs?
A: Indirect costs can be included and should be reasonable.

Eligibility

53. Q: Can funds be used for: hiring bonuses; purchasing and implementing a new HRIS system; hiring a human resources recruiter; current human resource staff salaries; tuition reimbursement for current public high education employees; permanent rate increases; recently installed systems for scheduling; training; and retention; defrayment of housing costs for eligible staff; purchase of new vehicles; or EMT testing fees?
A: No, funds may not be used for these purposes. Please see Section 4.A.3 of the RFA for eligible grant activities.

54. Q: Can funds be used for: salaries for staff to train eligible workers; internship stipends directed at recruiting diverse degree candidates through an internship-to-employment pipeline program; visa fees for international candidates; instructor/coordinator salaries for new programs; development of a new LPN evening / weekend program for adults; laptops; development of a customized e-learning module for a training component, salaries of trainers and/or mentorship time; MAP Training program stipends for the trainee/trainer; development of a certificate or educational program; compensation for presenters or teachers for a certificate program related to workforce development; CNA testing fees; dual enrollment for high school students to attend a post-secondary institution as part of expanding a CNA program?

A: Yes, funds may be used for these purposes. Please see Section 4.A.3 of the RFA for eligible grant activities.

55. **Q: Can funds be used to replace aging computers in nursing classrooms?**
A: Simply replacing aging computers is not an eligible program as defined in Section 4 of the RFA. However, if purchasing hardware or software is critical to the success of the proposed eligible activity funds may be used to purchase hardware, such as computers or software. For example, if a new training program that is linked to a path to employment is proposed and existing computers cannot support the training, then reasonable costs for a reasonable number of new computers would be an eligible cost. See Section 4.A.3 of the RFA for a list of grant eligible activities.

56. **Q: Can funds be used to convert professional development trainings to an online model which would be accessible by eligible workers?**
A: An application for funding can propose to convert multiple trainings. However, each training must meet all eligibility requirements. See Section 4.A.3 of the RFA for further explanation of eligible activities.

57. **Q: Is this funding able to be utilized for an existing internship program that does not have a funding source dedicated to it? Or can it only cover expansion of a program (i.e., if the program currently has 20 interns, and the plan is to go to have 40, could the funding cover all 40 or only the new 20)?**
A: In this example, funds could only be used to support the "new 20".

58. **Q: Are the eligible workers described in Section 4.A.2 the only eligible workers able to benefit from this grant program or are all staff employed by the organization able to benefit from this grant program?**
A: Only eligible workers in eligible settings may benefit from the grant program.

59. **Q: Supervisors are listed as qualified staff under the Home and Community-based Long-term Services category. Are Supervisors considered qualified staff in other categories as well? Are there specific criteria that a Direct Care Supervisor needs to meet to be considered eligible?**
A: Supervisors of direct care workers may be included in the target workforce, regardless of setting.

60. **Q: Would a proposal to train counselor and school psychologists entering high-needs school districts align with the grant parameters under "Other Behavioral Health Workers" (workforce) and "Children's Behavioral Health Services" (workforce setting)?**
A: To be eligible, the proposal must plan to fund an eligible activity, as described in Section 4.A.3 of the RFA. School counselors and school psychologists are within the

eligible worker category if they are providing direct support to the students. Settings that provide school-based mental health treatment for youth are eligible.

61. **Q: Are the DMH funded adolescent Intensive Residential Treatment Programs (IRTPs) a qualifying program?**
A: A vendor operated IRTP program would be an eligible setting, provided that the submission meets all other eligibility criteria described in Section 4.A.3 of the RFA.

62. **Q: Are inpatient community hospitals or inpatient psychiatric hospitals eligible settings?**
A: No, these are not eligible settings as defined in Section 4.A.1 of the RFA.

63. **Q: Are CBHCs (Community Behavioral Health Centers) eligible for this program?**
A: CHBCs would be an eligible setting, provided they meet the other application criteria provided in Section 4.A.1 of the RFA.

64. **Q: Are transportation workers an eligible worker category?**
A: No, transportation workers are not an eligible worker category provided in Section 4.A.1 of the RFA.

65. **Q: If an organization subcontracts wrap-around services to another organization to support its professional development and retention efforts, is that subcontracting organization eligible to apply separately for this grant funding to support its own staff?**
A: Yes, this arrangement would not preclude the subcontracting organization from submitting a separate proposal.

66. **Q: Can a technical high school apply for this grant if partnered with a post-secondary institution as a way to expand an existing CNA program?**
A: Yes.

67. **Q: Can a technical high school apply to expand its allied health programming to include EMT training/certification?**
A: No.

68. **Q: Are scholarships to individuals an allowable use of funds under this grant opportunity or do scholarships have to run through a specific post-secondary partner or partners?**
A: As stated in Section 4.A.3 of the RFA, scholarships are allowable, and are not required to run through a post-secondary partner.

69. **Q: Are state employees at public education or training institutions eligible for this program?**

A: Proposals that expand existing educational capacity and, through partnerships with employers, create opportunities for students to enter the workforce post-graduation, are prioritized for funding. See Section 4.A.3 of the RFA for eligible activities. In such proposals, reasonable administrative costs may be included for education/training institutions. Additionally, reasonable costs associated with staff at the education/training institution are an eligible expense. Public higher education institutions (e.g., UMass) may apply for these funds and may either directly hire staff or use contract staff.

70. **Q: Are direct care workers employed by the state or municipalities eligible for this program?**
    A: This grant is not intended to support recruitment, retention or training efforts that target state or municipal employees and are ineligible for funding. See Section 4.A.2 of the RFA for HCBS or Human Services eligible workers that should benefit from this program.

71. **Q: May a program support all agency employees so long as it also supports employees within any of the five categories defined in the overview?**
    A: Programs must primarily benefit the eligible target workforce. See Section 4.A.2 of the RFA for HCBS or Human Services eligible workers that should benefit from this program.

72. **Q: If an organization seeks to expand a program that advances careers in mental health of diverse bachelor's level staff at community mental health organizations, can funds be used to employ additional administrative staff to support the students in the program, maintain partnerships with satellite mental health organizations, and expand the program over the next three years? If an organization also employs state employees, is that organization precluded from applying for the grant, or is there an exception for public higher education institutions?**
    A: Proposals that expand existing educational capacity and, through partnerships with employers, create opportunities for students to enter the workforce post-graduation, are prioritized for funding, as described in Section 4.B of the RFA. In such proposals, reasonable administrative costs may be included for public or private education/training institutions. Additionally, reasonable costs associated with staff at the public or private education/training institution are an eligible expense. Where the state employee is providing the training/teaching function, the exemption does not apply. A public or private institution may apply for these funds and may either directly hire staff or use contract staff.

    Applicants are asked to identify and describe any partnerships or working relationships with other organizations and to identify points of contact at the partner institution(s). The submitting organization will be the organization to receive all program funds and will be required to submit all required reporting information. Any partnerships will need to

submit, as part of the application, a corresponding letter of intent signed by all parties of the respective leadership teams.

73. **Q: With respect to scholarships, should proposals include distribution criteria? Is there a limit on scholarship amounts that can be requested? Can scholarships be used for current LPN program students for retention?**
A: Applications should describe distribution criteria for scholarships. Scholarships may support LPN students who are current employees as part of a retention strategy, provided that the employer is listed as a partner on the application.

There is intentionally no minimum or maximum grant funding award amount listed in the RFA, and bidders may apply for as much or as little funding as they need for their proposed projects. Applying does not guarantee funding. Programs, as described in Section 4, proposed through an application may be fully approved, partially approved, or not approved for any funding.

74. **Q: Are ABA staff supporting young children eligible?**
A: Yes, provided they meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 4 of the RFA.

75. **Q: Would the childcare/transportation vouchers described in Section 4.A.3.B.vi be applicable as a flat amount for all staff members?**
A: The specific amount would need to be part of the proposal. The project can only support eligible staff, not all staff.

76. **Q: Is a company who has a training platform for direct care workers eligible for this program?**
A: No, as described in Section 4.A.1 of the RFA.

77. **Q: Are Early Intervention workers included in the eligible workers?**
A: Yes, as described in Section 4.A.2. of the RFA.

78. **Q: With respect to the Professional Development and Retention wrap-around services for workers listed in Section 4.A.3.B.vi of the RFA, are child-care vouchers meant to be based on an existing voucher program? Is there any similar specificity regarding transportation assistance, or other purchases?**
A: An Eligible Organization's proposal should include these program specifications and submit them as part of the proposal for funding.

79. **Q: Do ALTR's qualify for these grant funds?**
A: ALTRs would be an eligible setting, provided they meet the other application criteria provided in Section 4.A.1 of the RFA.