

STEP Request for Proposals

2015 - 2020

Questions and Responses

Prequalification Process

Prequalification for all non-profit organizations must be completed by the due date of the grant application. The prequalification process may take up to a few weeks to complete, so interested organizations are encouraged to begin this process immediately upon RFP announcement. The process is described in the RFP. If you have any questions about prequalification registration, please go to the Grants Reform website (<http://www.grantsreform.ny.gov/Grantees>). If you intend to submit an application and have a question about your institution's status, contact NYSED at prequal@nysed.gov.

Reminder about the **Non-Mandatory Notice of Intent (NOI)**: The Notice of Intent is not a requirement for submitting a complete application by the application date; however, NYSED **strongly** encourages all prospective applicants to submit an NOI to ensure a timely and thorough review and rating process. A non-profit applicant's NOI will also help to facilitate timely review of their prequalification materials. The notice of intent is a simple email notice stating your organization's (use the legal name) intent to submit an application for this grant.

The due date for NOI is Friday, April 3, 2015. Please send the NOI to STEPPrfp@nysed.gov.

1. Question: Given that eligible applicants must be colleges, what is the role of the Research Foundation?

Response: Under § 6454 of the Education Law, the eligible applicant must be "an institution of postsecondary education or a consortia of such institutions" In order for any proposal to receive consideration, the applicant for your STEP RFP application must be the degree-granting institution. The Application Cover Page should list the degree-granting institution as the applicant. Although SUNY and CUNY colleges may use their respective "Research Foundation" as their fiscal agent if they receive a STEP award, the Research Foundation is not a degree-granting institution and therefore cannot itself be the applicant.

In the event a SUNY or CUNY College wins an award and that college has chosen to use the Research Foundation as their fiscal agent, the standard process is that a grant contract is written for 'RF <SUNY/CUNY> on behalf of <specific SUNY/CUNY college>.' Ultimately, the college bears responsibility for program operations and for fiscal, and performance reports.

2. For the recent C-STEP proposal it was specifically stated that the higher education institution must be listed as the applicant – and not the Research Foundation for SUNY on behalf of the institution – do similar regulations apply for the STEP application or can we apply as we always have with Research Foundation as applicant?

Response: The Research Foundation is not an eligible applicant under § 6454 of the Education Law. See Question #1.

3. The Application for Funding order on page 33 and the Application Checklist on page 59 have some discrepancies. Which order should we follow?

Response: Please follow the order on the Application Checklist found on page 59, but please know that no points will be deducted if the proposal is complete yet follows a different order. A check box for “Table of Contents” was missing and is now present in the posted STEP RFP at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/step/>.

4. The informational webinar mentioned that the 30-page limit does NOT apply to the Matrix (Section C). We are assuming that it does not apply to the max. 10-pg. Budget Narrative either, i.e., the 30-page limit refers specifically to sections A-B plus D-F. Is that correct?

Response: Attachments are not counted towards your 30 page limit. The “Narrative Format” 30 page limit does not include the 10 pages allowed for the Budget Narrative. The budget narrative provides an explanation and justifies all proposed expenditures of state STEP funds and matching funds where required, which must include details clarifying their nature, and the method of the calculation for each cost. The budget narrative should be organized in the order of the categories on the FS-10. The budget narrative may be described in prose and/or in table format, but it may not exceed the 10 page limit.

Letters of support as well as any MOUs/MOAs should also be included in a complete proposal as attachments (hard copy as well as electronic). Your proposal may include the attachments as appendices. M/WBE documents are expected to be a part of the attachments.

Also see Question #5.

5. Is the Matrix to be included in the Narrative 30 page number requirement?

Response: Attachments are not counted towards the 30 page limit for the “Narrative Format.” Some examples of attachments include the 10 pages allowed for the Budget Narrative, the seven “Program Requirements” Matrix Tables, resumes, and MOU letters placed as appendices. Also see Question #3.

6. In the RFP Narrative Format, Section C. Program Requirements and Measures of Positive Performance Matrix, do we only complete the Matrix (Attachment 1) without including any additional text in the 30 page narrative?

Response: The Narrative Format XV.C describes the requirements that are found in the “Program Requirements and Measures of Positive Performance Matrix.” The 30 page narrative may include text referring to the Program Requirements/performance matrix. Any text in

Narrative Format associated with the XV.C requirements would count towards the maximum length of the proposal narrative of 30 pages. However, the tables of the Program Requirements/performance matrix are considered attachments and do not count towards the 30 page maximum.

7. In the webinar, we heard in the budgeting section that grant funds cannot be used for cultural enrichment or social activities. Can you provide more clarity on what NYSED would define as a social activity?

Response: Cultural and social activities are ones in which there are no direct relationship to the STEP academic mission. As found in EDL § 6454, “[t]he purpose of the science and technology entry programs shall be to assist eligible students in acquiring the skills, attitudes and abilities necessary to pursue professional or pre-professional study in post-secondary degree programs in scientific, technical and health-related fields...” as such program activities and allowable expenses must be clearly tied to this goal. Allowable expenses include services and programming for:

- A. Program administration, including professional and non-professional salaries, benefits, staff travel for required program administration as approved by NYSED. *Note: Out of state travel requires prior approval by NYSED liaison.
- B. Stipends for students participating in approved STEP supervised research opportunities and internships (the maximum stipend must be consistent with the average for similar activities at the institution or in the region).
- C. Program activities, such as field trips, STEP student conference expenses, program achievement/awards, and related fees/charges, including charges for recreational facilities and activities, standardized tests/instruction fees, etc.
- D. Expenses related to program attendance such as participant transportation.
- E. Student classroom supplies, including laboratory supplies, calculators, etc.
- F. Administrative and instructional supplies, materials, and equipment (including instructional or administrative computer software and computers, lab equipment, etc.).
- G. Evaluation materials and activities.
- H. STEP staff development/training (*Out of state travel requires prior approval by NYSED liaison).
- I. Program brochures/materials and promotional activities.

Allowable services and activities are those that are directly related to goals and objectives germane to STEP and its objectives. Descriptions of allowable services and activities should include how they support and advance the project’s goals and STEP mission. Use of funds should be reasonable, practical, and prudent in terms of the respective project’s budget and the number of students being served by the particular activity or service.

8. Please explain social activities and cultural activities that are not allowed?

Response: As found in EDL § 6454, the STEP program must “provide a program of instruction and curriculum-related activities and services to advance the purpose of the science and technology entry program” as such program activities and allowable expenses must be directly tied to this goal. Please also see Question #7.

9. Can funds be used for food for student conference/workshop?

Response: Funds may be used for food if its presence is deemed critical to facilitate the STEP goal(s) or objective(s) connected to the given activity or service. Use of funds for food should be reasonable, practical, and prudent in terms of the respective project’s budget and the number of students being served by the particular activity or service.

10. Regarding allowable expenses: When taking students on a College Tour or to a Conference, is the cost for an evening activity such as a play or a visit to a museum allowable?

Response: See Questions #7 and #11. Through its proposal, institutions must clearly describe how activities support participant pursuit of academic programs or careers related to the STEP mission. STEP state funds cannot be used for the purposes of entertainment. Any use of STEP state funds must relate to the mission of STEP as defined in EDL § 6454.

11. Do all field trips have to be science based?

Response: See Questions #7 and #10. Through its proposal, institutions must clearly describe how activities support participant pursuit of academic programs or careers related to the STEP mission. As found in EDL § 6454, the STEP project must “emphasize the concrete aspects of the scientific, technical or health-related discipline as it relates to a professional career, through laboratories, relevant work experience opportunities, or similar activities...” as such program activities and allowable expenses must be linked to this goal.

12. Is a Recreational Activity allowable if it includes a workshop on physics or engineering, or a STEM related career?

Response: STEP-SED realizes that some recreational activities may be necessary during certain STEP programming (e.g., summer programming, overnight field trips, etc.). As mentioned in Questions #7, #10 and #11, through its proposal, institutions must clearly describe how curriculum-related activities support participant pursuit of academic programs or careers related to the STEP mission.

13. Regarding Summer Program Requirement: If STEM summer camps are offered by the institution and STEP scholarships are provided for students to attend, does their attendance at a summer camp meet the requirement for a summer program?

Response: Also see Questions #14 and #15. Individual STEP projects that request a budget of \$200,000 or more a year are required to conduct a summer program. Regarding summer programs, through its proposal, institutions should project the number of summer student participants and denote the length of its summer programming. The quality of summer programming is reviewed in Requirement C.1, Recruitment D.2, and Retention E.b.

STEP projects may use funds to sponsor active STEP participants to attend other STEM summer programs. Reviewers may consider the number of such sponsored students and the length of external summer programming in combination with the institution's summer program plan.

14. For individual STEP projects that request a budget of \$200,000 or more a year and are required to conduct a summer program, must all students receiving services in the program participate in the summer program? Or can the summer program be designed to serve just a subset of participants?

Response: No, not all of your project's STEP participants are expected to participate in your summer programming. Yes, the summer programming may be designed to serve a subset of your project's STEP participants. As mentioned in XV.D2, please describe the process and list the criteria that would be used to fairly select participants for any component of the program, such as internships, summer programming and other field experiences, etc. The only eligibility criteria for participation in STEP are those identified in the RFP.

Also see Question #13 and #15.

15. Is there a preference between a commuter or residential summer program?

Response: No.

16. Regarding Staff Salaries: I understand that the PI on the grant cannot be paid. Can the PI also serve as the Program Evaluator and be paid by the grant?

Response: State STEP funds cannot be used to pay for the salary or stipend of the STEP Director's Supervisor or someone designated as a Principal Investigator for the grant contract (in their role as supervisor or PI). STEP funds may be used towards program evaluation. Certain data may be required for mid-year and annual reports, such as information on the persistence rate of participating students, college placement rate of participating students in professional or pre-professional programs in scientific, technical, or health-related fields, etc. There must be a clear delineation between the activities performed as the supervisor of the STEP program director and any activities as an evaluator. It must also be clearly delineated how these two roles in no way overlap or impact each other. The funds allocated, staffing used, and the manner in which the data is collected for the project is left to the discretion of the individual institution and should be described in the proposal.

17. If the RFP is completed as a word document. Do programs still submit 2 copies in PDF? Meaning we have to convert the word document to PDF document?

Response: Yes, please convert the Word documents to PDF for saving onto the USB/flash drive. This will avoid formatting issues that can take place during conversion and maintain consistency across proposals and USB/flash drives. The **flash drive should** contain a complete electronic copy (including all attachments) of the proposal in one PDF file and a copy of the budget documents (FS-10, Composite Budget, and Budget Narrative) in separate PDF files.

18. Prequalification requirement: If an organization is a currently funded program and already prequalified in the NYS Grants Gateway System, does the organization have to submit the prequalification materials again to be eligible for the grant?

Response: The applicant must be prequalified by the application due date. If the organization was previously prequalified, they should verify in the Grants Gateway that all of the critical documents are approved and up to date. If any are due to expire before the application due date then the organization should upload the appropriate documents and allow sufficient time for review by the prequalification specialist prior to the STEP application due date. Also see information on page one (1) regarding Notice of Intent (NOI).

19. Regarding Historically Underrepresented, slide 11 refers to those who are “Black, Hispanic, American Indian, or Alaskan native”, and the voice-over said “Black, African American, Hispanic...” Please provide specific guidance on what the state is referring to as “Black.”

Response: According to the US Census Bureau – “Black or African American’ refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.”

20. Slide 52, on FTE explanation. If a teacher is hired as an independent contractor to teach a specific topic – is that teacher a 1.0 FTE? If another teacher is hired as an independent contractor for the year for recruitment and to teach a specific topic, is the 1.0 FTE split between those two responsibilities? Last, if a teacher is hired as an independent contractor at a rate of \$40 per hour, for 40 hours, is their FTE equivalent equal to .05 FTE (i.e., that part of a year that they work for us)? How should we be thinking about this?

Response: See question #21. For each activity and/or service, indicate the full-time equivalent (FTE). Full-time equivalent (FTE) is a way to measure a worker's involvement in a project, or a student's enrollment at an educational institution. For clarification, full-time equivalent for staff is the percent effort provided by the worker towards the project. An FTE of 1.0 means that the person is equivalent to a full-time worker and spends 100% of his or her time on the project; an FTE of 0.5 signifies that the worker spends half of a full-time position serving the project.

If the staff-person responsible for the STEP requirement/activity is a seasonal or hourly employee, you could describe the staff-person's role in the "Activities/Services" section and list his or her corresponding hours and dates of responsibility in the "FTE" section.

21. The instructions for Addressing Requirements and Measures of Positive Performance Matrix provides a definition of FTE in relation to time spent on the activity. However, it is still unclear how this definition is to be applied to completing the matrix. What is the relationship between the FTE required to be included on this matrix and a project staff member's total FTE? For example, if the grant pays for a program director with a grant-funded FTE of 0.50, should the total FTE for this staff member add up to 0.5 per year, allocated among the outlined activities? Or is there another way this is to be done? Can you provide an example?

Response: See question #20. FTE should reflect the time and effort towards the *STEP project* of the staff person responsible for that specific activity. The FTE should reflect the staff person's time and effort spent towards the STEP project, irrespective of the staff person's source of funding (e.g., STEP funding or in-kind).

As mentioned in Question #20, if the staff-person responsible for the STEP requirement/activity is a seasonal or hourly employee, you may describe the staff-person's role in the "Activities/Services" section and list her or his corresponding hours and dates of responsibility in the "FTE" section.

22. Our institution's home school district is slightly below the 20% cut off for minority student enrollment. However 6% of our students are classified as multiracial. Can we include the multi-racial students in our calculation to meet the criteria?

Response: Minority student enrollment for the purposes of the 20% calculation includes all minority students as indicated on the NYS school report card for that district. School report cards can be found at <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/>

You may include "multiracial" students in your proposal's calculation. In the Recruitment section (D) of your application, you may discuss and explain how the category of "multiracial" students contributes towards the requirement of being located within a school district of at least 20% minority.

In order to be eligible for STEP participation under the minority criterion, a "multiracial" student must self-identify on their application as one of the eligible underrepresented groups. By signing the application cover page, and identifying the eligible partner school district, your institution is certifying that the enrollment of that district meets the eligibility criteria.

The Science and Technology Entry Program is designed for New York State residents in grades 7 through 12 who are either economically disadvantaged or minorities historically underrepresented in the scientific, technical, health-related, and licensed professions. For the

purpose of STEP, minorities historically underrepresented in the scientific, technical, health-related, and licensed professions are Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native. Economically disadvantaged may include members of any racial or ethnic group, however this population is not included in the criteria for 20% racial/ethnic minority.

23. If funded, our program will be a start-up program. We plan on offering services to 7, 8, and 9th graders in year 1 and then adding subsequent grades as these students progress so that we serve all grades by Year 5. Does NYSED have any guidance or another preferred method for start-up programs?

Response: Also see question #24. All projects must provide services to students enrolled in secondary education (grades 7 – 12) by the end of the 2015-2020 grant/contract cycle. Program services must address the students' academic and collegiate preparation in science, technology, health-related fields and licensed professions.

You are expected to enroll your full headcount in your first year, as STEP is not a cohort based program, meaning that you can serve students at each educational level without them having previously been a STEP participant. New student participants to STEP can be from any grade year and as such STEP-SED would expect projects to serve all grade levels as soon as it is feasible for the individual project to do so.

24. Do you need to have all grade levels in each year of the proposal?

Response: See question #23. STEP-SED would expect all projects to attempt to serve all grade levels each year. Again, projects are expected to enroll the full headcount for each year of the funding cycle.

25. Other than the 18 week academic year requirement for the programs, Is there a required number of contact hours and or sessions?

Response: Outside the 18 week academic year minimum requirement for all programs, each institution will determine its own number of contact hours and sessions to be held during the academic year or during its possible summer programming. STEP projects that request a budget of \$200,000 or more a year and are required to conduct a summer program.

26. What does SED define as direct services?

Response: Direct services are those which lead the project to interact directly with STEP participants on STEP activities (e.g., relevant tours, career workshops, academic support, etc.).

27. Within a consortium, does every program have to serve middle school students or can some programs fulfill the component?

Response: Since the consortium is viewed as one project, the partner institutions within the consortium may serve all grades 7 through 12 as a collective. Also see questions #23 and #24.

28. Previously, we have participated in STEP as part of consortium and only some have served students in grades 9-12/10 to 12. Our programs are in the process of applying as an individual entity but need additional time to revamp our program and budget, especially as it relates to adding grades 7 to 9. Will the Department provide an extension in order to allow programs time to add additional grade levels and revamp curriculum?

Response: Extensions for the RFP will not be granted. Also see Questions #23 and #24.

29. May we reduce or eliminate the descriptions at the top of the Performance and Measures form to make more room for describing the performance outcome measures below?

Response: Yes, you may. Attempt to arrange all materials, including the requirement tables, in a fashion conducive for review.

30. Does information in tables also need to adhere to the 1.5 line spacing requirement

Response: No, the tables may be single-spaced.

31. Can the 25% matching funds be all in-kind or does a certain portion need to be matching funds?

Response: As stated in F.1, Matching Funds: The matching requirement may be met through the institution's own resources, private sources, other non-New York State governmental sources, and in-kind services. All matching contributions must be used for activities related exclusively to the STEP project, and institutional accounts must be structured to reflect this contribution by appropriate line item. Matching funds for indirect expenses provided by the institution may not exceed 20 percent of the matching funds contributed by the institution and/or other non-NYS sources. Any combination of the aforementioned matching sources is allowable.

32. Is Kaplan Educational Services considered a vendor or contractual agreement?

Response: Test preparation services through Kaplan or other companies would typically be included in Code 40: Purchased Services.

33. Is collaboration with government agencies, local businesses, etc. required?

Response: As per section XV.B, proposals should describe formal collaborations between the proposing institution and local education agencies, such as local schools and school districts,

CSTEP Programs, professional organizations, and other agencies, and outline those relationships on the STEP Collaborations Form found in Attachment I.

Two (2) points are connected to your description of planned collaboration with government agencies, local businesses, and/or industry in scientific and licensed professions and how you may involve their participation in the planning and implementation of the project.

34. Are there no priority points for Previously Awarded STEP Programs?

Response: Correct, there are no points provided for previously awarded STEP programs.

35. In the CSTEP proposal there was no matrix but Program Priorities were requested, are there no program priorities?

Response: There are no Program Priorities in this STEP RFP.

36. There is not a priority table included with this RFP. Are there priorities that we should be discussing in the narrative portion?

Response: See Question # 35.

37. Are Cap limits for new programs only?

Response: The funding formula is for all STEP RFP applicants, not just new programs.

38. We are planning on submitting as a new program. Presently, we do not have staff identified and would not have them in place unless we are awarded funds. Do the staff members need to be identified prior to submitting the RFP? If not, how is this section completed in the proposal?

Response: The project Staffing and Management rubric is described in the RFP Narrative Format, Section F. If the project is unable to list the names and/or attach an appendix containing the current resumes of all fulltime and part-time professionals, including instructional staff, to be assigned to the project, you may describe how your search process will hire project staff who will best address the needs of your project goals, students, and STEP objectives.

39. On page 45 it states "The applicant must be located within and partner with a school district with an enrollment comprised of at least twenty percent minority group students or must be located near such a district that is accessible by public transportation." SUNY Canton is located in rural northern NY and is not located within a school district that has at least 20% minority group students; we are located near one but no public transportation exists in The North Country. Does this mean we are

not eligible to apply? Please elaborate. The North Country has a very low minority or diverse population but extremely high in the economic disadvantaged category.

Response: The applicant must be located within and partner with a school district with an enrollment comprised of at least twenty percent minority group students or must be located near such a district that is accessible by public transportation.

Applicants are encouraged to examine the public transportation resources offered through your county. (As an example, see [http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Departments/PublicTransportation/.](http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Departments/PublicTransportation/)) By signing the application cover page, and identifying the eligible partner school district, your institution is certifying that the district meets the eligibility criteria.

40. The maximum amount of funding we can ask for per student is listed in the given tables. Will extra consideration/points be given for a cost per student ratio less than the maximum?

Response: The maximum amount of funding that may be requested in any one application will be determined by the minimum number of student participants (headcount) the project commits to serve contractually on an annual basis. The maximum amount of funding which may be requested is directly linked to the number of students served or headcount.

The project may propose a budget that reflects a lower funding amount if the project deems it suitable for the scope of their services or to correspond with their ability to meet the required 25% match.

Further, while **individual projects** that provide services to more than 301 students will not receive additional funds per student, serving higher numbers of proposed participants will be viewed favorably by reviewers in the scoring rubric for recruitment: "Describe all strategies and activities that will be used to recruit and select participants." Similarly, non-profit applicants requesting lower funding while proposing quality services to higher numbers of proposed participants may also be viewed favorably by reviewers in the Fiscal Viability section of the same scoring rubric. For-profit applicants' fiscal viability will be scored using a formula that awards the highest score of twenty points to the budget that reflects the lowest cost per student and five (5) points for the highest institutional match relative to the total amount of STEP funds requested.

41. Do you realize that with the funding chart, when calculating with the same number of students to serve my budget is reduce by \$100,000. I cannot imagine how we will adequately serve our students with less money and staff.

Response: This approach seeks to award funding to successful projects in an equitable manner and maximize the number of students served statewide while recognizing that projects serving fewer students can bear a higher proportion of infrastructure and administrative costs per

student. Previous programs that would see a decrease in funding levels from past cycles may choose to increase their contracted headcount of STEP participants to reach or exceed their prior funding level.

42. Our program serves students from an entire county, although the majority of our students are enrolled in a district with more than a 20% minority population. Are we allowed to continue this practice as long as we have an MOU from the district with the minority population that exceeds 20%, or can we only serve students from districts with a minority population of 20% or more?

Response: While you are required to serve and have a MOU with a School District that is at least 20% minority, you may also serve eligible students from other schools and districts.

43. Is it permissible for our program to offer tuition-free college courses to a group of the STEP cohort in a “fast track” component so that some advanced students will graduate from high school with transferrable college credits?

Response: Yes, it is permissible to offer or provide support for special summer courses. As mentioned in XV.D2, your proposal should describe the process and list the criteria that will be used to fairly select participants for any component of your program, including requirements for internships, summer programming and other field experiences. The only eligibility criteria for participation in STEP are those identified in the RFP, therefore the institution must clearly identify the criteria for providing this opportunity to only ‘some advanced students’.

44. As found on page 45 – (attachment 1): The applicant must be located within and partner with a school district with an enrollment comprised of at least twenty percent minority group students or must be located near such a district that is accessible by public transportation.

- **How is minority being defined? Is it Black/Latino students within a school? or Black/Latino and economically disadvantaged per the grant eligibility requirements for income inside a school? Inside each district that we have a student?**

Response: Minority student enrollment for the purposes of the 20% calculation includes all minority students as indicated on the NYS school report card for that district. School report cards can be found at <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/>

For the purpose of STEP participation, a minority historically underrepresented in the scientific, technical, health, and health-related professions is defined as Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, American Indian, and Alaskan Native. Economically disadvantaged may include members of any racial or ethnic group, however this population is not included in the criteria for 20% racial/ethnic minority.

45. If all districts and schools that we work with are accessible by public transportation then is this requirement met?

Response: Yes.

46. Some documents contained in the RFP ask for a "project code" but a new applicant will receive a project code only if their proposal is approved, correct?

Response: That is correct, so a new applicant should leave the "project code" blank. Once funding decisions are made STEP-SED will assign project codes.

47. Who should our program directors address the letter of support to? They addressed it to James Donsbach in the past, but I don't see that name in the grant documents.

Response: You can have the letter(s) of support made out to an official at your institution or to:

Stanley S. Hansen, Jr. Executive Director
New York State Education Department
Office of Postsecondary Access, Support and Success
State Education Building, Room 5W
Albany, New York 12234

Any letters of support should be submitted with the application and not mailed separately.

48. Can you provide the low-income guidelines for 2015-16?

Please find the latest Income Guidelines below as well as on the following link:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/colldev/CollegiateScienceandTechnologyEntryProgram.htm>

**New York State Opportunity Programs
Income Eligibility Criteria
2012-13 through 2015-16**

Number in Household Dependent on Income	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	\$20,665	\$21,257	\$21,590	\$21,755
2	\$27,991	\$28,694	\$29,101	\$29,471
3	\$35,317	\$36,131	\$36,612	\$37,167
4	\$42,643	\$43,568	\$44,123	\$44,863
5	\$49,969	\$51,005	\$51,634	\$52,559
6	\$57,295	\$58,442	\$59,145	\$60,255
7	\$64,621 ¹	\$65,879 ²	\$66,656 ³	\$67,951 ⁴

¹ Add \$7,326 for each family member in excess of 7.
² Add \$7,437 for each family member in excess of 7.
³ Add \$7,511 for each family member in excess of 7.
⁴ Add \$7,696 for each family member in excess of 7.

49. Are letters of support with electronic signatures acceptable? Some colleagues have sent letters of support via email with electronic signatures because it is more efficient and economical than through the mail.

Response: Yes, electronic signatures are acceptable for letters of support.

50. Can you expand the meaning of statewide and regional collaboration and give examples?

Response: There is no list of recognized or approved Statewide/Regional collaborations. However, some examples could include involvement with the Association of Program Administrators for CSTEP and STEP (APACS), NYS Regional Economic Development Council, NYS associations related to specific professions or fields (<http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/national.htm>) or the institution's regional STEP working group. Partnerships and collaborations (formal and/or informal) are viewed more favorably if they take place regularly and have potential for a measurable impact on STEP related goals and objectives.

51. Can recruitment activities for the STEP program be covered by the grant?

Response: Yes, however the focus must be on a plan of instruction and curriculum-related activities and services to advance the purpose of the science and technology entry program.

52. If information requested by SED is given in one section and is the same for another section should we repeat our response, or can we simply cite the earlier response?

Response: While there may be some overlap in the activities which provide these opportunities, all requirements should be addressed separately.

53. For the Equal Employment Opportunity Staffing Plan, do we just address employees that are actually paid from STEP funds?

Response: The Equal Employment Opportunity Staffing Plan may be completed one of two ways:

1. If staff has been identified, then please complete the Equal Employment Opportunity Staffing Plan based upon staff funded through this grant. Please indicate this by selecting "Work force to be utilized on this contract."
2. If a majority of staff has yet to be identified, then please include the entire workforce. Please indicate this by selecting "applicant's total work force"

54. M/WBE requirements – does this pertain to faculty and tutors or only to purchased services and contractors? Our institution uses a competitive bidding process to select vendors for office supplies, many instructional supplies, transportation, catering, etc. We are required to use the contractor selected through this process, which may or may not be a M/WB. Is this acceptable?

Response: All applicants are required to comply with NYSED's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) policy and are, therefore, responsible for identifying areas in their budget where an M/WBE can be utilized. M/WBE participation includes services, materials, or supplies purchased from minority and women-owned firms certified with the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development. The inclusion of M/WBE forms in your institutions competitive bidding process will increase your chance of reaching the 20% participation goal while demonstrating good faith efforts. See the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise, GOOD FAITH EFFORTS, section of the RFP for additional examples of good faith efforts that applicants may take to solicit NYS certified M/WBE firms as subcontractors and/or suppliers to achieve the goals for this grant.

55. I would like clarification on the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises. If we cannot provide documentation with submission, do we note that somewhere on the RFP? It says, "the applicant will have thirty days from the date of notice of award to submit the necessary documents..." I don't see space on the form in the RFP to note the documentation will be submitted at a later date.

Response: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit complete M/WBE documentation, as missing or incomplete information may result in a delay of approval. If some information is unavailable, applicants should then submit documentation indicating their level of participation

and identify how they are planning to meet their participation goal. TBD (to be determined) may be used as a place hold for unavailable information (i.e. price quotes), with the expectation that missing information will be provided as soon as possible, or within thirty days from the date of notice of award.

56. Is the M/WBE requirement 20% of any combination of contractors or are there specific % requirement for Women-Owned and for Minority-owned business (e.g., 10% and 10%)?

Response: Yes, full M/WBE compliance can be achieved with any combination of WBE and MBE participation as long as the 20% requirement is met. The suggested target, although not required, is 12% MBE and 8% WBE.

57. The RFP says the [MWBE] "participation goal is 20% of each applicant's total discretionary non-personal service budget over the entire term". Are we penalized if we can't meet the 20% since participation may change each year? Is there some required process if vendors change after awarded?

Response: The 20% M/WBE participation goal applies to the total budget for the five year grant period. The M/WBE participation can be different from year to year as long as the 20% participation goal is met by the end of the grant.

58. Do stipends paid to students count as salary in the MBWE calculations?

Response: Any stipends paid to students should be included in code 40 (Purchased Services) of the FS-10 form and, therefore, will not be deducted for MWBE goal calculation purposes. Please refer to the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise section of the RFP (pages 79-88) for information regarding the three methods of compliance. Should you have any questions regarding M/WBE compliance or attainment of goals, please contact the M/WBE coordinator at MWBE@nysed.gov.