

July 14, 2022

Concept Paper Vision Screening and Optometric Services for Students, City-Wide

Purpose of the Concept Paper/RFP:

The purpose of the concept paper is to clearly outline the Division of Family and Child Health's projected long-term plans to procure vision screening and optometric exams services via qualified vendors, for the School Years 2023-2032. This document will also support the drafting of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for vision screening and optometric services for students, city-wide.

Background of the Program:

The Office of School Health (OSH) is a joint office in the Division of Family and Child Health, managed, staffed, and funded by both NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and NYC Department of Education (DOE). The OSH Vision Program staff are from both agencies, and they collaborate and act as support for each other to ensure the smooth operation of the program.

The purpose of the OSH Vision Program is to identify and ensure treatment for students who are at risk for amblyopia, myopia, astigmatism, hyperopia, and any other eye conditions that may potentially impact aspects of their development. Early detection and treatment of vision problems can prevent monocular blindness and other vision problems. Vision screenings are provided to students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten through 1st Grade, in public and private schools, city-wide. The results are entered into the Automated Student Entry System (ASHR) in the student's health record and accessible by school staff.

Under Chancellor Regulation A701, all new entrants into a New York City public school must be screened within six months of entry. In addition, all pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grade 1 students must be screened. DOHMH OSH screening teams conduct screening for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grade 1 students. The principal is responsible for ensuring that screening is completed of students in all other grades as well as students who were not screened by the DOHMH.

Since its inception in 1984, the OSH Vision Program has provided vision screening services to students enrolled in New York City schools. Vision screening is comprised of far and near testing with additional tests for K-1 grades. In the fall of 2019, the program was expanded to provide exams and eyeglasses to all Kindergarten and 1st grade students throughout the city.

OSH also offers optometric services and glasses to 30,000 students in the Students in Temporary Housing (STH) program. Community Schools' 110,000 students and STH vision services are now provided by contracted vendors. Helen Keller International (HKI) services the Community Schools with the use of Warby Parker glasses. STH schools are served by Optical Academy, which fabricates its own glasses.

Current Program Structure:

There are several components within the Office of School Health's Vision Program that provide an array of services. Each component of the program serves a vital role in the overall program's success to ensure seamless delivery of vision screening and optometric services to NYC students. Written parental consent is required for all optometric services. The components of the program are as follows:

1. **The Pre-K Program:** The Office of School Health is contracted with the DOE to provide vision screening services to students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten, both in the public schools and community-based organizations. Pre-K's screeners target population of students are children enrolled in Pre-kindergarten, and the Pre-K for All Program, city-wide. The Pre-K's screeners use Spot Autorefractors to vision screen students, which assesses the values of sphere, cylinder, axis, pupil, distance, and gaze asymmetry. Annually, the Pre-K's team screens approximately 55,000 students enrolled in 1,600 schools, city wide.
2. **Kindergarten and 1st Grade Program:** During the School Year 2019-2020, Kindergarten and 1st grade vision screening services were expanded to include eye examinations and optometric services for this age group. The program's contracted optometrists, who are at schools during the vision screening, further evaluate and examine students who are identified with potential vision conditions and are provided with the needed services, such as prescription eye- glasses. The optometrists do non-dilations exams. Annually, the Kindergarten and 1st grade teams screen approximately 160,000 students enrolled in these programs.
3. **Community Schools (CS) and Students in Temporary Housing (STH) Program:** Vision services for students enrolled in grades Pre-K-12 in Community Schools and students in Temporary Shelters are provided vision services via contracted vendors. The vendors are responsible for providing vision screening and optometric eye examination services to these student's city wide. There is a plan to hire OSH staff to provide quality assurance to vendors to ensure vision screenings are compliant and in accordance with "Best Practices" as recommended by the **National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health**. The Snelling eye chart is the preferred tool/mechanism used for vision screening students. However, for students who are enrolled in kindergarten through 1st grade, the Tumbling E eye chart may be used to measure students' visual acuity. In the 2021-22 SY, services were provided to approximately 110,000 students across 260 Community Schools and 30,000 students across 70 Temporary Housing schools. It is important to note that the Community School Program is expected to expand to 440 schools in the 2022-2023 SY and the expectation is that services are provided to all schools.
4. **Optometry Program:**

The Optometry Team provides free vision exams and free eyeglasses for kindergarten and first grade students attending NYC elementary schools. Students are identified through a vision screening. If results indicate students may have a visual problem, they are then referred to OSH optometrists' consultants when available. If the contracted optometrist determines that prescription glasses are needed following the students eye examination, glasses are provided, courtesy of Warby Parker.

- The Eyeglasses Unit is under the Optometry Program. This team is responsible for checking a random number of prescription lens for accuracy upon receipt from Warby Parker. Staff process and pack each pair of eyeglasses into its case with the prescription and directions for use and care of the eyeglasses. The Eyeglasses Unit coordinates the ordering and delivery of student's eyeglasses to the designated schools where they will be distributed to students by school staff. Eyeglass unit staff also follow-up with the schools until distribution of glasses to students is confirmed. All vision screenings, exams and eyeglasses issued are recorded and entered in DOHMH/ASHR for entry into the student(s) health record. Eyeglasses are distributed to approximately 35,000 students each school year.

5. District 75 Summer Initiative:

The district 75 Summer Initiative Vision Program provides vision screening services, optometric exams and glasses to students enrolled in NYC Special Education Programs. Each summer, vision services are provided to approximately 6,500 students in the D75 program across 150 schools. During summer of school year 2018, 632 eyeglasses were provided to students.

The Department of Education Special Education Programs are comprised of students with a variety of educational challenges. Classes for these students are held year-round and close for two weeks at the end of the summer.

Approach/Expected Vendor Deliverables:

On behalf of the Division of Family and Child Health, the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) propose to issue an RFP to procure services for vision screening, optometric exams and eyeglass distribution to students enrolled in New York City schools.

The DOHMH anticipates that responsibilities of vendors would include:

- **Vision Screening (for PreK, K+1 graders citywide, CS and STH Students grades K-12, and D75 Summer Initiative)**
 - Schedule and provide on-site visual acuity screenings (near and distance) to students
 - Kindergarten and first grade students will be screened for near, far, hyperopia, fusion, and color deficiency.
 - Identify students who fail the visual acuity screening and provide a list to OSH and School Administration so that those students can receive optometric examination.

- **Eye Exams (for K+1 graders citywide, CS and STH Students grades K-12, and D75 Summer Initiative)**
 - Provide a non-dilated optometric exam and prescription for glasses when indicated to students with visual acuity of 20/40 or less.
 - Provide on-site optometric examinations and refraction assessments.
 - At the vendors discretion, when the vendor believes that a non-dilated exam will not be adequate for evaluating the student (s), refer student (s) to community optometrist for a dilated exam, which requires written parental consent.
 - Conduct follow-up exams as needed.

- **Eyeglass Fabrication & Delivery (for K+1 graders citywide, CS and STH Students grades K-12, and D75 Summer Initiative)**
 - Provide prescription information to DOHMH, OSH and optical vendor.
 - Provide one (1) trial frame set suitable for K, 1st, and additional options for all grades in NYC schools in the event of program expansion.
 - Fabricate all glasses, including students who may need high index lens using prescriptions provided by the Office of School Health program staff, and supply elastic or adjustable eyeglasses straps or bands.
 - Shipping of orders to various locations at no cost to the student.



- **Program Management & Reporting**
 - Provide Management reports.
 - Provide all student's records of screenings and exams including dilated exams performed to DOHMH/OSH Vision for entry into Automated Students Health Record (ASHR) database or similar database.

Proposed Term of Contract:

It is anticipated that the term of the contract(s) awarded from the forthcoming RFP will be for nine (9) years, beginning 1/1/2024-12/31/2032, contingent on the availability of funding. DOHMH reserves the right, prior to contract award, to determine the length of the initial contract term and each option to renew, if any.

DOHMH anticipates awarding up to 3 contracts for these services.

Funding information and Proposed Payment Structure

It is anticipated that the available annual funding amount for the procurement will be approximately \$3,000,000, with an estimated 9-year total value of \$27,000,000, contingent upon the availability of funds. DOHMH expects that the payment structure of the resulting contract would be deliverable based.

Planned Methods of Evaluating Proposal

DOHMH anticipates that proposals will be evaluated based on proposer's relevant experience; approach to the scope of services; approach to program monitoring, data management, and reporting; organizational capacity, including proposed staffing plan; and proposed approach to budget management.

Provider Conferences

DOHMH will hold a conference for interested providers to obtain feedback and input from the provider community to gain additional information.

The conference will be held on July 18, 2022, at 1:30pm – 3pm. The conference link, bridge number and participation code will be sent out on July 17, 2022. If you plan to attend this meeting, please email RFP@health.nyc.gov on or before July 17, 2022, at 2pm with the attendee's name and include "Vision Screening and Optometric Services for Students, City-wide RSVP" in the subject line.

Procurement Timeline

It is anticipated that the RFP issuance date would be in Fall 2022, with an approximate proposal due date in Winter 2022 and expected award decisions by Spring 2023.



Contact Information/Deadline for Questions/Comments

Comments and feedback are invited by August 29, 2022. Please email RFP@health.nyc.gov and indicate “**Vision Screening and Optometric Services for Students, City-Wide Concept Paper**” in the subject line of the email.

Alternatively, written comments and feedback may be sent by mail to following address:

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