

IMPROVING YOUR RFP RESPONSE

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a document that outlines all the requirements and needs pertaining to the available funding.

These tips can help you improve your proposal for funding.



Getting Started



- ✓ Follow all instructions closely and ensure that your response is complete, directly and explicitly answering/addressing each question/criterion such as “how” proposed services are being provided, tangible project performance outcomes, etc.
- ✓ When answering the narrative questions, be sure to answer as if the evaluator does not know anything about your agency or services.
- ✓ Ensure that the electronic version of your proposal is **identical** to the original proposal on paper. Best is to provide one PDF file that was converted from the original electronic proposal and one PDF file that was scanned from the original proposal on paper.
- ✓ If you are unclear what the RFP is asking, reach out prior to the Q & A closing date to get clarification. Sometimes the RFP may not be as clear as we would have liked it and you will find out directly from the source what we are looking for in your response. Plus, it helps us write clearer RFP down the road.

Focus on the Details!



- ✓ Establish an internal deadline for drafting and finalization of the RFP to ensure timely submission.
- ✓ Double check to ensure you are responding to the appropriate RFP.
- ✓ When preparing the RFP application process, it is important to find and read the requirements and FAQs, keep your narratives concise but persuasive, and stay on topic, answering questions as directly thoroughly as possible.
- ✓ In the Cost Proposal portion of the RFP, provide as much detail as possible as to the need of the funds requested. The most information that is provided, can help in reviewing and gaining a better understanding of the project proposed.
- ✓ Often questions about the proposed services are answered with what is currently being provided by the organization. It is important to explain how your organization will use the new funding in addition to what is already being done. Make sure you add the “and then some” to the proposal so that we can see how the funding will strengthen and provide additional services. (e.g. we will support our emergency shelter operation, but with this funding we will be able to add 10 new beds)
- ✓ Make sure that your answer is organized as reflected in the RFP. For example, if a question has multiple sub questions labeled, a, b, c, d., have the answers to the questions correspond directly to the section. (e.g. 1a- type answer, 1b: type answer)

Keep it Simple!

PROCESS



- ✓ RFPs should clearly state the purpose of your project, define the scope of work to focus your funding search and identify the specific objectives that define how you will focus the work to accomplish these goals
 - ✓ When answering questions hit all points without “fluff” that do not pertain to what the question is asking. The committee is looking for clear and direct answers to the questions. It makes the evaluators job more difficult, and when developing the Scope of Service it is difficult to pull out key information. Get to the point.
 - ✓ When drafting an application, there should be detailed information about the total number of clients that would be served with the awarded funding. This helps the committee members to better review and evaluate the application and determine how best funding would be spent.
 - ✓ If proposing a new project, be sure to discuss how the PROPOSED project will be implemented when answering narrative questions.
 - ✓ If applying to expand current services, please be detailed on how the additional funding would expand current services.
 - ✓ In the Cost Proposal & Budget Narrative, provide information as to the number of clients that your agency plans to serve, both the total served over the course of the grant and the number to be served per month. This makes it easier to compare the cost of projects that are best compared per month (such as rental assistance).
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Don't Forget!

Reminder



- ✓ For the Financial Statements, please submit both a balance sheet and an income statement for your agency. For non-profit agencies, these are commonly called the “statement of financial position” and the “statement of activities”.
 - ✓ The balance sheet, or statement of financial position, is a listing of all assets, liabilities, and equity (or, for non-profits, “net assets”) at the end of the fiscal year.
 - ✓ The income statement, or statement of activities, is a listing of all revenues and expenses over the course of a fiscal year, ending with the net income (or “change in net assets”) for the year.
 - ✓ Submit early, at least one day or half day prior to deadline to allow sufficient time for contingency to ensure that proposal is submitted on time.
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