Request for Proposals – What to Know

Request for Proposals – What to Know

Thursday, April 4, 2024

CoC Meeting – 9:00 AM

Information provided is general RFP knowledge and may/may not be related to any future THHI RFP release and does not 'count' as attendance at any THHI specific RFP workshop(s).

THHI
TAMPA HILLSBOROUGH
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Request for Proposals
What to Know

What is a Request for Proposals (RFP)?

Process that funding entities use to solicit project proposals for funding consideration.

Also known as

Request for Applications (RFA)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Request for Proposals
What to Know

Funding Entities may include, but not be limited to:

- **Federal Departments -** *e.g. Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human (HHS) Services, Dept of Justice (DOJ), Veterans Affairs (VA)*
- **State Departments –** e.g. Children and Families (DCF), Justice
- **County / City Government –** often times 'passed' through from Federal / State Department; could may be General Revenue funds
- **Non-profits / other organizations** – e.g. THHI, Children's Board of Hillsborough County, Elks, Kiwanis
- **For profit entities** – e.g. USAA, Bank of America, Home Depot

Ensure your agency is 'signed up' to receive notices of RFP / NOFO Releaases

Request for Proposals
What to Know

RFPs tell you all the things you need to know about the funding opportunity:

- Workshops that may be offered / mandatory or optional
- Critical Dates / Timeline including submission deadline
- How to submit a proposal
- How to Format the proposal
- Key questions & information needed in the proposal submission
- Some information is general to your organization / some project specific
- How proposals will be scored and selected

** Read it ASAP after an RFP is Released**

Request for Proposals
What to Know

Agency Documentation Frequently Requested for RFP Submission

- **Evidence of Organization's Establishment Date** – Articles of Incorporation / other legal documents establishing the organization
- **Evidence of 501 (c) 3 Status** – IRS Determination / Affirmation Letter of organization's 501(c)3 status (or explanation statement/documentation if faith-based entity)
- **Evidence of Good Standing with the State of Florida** –the organization's most recent annual report filed with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations (Sunbiz). *NOTE: This is not the State Tax Exempt certificate.*
- **SAM.gov Entity Registration Summary** - showing 'no active exclusions"
- **IRS Form 990 –** Most Recently Filed
- **Most Recent Financial Audit**
- **Current List of agencies' board of directors**
- **Organizational chart** (noting paid staff vs. volunteers; with titles)
- **Organizational Budget**

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What to Know

Good Governance

Good Organization Governance Policy and Process is CRITICAL to administering grant funding – especially federal and state funds

- Does your organization have a written mission statement?
- Have the most recent versions of the organization's articles and bylaws been provided to all Board members?
- Does the full board meet at least on a quarterly basis?
- Does the board contemporaneously document its meetings and retain this documentation?
- Does the organization have a written conflict of interest policy?
  - How is that policy enforced to disclose family/business conflicts?

Request for Proposals
What to Know

Good Governance

- Does the organization provide board members with written reports of the organization's financial activities at least quarterly?
- Does your organization have an independent accountant's report prepared?
- Does your organization have a written policy for document retention and destruction?
- Who can sign contracts? Who authorizes the person to sign contacts?
- Does your organization have a clear segregation of duties specific to financial transactions?
    - Who requests, approved, prepares and signs payment approvals
    - Who reconciles the bank statements?

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RFPs' usually specify the 'type' of project they are seeking proposals for, such as:

- **New project** - a project that does not currently exist and, if funded, will increase overall capacity in the community.
- **Currently Funded Project** – a project that has been operating and seeks to continue their project.
- **Expanded Project** - a project that is currently operational, that would add/increase overall capacity.
- **Renewal Project –** a project that is currently operating and the process to renewal, if appliable

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Project Completion Timeframes

For most project types, the Proposed Project should be able to be operational within 1 to 3 months following the award of funding, based on information in the RFP. For acquisition, new construction and/or rehab projects, proposed projects may be 'Shovel Ready" or "Pipe Line" projects.

"Shovel Ready" projects are projects where planning and engineering is advanced enough that with sufficient funding, construction can begin within a very short time, including the ability to ensure occupancy of units within 12 months or less following an award of funding.

"Pipe Line" projects are those that have concrete plans in place, but the process to develop to occupancy is greater than 12 months, but less than 18 months. Project ideas that have not had preliminary budget, timeline and planning completed are not "Pipe Line" Projects.

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Project Location

- **Site Based** – also known as project based or facility based – services are provided at a single location
  - Agency owns/rents location where services are offered
  - Project types are usually: emergency shelter, transitional housing or permeant supportive housing project

- **Scattered Site** – projects utilize sites "scattered' throughout the community
  - Emergency Shelter / Transitional housing – agencies have agreements / leases with property owners to use 'units' for emergency shelters / transitional housing
  - Rapid Rehousing - household assisted has lease/rent from property owner in the community
  - Permanent Supportive Housing (Leasing) – agency/project has a lease with property owner and selects households to be placed in unit

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What to Know

Understand key components of the funding your submitting proposals for and IF your organization can meet them:

- Cost Reimbursement and Financial Viability
- Match
- Admin Costs allowed
- Indirect Rate
- Funding regulations / requirements

Request for Proposals What to Know

Cost Reimbursement

Most Federal and State Funding is awarded on a cost reimbursement process:

- Funded agency incurs the cost
- Funded agency requests reimbursement of the incurred cost to the funder - supplying appropriate and required back up documentation that may include:
  - Proof of the required cost
  - Proof that payment of the required cost was made
  - Proof that the payment 'cleared the bank'

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What to Know

Cost Reimbursement

Have a good idea of how this will / would affect your agency's ability to function

- Be able to operate while pending reimbursements without financial hardship
- Reimbursements happen USUALLY between 30 and 90 days – dependent on organization being able to provide the proper documentation and follow submission instructions
- Have consistent cash flow
- Have a separation of duties for personnel time allocations, etc.
- Have a governance and organizational structure in place that allows for success and transparency within the organization.

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ADMINISTRATIVE (ADMIN) COSTS

- The amount of funds available for admin cost varies from source to source, with some funding sources providing no admin funding.
- Admin costs include:
  - Project oversight (beyond Program supervisor, manager)
  - Executive level costs (% of program to organization)
  - Training (non-certificate / certification trainings)
  - IT costs (that are not billed as direct costs)
  - Finance and accounting (that are not direct costs)

NOTE: Indirect Rate is not the same as Admin

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INDIRECT COSTS

- Some funding sources (federal/state) allow for the use of an Indirect Cost Rate.

- Whenever an Indirect Cost Rate is allowable, it is usually the federal <u>de minimis rate of 10%</u> of modified total direct costs (MTDC). MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, and travel.

- If your project budget calls for a direct reimbursement of items such as office rent, office utilities, office supplies, the use of the Indirect Cost Rate is not applicable based on your project's budget structure.

- Further Information of the (federal) Indirect Rate:
  - https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-eligible-activities/indirect-costs/

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MATCH

- Eligible costs to the project from a source other than the funding source.
- May be cash or in-kind for otherwise eligible project costs by the funding source.
  - **Cash:** the subrecipient spends actual funds on eligible CoC Program costs. Cash counts as match only if the subrecipient can demonstrate that a payment of funds was made to cover the cost of eligible activities expended during the grant term.
  - **In Kind:** the value of any real property, equipment, goods, or services contributed to a grant that would have been an eligible activity if the subrecipient paid for them directly with Program funds. In-kind match can be donations provided directly by the recipient, subrecipient, or third party.

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MATCH Cont.

- Must be documented in writing.
- Can be provided through an agency's other funded projects which may also provide services to the funded project's clients - *if the other funding source allows for their funding to be used as match.*
- *For further general info on match:*
  - *https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-match/cash-match/*

Be aware of the specific match requirements –
   some are 25% of funding expended
   some are 100% of funding expended

TIPS for Successful RFP Submissions

- Stay true to your organization's Mission
- Don't "chase" money – don't apply for every opportunity if it **does not** align with your mission
- Learn about the funding source for the funding opportunity
  - Research the funding regulations / rules
  - Know who it can serve – does it match who your mission is to serve?
- Know your organization's capacity and when it's the right time to 'expand'
- If you don't want 'outsiders' to know and/or examine your organization's processes – don't respond to funding proposals

TIPS for Successful RFP Submissions

- **READ and FOLLOW** the RFP Instructions
- **READ and USE any** Proposal Scoring Criteria that is part of the RFP
  - Score your own proposal
  - Have a co-worker or friend score your proposal
- Do Not Exceed page limits
  - 1 page = 1 page
  - 1 page single spaced is approximately 500 words
  - If you double space, your 500 words can become 2 pages
- Be concise yet detailed in your narratives
- Make sure your narrative includes the information requested, as applicable

TIPS for Successful RFP Submissions

- Use any provided Checklist
- Ensure that you have EVERY document listed on a Checklist is included
- Don't ignore any section
  - If you think a section doesn't apply to you
    - submit a question for clarity
    - clearly state why your agency can not provide the document
      - Example: A faith-based organization is not also a 501c3 – provide narrative explaining

TIPS for Successful RFP Submissions

Real people review and score your proposals:

- Ensure that you answer all the questions / provide all the info requested in each section.
- Don't assume the reviewer knows your organization / its capacity.
- Ensure your budget summary and narrative makes sense AND aligns with project description.
- Ensure your budget summary and narrative includes your match.
- Confirm your match / leverage (if applicable) information is consistent
- Compliance narrative should be supported by the agencies most Recent Financial Audit that is being submitted
- Don't be afraid to bring in other organizations that may provide a supportive service better than your organization (if applicable)

TIPS for Successful RFP Submissions

DO NOT COMMIT A FATAL FLAW

- Nearly all RFPs will include a list of things 'NOT TO DO"
- Include things like:
  - Missing a section or required document
  - Not submitting on time / in the right format
  - Page limits
  - Unsigned
  - Handwritten

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What to Know – Homeless Services

HOUSING FIRST

- **BE HOUSING FOCUSED – HOUSING ENDS HOMELESSNESS**
- All project types – housing plans primary discussion
  - What is needed to end a person's homelessness
  - No 'housing ready' conditions, such as:
    - Must prove / be 'housing ready'
    - Must be "compliant" with behavioral health plans; other 'service' plans
    - Must have income

Being HOUSING FIRST is not an option – It is REQUIRED

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What to Know – Homeless Services

Homeless Services

- **Permanent Supportive Housing**
  - requires head of household/adult member has a documented disability that interferes with ability to maintain housing
  - May require household to have long-term / chronic homeless documentation
  - Provides housing stability and general case management, assistance with housing placement, financial and rental assistance, connections to other eligible benefits
  - No time limit - permanent

- **Rapid Rehousing**
  - But for this assistance – household will remain homeless; lacks resources to resolve homelessness
  - usually up to 24 months of assistance to include: housing stability case management, assistance with housing placement, financial and rental assistance, connections to other eligible benefits
  - Able to maintain Permanent housing after assistance ends

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What to Know – Homeless Services

- **Homelessness Prevention (targeted)**
  - Not 'eviction' prevention
  - But for this assistance, household will become homeless
  - Hotel household is paying for, exiting institution without 'homeless' status
- **Street Outreach**
  - Persons experience unsheltered homelessness
  - Primary outcome – resolve unsheltered homelessness, even it temporary situation
- **Emergency / Crisis Shelter**
  - Focus on housing first / rapid exit to permeant housing
  - Housing discussion begins at entry
- **Transitional Housing**
  - Not best practice if it requires lengthy programmatic requirements, unless necessitated by age (youth under 18)
  - Can be similar to emergency / crisis housing (depending on funding source)

RESOURCES

The HUD Exchange (https://www.hudexchange.info) is THE 'go to' resource for accessing information on the following funding streams and topics.

HUD CoC Program - https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/

- **HUD ESG Program** - https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/esg/
- **Housing First-** https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/spring-summer-23/highlight2.html
- **Indirect Rate:** https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/OHC_ICR020216.PDF

- **Nonprofit Leadership Center** - https://nlctb.org/
- **Bay Area Legal Services - The Judge Don Castor Community Law Center** -provides free transactional legal assistance to eligible nonprofit charities with legal needs in the areas of corporate, tax, real estate, employment, zoning, land use, risk management/insurance, and intellectual property - https://bals.org/community-law-center

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What to Know

Cone of Silence

- Once a funder releases an RFP, their staff enter the 'cone of silence' phase
- Staff can not talk with you about specifics in the RFP or what you need to say in your proposal; how to answer a question in the proposal
- RFP's state how questions can be asked – usually in writing and then provided for other potential applicants to see

Questions

Request for Proposals
What to Know

2024 HUD Innovations in Ending Homelessness Roundtable Series: Housing First: Still the Right Way to End Homelessness – April 4, 2024 – 1:00 PM EDT

HUD Innovations in Ending Homelessness Roundtable Series. This series is a continuation of the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Roundtable Discussion Series, which included panel discussions from system leaders, program staff, and people with lived experience of homelessness, to discuss challenges, lessons learned, and innovative new approaches to rapid rehousing.

This series is intended for front-line staff, program directors, system leaders, and funders.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88079102015?pwd=Ume57hg88AnzkK4tH0dfqWrCGF0.V9IRPEG0l3BCZBnA&utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=76e3d1494bHomelessness_Roundtable_Series_3.19.24&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-ca1989f51c-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D#success