

SLFRF RFA Checklist

An RFA (Request for Applications) is an application tool used to announce or notify potential applicants of the opportunity to apply for funding available for a grant. Some agencies may use different terms, such as NOFA (Notice of Funding Opportunity). Agencies should not use procurement processes such as RFP (Request for Proposals) as these are governed by the Procurement Code, which does not apply to grants. It is critical that all salient elements are included in the RFA to ensure that those applying for funds understand the purpose, intent, process and requirements of the funding.

Basic considerations:

The purpose of the RFA is to further the goals of a specific program as outlined by the originating funding, whether it is the federal agency, or legislation for state funds.

The grant process can be competitive or non-competitive, depending upon a number of variables. The requirements for determining which process to use can be found in the State Controller Policy.

A clear understanding of rules, requirements and expectations laid out by the funding source is essential to development of the RFA. Those rules and requirements should be included and explained in the RFA.

Clear timelines need to be established including when the RFA will be announced, when the applications are due, expected start and end dates of awards, as well as reporting deadlines.

If the funding is new to the agency, it is important to involve all appropriate internal stakeholders such as program staff, accounting, budgeting, procurement, and leadership.

Identify upfront the process for selecting awardees. Specify the evaluation criteria to be used, the scoring methodology, and identify and be prepared to train those that will be involved in the decision-making process.

Review the RFA several times before publishing. Once the RFA is published, major changes to program requirements are not allowed as this would create an unfair competitive advantage to applicants. If a critical error is found after publication, the initial RFA will need to be pulled back, corrections made, and the new RFA announced and published.

At a minimum, the published RFA should remain open and available to applicants for a minimum of 30 days.



Consider hosting a webinar to provide information about the RFA. This also provides potential applicants an opportunity to ask questions. As a follow up, post an FAQ document that answers general questions related to the RFA. Avoid questions that are specific to only one individual applicant-answers need to be broad in scope such that they apply to all potential applicants.



RFA Checklist - Sample

Project Purpose, Background and Overview

- ☐ Information regarding the originating funding source (federal, state legislation, etc.) and the stated purpose of the funding
- ☐ Information on the funding entity/agency
- ☐ Relevant data, if appropriate
- ☐ Definition of terms

Budget Requirements

- ☐ Estimated amount of available funds overall, estimate amount per each award
- ☐ Payment Terms: Will payments be in advance or on a reimbursement basis? How many payments/installments? Are payment(s) triggered by completion of a task or at the end of a time period?
- ☐ Is a match required? If so, how much and are there limitations on the source of the match funds?
- ☐ Allowable/Unallowable costs spelled out
- ☐ Are fiscal agents allowed?

Program Requirements

- ☐ Area/specific population to be served (including specific requirements if any)
- ☐ Program Components (how will the program be provided)
- ☐ Goals and Objectives/Expected Outcomes/Outputs
- ☐ Reporting requirements

Evaluation Criteria

- ☐ How applications will be scored and evaluated

Submission Requirements

- ☐ How to submit application including deadline, method (paper/online, etc.), needed attachments (such as recent designation or affirmation letter from IRS, audits (if applicable), W-9, etc.
- ☐ Standard cover form with name of entity, address, contact information, Unique Identifier Number (UEI), and Signature (specify if it must be wet signature or if electronic signature is accepted)

