

Program Solicitation Worksheet

The program solicitation is the mechanism for announcing the availability of grant funds and the instructions for writing a proposal that would qualify the proposer to receive awarded funds. These documents may be called Requests for Proposals (RFPs), Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), Broad Agency Announcement (BAA), Requests for Applications (RFA), Solicitation for Grants, Proposal Instructions, or similar names.

RFPs from Government Agencies. Government agencies have written solicitations for grant and contract applicants. These documents make the application process fair for all applicants by standardizing the requirements and objectifying the criteria for awarding funds. If you think of the solicitation in terms of the funder, it is the agency's stated purpose for awarding funds, qualifications for potential recipients, expectations of the work to be performed or service to be rendered, and requirements for the written proposal. If you think of the solicitation in terms of the proposer, it is the "Bible" for submitting a viable, competitive proposal.

Solicitations from government agencies have varying degrees of complexity. Some are very detailed and others are not. Please be aware that some agencies, such as NSF and NIH have both a solicitation for specific programs, as well as a publication of overall guidelines for proposal submission that must be followed. For NSF, the latter document is called the *Proposal & Awards Policy and Procedure Guide*. For NIH, the document is called the *NIH Application Guidelines*. Each is updated annually.

RFPs from Foundations. RFPs from corporate and private foundations range from detailed, extensive documents to a simple request for a letter. Foundations are not under the same requirement for transparency or objectivity as government agencies and may conduct their review process however they prefer. Most foundations have specific deadlines for proposal submission but some do not. Many foundations fund by private mechanisms and do not issue open requests for proposals.

As you study the solicitation, consider the following questions:

Initial Questions

What is the purpose of the program? Scrutinize the purpose of the program carefully. Think about the project from the funder's point of view.

Does your program or research fit the criteria?

Is UVU eligible to submit? Are you eligible to serve as PI/PD (principal investigator/project director)?

When is the proposal due? Can you create a high quality proposal in time? (or should you prepare for submission next year?)

Are specific topics given priority and does your idea fit into one of those priorities?

Will they fund the items you need? (Look at the funding amount and any budget restrictions.)

How does the award amount compare to your potential budget?

Examine the narrative requirements and/or the selection criteria. This gives you further clues about what the funder is looking for.

- Do the questions fit your intended scope of the project?
- Are you prepared to provide information at this level of detail?
- Have you laid the necessary groundwork? (or do you still need to do preliminary work?)

Is a preliminary proposal or letter of intent required or requested?

Important: If your proposed program or research does not fit all of the criteria of the solicitation, don't waste time submitting a proposal. If you have questions about the fit of your project for a *government* program, contact the program officer. If you have questions about the fit of a *foundation* proposal, please contact the OSP Program Director of Foundation Grants; do not contact the foundation directly.

General Program Questions

Who is the funding organization? What is the name of the funding program within the organization?

What is the due date and time?

How many new awards will be given?

Are there any requirements for PI/PD (principal investigator) eligibility?

Is there a focus or funding priority(ies) for this program?

If there is more than one category of funding, which would be most appropriate?

What are the special requirements of this program?

Who should you contact if you have questions?

Budget Questions

What is the range of funding?

Is cost sharing required?

How long is the funding period?

When is the start date for project funding?

Are there indirect cost limitations?

Is a budget justification (or budget narrative) required?

Proposal Preparation Questions

Is a letter of intent or a preliminary proposal required?

Is the reader referred to any other documents for proposal preparation information?

What are the required elements or parts of the proposal to be submitted? Is there a checklist?

How many pages are allowed for the narrative (or project description)? For the full proposal?

What are the font and margin requirements?

What are the required sections of the proposal narrative or project description?

Are resumes requested and for which personnel?

Are letters of support, commitment, or collaboration required, requested, or allowed?

Can the proposer include optional appendices such as explanatory tables, brochures, etc.?

Are there any other required elements of the proposal?

Are there any funding priorities or special program considerations?

What criteria will be considered by the reviewers in scoring or evaluating the proposals?

Proposal Submission Questions

How should the proposal be submitted (Grants.gov, NSF FastLane, online, or e-mail)?

It is important to know this ahead of time because it will affect proposal preparation and because the prior registration to new application sites can take OSP some time.

Are there special submission requirements?

At what time is the proposal due? When are you encouraged to submit by?

Please note that proposals must be submitted to OSP five workdays in advance of the deadline.