

## **Script - Request for Proposals: A Guide for Applying**

Slide 1 - Welcome to this presentation, A guide to the Instructions: Request for Proposals. I'm Audrey Shifflett with the Grants Program at the South Carolina Department of Education. This presentation is designed to help you respond to an SCDE funding opportunity – either a grant or subgrant opportunity - by guiding you through the instructions presented in a Request for Proposals document.

Slide 2 - By the end of this presentation, you will understand how a Request for Proposals or RFP issued by our agency is structured. You will also know where to find information that is important to both your ability to complete and submit a successful application for funding, and your ability to manage the proposed project once you receive an award. I will also give you tips for using the RFP to get organized and getting started on an application.

Slide 3 - All of the funding opportunities for grants or subgrants offered by the South Carolina Department of Education are posted publicly to the agency's website and are listed on the SCDE Grant Opportunities page. By clicking on the hyperlink to a specific opportunity...

Slide 4 - ... you are directed to a website of information specific to that opportunity.

Slide 5 - The information on the specific funding opportunity includes a description of the program, a description of the eligible applicant, and information about how much total funding is available, the estimated number of awards to be made, and the project term.

Slide 6 - Further down the web page you will find additional information about the funding opportunity, including the application due date, information on technical assistance sessions, contact information for the program office conducting the competition, and hyperlinks to important documents. These documents include the "Request for Proposals," or an "Application Instructions," the online application form, and any additional forms, such as a budget narrative template, that the program office wants applicants to use.

Slide 7 - The RFP is designed to provide detailed information about the specific funding opportunity. Let's take a look at how an RFP from the South Carolina Department of Education is structured.

Slide 8 - The first part of the document is the cover page, which contains important information.

Slide 9 - The cover page indicates the program title and indicates whether the competition is for a state grant or a federal subgrant. The legislated sources of the funds, also known as the funding authorization, is also stated along with important deadlines, the submission deadline and if applicable to the competition, a deadline for a e-mail of intent which is the intention to apply. The cover page also indicates the date for the technical assistance session and the contact person for the funding competition and the program office issuing the RFP.

Slide 10 - The table of contents indicates that the request for proposals is organized into two parts and four appendices. Let's take a closer look at each of these sections and what they contain.

Slide 11 - Part I – General Information contains important items about both the state or federal program offering the grant or subgrant and the specific funding round. Of particular importance in this section of the RFP...

Slide 12 - Are whether competitive priorities are offered for this funding round, the timeline of the granting process, when the technical assistance will be provided and most importantly, the requirements imposed by law or statute and the requirements for accountability and monitoring of the program. It is important that you understand this part of the RFP because it details the requirements that go into affect when you receive an award. For this reason, it is important to keep a copy of the Request for Proposals after you submit your application in case your proposed project is funded.

Slide 13 - Part II provides an overview of the application components and content and the instructions for completing the application and submitting it by the deadline. Of particular importance in this section of the RFP...

Slide 14 - ...is everything. Literally – this part of the RFP spells out everything that is needed to complete an application, the page limits for the application narrative and the instructions you should follow in writing your narrative, the instructions to follow in preparing your application budget, and what appendices are required. It also includes the directions for using the agency's online application forms and will include screenshots of the specific sections of the online forms.

Slide 15 - Of particular importance in Part II of the RFP are the instructions for the application narrative. Note that there are formatting instructions, including the page limit for the narrative, and the required font size and line spacing. Of greater importance are the content instructions for each section of the application narrative. You must follow these instructions. Also, use the section headings to organize you application narrative and address each section in the order in which they appear in the RFP.

Slide 16 - Appendix A contains definitions of terms that are used in Parts I and II that are specific to the funding opportunity. Be sure to read these as the program office may be using a term in a particular manner, and that definition may be important for how you respond in your application. The next appendix, Appendix B, ...

Slide 17 - ...presents the selection criteria for the funding opportunity and a copy of the rubric that reviewers will use in scoring a complete application. In some instances when the scoring rubric for the competition is very large, this part of Appendix B may contain a hyperlink to a separate document that contains the scoring rubric.

Slide 18 - Appendix C is required forms and the contents of the RFP you're working with may differ from the examples on this slide. Regardless, all of the information in this section of the RFP is of critical importance to an application. The Certification Signature Page is required for all applications. Be sure to review this form and the Assurances and Terms and Conditions that follow it, along with any program-specific assurances that may be included in this section. The officials who sign the Certification Signature page should also be given a copy of the Assurances and Terms and Conditions and any program-specific assurances because their signatures on this

form indicate their certification that they will comply with all assurances, terms, and conditions of the project. Other forms in this section are the Budget narrative form for the competition and if applicable, the format for the timeline of activities. If a pre-award audit questionnaire is required, a copy of the questions will be included in this section, along with a hyperlink to the form. Depending on the type of competition, a request for a taxpayer identification number or TIN form may be included. An RFP for a federal subgrant will also include instructions for developing a General Education Provisions Act or GEPA statement of compliance.

Slide 19 - Appendix D is optional forms and may contain additional information about the program that is important for you to know, along with any templates that the program office may provide to help you prepare components of the application. Some RFPs may also include an additional appendix to feature other important information.

Slide 20 - So, now that you know more about what is in the RFP, I'm going to share some tips to help you get started on preparing an application in response to the RFP.

Slide 21 - Always read the RFP thoroughly and completely before you start writing, completing any forms, or calling the program office with questions or concerns. As you've seen, the RFP contains important information about the program you're applying for, how you apply, and what is needed for a complete application. You must follow the instructions in the RFP. It is helpful if you list the items that are required and think about the timeframe that you may need for getting required items like data or signatures on forms. Also, determine who can help you with the application. Grant writing is not a one-person job; develop a grant application team, give each person a copy of the RFP and break out the sections and make assignments. Use the RFP throughout the process of writing your application. It is your guide to what is required for a complete application. Follow the instructions in the RFP and proofread application sections multiple times against those instructions to ensure that you're including all requested items and information.

Slide 22 - Before the technical assistance session, be sure to read the RFP carefully and note any areas where you need more information or you have questions that the RFP does not address. Be prepared to ask your questions during the technical assistance session. If the session has already been conducted, contact the program person listed on the cover of the RFP for more information.

Slide 23 - Additional tips concern getting organized – it is helpful to make a timeline leading up to the application deadline that indicates what need to be done and by when. It's also useful to keep application items in a shared drive or accessible location where members of the writing team can access them and be sure to save and back up your computer files. Also, use the instructions for the application narrative to create an outline that follows the headings in the instructions, in the order in which they are presented. This will help keep you organized when writing your application narrative.

Slide 24 - I hope this information helps you as you read the RFP for the funding opportunity that interests you and begin to prepare your application. I'm Audrey Shifflett, and this presentation is a production of the Grants Program at the South Carolina Department of Education. Visit our website for more information.