

Best Practices for Communicating New Grant Opportunities

CECP INSIGHTS ON COMMUNICATING NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- Insert the news into existing communications channels—how you communicate to your current audiences, including existing partners and grantees (e.g., website, newsletters, social media).
- Reach out to partners (current or new) that address the audiences and have strong connections to the populations and issues (i.e. mental health organizations) you seek to address through the grant.
- Create a press release to post on your site and a wire service (e.g., 3BL Media), and share with local media in your service areas and philanthropy press (e.g., *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and *Philanthropy News Digest*).
- Review the 2019 process for what worked and did not work. Adjust and learn from that experience.
- Seek advice from trusted partners on the RFP to be sure you are designing it for a successful application process. Ask critical questions:
 - Are you attracting the right organizations?
 - Are your criteria right?
 - Are your outcomes and desired impact clear?
 - Are the criteria for the partner clear at the outset?
 - Be sure the messaging you are using in the RFP and the website where you will post the RFP is clear on what you are looking for. Some companies use a pre survey of a few questions to be sure applicants are a good match for funding.

EXTERNAL INSIGHTS: LAUNCHING RFP

Education First, with the support of the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI), sought to discover best practices for implementing RFP processes and avoiding RFP pitfalls. During the spring of 2019, they analyzed open RFP documents and interviewed representatives from large funders, CZI grantees and Education First staff with grantmaking experience. They found that while basic RFP processes were similar across the field, each funder had its own approach and best practices.

- Education First has compiled those best practices into [this primer](#), which outlines key questions for funders to consider when designing, launching and managing open RFPs. The purpose of this primer is to help foundation staff implement open RFPs in a way that prioritizes equity and transparency, while simultaneously ensuring a high-quality experience for grantees
- How will you disseminate the RFP to potential applicants? (p. 32-33) shares best practices, questions for consideration in developing a strategy, and steps to take, including possible outlets for dissemination.
- Source: [Making the Most of Grantmaking: A Primer for Designing and Launching Open RFPs, June 2019](#)

EXTERNAL INSIGHTS: COMMUNICATING WITH POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

As you consider your communication strategy, consider potential applicants. Grantees seek clarity up front around the intent of the opportunity as well as continued touch points throughout the application process to keep them informed.

WHAT GRANTEES WANT TO TELL FUNDERS ABOUT RFPS AND COMPETITIONS

Grantees who have responded to RFPs have these thoughts to share:

- Get feedback from the community before you launch an RFP or competition — don't create your plan in a vacuum.
- Be clear up front about what you are looking for, and make the application simple.
- Don't raise expectations that can't be filled. Provide a ballpark grant amount.
- Use an executive summary to explain the intent of the RFP or initiative.
"What are the pertinent facts, what does the funder intend, and what is the deadline to apply? Then I can see right away whether there is a match between us and the grant maker, and if there is, I can ask for more detailed information."
- Be realistic about requirements for collaboration with other organizations.
- Provide technical assistance to help applicants respond to the RFP.
- Keep applicants informed throughout the process.
- Let applicants know why they are turned down.

Source: [Using Competitions & Requests for Proposals, "What Grantees want to tell funders about RFPs and Competitions" \(p. 17\)](#)