



Key Terms Common to Requests for Applications (RFAs)

This reference document defines key terms that are often used in competitive grant proposal processes.

Term	Definition
RFA	Request for Applications
RFP	Request for Proposals
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
NOFA	Notice of Funding Availability
RFQ	Request for Quotes
FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement (term used by Dept. of Energy and sometimes others)
Solicitation	May be used interchangeably with above terms
Program Officer	Usually, the person tasked – often as part of a broader team – with managing a given funding opportunity. For both foundations and government grants, the program officer is usually the contact person for substantive questions related to the funding opportunity. For foundations, program officers usually manage a specific portfolio of funding opportunities based on geographic region and/or issue area.
Grants.gov	Main portal for researching and submitting government grants
Workspace	Platform in Grants.gov for uploading documents, completing forms, and submitting applications
Demographic(s)	(<i>n</i>) The target population or the set of data points that describes a specific population
Award Ceiling	Maximum available grant award
Budget Narrative	Written description of the budget line items (i.e., what's being spent on what)
Budget Justification	Another name for Budget Narrative
SF-424	Form to complete in Grants.gov; nearly always required for federal grants
Direct costs	Costs associated with implementation of substantive programming (e.g., the costs of buying school supplies for a back-to-school program)

Indirect costs	Costs Examples: utilities, rent, etc. Oftentimes a flat rate of 10% of direct costs allowed
501c3 / 501c4 activities/ expenditures	501c3 and 501c4 are IRS tax designations that are applied to many nonprofit organizations; each designation comes with a different set of tax rules and exemptions. For the most part, 501c3 nonprofits are charitable organizations to which donations are tax-deductible; donations to 501c4 nonprofits are not usually tax-deductible. When people speak of 501c3 vs. 501c4 activities, they are usually referring to public education or charitable programming that does not involve lobbying, vs. not-for-profit activity that is lobbying or lobbying-related. Nonprofits designated as 501c3s can engage in a limited amount of lobbying, but where the line is drawn (how much is too much) and what constitutes lobbying can be complicated. Many funders, both individual and federal/private, prefer to limit their awards to 501c3 organizations and sometimes also to purely 501c3 activities. Please see this page on Instrument! for a longer overview. Please see also the specific eligibility rules for a given funding opportunity.
<i>Please use the following rows to add any terms you may wish to remember for the future:</i>	