Responding to a RFA:
Helpful tips and guidance to successfully responding to an opportunity for funding

Pennsylvania
January 19, 2021

FRIENDS

Label your device with your name and program

- Click on the icon for participants on the Zoom menu bar (typically at the bottom of your computer screen).

- Hover over your name in the participant list and click on the "More" button.

- Click on the "Rename" button and type in your name and program.

For the best meeting experience

- Audio and video quality are dependent on your internet service. Make sure you have a stable connection.

- Use the chatbox to ask questions.

- Use Speaker View while watching the webinar.

Notes

- This webinar is **<u>NOT</u>** related to any specific Request for Application (RFA).

- This webinar **<u>IS</u>** intended to cover general information on how to apply to any grant opportunity.

- This webinar uses publicly available historic Pennsylvania Department of Human Services RFA's as examples.

- The RFA's referenced in this webinar are historic examples and may not match language utilized or requirements specified in any current or future RFA's.

List of Historic PA RFA's

- **Family Support Programs – Family Center & Fatherhood**
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2023-18
    - Please note that this RFA was cancelled after release

- **Home Visiting Expansion RFA**
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2025-17

- **MIECHV RFA**
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2013-14

- **NFP RFA**
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2011-14

- **Children's Trust Fund RFA's**
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2024-18
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2001-18
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2002-16
  - http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2003-14

- **Other examples of RFA's**
  - May be found at the Pennsylvania eMarketplace website using the archived search feature: http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Search.aspx

Introductions

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PURPOSE

**To provide resources and guidance regarding:**

- Effectively preparing an application in response to an Request for Application (RFA)
- Determining how to identify what information is most pertinent to include in an application
- Organizing a proposal and keep within the submission guidelines
- Building awareness of
  - ✓ Requirements
  - ✓ Cost guidelines
  - ✓ Scoring
- Additional questions

Poll Everywhere – How to Participate

From your cell phone,

- **Go to text messages**
- **Create New Message to the number: 22333**
- **text: "friendsn382"**

New Message Cancel

To: 223-33
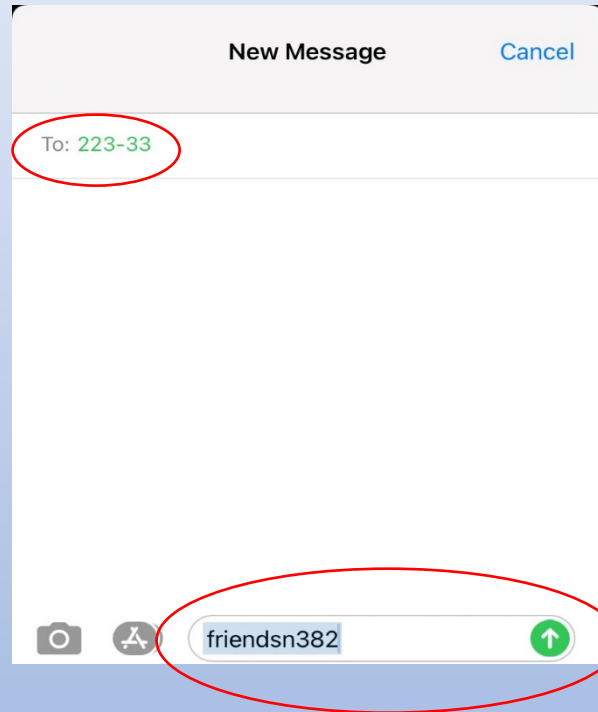
friendsn382

Or, participate through your internet browser: pollEv.com/friendsn382

For 2-3 word phrases, use ~ between each word to keep them together for example: less~exercise or travel~more

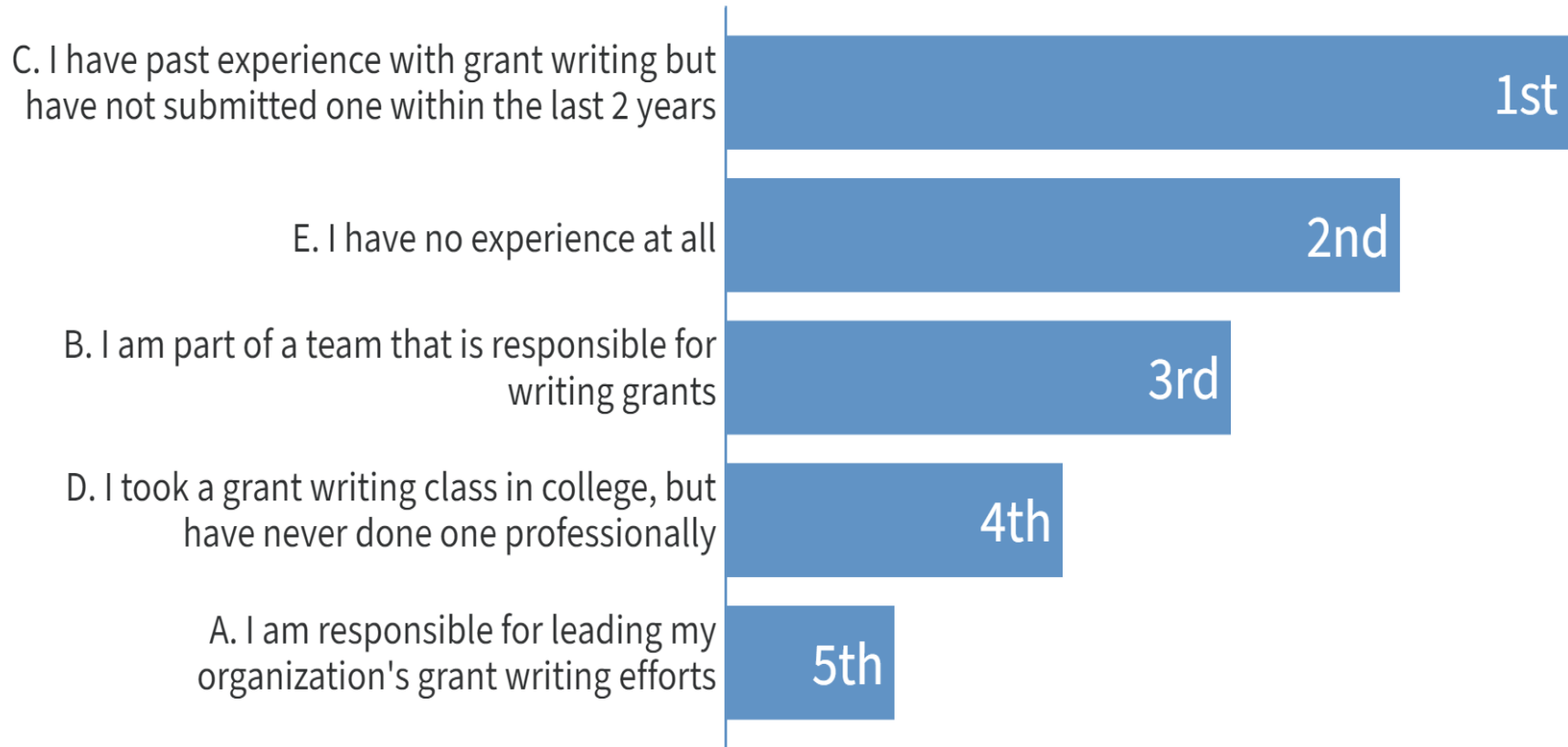# What comes to mind when you think of responding to an RFA / RFP

In addition to securing funding, grant writing provides a vehicle for your organization to educate funders about key community needs.

A grant application can inform funders of how your organization meets those community needs.

Funders and nonprofits that deliver community programs have a symbiotic relationship; both entities can benefit from that relationship.

Grantmakers receive requests that far exceed the amount of funds they have available to distribute making the grant process extremely competitive

My experience with grant writing / responding to RFAs

C. I have past experience with grant writing but have not submitted one within the last 2 years — **1st**

E. I have no experience at all — **2nd**

B. I am part of a team that is responsible for writing grants — **3rd**

D. I took a grant writing class in college, but have never done one professionally — **4th**

A. I am responsible for leading my organization's grant writing efforts — **5th**

Getting Started!

FOCUS STATEMENT

Insure that you understand the specific focus & purpose of the initiative and RFA:

Example*:

This initiative is intended to focus on at-risk families who are predisposed to infant health and developmental problems and in need of additional supports during pregnancy and through their child's infant and toddler years.

The purpose of the grant is to expand the delivery of voluntary, evidence-based early childhood home visiting program services

* *Taken from the 2017-18 PA Home Visiting Expansion RFA*

Gathering Data

Existing Needs Assessment Data Sources

United States Census Bureau

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

United Way

Public Health — Prevent. Promote. Protect.

kids count

HRSA

Other Public Records

Prove that you have a significant need or problem

Identify good data sources:
- United Way
- Kids Count
- Focus Groups
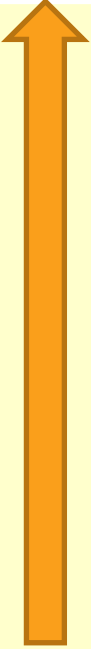- Cafes

Use the data
- Quantitatively
- Qualitatively

Mural, McDonald's Queensbury NY

150,000

1,500

100 X
more?

• Don't assume the funder knows much about your subject area, community or program.

• Why is this situation important? To whom did your organization talk, or what research did you do, to learn about the issue and decide how to tackle it?

• Describe the situation in both factual and human interest terms, if possible. Providing good data demonstrates that your organization is expert in the field.

• Describe a problem that is about the same size as your solution. Don't draw a dark picture of nuclear war, teen suicide and lethal air pollution if you are planning a modest neighborhood arts program for children.

• Don't describe the problem as the absence of your project. "We don't have enough beds in our battered women's shelter" is not the problem. The problem is increased levels of domestic violence. More shelter beds is a solution.

Evidence Based: Where Can you find the best research evidence?

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
The mission of the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) is to advance the effective implementation of evidence-based practices for children and families involved with the child welfare system.

SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices
NREPP is a searchable online registry of more than 350 substance use and mental health interventions and was developed to help the public learn more about evidence-based interventions that are available for implementation.

National Institute of Justice Crime Solutions The Office of Justice Programs' CrimeSolutions.gov uses rigorous research to determine what works in criminal justice, juvenile justice, and crime victim services.

Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development helps you easily identify evidence-based programs that help young people reach their full potential.

Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness The goal of Homvee has been to conduct a thorough and transparent review of the home visiting research literature in order to identify and evaluate evidence-based models that have proven effective.

What program / approach the right fit for your organization & the target population?

Evidence Based

Search & Filter Programs

Target Population: Prenatal, 0-3, 4-9, 10-13, 14-18, Parent Only

Program Title: Find a specific program by name

Program Type: Select a Program Type

CBCAP Classification: Promising ✓, Supported ✓✓, Well-Supported ✓✓✓

+ Advanced Search Filters

GET RESULTS   Clear Results

https://friendsnrc.org/evidence-based-practice-in-cbcap/evidence-based-practice-directory

Prepare to deliver an answer to the need or solution to the problem

Before

After

GiveMeFIVE Volunteer Respite Makes a Difference!

720,000 hours: the number of hours GiveMeFIVE has provided to PA families of children with special needs

$14.63: The value of one hour of respite In Pennsylvania determined by Labor & Industry (cost equivalent for Home Health aide)

$10.5 million: the value of the volunteer respite provided by GiveMeFIVE volunteers over 2.5 years

"As a parent, this time is meaningful to me. I can reconnect with my husband and my church family and feel hopeful instead of helpless"

"As a respite volunteer, I can't imagine a better use of my gift of time. I'm prepared and feel confident and competent to serve the children in our program!

"This program has made our family stronger and better. There is something very gratifying about having someone volunteer to spend time with your child, and seeing by the look on their face that they are having just as much fun as my child is. "

Feedback from GiveMeFIVE participants

SUMMARY

At the beginning of your proposal, or on a cover sheet, write a two- or three-sentence summary of the proposal. This summary helps the reader follow your argument in the proposal itself.

For example: *"Annunciation Shelter requests $5,000 for a two-year, $50,000 job training program for homeless women in southwestern Minnesota to support self sufficiency. Training will be offered at four rural shelters and will include basic clerical skills, interview techniques and job seeker support groups."*

Work plan / Specific Activities

Who is the target audience, and how will you involve them in the activity?

What are you going to do? Describe the activities. Tell the funder about the project's "output," or how many "units of service" you intend to deliver over a specific time period

Who is going to do the work and what are their credentials?

When will the project take place

Where will the project take place?

AVOID THE PITFALLS!!!

| Overzealous expectations / plans | Confusing outputs with outcomes | Saying too much but not answering the questions | Saying too little / expecting the reader to "know" what you're talking about | Going over the page or space limit | Incomplete sentences and poor grammar |

OUTCOMES , IMPACT AND OUTPUTS

Take the time to learn the difference (it's important both now and later!

- Have a strategic plan in mind

- Use language from child abuse and neglect prevention
  - Example: Building protective factors, strengthening parent / practitioner collaboration

- Know what you want to measure and how it will be measured

- Consider a logic model or similar framework (even if it's not required)

What is a Logic Model?

A logic model is a visual representation of your programs goals, resources, activities, services, and intended outcomes. By using this systemic approach you begin to organize and understand the relationships between the resources you have to run your program, the services and activities that you provide, and the outcomes or changes in your participants and communities that you hope to achieve.

Resources → Activities → Outcomes

Where do we start?

Logic models are as much an art as a science

1. View the brief introduction to Logic Models on the FRIENDS online learning site
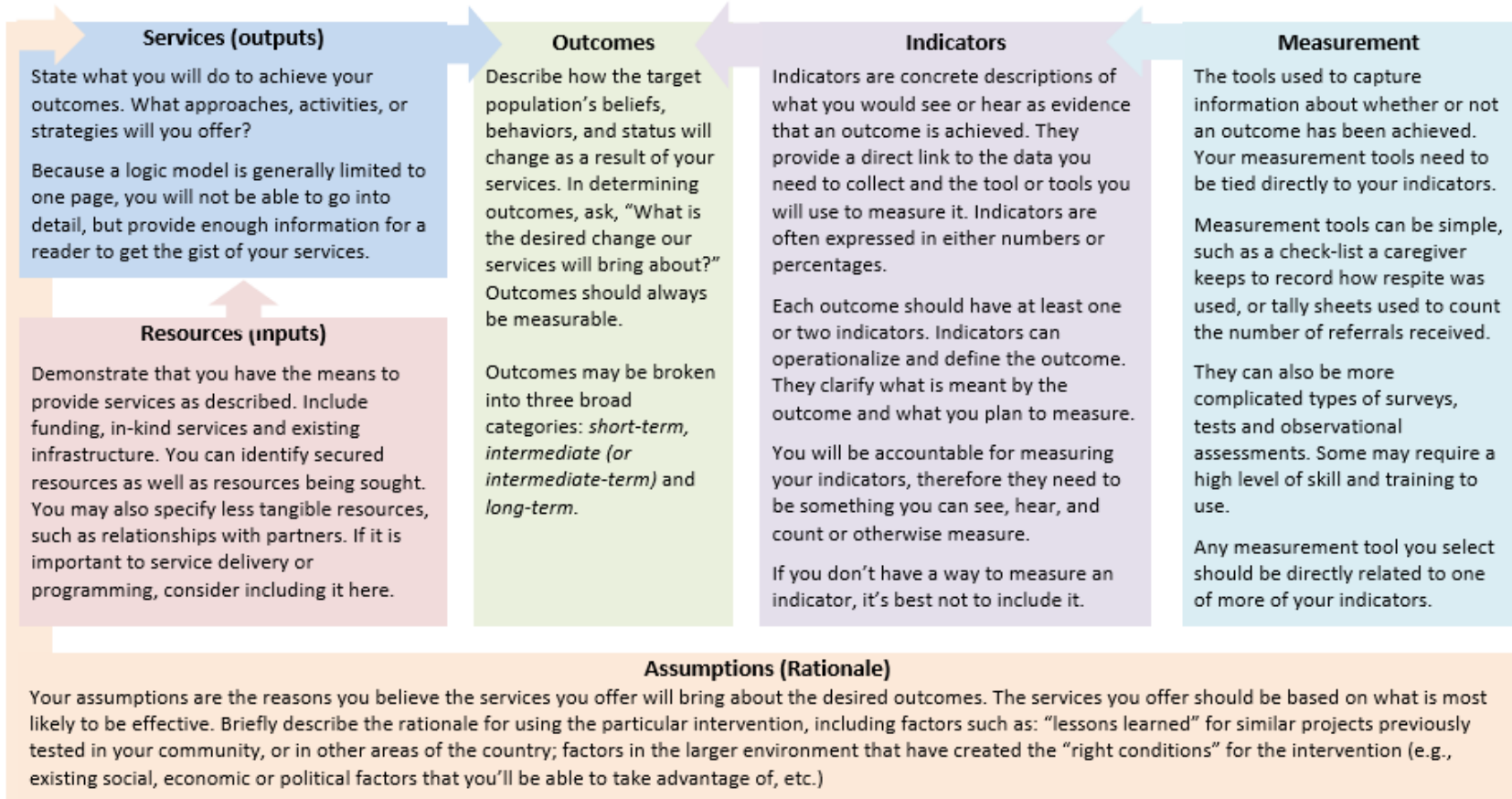https://friendsnrcelearning.remote-learner.net/

2. Create your Logic Model using the Child Welfare Information Gateway's Logic Model Builder:
https://friendsnrc.org/evaluation-toolkit/evaluation-planning/logic-models

The Title of Your Project

Vision (impact, long-term outcome, goal) Your vision statement is a reflection of the purpose and spirit behind your actions. All activities and outcomes should contribute to the achievement of your vision. A truly inspired vision statement may not be measurable in the short–term, and your program doesn't necessarily have to be responsible for single–handedly achieving it. Rather, your program may be *contributing* to its achievement.

Population and Population Needs A description of the population you are targeting and the specific needs you intend to address through your services.
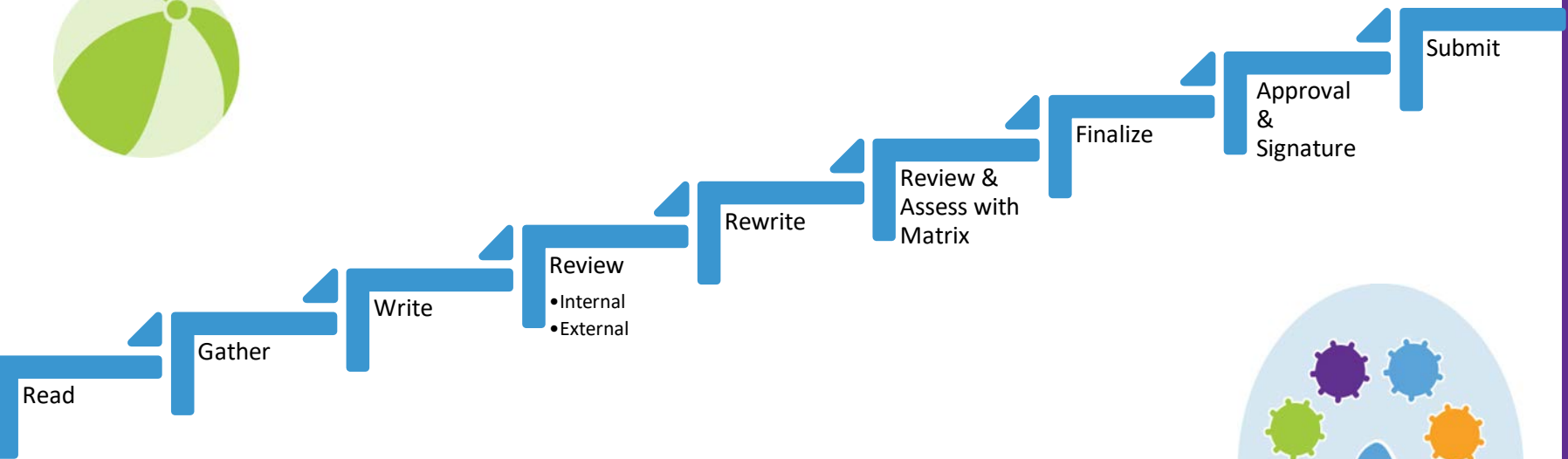
Services (outputs)

State what you will do to achieve your outcomes. What approaches, activities, or strategies will you offer?

Because a logic model is generally limited to one page, you will not be able to go into detail, but provide enough information for a reader to get the gist of your services.

Outcomes

Describe how the target population's beliefs, behaviors, and status will change as a result of your services. In determining outcomes, ask, "What is the desired change our services will bring about?" Outcomes should always be measurable.

Outcomes may be broken into three broad categories: *short-term, intermediate (or intermediate-term)* and *long-term.*

Indicators

Indicators are concrete descriptions of what you would see or hear as evidence that an outcome is achieved. They provide a direct link to the data you need to collect and the tool or tools you will use to measure it. Indicators are often expressed in either numbers or percentages.

Each outcome should have at least one or two indicators. Indicators can operationalize and define the outcome. They clarify what is meant by the outcome and what you plan to measure.

You will be accountable for measuring your indicators, therefore they need to be something you can see, hear, and count or otherwise measure.

If you don't have a way to measure an indicator, it's best not to include it.

Measurement

The tools used to capture information about whether or not an outcome has been achieved. Your measurement tools need to be tied directly to your indicators.

Measurement tools can be simple, such as a check-list a caregiver keeps to record how respite was used, or tally sheets used to count the number of referrals received.

They can also be more complicated types of surveys, tests and observational assessments. Some may require a high level of skill and training to use.

Any measurement tool you select should be directly related to one of more of your indicators.

Resources (inputs)

Demonstrate that you have the means to provide services as described. Include funding, in-kind services and existing infrastructure. You can identify secured resources as well as resources being sought. You may also specify less tangible resources, such as relationships with partners. If it is important to service delivery or programming, consider including it here.

Assumptions (Rationale)

Your assumptions are the reasons you believe the services you offer will bring about the desired outcomes. The services you offer should be based on what is most likely to be effective. Briefly describe the rationale for using the particular intervention, including factors such as: "lessons learned" for similar projects previously tested in your community, or in other areas of the country; factors in the larger environment that have created the "right conditions" for the intervention (e.g., existing social, economic or political factors that you'll be able to take advantage of, etc.)

BUDGET

Applicants must be aware of the:

Cost Guidelines

Allowable / non allowable costs

Budget

Budget timelines

The Application

Read

Gather

Write

Review
•Internal
•External

Rewrite

Review & Assess with Matrix

Finalize

Approval & Signature

Submit

HOME VISITING EXPANSION
RFA #25-17
RFA Checklist

Please use this checklist to ensure that all required items requested within this RFA are completed and submitted as part of the application package.
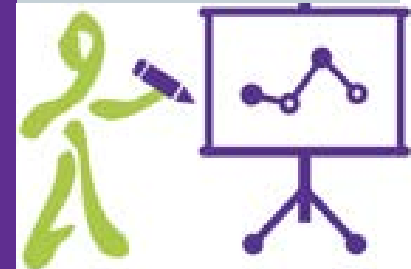
<u>Application</u>

_____ *Attachment 1 - Applicant Information Form:* Please ensure that all portions of this form are completed.

_____ *Rider 2 - Work Statement:* Please respond to each question in the Work Statement in clear, specific language.

_____ *Rider L - Lobbying Certification Form*: Please review and sign this form that will become part of the grant agreement if a grant is awarded and executed.

_____ *Attachment 2 - Grant Signature Page*: If awarded, the Department will use the attached grant agreement with the selected Applicants. For the purposes of this Application, please review the document and *submit only the signature page* (page 3) of this document, *signed* by agency representative(s) who are authorized to bind the agency to the grant provisions. *Do not complete any other part of the document and do not submit the entire document.*

_____ *Rider 3 - Budget Form and Narrative:* An annual budget form and accompanying budget narrative must be completed for the project.

<u>Application Submission</u>
Applicants must submit one original and four (4) binder-clipped copies of the entire Application (Technical and Cost portions), as well as a complete and exact copy of the entire Application (Technical and Cost portions) on a USB Flash drive. The Flash drive should clearly identify the Applicant and include the name and version number of the virus scanning software that was used to scan the Flash drive before it was submitted.

_____ Submit one original and _four_ copies (binder-clipped) of the Application in a sealed envelope labeled "Home Visiting Expansion RFA"

Questions?????

Next Steps

https://tinyurl.com/FRIENDS-webinars