



2009 TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE – PHASE II REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation seeks to assist not-for-profit agencies with obtaining the technological expertise and equipment required to implement a strategic technology plan.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks to accomplish this by providing matching funds to purchase the hardware, software, training, and services required to implement an existing three-to-five year technology plan.

The ultimate goal of the RFP is to enable not-for-profit agencies to align their technology needs with their administrative and business needs, as outlined in strategic planning documents, allowing them to meet their missions more efficiently and effectively. Grants will be made to eligible organizations that wish to implement a strategic technology plan.

Timeline		
Summer Funding Cycle		Winter Funding Cycle
January 9, 2009	Deadline to arrange pre-screening telephone call	July 1, 2009
April 3, 2009	Deadline for proposals (if requested)	October 2, 2009
June 5, 2009	Successful applicants notified	December 19, 2009
July 2009	Grant funds available	January 2010

I. Project Description

Used effectively, technology frees not-for-profit agency staff to pursue the organization's mission, providing opportunities to streamline and improve business processes and service delivery. Poorly chosen or implemented, technology can become a distraction, impeding progress towards an agency's goals.

A technology plan is a key element in using technology effectively, mapping tools to the agency's strategy for accomplishing its mission. Many not-for-profit agencies do not, however, possess the technical expertise to develop a strategic technology plan. Likewise, the high cost of technology presents a substantial barrier to agencies that wish to incorporate technology into their business processes in order to pursue their missions more effectively and efficiently. The Tower Foundation seeks, through this RFP, to eliminate or reduce these barriers.

This initiative consists of two phases. In Phase I, the Foundation provides funds for not-for-profit agencies to hire a technology consultant to conduct a technology inventory and needs assessment, and to develop a three-to-five-year technology plan. In Phase II, the Tower Foundation provides a dollar-for-dollar match (up to \$125,000) to agencies wishing to implement their technology plan. A total of \$1.5 million is available for this initiative.

II. Eligibility Requirements

- A. The Foundation makes grants to tax-exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) classifications from the Internal Revenue Service that are not private foundations or described as 509(a)(3) organizations.
 - B. Organizations must either be located within or primarily serve residents of:
 - Erie or Niagara Counties in New York State;
 - Barnstable, Dukes, Essex or Nantucket Counties in Massachusetts.
 - C. Diocesan and public school districts are not eligible to apply for technology initiative grants.
 - D. Private and charter schools are eligible to apply for technology initiative grants.
 - E. To apply for this initiative, agencies must fall within the eligibility requirements for the Tower Foundation's Early Childhood Education, Community Mental Health, or Developmental Disabilities cycles. This includes agencies that:
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- focus on providing services for children and adolescents with developmental disabilities;
 - focus on preventing or treating substance abuse or mental illness among children and adolescents; or
 - focus on providing early childhood education services.
- F. In order to be eligible for this initiative, agencies must have completed a strategic planning document within the past 36 months that identifies technology as a focal area.
- G. To be eligible for the implementation component of this technology initiative, agencies must have completed a strategic technology plan that:
- recommends specific technologies/policies/practices and identifies their relationship to administrative needs; and
 - provides an estimated implementation budget for each recommendation.

Preference will be given to technology plans that also:

- identify the current state of the agency's technology, including network infrastructure; desktop/server hardware and software; staff skills and training needs; end-user support; periodic systems maintenance; and practices, policies, procedures, and documentation;
- place a priority on each recommendation, as well as identifying benefits associated with each recommendation and consequences of failing to implement recommendations;
- propose an implementation timeline and replacement schedule.

III. Grant Awards

The Foundation anticipates making multiple awards in each of the geographic areas it serves. Each matching grant will be for a time period of up to three years, to a maximum of \$125,000. The amount of the award will vary based on the size of the organization and the complexity of implementing the technology plan.

Organizations funded through this initiative are expected to provide matching funds for the Tower Foundation's award. These funds may be obtained through any source of unrestricted funds or awards designated for the technology implementation project specifically.

For multi-year awards, funds will be disbursed each year, not as a single lump sum. Organizations funded through this initiative will need to demonstrate the commitment of matching funds for each year prior to the Tower Foundation's disbursement.

IV. Use of Grant Funds

- A. The Tower Foundation will provide dollar-for-dollar matching funds for costs associated with purchasing equipment, software, training, and services necessary for implementing the agency's strategic technology plan.
- B. **Please note that the RFP does not provide funds for hiring new staff nor does it provide funds for existing staff to conduct these activities.**
- C. Phase II grant money may not be used for:
- the private benefit of any grant recipient or affiliated person
 - endowments
 - capital projects or campaigns
 - staffing costs associated with technology planning or implementation
 - the development of an agency's strategic plan
 - the development of a strategic technology plan
 - the development of custom software applications or web sites
 - advanced information technology training (e.g., certifications)

V. Application Procedure

The Phase II technology planning RFP has a two-step application process:

The first step in this process is a telephone call. This call will provide an opportunity to clarify the intent, scope, and details of the technology initiative; establish an organization's eligibility for the initiative; and to discuss an agency's capacity and readiness to implement its strategic technology plan. Based on this telephone call, the Foundation will determine whether or not it wishes to request a full application from the agency. Arrangements for this pre-screening telephone call must be made prior to January 9, 2009 for the summer cycle, or July 1, 2009 for the winter cycle.

The second step is the submission of a full proposal. The Foundation will provide the application format, components of which will include:

- a brief statement of the organization's history, mission, staff size, and services, including the geographic area and population served
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- a description of the existing state of technology and reasons for beginning the technology upgrade process at this point
- project budget showing the project cost per year, the requested Tower Foundation contribution, and the agency's contribution
- evidence of matching funds for the first year of the project
- estimates from the vendors and service providers from which the agency intends to purchase equipment or contract services
- a copy of the agency's strategic planning document
- a copy of the agency's strategic technology planning document
- a copy of the agency's 501(c)(3) determination letter
- the agency's annual budget
- the agency's most recent financial statements
- a copy of the agency's most recent IRS 990 submission

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis, due in April and October. Final decisions on grant awards are made by the Foundation's Board of Trustees. Summer applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in June. Winter applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in December.

The Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals.

VI. Proposal Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

- completeness and adequacy of the technology plan;
 - integration of the technology plan with the overall agency strategic plan;
 - organizational capacity and readiness to implement and oversee the project;
 - evidence of appropriate matching funds;
 - evidence of commitment by the organization's leadership and management
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VII. Evaluation and Monitoring

Grantees are expected to meet the Foundation's requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports and will be required to submit periodic information regarding overall project performance, monitoring and management.

Funds will be disbursed following the receipt of the preceding year's project report. Agencies must demonstrate the availability of matching funds prior to the Foundation's disbursement for each year.

VIII. Resources

The following links provide helpful information about technology planning and its value for not-for-profit agencies:

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/techplan/index.cfm>
<http://www.ncrtec.org/capacity/guidewww/gqhome.htm>
<http://epic.cuir.uwm.edu/entech/index.php>

IX. RFP Contact Information

For more information about this RFP or to discuss eligibility requirements, please contact:

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