



2012 TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE – PHASE I REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation seeks to connect not-for-profit agencies with technological expertise in order to develop and execute a strategic technology plan.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks to accomplish this by providing funds to retain the services of an outside technology consultant to assist in the development of a 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 develop and implement a strategic technology plan.

Timeline		
Summer Funding Cycle		Winter Funding Cycle
January 6, 2012	Deadline to arrange pre-screening telephone call	July 6, 2012
March 14, 2012	Deadline for proposals (if requested)	September 12, 2012
June 15, 2012	Successful applicants notified	December 14, 2012
July 2012	Grant funds available	January 2013

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 be either located within or primarily serve residents of:
 - Barnstable, Dukes, Essex, or Nantucket Counties in Massachusetts
 - Erie or Niagara Counties in New York State
 - 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 Intellectual Disabilities, Mental Health, or Substance Abuse cycles. This includes agencies that:
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- focus on providing services for children, adolescents and young adults to age 26 with intellectual disabilities;
- focus on preventing or treating mental illness among children, adolescents and young adults to age 26; or
- focus on preventing or treating substance abuse among children, adolescents and young adults to age 26.

F. In order to be eligible for this initiative, agencies must have completed a strategic planning document within the past 36 months explicitly identifying technology as a focal area.

III. Grant Awards

The Foundation anticipates making multiple awards in each of the geographic areas it serves. Each grant will be for a one-year time period, to a maximum of \$50,000. The amount of the award will vary based on the size of the organization and the complexity of the business needs as articulated in its strategic plan. Because of the wide range of agencies eligible for funding, it is anticipated that grant awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

IV. Use of Grant Funds

A. In general, the Foundation will provide funds for costs associated with hiring an outside technology consultant to assist with this project. For the most part, grant funds will be used for outside consultants to:

- conduct a comprehensive hardware and software inventory;
- develop a technology needs assessment; and
- produce a three-to-five year 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 I 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
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- the development of an agency's strategic plan
- the purchase of computer hardware or software

V. Application Procedure

The Phase I 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 undertake the technology planning process. 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 6, 2012 for the summer cycle, or July 6, 2012 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
- a description of the existing state of technology and reasons for beginning the technology planning process at this point
- estimates from the technology consultant from which the agency intends to contract services
- a copy of the agency's strategic 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

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis, due in March and September. 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 of the proposed technology plan
- integration/consistency with the agency's strategic plan
- organizational capacity and readiness to implement and oversee the project
- evidence of commitment by the organization's leadership and management
- involvement of staff at all appropriate levels
- process for selecting the technology consultant

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 information regarding overall project monitoring and management.

VIII. Resources

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

MAP for Nonprofits: <http://ow.ly/6foYy>

TechSoup Learning Center: <http://ow.ly/6fp0q>

Westchester Not-for-Profit Technology Council: <http://ow.ly/6fpaZ>

IX. RFP Contact Information

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

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