

RFP 101 Empowerment & Capacity Building (ECB) Informational Session

Meeting Information

Date: 2026-03-09 11:01:43

Location: WebEx

Lead: Samuel Thomas, SFHRC CFO

Meeting Notes

- Topic Title: RFP Overview — Empowerment and Capacity Building (ECB) Program
 - Description:
 - The RFP seeks a single qualified foundation partner to administer mini-grants for emerging CBOs in San Francisco.
 - Focus on, but not exclusive to, historically marginalized communities (including Black, LGBTQI, immigrant, and low-income communities).
 - Includes capacity building: technical assistance, mentorship, fiscal guidance, and organizational development.
 - Prepare organizations to transition to other funding sources after the grant term.
 - ECB is part of the Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) portfolio at the SF Human Rights Commission (HRC).
 - Conclusion:
 - Foundation-partner model confirmed; emphasis on equity, access, community-centered programming, sustainability, collaboration, and transition readiness.
- Topic Title: RFP Schedule and Key Dates
 - Description:
 - Solicitation issued on the 3rd.
 - E-question period open until the 11th; Q&A will be posted publicly.
 - Applications due March 23 at 12:00 PM Pacific; no late submissions accepted.
 - Scoring by panel follows; notice of intent to award expected April 30.
 - Negotiations through execution by July 1; programming starts then.
 - Conclusion:
 - Clear timeline established from issuance to the anticipated start date of July 1.
- Topic Title: Funding Available and Period of Performance
 - Description:
 - Not-to-exceed amount in the RFP: \$10,000,000 (flexibility if additional funds become available).
 - Anticipated award: approximately \$7,000,000 over two years.
 - Year 1 (July 1, 2026–June 2027): \$3.5 million; Year 2: \$3.5 million.
 - Optional Year 3 may be exercised with no additional funding for transitional support.
 - Conclusion:

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- Funding plan is \$7 million across two years, with a possible unfunded third-year extension.
- Topic Title: Application Materials and Submission Process
 - Description:
 - Materials posted on the HRC website; includes recording, updates, and e-question outputs.
 - Attachment 1: transitioned to an online fill-out form; submit any time before the deadline.
 - Attachment 2: Word proposal template with instructions and scoring alignment.
 - Provide Form 990s for the last three fiscal years; considered but not scored on specific criteria.
 - Submit the fill-out form and Attachment 2; use DOC/DOCX format; no PDFs or handwritten submissions.
 - Word limits: 1,000 words for Sections 1–5; 500 words for Section 7.
 - Conclusion:
 - Applicants must use the Attachment 2 template and the online form; adhere to format and word limits.
- Topic Title: Scoring Criteria and Strong Application Guidance
 - Description:
 - Scoring total: 100 points across five categories:
 - Community and Cultural Alignment
 - Grant Management Expertise
 - Fiscal Health and Operational Capacity
 - Capacity Building Approach
 - Transition Planning
 - Proposal structure mirrors scoring criteria; read Attachment 2 thoroughly.
 - Strong application guidance (non-scored principles):
 - Depth and clarity; actionable plans with evidence; avoid vagueness.
 - Alignment with RFP goals, DKI values, and HRC mandate.
 - Feasibility and readiness; resources and experience; address gaps/risks.
 - Impact and sustainability beyond the 2–3 year term.
 - Conclusion:
 - Clear evaluation framework; emphasis on detailed, aligned, and feasible proposals.
- Topic Title: Minimum Qualifications
 - Description:
 - Must be a registered 501(c)(3).
 - Annual operating budget totaling at least \$10,000,000 over the past three fiscal years (per Form 990s).
 - Experience administering grants totaling at least \$5,000,000 annually.

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- At least three grant-making rounds in the last five years.
- Five+ years providing capacity-building to orgs with budgets under \$2.5 million.
- Operational presence or grant-making history in SF or Bay Area for 4+ years.
- Lead staff with 3+ years of technical assistance experience with marginalized communities.
- In good standing with the City of San Francisco (not debarred/suspended; affiliates not debarred/suspended).
- Conclusion:
 - Specific qualifications must be met to be eligible.
- Topic Title: Compliance, Communications, and Collaborative Applications
 - Description:
 - Do not submit staff demographic data; board/staff composition is not a deciding criterion.
 - CBOs funded must serve all eligible participants inclusively.
 - Communications limited to the HRC grants handle hrcgrants@sfgov.org and Samuel Thomas, CFO; do not contact other HRC staff or leadership.
 - Collaboratives allowed but must designate a lead agency as fiscal sponsor and contract signatory.
 - Philanthropic match strongly encouraged to leverage funding.
 - Conclusion:
 - Clear compliance and communication protocols; collaborative structure guidelines established.
- Topic Title: Q&A Highlights
 - Description:
 - Question: Clarified minimum qualification for operating budget is at least \$10,000,000 per fiscal year over the past three fiscal years, per 990s.
 - Conclusion:
 - Operating budget requirement clarified during the session.

Next Arrangements

- Submit questions via email by the 11th; monitor the HRC website for posted Q&A.
- Prepare and submit Attachment 2 (proposal template) and the online fill-out form by March 23, 12:00 PM PT.
- Include Form 990s for the last three fiscal years with the submission.
- Adhere to word limits and DOC/DOCX format; avoid PDFs and handwritten documents.
- If applying as a collaborative, designate a lead agency as fiscal sponsor and contract signatory; confirm good standing with the City.
- Explore and secure philanthropic matching funds where possible.