# Notes on the FY18 RFA from ASHA Annual Conference

I would like to point out a number of changes in our RFA for FY18, but they are not as big as they may seem. I will also comment on a number of areas in which applicants lost points or were found to be ineligible last year.

This year we are releasing a Request for Application (RF) instead of an Annual Program Statement (APS). There is no real significance in this for applicants.

**The Big difference**:

This year we are asking applicants to submit a concept Paper, rather than a full proposal. The concept paper will contain just the Program Description section of the proposal.

In the instructions for the concept paper, we have tried to be more explicit about the goals of the program and provided illustrative examples. The goals are not new, they are simply collected all together in one place.

Concept papers will be evaluated according to the criteria for Technical Merit.

Assuming we get the usual 200+ concept papers, we will likely select 50 or so for full proposals with the intention of making 30 to 35 awards, as we have done in the past.

NB: Being asked to submit a full proposal is **NOT A GUARANTEE** of an award. There will still be competition in the full-proposal stage.

**Full Proposal:**

When we ask for a full proposal, you will have 60 days from the date of the request to submit the full proposal.

When we request a full proposal, we **may** ask for more info or clarifications on any aspect of the concept paper submission.

The Full Proposal will contain:

- Construction and Renovation;
- Commodities;
- M&E;
- Past Performance, Sustainability, Institutional Capacity and
- Budget Narrative

The Evaluation criteria will remain the same:

- Technical Merit (50%);
- Management Approach (25%);
- Construction and Commodities approach (25%)

**Timing**

We hope to release the final RFA around mid-November.  The RFA will close 3 months later, **around February 15, 2018** for concept papers.  No concept papers will be accepted after that deadline.

We expect to complete the review of concept papers and send requests for full proposals **around March 15, 2018.**

Full proposal will be due **around May 15th, 2018**.

Note that this is roughly the same 6-month window as in previous years.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

ASHA staff makes every effort to ensure that our procurement process is fair and competitive and in compliance with all applicable statutes regulations and Agency policies.  In order to ensure 'procurement integrity', we adhere strictly to Agency guidance for the application process.

We expect to make roughly $23 million in awards in the FY18 cycle.

$2M is the largest award you can request.  However, it is worth noting that we make very few awards of this size.

**Cost-Share Requirements**

Given the structure of ASHA grants, we recognize that each or our partners, both USO and OSI, makes very significant investments, both financial and in-kind, in the projects for which you seek ASHA funds.  By definition, you contribute extensive 'cost-share' type resources. We have eliminated the requirement that you propose specific cost-share as part of the grant application. You can, of course, refer to your contributions and investments in your narrative. But they should not be listed as part of the proposed budget, not is there a requirement to report on them in quarterly and annual financial reports.

**Construction vs. Commodities**

There has been confusion about the distinction between construction and commodities. We have posted a definition of construction on the ASHA Annual Conference website. Here are some general guidelines:

- If you have to do anything to the existing structure to 'install' your commodities, this is construction.
- If something is connected to your building, it is construction.
- If it affects the physical structure of the building, it is construction.

If you submit an application for commodities for an activity which is actually construction, you will be disqualified. If you are not sure, please inquire of us. We can answer that kind of question at any time.

**Eligibility Criteria**

The eligibility criteria are the same as prior years. In the concept paper template, they are articulated as questions, and you must answer all of them.

Last year there was some confusion about the number of applications an organization could submit. Here are some clarifications:

- Each application can have only 1 USO, only 1 OSI. Any application with other than that will not be eligible. If a USO wishes to submit applications in support of more than 1 OSI, each must be a separate application.
- Each OSI/USO partnership may submit only 1 application.

**SAM and DUNS Registrations**

Your registration in SAM (system for award management) and DUNS numbers must be up to date. Even if you have never received federal funds, you must be registered in SAM.

**Land Tenure**

The requirement to establish right of land tenure is challenging due to the wide variance in titling and leasing regimes worldwide.  We have developed a process with our legal counsel and our procurement experts to help us make determinations in cases which are not clear.

Your obligation is to attach a title or lease, in English, which demonstrates your right to occupy the land for 20 years.

**Formatting**

Applications must be in English, single-spaced, in Times New Roman font size 10 or larger, with

each page numbered consecutively, and with one inch page margins;

Observe **page limits** and the **naming conventions** carefully. If we ask for 10 pages and you submit 15, we stop reading at 10 pages.

**M&E**

You **must** report on applicable standard indicators – [additional text from Tina]

**Audits**

You must provide Independently Audited Financial Statements for each USO and each OSI unless they are the same institution.

Independently Audited Financial Statements must be in **USD** and must be in **English**. They must be Independently Audited Financial Statements. Internal financial statements, external reviews, and financial compilations are not acceptable. They must be from FY16 or later.

**Board list**

You must [provide a list of the members of the Board of Directors of the OSI which clearly demonstrates that no more than 50% of the members are NOT appointed by or employed by the hosts-country government.

**Non-concurrence by Missions**

We have a new process in the Agency whereby Mission Directors (or Regional Bureau leadership) must provide affirmative written concurrence for projects in their countries funded by Washington.

We are seeing non-concurrences mostly in countries with significant conflict where projects would be at risk and/or where we would be unable to effectively monitor their progress.

If you are operating in a non-permissive environment, feel free to inquire on the current situation re concurrences.