

Grants Screening & Evaluation

PURPOSE

Preplanning and early resource gathering are key to success when screening and evaluating a grant application. This policy promotes a proactive assessment and determination of each grant’s requirements to minimize confusion and maximize preparation time prior to submitting an application.

SCOPE



This policy is applicable to all city of Baltimore agencies/entities that use grant funding, as well as any other organizations for which the city serves as grantor or contributes resources. Moreover, this policy supersedes and replaces **AM 404-1 Financial Grants, AM 404-1-1 Applying for Grants** and **AM 404-1-2 Action upon Receiving Grant Approval**.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy requires grants management staff to proactively determine all grant application requirements and compile resources when preparing a grant application, to include determining whether the grant application requires *sustainability* or *matching funds*. When questions arise regarding a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Scope of Work (SOW) or a Request for Proposal (RFP) – see **Definitions**, page 3 – staff should seek clarity from the grantor as early as possible.

PROCEDURE

NOTE

- Procedural items preceded by this symbol  are designated as quality issues. Failure to adhere to this requirement can impact the overall quality of this policy.
- Procedural items preceded by this symbol  are designated as risk issues. Failure to monitor this requirement can create an unwarranted risk.

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Grants Management Committee:



1. Assigns a grant proposal manager and/or budget proposal manager to compile, review and submit each grant application. This/these individual(s) must be proactive in identifying any problems or issues that may interfere with a successful grant award and/or ongoing operation;



2. Determines whether a NOFA or RFP has a sustainability or matching funds requirement. **Note:** Both the applying agency/entity and their respective Bureau of the Budget and Management Research (BBMR) Budget Analyst must review and approve in writing the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and corresponding draft budget prior to submitting *any* grant application. The agency/entity must also,

3. Determine their eligibility to apply and decide if the funding guidelines meet the agency/entities' funding needs by thoroughly reading the NOFA or RFP. If necessary, identifies a partner to meet the SOW requirements.

Grants Manager/Grant Proposal Manager and/or Budget Proposal Manager:

4. When necessary, seeks clarity on the SOW from the grantor by completing a *Letter of Inquiry* as early as possible. Draft Letters of Inquiry can be found (or stored) on the SharePoint site, at: <https://portal.baltimorecity.gov/dof/GM/SitePages/Home.aspx>, in the **Forms Library**.

BBMR Budget Analyst:



5. Has two (2) workdays from the receipt of the inquiry to approve or disapprove (in writing) the submitting agency/entity's draft budget. **Note:** BBMR's draft budget template can be found in the **Forms Library** on the city's grants management SharePoint site.

Grant Proposal Manager and/or Budget Proposal Manager:



6. Identifies sub-recipient(s) and determines their funding amounts prior to an application submission. **Note:** Pre-award identification and preparation of sub-recipient agreements expedites post award startup; and,

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- 7. Gathers all resources required by the NOFA or RFP Scope of Work (SOW) as early as possible, to maximize the grant application’s success.

DEFINITIONS

- **Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)** - is a publicly available document by which an agency/organization makes known its intentions to award discretionary grants or cooperative agreements, usually as a result of a competition for funds; also known as a **Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)**.
- **Request for Proposal (RFP)** – is a solicitation to submit business proposals, often made through a bidding process to potential suppliers by an agency or company interested in procurement of a commodity or service.
- **Scope of Work (SOW)** – is a formal agreement that specifies all the criteria of a contract between a service provider (vendor) and the customer. The SOW documents the project requirements, milestones, and deliverables, i.e., products, documents and reports expected from the customer/contractor/consultant.

POLICY OWNER

The grants management office is responsible for all changes and/or updates to this policy.

WORKFLOW PROCESS

A flowchart displays workflow graphically, using some or all of the following process symbols.

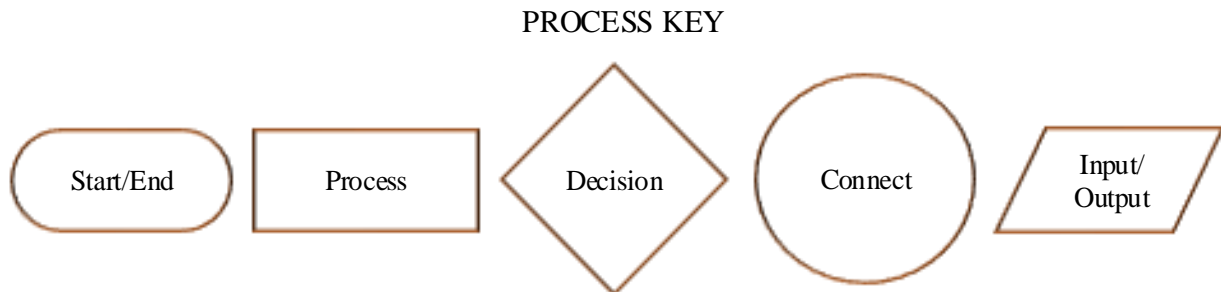


Figure 1, below, graphically displays the primary steps followed in the **Grant Screening & Evaluation** process.

AM Policy 413-20: Grant Screening & Evaluation

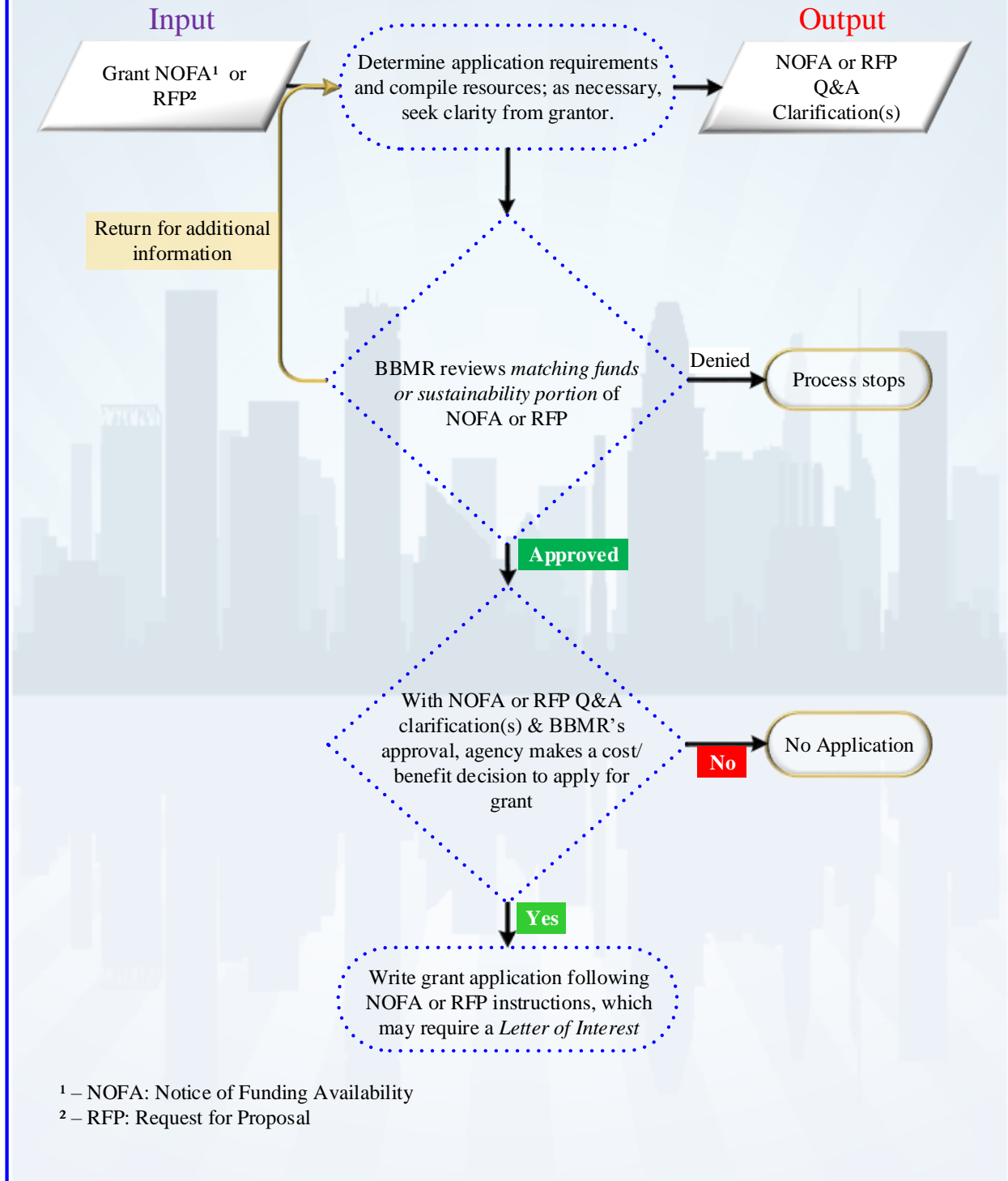


Figure 1: Grant Screening & Evaluation requires BBMR's pre-submission approval of all grant budgets.