



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Summary of Question & Answers

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) released the [Request for Proposals for Cultural Brokers in Maryland](#) on June 26, 2023. The Council hosted an information session for potential applicants on July 11, 2023 at 11:30am. Attendance was not mandatory to submit an application. The following is a summary of the questions asked during the information session. The questions and responses have been edited for clarity. Identifying information has been removed.

Question: Is a copy of the request for proposals (RFP) available now?

Answer: Yes, it is available now.

The RFP and documents can be found here: <https://www.md-council.org/funding/large-grants/>.

This is a direct link to the RFP: https://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Cultural_Brokering_RFP-1.pdf.

This is a link to our 5 year state plan: <https://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MDDC-State-Plan-Overview-Final.pdf>

Question: How can individuals interested connect with organizations looking to collaborate?

Answer: In some ways, the Council is limited in the advice we can give. Each community is different and it is hard to give advice that fits every situation. There are many ways for individuals to get connected with organizations. You can think about organizations in your community that are supporting people with disabilities. You can set up an informational meeting to share the RFP and to see if the organization wants to collaborate.

Question: Is the average grant award for selected proposals expected to be between \$50-75,000 each?

Answer: It depends on the applications we receive. The RFP includes two pieces of information. The first is that we have \$150,000 allocated for this project. The second is the Council expects to award up to three grants. If we get really strong proposals, we will pick up to three of them. You should develop and design a proposal based upon what your program needs, not based upon the numbers in our RFP.

Question: I am with [name of organization] based in [name of town], MD. We just became a non-profit organization. Can an application be specific to people with Autism, or should we include other groups of people with developmental disabilities?

Answer: We support all people with developmental disabilities. The definition of developmental disabilities is on our website: [Maryland's definition of developmental disability](#). So long as you support people that meet that definition, then we would welcome and review your application.

Question: Can you please repeat the definition of cultural broker?

Answer: Yes. You can find the definition on page 1 of the RFP. It says, "A cultural broker is a member of the community they work with. They build trust and connections between community members and the services and supports they need and want."

Question: If two organizations want to partner, will there be one award? Or could both organizations be awarded a grant and still collaborate?

Answer: Collaboration is always valued in a proposal. Organizations bring different skills and serve communities in a different way. The answer to this question depends on how organizations submit proposals. If the organizations submit one proposal, there could be one award. If the organizations submit two proposals, we will review each individually and make a decision about each organization separately.

Question: If an organization is already a cultural broker, is this award for one individual “member of the community” or could it be a staff group or organization leadership that is more than one person?

Answer: The RFP states that funds will be awarded to train or empower one or more cultural broker. For organizations that already do the cultural broker work, we will want to see evidence in the proposal of how you do cultural broker work.

Question: For organizations applying together, who should be the main contact?

Answer: This depends on the organizations and what you decide to do. We recommend getting together to make that decision. You should discuss with your collaborators about who should take the lead to develop the proposal and be the main contact.

Question: Can you share the recording of this meeting with attendees? When will it be posted?

Answer: We will be developing a summary of the questions asked and answered to share on our website. It will be posted by the end of the week (7/14/23).

Question: In terms of evaluating the proposals by the Council, are there any components that would make an application rise to the top?

Answer: Please review section #11 of the RFP. The Council spent a lot of time developing this list to align the priorities for this RFP with the state plan. Section 11 lists seven areas that we will use to evaluate a proposal. In particular, items #2 (relationship with the community) and #3 (community accountability) were areas that were especially important to the Diversity Work Team, the group that developed the RFP.

Question: Is there anyone we can email for follow up questions?

Answer: The information session is the only opportunity to ask questions.

Question: Could you give us examples of services a cultural broker may provide?

Answer: Please review section #4 of the RFP. This includes several examples of work that cultural brokers might do. The high level examples here are identifying and building resources to work with cultural broker(s), sharing information with the selected community, improving relationships between the selected community and organization, and improving relationships between the organization and the selected community. The examples in this section are meant to be a guide to support proposals.

Question: Can you provide examples of in-kind contributions?

Answer: Please review the match instructions for more details on in-kind contributions. In section #10, there is a link to the document called [Match Instructions](#). In that document, we share several examples. The common examples of in-kind contributions are volunteer hours, donated space, donated materials, or donated professional services. The most important thing to remember about in-kind contributions is that you need a dollar value associated with the item.

Question: Can you provide examples of “Relationship with Selected Community: The proposal demonstrates existing positive connections with the applicant’s selected community” and “Community Accountability: The proposal demonstrates clear plans to ensure the proposed activities reflect the needs identified by the community”?
These are from section #11 of the RFP.

Answer: It is hard to give specific examples beyond what is in the RFP. The vision behind these evaluation categories is that we are looking for proposals from organizations that have an existing, positive relationship with the selected community. We expect proposals to explain how they have established a positive relationship with the selected community. We are not looking for proposals that explain how the organization has not served a community. We want proposals that show an existing, positive relationship because the timeline is one year. We need organizations to complete the work they propose in that timeline. Related to community accountability, that depends on the organization and the community. The kind of accountability and analysis of community needs is based upon many factors within the community and organization. We want thoughtful applications that address these areas with information based on the relationship with the selected community and what the community says they want and need.

Question: When the Council reviews the applications, will they be organized into categories related to the size or other areas? For example, will rural areas/counties be compared with and competing against larger cities/counties?

Answer: We will not be placing applications into categories. Please review section #11 to see how applications will be evaluated. We anticipate receiving applications from large organizations that support a lot of people and also small organizations that are doing work with less people. We will review the applications based on the criteria in section #11. In the RFP, we have not listed any specific number or targets, because we know that will depend on each organization and community in the application.

Question: What do you recommend for a solution if an individual wants to apply for this grant, but does not want to be burdened with the administration of working with an organization?

Answer: For an individual to apply, they do not need to be part of an organization. But the Council cannot give money directly to individual due to our regulations. Individuals can find an organization that can serve as a fiscal agent of the funds. A fiscal agent is an organization that agrees to accept and be responsible for grant funds on your behalf.

Question: Are travel costs permitted in the budget?

Answer: Yes. Travel costs may be included in your budget depending on the proposal details. This may include travel for organization staff or for members of the community. If you include travel expenses, the rate must be in line with state guidelines. You must also estimate the travel costs based on your proposal. For example, if you propose 400 miles, you need to explain how you came up with 400 miles.

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