FREE WORKSHEET

NOFO Checklist: Decoder Worksheet for RFPs (Free PDF)

A two-page worksheet for pulling the rules out of a NOFO or RFP, with a table that maps every requirement to the section of your application that answers it.

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A notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) or request for proposals (RFP) is the rule book for one application. This worksheet is a place to copy out the rules that matter so the whole team works from the same page. Record what the funder wrote and where, with a page number. The funder's document always comes first. If this worksheet and the NOFO disagree, the NOFO is right.

The opportunity

Funder or agency:

Opportunity title:

Opportunity number or ID:

Version or date of the document we read:

Amendments or question-and-answer documents issued since (dates):

Eligibility

Who may apply, in the funder's words:

Limits by geography, organization type, size or past funding:

Limit on the number of applications per organization:

☐ We meet every eligibility rule, and we can show it with a document

Deadlines

Item	Date	Time and time zone	Page
Letter of intent or pre-application			
Questions to the funder			

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Item	Date	Time and time zone	Page
Full application			
Expected award notice			
Expected project start			

Money

Total funding available:

Expected number of awards:

Award minimum and maximum:

Project period (length and dates):

Match or cost share required (amount, type, and what counts):

Indirect cost rule:

Costs the funder will not pay for:

Required sections

List each section in the order the funder gives it.

Section	Page or word limit	Points	Page in NOFO

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Scoring criteria

Copy the criteria as written. If the funder gives no points, write "not stated".

Criterion	Points	What the funder says it wants to see

Priority or bonus points, and how to earn them:

Attachments and forms

Attachment or form	Required or optional	Limit or format	Who provides it

Formatting rules

Font and size:

Margins and spacing:

File type and file naming:

What counts toward the page limit:

Submission

How to submit (portal, email or other):

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Registrations or accounts needed before submitting:

Who in our organization is authorized to submit:

Contacts and questions

Program contact (name, email, phone):

Technical help contact:

Webinar or information session (date and link location):

Our questions for the funder:

Requirements-to-section map

Give every requirement, scoring criterion and priority its own row, then name where your application answers it. A row with an empty last column is a gap.

Requirement or criterion	Page in NOFO	Section of our application that answers it	Owner	Answered

Final check

- [ ] Every "must", "shall" and "required" in the NOFO has a row in the map
- [ ] Every row names a section and an owner
- [ ] A second person has read the NOFO and compared it with this worksheet

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- [ ] We have checked for amendments since we filled this in

> **Want help with this?** The Complete Grant Architect is a free 16-week grant writing course, and you can hire a grant writer for your next proposal. Both are at subthesis.com.

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