

Competitive Procurement 3C: Procurement Monitoring & RFP Best Practices

Module 3C of GSETA's Local Governance Policy
Training Series



- Welcome to the pre-recorded webinar “Competitive Procurement: Procurement Monitoring & RFP Best Practices”! This is Module 3C of the Local Governance Policy Training Series, offered through New Jersey Department of Labor’s partnership with the Garden State Employment and Training Association.

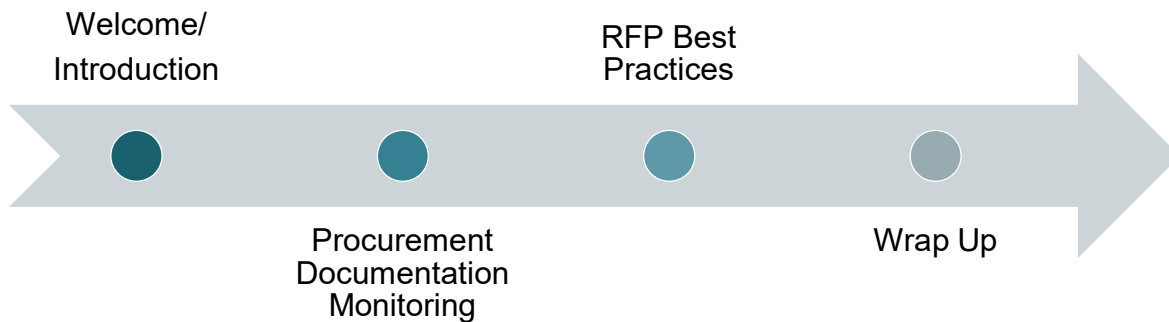
Training Series

Number	Title
Module 1	Introduction to Local Governance Policy
Module 2	The Local Workforce Development Board
Module 3	Competitive Procurement 3A: Workforce Procurement Introduction, Standards & the LWDB's Role in Procurement
	Competitive Procurement 3B: Competitive Procurement Process
	Competitive Procurement 3C: Procurement Monitoring & RFP Best Practices
Module 4	Competitive Procurement: Evaluating Proposals
Module 5	Setting Up Clear Agreements



- As you can see, there are five pre-recorded modules in this training series.
- We are in Module 3C, Competitive Procurement, Procurement Monitoring & RFP Best Practices
- If you have not had the opportunity to participate in the first three modules of the training series, specifically, Module 3A, it is highly recommended that you do so, preferably before continuing with this module.

Agenda

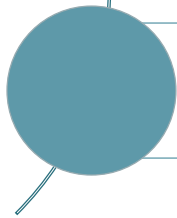


- Here is the agenda, or main topics, for this module.
 1. Right now, we are in the welcome/introduction section.
 2. The first main topic we will be discussing is procurement documentation monitoring.
 3. Next, we will discuss RFP best practices. We will also spend a moment reviewing the RFP development guide that accompanies this module as this will replace the application guides that were used in previous modules.
 4. Finally, we will wrap up, and preview the next module in the training series.
- Let's move onto reviewing our objectives for this module.

Objectives



Explain LWDB's responsibility to prepare for procurement documentation monitoring.

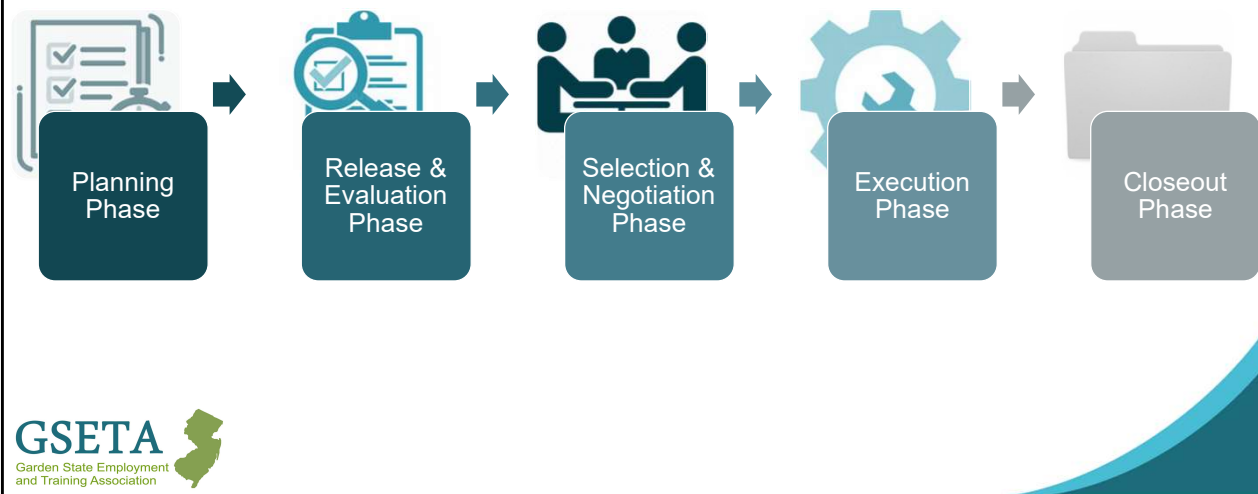


Apply best practices for strategizing and creating RFPs.



- Objectives refer to what you should be able to do by the end of this module. Our objectives today are for you to be able to:
 - Explain the LWDB's responsibility to prepare for procurement documentation monitoring.
 - Apply best practices for strategizing and creating RFPs.

Review – Competitive Procurement Process



- Before we dive into today's training, let's take a moment to revisit the procurement process. To refresh our memory, the phases involved in the procurement process include:
 - The Planning Phase
 - Release & Evaluation Phase
 - The Selection & Negotiation Phase
 - Execution or Implementation Phase
 - And the Closeout Phase
- Today, we are going to briefly discuss the monitoring of the procurement process and the specific responsibilities of a LWDB in relation to the monitoring.

Procurement Documentation Monitoring

LWDB's Documentation of Procurement Activity
Responsibilities

- Documenting procurement is a critical component of conducting competitive procurements; local areas must be able to document the various ways in which they have conducted a process that supports "fair and open competition" - to the public, as well as for the purposes of state and federal monitoring.
- NJ DOL uses this monitoring as the basis for evaluating the LWDB's governance structure and fiscal integrity, identifying opportunities for technical assistance and improvement of program or administrative functions.
- Monitoring serves as an important mechanism in the workforce development system. In particular, procurement monitoring is critical by ensuring that WIOA resources are being used lawfully and are in line with pertinent laws, regulations, and policies as well ensuring sound financial management of public funds.

Procurement Documentation Monitoring

- Outline's full & open competition
- Outlines ethical practices
- Address promotion transparency

Written Policies & Procedures



- Date RFP was released
- Details of pre-proposal conference
- Number of proposals received

Details of Competition



- Evaluation & scoring criteria clearly established & communicated
- Evaluation results & recommendation

Evaluation & Selection



- The LWDB's responsibility when it comes to procurement monitoring, is it's documentation and recordkeeping practices. Procurement monitoring includes all the procurement recordkeeping we discussed in module 3B during each of the phases.
- Specifically, procurement monitoring will review the following:
 - **Written Policies & Procedures**
 - **Details of the Competition**
 - **Evaluation & Selection**
- **Written Policies & Procedures:** This is the oversight that accompanies the written policies and procedures. It can be thought of as a checklist to ensure that all the procurement standards we discussed in module 3A are addressed. These include but are not limited to:
 - **Any Written policies/procedures** that outline the full and open competition, outline the LWDB's ethical practices, and also addressed the transparency of the promotion.
- In terms of the **details of the competition**, this includes ensuring that there is documentation noting the date the RFP was released, the details of the pre-proposal conference such as the date it was held, number of attendees, and any questions & answers that were addressed. Details of the competition would also include the number

of proposals received in response to the solicitation.

- And lastly, the monitoring of the **evaluation & selection** really focuses on the documentation of the clearly established and communicated evaluation and scoring criteria as well as the evaluation results and recommendation of the selected provider.

RFP Best Practices

RFP Considerations, Key Elements, & Best Practices

- One key piece of the procurement documentation is the Request for Proposal or RFP.
- Local workforce development boards (WDBs) have the responsibility for the selection of WIOA service providers through competitive grants or contracts. This selection is done through the release of a RFP.
- This next section is really going to dive deep into reviewing aspects of quality RFPs and introducing RFP best practices.

Request for Proposal



Request for Proposal or RFP is a business document that publicly announces a project, describes it, and solicits proposals from potential suppliers.



- As we've been talking about RFPs, let's quickly review what we mean by RFP.
- A request for proposal or RFP is a business document that publicly announces a project, describes it, and solicits proposals from potential suppliers. An RFP, in part is an advertisement.
- The RFP defines the project, for the agency that issues it as well as the agencies that respond to it. It outlines the proposal process and contract terms.
- In government particularly, the RFP has been adopted as a way to promote open and fair competitions in awarding contracts which encourages LWDBs to balance providing the highest quality services at the lowest possible cost.

Considerations for Drafting Strong RFPs



Descriptive without
being prescriptive



Streamlined



Rooted in
achievable goals



- There are certain factors that can influence the quality and effectiveness of a RFP. Let's spend a moment discussing three key factors that can ensure that you develop a strong and effective RFP.
- At its base level, a strong RFP should be a way to **clearly** communicate to potential vendors what the needs and expectations of your program.
- A strong RFP should be **descriptive** and give insight to your vendors on what is important to you, what drives you. The proposal should not be so detailed that it hinders the proposer's creativity, or so vague that the proposer is left stumped.
 - If the specified requirements are too vague, the proposer may not design and implement an adequate solution for the problem.
 - If the requirements are too detailed and restrictive, the proposers' innovation may be limited.
- Second, an effective RFP is **streamlined**. A great way to ensure that your solicitation is streamlined is to remove all of the unnecessary requirements that your RFP may have built up over the years. It could be that all those specifics were truly limiting the amount of proposers that would respond.
- Lastly, a strong RFP is **rooted in achievable goals**. Prospective service providers will want to ensure that they are able to achieve the service and performance goals established

and if those goals seem unachievable, the number of responses may be limited. Your RFP should be attractive to prospective service providers in order to illicit a great number of responses.

Key RFP Elements



VISION & POLICY



PROGRAM DESIGN
& SCOPE OF WORK



BUDGET



PERFORMANCE
OUTCOMES & REPORTING



EVALUATION
CRITERIA

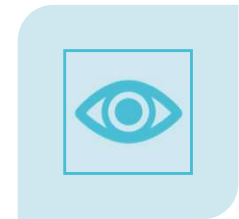


SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS &
TIMELINE



- When developing an RFP, it is important to ensure that prospective service providers have a clear picture of the vision, program design, program activities and services, and anticipated outcomes. While there is no perfect template or outline for an RFP, there are key elements found in most quality RFPs. These include:
 - Vision & Policy
 - Program Design & Scope of Work/Services
 - Budget
 - Performance Outcomes & Reporting
 - Evaluation Criteria
 - Submission Requirements & Timeline
- Let's review each of these in a bit more detail.

Vision & Policy



Vision:

- Aligns with goals in State & Local Plan.
- Articulates target populations & desired outcomes



Policy:

- Incorporate program & policy expectations
- Include any regulatory requirements or policies that impact program operations



- The first key RFP element is vision & policy.
 - **Vision:** A high-quality RFP lays out a clear vision for services that aligns with the strategic vision and goals identified in the WIOA state and local plans. The RFP also reflects how the LWDB expects investments around workforce and education to connect participants to locally available career pathways. It articulates the target population(s), the partnerships to develop and/or strengthen, and the desired participant outcomes
 - **Policy:** A quality RFP incorporates program and policy expectations and ensures service providers understand the WIOA Title 1 programs and regulatory requirements, and any other Federal, state, and local policies impacting program operations.

Program Design & Scope of Work



Program Design:

- Describes how vision will operate
- Clarifies service delivery & career pathway opportunities



Scope of Work/Services:

- Articulates **exactly** what activities or program elements are being procured
- Incorporates partnerships to be leveraged to achieve desired outcomes

- Next, let's take a look at what is meant by program design & scope of work in an RFP.
 - **Program Design:** The program design describes how the vision will operate. This section clarifies how services and career pathways opportunities will be delivered and how those services fit into the overall local area strategy.
 - For youth, the RFP should clarify if it is seeking prospective service provider(s) to provide the full array of WIOA Youth program services or only some of the services. If the RFP is only procuring some of the services, it should describe the coordination of services with other community organizations, service providers, or the local WDB to ensure youth have access to all 14 program elements.
 - **Scope of Services:** The scope of services articulates exactly what activities and program elements will be procured through the RFP. This section defines the tasks to be accomplished and/or the services to be delivered by the selected service provider. A well-written Scope of work/services is the cornerstone of an effective RFP, and is essential to the management of a sound contract.
 - Included with in the scope of work, the RFP may provide guidance around developing partnerships: This sub-section

can describe the strategies for leveraging resources and the expectations around service provider partnerships. It should request prospective service providers to identify partners they will work with to help participants achieve successful outcomes. This is especially important during youth service procurement.

Budget



Budget:

- Outlines estimated costs that align with proposed program design and services
- Cost considerations for LWDB are but not limited to: program staff wages and fringe benefits, supplies & materials, training costs or work experience wages, stipends and incentives

- Next, we will discuss the budget narrative of a RFP.
 - **In terms of Budget:** The RFP should solicit sufficient details to determine the accuracy and reasonableness of the service provider's cost projections. The budget narrative should outline estimated costs that align with the proposed program design, services, and activities.
 - Costs that local WDBs may want to consider in the proposed budget narrative include: program staff wages and fringe benefits; travel; supplies; materials; training costs; work experience wages; stipends; and incentives. Leveraged costs and indirect costs should be requested.

Performance Outcomes & Reporting



Performance Outcomes & Reporting:

- Clarifies required performance measures & indicators of success
- Outlines expectations & sets minimum standards and targets

- Another key element of an RFP is:
- **Performance Outcomes and Reporting:** This aspect of the RFP clarifies the required performance measures. Local WBDs are required to negotiate performance levels for these measures with the state. In order to meet those negotiated levels, the RFP should incorporate performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of the participants served by the program, set minimum standards and targets for those measures, and outline expectations for reporting on those indicators.

Evaluation Criteria

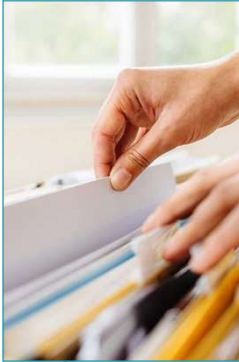


Evaluation Criteria:

- Articulates how the proposal will be scored including the different categories or sections as well as the amount of points assigned
- Typically is shown as a rubric to allow for consideration of completeness as well as the quality of the proposal

- Additionally, another key aspect of the RFP is the
- **Evaluation Criteria:** This section clearly articulates how the proposal will be scored and identifies the different categories or sections that will be evaluated as well as the amount of points assigned to each evaluation criteria.
- Typically the evaluation criteria section includes a rubric that illustrates the different criteria and associated points and also allows for consideration of the completeness of the proposal as well as the quality of the proposal.
- We will be diving deeper into evaluation in module 4 so stay tuned!

Submission Requirements & Timeline



Submission Requirements & Timeline:


- Provides prospective proposers with specific formatting requirements and required additional documents. Also includes directions on how to submit the proposal
- Clearly illustrates the proposal submission timeline with key dates and deadlines highlighted

- And the final key RFP element we are going to take a look at is the **proposal submission requirements and timeline**.
- Part of this key RFP aspect is really focused on the specific guidance given to prospective proposers on any proposal formatting requirements. These requirements are subject to local preferences and can be as specific as text size, margin size, spacing, etc. or they can be more general, such as providing guidance on overall response length.
- This section should also include directions on how to submit the proposal; whether it is by electronic submission either by email or upload or if hard copies or submission by flash drive is preferred. The submission requirements should detail any additional attachments or documents required. These can include any certifications and other legal documents.
- Lastly, in terms of the timeline, the RFP should lay out the procurement process timeline, with key dates and deadlines highlighted, such as the date of pre-proposal conference, deadline for submitting questions, and deadline for submission.

RFP Best Practices



Utilize RFP guide



Ensure separation of scopes of work



Engage committee structure



Ensure RFP is specific & clear



- So now that we've established some key elements found in high quality RFPs, let's talk about some best practices to keep in mind.
- These best practices are really about applying the considerations and key RFP elements into action.
- First, it is recommended that you utilize a **standard RFP format or template** with clearly defined table of contents. Please refer to the RFP development guide as a resource in designing a format or template. The RFP development guide includes recommended and optional elements to allow for customization and flexibility.
- Next, it is best to develop, **clearly defined and separate scopes of service** for each service being solicited within a single RFP or developing completely separate RFPs for One Stop Operator, One Stop Career Services, and One Stop Youth Services.
 - By ensuring separation of scopes of work, it provides the LWDB with the best choices for each service.
 - In terms of separation, each scope of service or RFP should be reviewed and scored on its own merit. Your review panel can be the same but the process is independent of each other.
- Additionally, it is also a good practice to engage your **committee structure** to review the RFP and provide input. For instance, leveraging your youth committee when

drafting a RFP for youth service procurement is a way in which to ensure a high-quality RFP is released.

- As a reminder, when involving your committees in the development of the RFP, be sure to address any conflicts of interest.
- And lastly, your RFP should be **clear, concise, and specific** so that prospective proposers are clear about expectations, timeline, submission responsibilities and any additional requirements.

Example: Do



Introduction

SEMCA Michigan Works! has issued this Request for Proposal (RFP) to secure contractors for the delivery of Job Seeker Services under the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), Public Law (PL) 113-128, was enacted by Congress on January 3, 2014. WIOA and federal regulations can be accessed on the US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration web site at:

- <http://www.doleta.gov/wioa>

Do include link if readers want more information; no need to clog up RFP with verbiage that can be found elsewhere.



- Now we are going to review some excerpts from sample RFPs to discuss some drafting RFP “Do’s.”
- First, take a moment to review this sample RFP introduction section and see if you can identify the “do”.
- Hopefully, you’ve identified the link that is provided to direct prospective proposers to the US DOL’s ETA website for further information on WIOA. This will allow prospective proposers the ability to review WIOA regulation in detail and at their leisure and it will not clog up the RFP with verbiage that can be found elsewhere.
- As mentioned previously, keeping the RFP clear, concise, and streamlined will ensure that prospective proposers respond appropriately while also elevating the level of competition.

Example: Do



WIOA Local Plan

A WIOA Local Plan was developed and submitted to the State of Michigan – Department of Labor and Economic Development (LEO) for SEMCA Michigan Works! workforce development activities to be in compliance with WIOA regulations. Proposers should be familiar with the local plan and keep it in mind when responding to the RFP. WIOA local plan can be found on our website: <https://www.semca.org/about-semca/workforce-development-board/>

Do include link to local plan. Include specifics about what you want proposers to address in your local area. *(Specifics could include any high priority occupations (HPOs) or demand occupations, target populations, etc.)*



- Next, take a moment to review this sample RFP WIOA local plan section and see if you can identify the “do”.
- Hopefully, you’ve identified the link that is provided to direct prospective proposers to review the local WIOA plan in detail. It is important for the plan and RFP to include the specifics of what a LWDB will want prospective service providers to address in the local area. This could include highlighting any high priority occupations (HPOs) or demand occupations as well as target populations and any other specific performance or service delivery goals.
- As mentioned previously, keeping the RFP streamlined and rooted in achievable goals will increase competition and promote high quality proposal responses.

Example: Do



Proposal Submission Order

1. Proposal cover sheet
2. Information about your organization
3. Scope of Work Questions
4. Budget Narrative & Budget
5. Required Forms

Do include instructions on how to submit the RFP & any formatting requirements.

Email? Mail? Portal? Electronic copy as well as paper copy? Who should they be addressed to? At what address?



- Our last look at an excerpt from a RFP is reviewing the proposal submission section. Take a moment to review this sample and see if you can identify the “do”. (Hint: There is also an additional “do” that is missing).
- Hopefully, you’ve identified the detailed submission order, providing prospective proposers with guidance on how to properly order their submission. However, a key item is missing, This submission section is missing any instructions on how to submit the RFP as well as any formatting requirements. It is important for LWDBs to include these specifics to ensure consistency between proposers and provide assurances that the RFPs will be properly received.

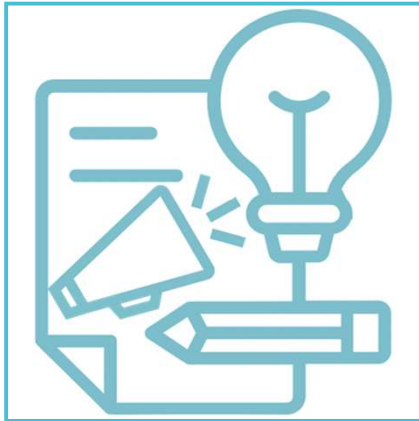
The slide features a dark teal background with a white horizontal band in the center. The title 'RFP Development Guide' is centered in the white band in a black serif font. Below the title is a thin green horizontal line, followed by the subtitle 'Purpose & Guide Contents' in a smaller black sans-serif font. The top-left and bottom-left corners of the slide have a light blue curved shape.

RFP Development Guide

Purpose & Guide Contents

- As we are approaching our wrap up, let's spend a moment reviewing the RFP development guide that accompanies this module.

RFP Development Guide

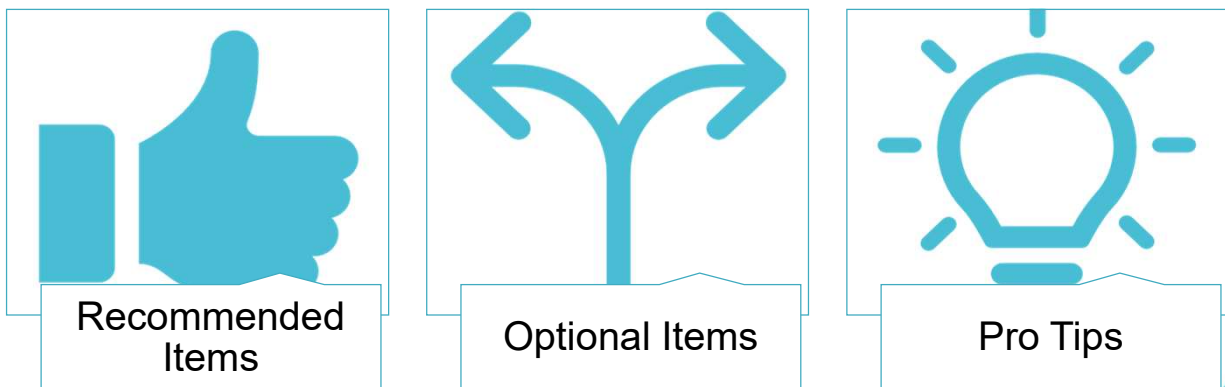


- The RFP Development Guide is designed to support LWDBs in constructing an effective solicitation for service providers.
- The guide is meant to support RFP best practices while maintaining degrees of flexibility for local needs.



- As mentioned previously, the development guide replaces the application guide that was used in the previous modules.
- The RFP Development Guide has been designed as a tool to support LWDBs in constructing an effective solicitation for service providers.
- The guide is meant to support RFP best practices while maintaining degrees of flexibility for local needs.

RFP Development Guide Contents



- In the RFP Development guide, there are 3 elements/contents that can be used to support a LWDB in drafting an effective RFP.
 - The first is, **recommended items**. These items are aligned with the best practices discussed in this module as well as requirements that were outlined in modules 3A & 3B. Please refer to our previous modules as needed when developing your RFP.
 - The next item found in the guide is the **Optional items**. These are items or sections that are LWDBs can chose to include, depending upon local priorities and structure. Additionally, the optional items provided in RFP guide are not all inclusive and there may be additional sections or items a LWDB may chose to include.
 - Lastly, the RFP guide provides LWDBs with **Pro tips**. These are tips that are also rooted in best practices and are designed to support LWDBs to create attractive RFPs to increase and elevate the level of competition.

Wrap Up

Key Takeaways, RFP Development Guide, Technical Assistance Registration

- Let's wrap up this module.

Key Takeaways




Monitoring of procurement document includes records of all phases of the procurement process to demonstrate a process that supported “fair and open” competition.


Strong RFPs are descriptive without being prescriptive, concise and streamlined, as well as rooted in achievable goals.



- The main takeaways from today include:
 - Monitoring of procurement document includes records of all phases of the procurement process to demonstrate a process that supported “fair and open” competition.
 - Strong RFPs are descriptive without being prescriptive, concise and streamlined, as well as rooted in achievable goals.

Development Guide & Technical Assistance

Development Guide	Technical Assistance	Preview of Next Module
 <p>Use the RFP Development guide to support the development of your solicitation.</p>	 <p>Address outstanding questions with a WIOA Subject Matter Expert by registering for Technical Assistance. Click the link below or scan the QR code.</p> <p>Click Here to Sign Up for TA!</p>	 <p>The next module in the training series is focuses on the evaluation of RFPs.</p>



- As a reminder, use the RFP development guide to support your development of the solicitation.
- Address outstanding questions with a WIOA Subject Matter Expert by registering for Technical Assistance. You can either click on the link or scan the QR code to be taken to the registration form.
- The next module in the training series is focuses on the evaluation of RFPs.



Thank You!

- Thank you for your time!