![Hawai'i Community Foundation logo]

Hawai'i Community Foundation

FLEX 2018

Top ~~10~~ *11* Things You Can Do to Improve Your Proposal

1. **Read the entire Request for Proposal (RFP).** Each year we review and revise the RFP based on your feedback and our learning experiences. Please do not assume this is the same application as last year. This is especially true this year since we added a new RFP.

2. **Watch the webinar.** The webinar was developed to provide you with additional background and insights on the RFP and application process, especially what to consider in the narrative questions. After watching the webinar, if you still have questions, e-mail them to FLEX@hcf-hawaii.org or consider registering for the live webinar on April 25, 2018. Details on how to register can be found on the FLEX Grants Program webpage.

3. **Apply as an organization.** The FLEX grant program was developed to support high-performing nonprofit organizations with unrestricted operating support. With this perspective, we are assessing the *entire organization's* performance and health, not only a specific program. If you write your proposal from the perspective of a single program, it is likely to be denied.

   Please note: *If you are applying as a church or public/charter school, you are ONLY eligible to apply for project-specific funds under the FLEX Grants Program – Micro RFP. Therefore, applications should describe a specific project/program and include a project budget. You will be asked to include a title of your project or program in the application.*

4. **Articulate your results well.** The Hawai'i Community Foundation is interested in the results your organization achieved in the past year. Achieving results that benefit your community is a hallmark of a high performing organization. Consider how well you conducted your programs or activities with regards to timeliness, attendance, satisfaction, cost, or as measured against an established standard. Consider, too, the impact or difference your organization made through the changes in the behaviors, attitudes, circumstances or conditions, knowledge, or skills in the community you're serving. Articulate those results clearly in your responses, using data to illustrate what you've achieved.

5. **Fill out the "Organization's Program Information" accurately.** In the online application, we request you to select the service location of your organization, types of services you provide, along with some other questions about your organization. Although this may

appear redundant, each question has a specific purpose and allows us to match your application to all the funding sources that you are eligible for.

6. **If you select a specific geographic community, you must provide <u>direct</u> services in that community.** In the "Organization's Program Information" section of the application, *Specific Geographic Community,* only select a specific geography if you <u>currently</u> provide <u>direct</u> services – i.e., you have staff that physically operate programs in these areas. Do not select areas where you intend or hope to provide services and activities.

7. **Use unformatted text if you plan to cut and paste your narrative.** The character count indicated in the RFP includes spaces between words and sentences. Sometimes word processors such as Microsoft Word inadvertently bring in additional formatting (e.g., tabs, returns, bullets), which affect the total character count. To view your character count accurately, it is best to paste your drafted responses from your word processor into a basic text editor such as Notepad or TextEdit. These basic text editor programs will strip all word formatting that Microsoft Word or other word processors added on. Then, you can paste your response into the online application.

8. **Submit all required attachments.** Applications with missing and/or incorrect attachments will be administratively denied. ***National organizations must also submit Hawaii-specific advisory board lists and operating budgets.***

   Also, be sure to title your attachments correctly: Application ID_Your Org Name_Name of File (for example, '145_HCF_Budget.pdf' or '145_HCF_Board of Directors.doc'). If multiple documents are submitted with the same title, it creates the opportunity for error within our system.

9. **Submit the correct information for the financial attachments.** Submit the current year's **operating budget** that includes **projected income and expenses**, and the **previous year's operating budget** that includes **projected and actual income and expenses**. Applicants often omit one or more of these elements in their financial documents which renders them incomplete. Without all the information requested we are unable to review an organization's financial health and thus cannot complete the full FLEX evaluation. Please see the FAQs on the FLEX webpage for a sample of what financial information we are requesting.

10. **Submit all overdue final reports before you submit your FLEX application.** Organizations currently funded by the Hawaii Community Foundation (HCF) with overdue final reports will be administratively denied. If your organization received a FLEX grant in 2017, *you must complete the online reporting survey by **May 16, 2018** to be eligible for a 2018 FLEX grant*. For those who are not applying for a FLEX grant in 2018, final reports will be due on November 30, 2018. If you are unsure if you have any outstanding final reports, please contact Christel Wuerfel at cwuerfel@hcf-hawaii.org or (808) 566-5522.

11. **Submit early.** If you run into challenges, staff will be in a better position to provide assistance if you begin your application early. Additionally, if you do not have an online account with the HCF Nonprofit Gateway, creating a "new user" could take up to two (2) business days. If you require assistance with retrieving an old login or are unsure if your organization has an account, please visit the Help Desk at http://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/ticket.