Development/Design Fund Process

Although each project is unique the Development/Design Fund typically follows this process.

Preliminary Meetings
Contact the Development/Design Fund program coordinator, Sebastian Baliva at 585.271.0520 or at design@rrcdc.org to learn more about the program and your project’s eligibility. Through phone conversations, in-person meetings and a site visit, the Development/Design Fund staff will learn about your proposed project. Key issues and suggestions may be made to strengthen the project including fine-tuning the scope and approach, recommendations for gathering support, and forming partnerships with other community organizations.

Applying for the Grant
You must submit a completed application and supporting documents in electronic format (.pdf) to design@rrcdc.org by the designated due date. The supporting documents consist of:

- Current Board of Directors List;
- Board Letter Support;
- IRS 501c3 determination letter;
- Lot / Block Maps;
- Site photos;
- Sales agreements (if applicable);
- Letters of support for project;
- Time schedule
- Project budget.

Assistance with the application is available upon request. The Development/Design Fund staff will offer suggestions and help you fine-tune the project idea and application; however, we encourage your organization to complete the application on your own. The Development/Design Fund staff may also provide assistance in acquiring site/context maps from the City, if necessary.

Application Review
The Development/Design Fund Committee will discuss and verbally assess each application based on the grant review criteria to reach a consensus on which projects to fund. Applications are selected based with consideration of the following factors:

- Design & planning impact;
- Community need;
- Community support;
- Organizational capacity;
- Potential for future implementation;
- Project feasibility;
- Strategic and catalytic impact; and
- Potential for repayment.

**Accepting the Grant Award**

The community organizations selected to receive funding for their projects will be mailed a letter of acceptance notifying the organization of its award from the Development/Design Fund Program. To accept the award, please sign the letter and return it to the Rochester Regional Community Design Center.

**The Project Agreement**

Before the pre-development work can begin the awardees must fill out and sign a project agreement. The project agreement is a document that outlines the roles of each party involved and highlights stipulations of the program. You may wish to have this document reviewed by your organization’s attorney. When all requirements are fulfilled and the agreement is in order, please return both copies of the document to the Rochester Regional Community Design Center. At this point we will fulfill our requirements in the document and return one of the copies to you.

In the event that your organization is not a 501c3, you must find one that will sponsor you as a fiduciary. In this circumstance there is an alternate project agreement that will require information and signatures from both your organization and the sponsoring one. Three (3) copies of the agreement must be filled out, signed, and returned to the Rochester Regional Community Design Center to be reviewed and completed. A copy of the project agreement will be returned to both the grant awardee and their sponsoring organization.

**Scoping Meetings**

The scoping meetings are a series of brainstorming meetings (2-3) that occur once the project agreement is signed. Participants at these meetings include members of the Development/Design Coordination Committee, which is comprised of experienced architects, urbanists, designers and members of your organization. This group might include the leaders involved with the project, board members, partners, or stakeholders. The goals of these meetings are to:

- Help you realize all of the goals for your project;
- Consider advantages and limitations;
- Generate a list of needs;
- Discuss potential outcomes and alternatives;
- Identify the deliverables that you will require from the pre-development work.

The outcome of the scoping meetings will be the creation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) generated by your organization. The Request for Proposal (RFP) can be sent out to the pre-qualified design consultants/firms that you wish to interview for your project.
Choosing Consultants to Interview
The Rochester Regional Community Design Center has an established list of pre-qualified design consultants that has been developed through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. This list consists of architects, landscape architects, engineers and designers that may be selected to do the pre-development work on your project. Certain design firms and disciplines may offer more to your project than others. During the scoping meetings, the Development/Design Coordination Committee will discuss with you consultant options to consider based on your specific project. Each of the consultants will have a bio for you to review consisting of a firm profile, staff members, past projects, areas of expertise, etc. When you have chosen three (3) consultants that best fit your project, we will assist in creating a Request for Proposal (RFP) and work with you through the site walkthrough and interview process.

Writing the Request for Proposal (RFP)
The Request for Proposal (RFP) is a document that, in the simplest terms, is the beginning of a conversation with the three (3) design consultants/firms that you wish to interview for your project. Similar to the firm profile that informed you about who the consultants are and what they do, the Request for Proposal (RFP) tells the consultants about your organization, your project and what your expectations and needs are.

This information for the Request for Proposal (RFP) will be generated during scoping meetings with the Development/Design Coordination Committee. Every Request for Proposal (RFP) is unique based upon the type of project. For example a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the adaptive reuse of a warehouse or religious building will have significantly different requirements than the development of a playground or community garden.

Our goal is to assist you in shaping your project outcomes, help you express your thoughts, into an organized document that informs the consultants, outlining exactly what you want and expect from the pre-development work. We encourage you to write the Request for Proposal (RFP) on your own, guided by a template and notes from the scoping meetings. The Development/Design Coordination Committee will assist you in finalizing the document. When completed, you will mail the Request for Proposal (RFP) to the three (3) consultants that you wish to interview.

Site Walkthrough / RFP Response
After you have sent out the Request for Proposal (RFP) and before holding the interviews, you will need to schedule a site/building walkthrough. This gives the prospective consultants a chance to view your site/building first hand and get a better idea of what it will take to ultimately complete your project. It also gives you a chance to meet the consultants that have responded. The walkthrough is scheduled for everyone at the same time which provides the opportunity for comments or questions raised to be heard by all parties.
After the walkthrough the consultants will formally respond to your Request for Proposal (RFP) including:

- Consultant’s approach to your project;
- Staff that will be working on your project;
- A projected timeline;
- What services / deliverable they will provide.

The responses should be submitted no fewer than a couple days before the interviews in order to give you and the Development/Design Coordination Committee a chance to review them. They will serve as the basis of discussion during the interviews. Each consultant’s response will vary and set them apart from the others.

**Conducting the Interview / Selecting the Consultant**
All three (3) consultant interviews will be held consecutively on the same day and each consultant will be allotted 30 minutes for their interview. The interviews will be based off of each consultants Request for Proposal (RFP) response. Each interview will begin with a presentation from the consultant that will include:

- Introduction of the team;
- Explanation of their approach;
- Similar projects that they have worked on;
- Questions from the consultant.

At this point, your team and the Development /Design Coordination Committee will ask questions of the consultant or voice any additional comments and concerns. Open discussion is encouraged. Immediately following the interviews, there will be some time for discussion with the Development/Design Coordination Committee that may include suggestions and guidance related to your decision. In the end, you choose the consultant that you feel will best fit your project and organization’s goals.

Selection of the consultant/firm may or may not take place on the same day as the interviews. For some projects, extra time may be needed to consider and review the interview context before making a decision. Additionally some organizations might require that you present your thoughts to your board of directors before a decision is made.

**What to Expect from the Consultant Contract**
The contract should be signed by your organization and the consultant. In the event that your organization is not a 501c3, the contract must also signed by the sponsoring 501c3 organization. Additionally, the contract should be signed off on by the Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC) acknowledging that we agree with the proposed scope of work and terms of the contract.
The contents of the contract should relate to the response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) and the discussions during the interview. The contract will outline all of the services that the consultant promises to deliver, a schedule, and payment. The following items need to be included in that contract:

- Overview and Summary
- Timeline and Schedule
- Who will be involved?
- Approach
- A Description of the Deliverables
- Disbursement of Payments

**The Pre-development Work Process**

The pre-development work process may include several meetings with the consultant in order for them to better understand your goals, your potential budget constraints, what you are looking for in the final product, etc. Community engagement is encouraged when possible and you might also consider holding one or more public meetings to get input from stakeholders related to your project. You and the consultant should establish meeting dates when you may review the progress of their work periodically. The Development/Design Coordination Committee should be involved in some of these meetings (2-3) so that we might also review the work and offer suggestions.

Throughout this process the consultant and/or other staff members will need access to your building or site for various reasons. If you do not own the building or site, you need to make sure that they will be able to have access when necessary. The total length of the pre-development work should not exceed six months. When the consultant has completed their study a final meeting will be held to present their work.

**Payment Disbursements**

Payments will be disbursed directly from the Rochester Regional Community Design Center to the consultant based on the approval from your organization given the quality and completeness of their work. The funds will be disbursed three (3) times over the course of the pre-development work and will not exceed the total sum of the grant awarded to your organization. Invoices should be submitted by the consultant directly to the Rochester Regional Community Design Center.

**Completing the Pre-development Work**

The pre-development work should be completed by an agreed upon date that does not exceed 6 months from the start of that work. The process will culminate in a final meeting where the consultant will present the final product to your organization, the Development/Design Coordination Committee, and the sponsoring organization if applicable. At this meeting discussion of the final deliverables and the next steps will also take
place. If the work is acceptable to all parties the final payment will be disbursed from the Rochester Regional Community Design Center to the consultant.

**Next Steps**
This pre-development process will determine whether your project is feasible. If the project is not deemed feasible at this time, you will have a clear idea as to why. You may choose to restructure your approach based on finding from the pre-development work. If the project is deemed feasible, you will now have some of the tools to begin targeting funding sources or potential developers that might have been identified during the study. Since the consultant you have been working with has a good foundation and knowledge regarding your project, you might choose to continue working with them to complete the project. This is by no means required. When funding is secured and you or a private developer move onto the construction phase, we ask that you include the amount of the Development/Design Fund grant award into the project’s budget so that the Rochester Regional Community Design Center may recycle the dollars back into the fund to be used for future pre-development work. The Development/Design Coordination Committee and its Advisory Committee wish to see worthy projects become implemented. We will remain a resource to your organization as you develop the final design and complete the project.