

2021 Rebuilding Better RFP

Building Support for America's New Business Plan

Launched in 2019, [America's New Business Plan](#) set out to level the playing field and create equitable access to entrepreneurial opportunities for everyday Americans striving to launch new businesses.

Although policy reforms at the local, state, and national levels have been enacted to support entrepreneurs since the release of America's New Business Plan, the challenges confronting entrepreneurs have perhaps never been greater. The dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice both exposed and exacerbated the many barriers that still block access to entrepreneurship.

Removing barriers that have made it harder for Americans – particularly people of color, women, and those in rural communities – to start a business requires addressing policies that directly impact new and small businesses as well as much bigger issues that limit access to entrepreneurial opportunities.

To build an economy that works for everyone and enables more entrepreneurship, policies must break down historic and systemic barriers so that all Americans, regardless of race, gender, and geography, can achieve economic stability, mobility, and prosperity.

Projects applying within this track must advance America's New Business Plan, whether by building awareness of the Plan in its entirety, advocating for policies contained within the Plan, or building upon its framework to achieve policy outcomes that level the playing field for all entrepreneurs. Applications should demonstrate an understanding of how to achieve policy change, the capacity to successfully execute the proposed project, and a commitment to supporting entrepreneurs.

Letter of Interest Elements

In addition to organization and primary contact information and funding request information, applicants will be expected to answer a series of questions that are specific to this request for proposals. Below is an overview of the questions applicants will be expected to complete:

Demographic information

Applicants will be asked to provide identity data for the organization's executive directors, board, and senior staff. Additionally, applicants will be asked to provide estimates on the race, ethnicity, and gender of the people they serve.

Identify the problem or need.

In no more than two paragraphs, applicants must describe the problem, challenge, or need their organization is seeking to address. Make sure to tie into how America's New Business Plan can help solve the problem and why the proposed solution is the best or most effective solution. Letters of interest that cite external or internal evidence (e.g., research, polling data, entrepreneur focus groups, etc.) that supports the need will receive higher scores.

Describe the project, concisely.

In no more than two paragraphs, describe the project seeking grant funding. Be sure to include how the proposed project will advance America's New Business Plan, either in part (e.g., a pillar or specific recommendation made in America's New Business Plan) or in whole, either through advocacy that brings entrepreneur perspectives to policymakers or through other educational efforts that will increase policymakers' understanding and provoke action. Letters of interest that describe clearly defined goals that align with America's New Business Plan will receive higher scores.

Explain why this organization is best suited to carry out this work.

In two to three short paragraphs, applicants must describe their organization's prior experience engaging policymakers, either through advocacy or other educational initiatives. Be sure to demonstrate how advocacy efforts tie to the organization's larger mission of helping entrepreneurs and describe some of the outcomes it has seen from these engagements. Letters of interest that describe the organization's capacity to execute advocacy or other policy engagement initiatives, including through the description of staffing dedicated to these functions, will receive higher scores.

Full Proposal Elements

If selected to advance to the second stage of the RFP process, applicants will receive user credentials to the Foundation's online grants management system, Fluxx. Below is an overview of the proposal elements required in the second phase of the RFP:

Project Description: Information about the proposed project/program, including a project summary, start and end dates, detailed description, and the team's implementation plan.

Relevant Qualifications: Information about the applying organization and how its staff are uniquely qualified to carry out the work described within the grant proposal.

Project Budget: In addition to providing a Kauffman-specific project budget, applicants will be asked to upload a detailed overall project budget (using the Kauffman template) that includes both revenues and expenses, status of other funds (if applicable), and clearly connects budget lines to grant deliverables.

Organization Capacity & Financials: Information to understand the applying organization's capacity to manage the grant and the organization's overall financial health, including such things as the organization's leadership/board, operating budget, financial statements, and most recent audit (if applicable).

Evaluation Metrics: Applicants will be expected to draft output and associated outcome metrics. Outputs are the activities, products, or services that the applying organization will undertake/provide as part of the grant. The associated outcomes are the changes that will result from the outputs. If an applicant needs help drafting outputs and outcomes, please see this [guide](#).

Review Process

All first-round letters of interest will be reviewed by Kauffman staff. Those chosen as semi-finalists will be evaluated by Kauffman program officers and grants administration staff in a final decision meeting. The review process for this RFP will take approximately 12 weeks from the letter of interest deadline.

At each stage of the review process, applicants will be assessed only against other applicants in the same track.

Reviewers will be using a track-specific rubric to score applicants objectively.