**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION**

The **Quad Cities Contributors Council (QCCC**) is a consortium of regional philanthropy leaders. The QCCC’s purpose is to promote the success of Rock Island and Scott County not-for-profit organizations that are seeking funding for capital and endowment campaigns. While the QCCC does not award dollars itself, the application process provides two key benefits to applicant organizations:

* **Guidance** to assure that proposed projects are financially viable, fully fundable, non-duplicative and strengthening to the organization and the community. This guidance is provided within the application by its requirements for completion, as well as by feedback given to the applicant subsequent to the application’s review by the QCCC.
* **Approval** of the application. The QCCC’s formal approval of an application communicates to Quad Cities’ funders that a campaign is considered viable by a broad range of experienced philanthropic leaders. Approval by the QCCC does not obligate any funder to support a campaign, nor does lack of approval prohibit funding from any funder. However, QCCC’s approval assures funders that a campaign has been carefully vetted.

***It should be noted that it is the QCCC’s policy to only review projects before they enter the fundraising and construction stages. If a project is already underway, please contact the QCCC to determine if it qualifies for a review.***

**THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

The QCCC reviews applications **4 times a year**. Application deadlines are posted on the website [www.qccontributorscouncil.org](http://www.qccontributorscouncil.org) – along with the Council’s meeting dates when applications are reviewed.

There are five basic steps to the application process:

1. Applicant prepares the application
2. Application is reviewed by the Council’s reviewer and Council members
3. The Council meets to consider the application and determine if it approves the application
4. The Council’s Chair communicates the Council’s decision to the applicant and may offer additional guidance as well, depending on the outcome of the Council’s deliberations
5. The Council shares its decision with its member organizations

The length of time between the application deadline and the Council’s review meeting is designed to allow a comprehensive review of the application. The Council employs a professional reviewer to supplement the Council members’ own assessments. Once an application is received, the Reviewer will study the application and request at least one face to face meeting with the applicant’s leadership at the applicant’s location to answer questions that have arisen during the Reviewer’s study. This allows the applicant to respond to questions that arise, and to update information to be considered at the Council meeting.

The Reviewer provides a brief written report to the Council members shortly before its meeting to supplement the application. The Reviewer does **not** make a recommendation to the Council to approve or not approve; that decision is the responsibility of the Council members.

When the Council meets to consider the application, the Reviewer will summarize key findings of the review. Then, discussion is opened among the Council members. Council members share their impressions of the quality of the application and their impressions of the importance of the proposed project relative to other campaigns competing for funders’ resources. Council members have a deep knowledge of the Quad Cities community and its needs which provides important context for considering the merits of each application.

After the Council concludes its discussion it will vote on a motion to approve the campaign proposed in the application. The Council may also define elements of a communication back to the applicant, whether approval is granted or not. That communication is intended to provide helpful guidance to the applicant. Whether approval is granted or not, feedback and guidance may include recommendations for possible improvements to the proposed campaign.

**THE APPLICATION’S CONTENTS**

The application requires a considerable amount of information designed to describe information about the quality and viability of its proposed campaign, as well as the applicant’s current strength and viability to support its ongoing mission. Required information is designed to focus on key areas including:

* Financial stability;
* Volunteer support of the applicant’s organization and its proposed campaign;
* Professional expertise, both in house and outsourced, available to conduct a major campaign while still ensuring the viability of ongoing operations;
* Ability to sustain and grow clientele and services of the applicant subsequent to a campaign’s completion.

The application requires electronic submission of:

* **Key documents** which are likely already available to the applicant (e.g. IRS tax exemption letter)
* **Answers to specific questions requiring detailed responses** to be prepared by the applicant’s leadership

These items are provided on the following pages. A checkbox list is provided as part of the application.

*The application process is designed to both provide the Council with information needed to assess the project and to guide your organization in developing thorough campaign.*

**THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND…**

* The application must be submitted in its entirety. Please review the application carefully before submission and use the check boxes to ensure all information has been provided, or—if not applicable—an explanation has been provided.
* ***The application must be submitted in an electronic format***. Any of PDF, Word, or Excel files are acceptable. It may take multiple files and formats to submit all of the data requested.
* In naming attached files to your submission, please use file names that allow easy identification of which information requested in the application is included in the file (e.g. “Board of Directors Roster” or “Financial History and Budget”). The application will be reviewed against the checklists shown below and information missing from that requested will, unless explained, cause the application to be considered incomplete.
* **If you are unsure of how to approach an application item, please email your question to info@qccontributorscouncil.org.** The application is designed to cover a very wide range of organizations so it is recognized some information requested may not be applicable to all organizations.
* It is recommended that you allow plenty of time to prepare your application, including an opportunity for your organization’s board of directors to review the application.

***Completed applications and support materials should be emailed in electronic formats to:***

***info@qccontributorscouncil.org***

**THE APPLICATION**

**ITEMS REQUIRED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION** (Attach as PDF, Word, or Excel files.)

☐ 1. COVER LETTER FROM CHAIR OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND/OR CEO/EXEC. DIRECTOR outlining:

☐ The proposed project

☐ The campaign rationale

☐ The financial goal/dollar amount to be raised

☐ How the funds will be used

☐ 2. IRS TAX EXEMPTION LETTER

☐ 3. FORM 990 TAX FILING WITH THE IRS (most recent year already filed)

☐ 4. AUDIT REPORT WITH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND NOTES (most recent completed)

☐ 5. CORPORATE IDENTITY INFORMATION SCHEDULE Must include:

☐ Legal name of organization

☐ Address

☐ Number of years of operation

☐ Name of Executive Director or CEO

☐ Name, phone number, and email of the organization’s contact person for the application

☐ Federal EID number

☐ Number of staff members broken out by full time and part time and number of volunteers

☐ 6. BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROSTER (include occupation/profession and years of service on the board)

☐ 7. SENIOR STAFF MEMBERS ROSTER (include position/title, years of service w/ the organization, and previous major campaign experience, if any)

☐ 8. MISSION STATEMENT/STATEMENT OF CORPORATE PURPOSE FOR THE ORGANIZATION’S EXISTENCE

☐ 9. DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR PROGRAMS OR SERVICES PROVIDED AND DESCRIPTION OF CLIENTS/BENEFICIARIES OF THE ORGANIZATION (include information on location of services provided and what percentage of clients are from the Quad Cities).

☐ 10. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION EMPHASIZING MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OVER LAST 3 YEARS

☐ 11. SCHEDULE OF FINANCIAL HISTORY AND BUDGET Please provide three years of financial history and current fiscal year’s budget in an identical format and including line item detail on revenue and expenses. Please provide accompanying narrative explaining major variances for major line items from year to year.

☐ 12. LIST OF MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS FOR MOST RECENT THREE YEARS (including grants and contributions from foundations, corporations, governmental, United Way and individuals). If not available from internal reporting capabilities, the annual Form 990 filings should permit identifying large donors.

☐ 13. PROVIDE RESERVE FUND AND ENDOWMENT POLICIES OF THE ORGANIZATION, IF ANY

☐ 14. CURRENT BALANCES OF RESERVE FUNDS AND ENDOWMENTS, IF ANY

☐ 15. SUSTAINED FUNDING STRATEGY DESCRIPTION Summarize how the organization plans to sustain its annual funding in conjunction to launching the proposed campaign.

☐ 16. CAMPAIGN IMPACT ANALYSIS DESCRIPTION TO INCLUDE:

☐ How the campaign will help the organization better achieve its mission and goals described in the mission statement and program descriptions, specifically describing the three most likely favorable outcomes due to the success of the campaign

☐ How the mission and clients would be affected if the campaign is NOT conducted or is unsuccessful

☐ 17. ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS IN THE CAMPAIGN. Describe the role of the board members, campaign cabinet, or other volunteers in the gift solicitation process and include the current dollar total of volunteer financial commitments to the campaign.

☐ 18. COPY OF FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT IF ONE HAS BEEN COMPLETED

☐ 19. CAMPAIGN DETAILS:

☐ Financial goal stated in dollars to be raised in contributions and grants

☐ Estimated period of time over which contributions may be paid

☐ Estimated date of kick-off, including private phase and public phase if applicable

☐ Campaign Budget (include a detailed line item budget outlining how the campaign total will be used).

☐ Please note any and all outside professionals who were consulted in the campaign budget process and detail their role.

☐ Will an outside fund-raising professional be hired? Please note estimated costs if one will be used.

☐ Is interim financing needed? If yes, have contacts been made to secure this type of financing? Detail specific funding commitments if applicable.

☐ Percentage of the campaign goal to be raised in the Quad Cities

☐ What type of funding is being sought outside the Quad Cities area? Is local match or local support required? List any funding commitments already secured from outside the Quad Cities.

☐ List companies and foundations you plan to approach to fund this campaign and an estimated amount you are budgeting to get from each.

☐ If a capital campaign, when will construction start and what is the timetable for completion?

☐ What percentage of the fundraising goal will you have to secure before commencing with construction?

☐ What is the level of investment your organization is making towards this campaign (i.e. reserve funds, endowment funds)?

☐ 20. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: List alternatives considered to achieve the goals proposed for this project. For example, if this is a building project did your organization consider alternative rental options, renovation of an existing structure, partnering with another entity, etc.? Explain why each alternative was rejected in favor of the proposed project.

☐ 21. PROJECT DETAILS (for capital projects):

☐ Square footage

☐ Scope of work

☐ Program spaces to be contained in new and/or renovated building

☐ How much additional space are you gaining, if any?

☐ How many years in the future will this space meet your growth needs?

☐ Describe status of architectural plans, building contracts or any necessary environmental testing/clean-up needed on new or existing site.

☐ 22. THREE YEAR BUDGET PROJECTIONS. If a capital campaign, please provide a three-year budget projection of the revenues and expenses by line item once the capital project is complete. **Note: The format of these financials must be identical to the format used in the three-year history attachment.**

☐ 23. DESCRIBE EFFECT OF CAPITAL PROJECT ON FUTURE ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS Discuss the projected organizational cost increases associated with the capital project (such as operating expenses related to maintenance and utility costs and describe how the organization plans to meet these ongoing increased expenses.

☐ 24. DESCRIBE APPLICANT’S PRIOR FUNDRAISING HISTORY AND RESULTS: Include the following:

☐ The dates of the organization’s last capital campaign

☐ What was the dollar goal and what were the funds to be used for?

☐ How much was raised?

☐ Was the project completed within budget?

☐ 25. DESCRIBE CURRENT INDEBTEDNESS Does the organization have any current capital or other indebtedness? If so, please detail the payback schedule and source of funds to cover this debt.

☐ 26. DESCRIBE POTENTIAL DUPLICATION OF SERVICES

☐ Identify what other organizations provide the same or similar services within the Quad Cities

☐ Describe any overlap in clientele

☐ Describe what, if any cooperative efforts your organization has with those providing similar services

☐ Would the proposed project duplicate other facilities or projects already in place or proposed for the Quad Cities?

☐ 27. OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION Please provide any other information pertinent to the project that will aid the Council in its evaluation.

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