

**Request for Proposals for the  
Creation and Administration of a  
Direct Response Fundraising Program  
RFP # 0922-3  
Questions and Answers**

**October 12, 2022**

- Q1. As I read the RFP, I am seeking information about current staffing (if any) relative to fundraising efforts. As the website only includes leadership roles, I am grateful for your assistance and clarification.
- A1. The Queens Public Library Foundation has a staff of eight fundraisers: an executive director; four staff who focus on government grants and institutional giving; an assistant director of individual giving; a corporate giving and events specialist; and a database manager. The assistant director of individual giving manages our direct response vendor and relationship, with strategy input from the executive director, and data management (list pulls, etc.) from the database manager. The Library's marketing team provides assistance with digital campaigns and graphics.
- Q2. Can you provide any budget guidelines or budget ranges? If you cannot share a budget, can you disclose prior year's budget spend?
- A2. This question seeks information that is not required to submit a responsive proposal.
- Q3. The majority of our firm's experience is growing revenue for our for-profit clients through direct response and multi-channel marketing tactics; would that prohibit us from being considered?
- A3. No. However, as per RFP section VI. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, 4, proposers are to, "Provide a summary of your firm's experience performing the tasks listed in the Scope of Service, with specific references to work for not-for-profit corporations, library systems or other like-entities. "
- Q4. Has social media messaging in the past been paid or organic, or a combination of both?
- A4. A combination of both.
- Q5. Can you share your media budget spend for the past 3 years?
- A5. It has averaged about \$5K in social media advertising per year.
- Q6. Have there been any paid tactics that haven't worked in the past?
- A6. Not that we are aware of.

- Q7. What is the estimated budget for the project?
- A7. See answer to question 2.
- Q8. Could you provide more detail on your current state of fundraising? Is there a percentage breakdown of current funding sources for the Foundation?
- A8. The Queens Public Library Foundation's fundraising activities include grant solicitations and sponsorships from foundations and corporations; one or more annual fundraising events, which raises funds from all constituencies; and individual solicitations through direct marketing appeals, major gift solicitations, and planned giving. In FY22, the breakdown of funding was 45% from Foundations, 31% from Corporations, 20% from Individuals, and 4% from Other (associations, etc.). Government grants are awarded directly to the Library, not the Foundation.
- Q9. Is this process aligning with a strategic/capital plan that the organization has developed or is planning for?
- A9. Proposers are encouraged to review the Library's website to learn about the Library. Proposers may wish to review the Reports and Publications webpage which includes the current Strategic Plan. These documents are subject to change. The direct web link is: <https://www.queenslibrary.org/about-us/queens-public-library-overview/reports-publications>
- Q10. What is working well today with the program and what do you see as areas for Improvement?
- A10. The program is working well and we have seen substantial growth in our donor base over the past four years with strong retention. We would like to focus on the growth of mid-level donors in the future.
- Q11. What will success look like a year from now?
- A11. Retention of current donors, growth in new donors, and increased revenue.
- Q12. Do you have specific 5-year goals for the program?
- A12. We do not.
- Q13. We note the goal to 'significantly grow the individual giving program beyond its current size'. Are there targets around donor growth? Revenue growth? Is there the potential for additional investment to achieve these goals?
- A13. We have not set specific targets for donor or revenue growth. There is no additional investment available at this time.
- Q14. We note a desire to do more around planned giving. Can you share your vision of the selected proposer's role in planned giving?

- A14. The Library’s planned giving efforts have been reactive instead of proactive. We currently have a small society of people who have self-identified as legacy donors and we want to grow this into a more robust group to increase the pipeline for planned gifts. Budget permitting, we would like to work with our DM firm to send out one or two mailings a year to targeted prospects within our database to actively grow legacy society membership, as well as thread planned giving messaging through other communications.
- Q15. The Scope of Services required includes marketing and related database services. Can you elaborate on what is required under “related database services”?
- A15. The Foundation’s database manager maintains our Raiser’s Edge database of donors, and the Library maintains lists of cardholders. We would ask our DM firm to help define list pulls for mailings, to help with suppression, analytics for reporting, and to act as a liaison with data management companies who provide modeling or list rentals.
- Q16. The Scope of Work section defines subcontractors as being paid by the proposer and production partners as being paid by QPLF directly. In Proposal Requirements, #16 under “General Requirements” asks for detailed information on how subcontractors and production partners will be compensated. Will you clarify the requirements in these sections?
- A16. The Library would like to know the financial relationship and agreement that the proposer has with its subcontractors and production partners and the cost implications to the Library.
- Q17. 1. Could you share the number of donors and average annual gift sizes by donor type?
- a. Current Donors
  - b. Lapsed Donors
  - c. Long Lapsed Donors (No gift for the last 5 years)
- A17. There were 4,241 current donors in FY2022. There are 6,007 lapsed donors who have given at least one gift in the last 60 months, and 5,469 lapsed donors who have given no gift in the past 60 months.
- Q18. 2. Could you share the number of donors and average annual gift sizes by methodology? The proposal reflects the cumulative dollars that are historically raised.
- a. Direct Mail
  - b. E-mail Solicitation
  - c. Monthly Giving Program
  - d. Text Message
  - e. Phone
  - f. Social Media advertising
  - g. Major Gifts Solicitations
- A18. For Direct Mail, there were 3,676 gifts that raised \$173,044 in FY22, with an average gift size of \$96.20. For email solicitations, there were 2,078 gifts that raised \$180,602 with an average gift size of \$86.91. There were 56 monthly donors with an average gift size of \$31.

For major gifts, there were 8 gifts that raised a total of \$75,603. In addition, there were \$155,600 white mail gifts. We do not solicit via text message or telephone appeals.

- Q19. 3. Have you ever tested an acquisition strategy for non-donor individuals?
- a. How many library card holders are on file across the system?
    - i. Active accounts
    - ii. Inactive accounts
  - b. Do you have a database of visitors or people who have used the Library without being a Library Card holder?
  - c. What data do you store related to library card users (name, address, telephone number, email address, etc.)
- A19. The Foundation has tested acquisition strategies for non-donor individuals, including with library card holders that are not current donors. We do not have a database of visitors or non-card holders who have used the Library. When registering for a library card, customers provide their name, address, telephone number, email address, home library branch, and date of birth.
- Q20. How successful were the digital fundraising efforts?
- a. The Library states they raised \$500,000 through all the channels. Will you be able to provide a breakdown of dollars and donors per channel?
- A20. Digital fundraising efforts have increased year after year. Please see Q 18 for a breakdown of giving by channels.
- Q21. What current channels are being used to increase the number of monthly donors?
- A21. Direct mail, email solicitations.
- Q22. Does the Foundation have a dedicated Planned Giving officer?
- A22. No, the Foundation does not have a dedicated planned giving officer.
- Q23. Does the Foundation have giving societies and gift acceptance policies in place?
- A23. The Foundation does not have giving societies. A new gift acceptance policy was approved by the board this year.
- Q24. In previous RFPs have you requested audited financials from privately held corporations?
- A24. Yes.
- Q25. If the successful Proposer(s) does not agree to provide the Library with audit access on request during the term of the contract and for 7 years thereafter what alternative exists? Section VI.A.15 provided an alternative to providing the 2 years of audited financials and wondering if there is also an alternative to the audit access reflected in section VIII.C.2?

- a. As a privately held C corporation we have partnered with public, private, government and military entities and have not previously been asked for this information. What is the rationale in requesting this information?
- A25. RFP section VIII. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CONDITIONS, C. Administrative Specifications, requires that, “The successful Proposer(s) must agree to provide the Library with audit access on request during the term of the contract and for 7 years thereafter.”
- Q26. During the past 1-2 years, what outside partners/companies has the Queens Library Foundation engaged for similar fundraising, multi-channel communication services such as those requested in this RFP?
- A26. Queens Public Library has been working with one direct marketing firm for the past five years.
- Q27. What has precipitated the need for the Library to release this RFP at this time? When was the last RFP of this nature conducted?
- A27. The Library last issued a Request for Proposals for these services in 2017. In keeping with the Library’s Procurement Policy, the Library is now re-procuring services.
- Q28. Would it be possible for prospective firms to see samples of the Library’s past direct-mail appeal collateral materials?
- A28. The successful proposer will have an opportunity to see past direct mail appeal materials.
- Q29. Can you comment on the level of annual financial support the Foundation receives from its board members? How engaged/involved are board members with the Foundation staff, ongoing fundraising efforts, special events, etc.?
- A29. There are 14 members of the Foundation’s board of directors. The level of engagement varies by board members, with some providing the match for matching gift campaigns, many supporting special events, and others securing funds from others. In the most recent fiscal year, 60% of Board members donated to the Foundation.
- Q30. From your own research (qualitatively and/or quantitatively), why do your donors support the Queens Public Library? What is your most compelling case for their support?
- A30. Donors recognize Queens Public Library as a community asset that is universally available and has the power to transform lives. Many give because they have used (or use) the Library, or know people who have benefited from Library programs, services and resources.
- Q31. Beyond the formal requirements and criteria cited in the RFP, what other key qualitative attributes are you seeking in a new direct-mail fundraising communications partner? In your words, what would make for a successful partnership?

- A31. We are looking for a partner that is collaborative, creative, with in-depth knowledge of best practices in direct marketing and great communication skills.
- Q32. Page 6, A - 4: Could you define multi-agency?
- A32. Multi-agency refers to the multiple organizations and vendors involved in the direct marketing program, including Queens Public Library, Queens Public Library Foundation, the successful proposer, printers, mailing houses, list vendors.
- Q33. Page 6, B - 1: Could you define "control creative"
- A33. This is a creative asset that is used as the control when testing.
- Q34. Page 6, B - 2: Could you define "test packages"?
- A34. A test package is an appeal in which one component is changed to test whether or not it has an impact on donor performance; it is typically tested along with a control package.
- Q35. Page 7, D - 2: Does this mean the Successful Proposer would manage all gift entry into Raiser's Edge NXT, or does it mean developing an appeal code system? Or something else
- A35. The Foundation has a staff member who enters all gifts into Raiser's Edge NXT, and that staff member is managed by the Executive Director. The Foundation has a system in place for Campaign, Appeal and Fund coding; Appeal codes for Direct Marketing are updated annually in collaboration with our direct marketing vendor.