

**U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families**



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Grant Review Handbook

NOTE: FOR ACF INTERNAL STAFF AND/OR CONTRACTORS

The ACF Grant Review Handbook was produced in the collaboration with the ACF Grant Review Workgroup comprised of representatives from each ACF program office. The Handbook reflects policies and procedures from the Grants Policy Administration Manual (GPAM) as well as ACF business processes from the Division of Grants Policy and Division of Discretionary Grants.

The Handbook is to be used by all ACF program offices. Program Offices must incorporate guidance provided within the document in their grant reviews. It is our hope this will ensure consistent reviews across program offices by providing guidance to federal staff, contractors, and panel members.

While we recognize each program office approaches their reviews somewhat differently, the Grant Review Handbook attempts to incorporate the different review processes for ACF (i.e., remote, on-site, and hybrid) into one guidance document.

Please note that when tailoring the Handbook to meet specific program grant review need, the content in the Handbook itself may not be edited. Program offices should instead include additional supplemental information to Handbook in consultation with OA.

Program Offices can omit this page as well as Appendix B, ACF Grant Review Feedback Forms, from the Handbook. The feedback forms can be submitted separately to panel members.

Should you have any questions regarding this Handbook, please direct them to Peter Thompson, Director, Division of Grants Policy.

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INTRODUCTION

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) generally awards up to \$18 billion annually in discretionary funds to states, tribal governments, faith-based and community-based organizations, for-profit organizations, and other eligible entities to promote the economic and social well-being of the American public. Grant proposals for funds are solicited from the public through Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs). FOAs describe the programmatic and financial requirements of the grant program.

ACF implements strict procedures during the grant review process to ensure good stewardship of federal funds and equitable awarding results. The review of applications is an integral part of ACF's mandate in dispersing funds.

ACF developed this guide to clearly delineate the structure of its grant review process with the purpose of ensuring every review is accurate and impartial. The guide is based on established policies and written training materials from ACF program offices and is intended for those involved in the grant review process, including reviewers and panel chairpersons.

Grant reviews are fundamental to the decision-making and awarding processes. ACF uses peer reviewers in its grant review process. A peer review is an assessment of scientific or technical merit of applications by individuals with knowledge and experience equal (peer) to that of the individuals affiliated with the applicant organizations. The review is conducted with a minimum of three reviewers and a panel chairperson who facilitates the process.

Conducting an objective review is essential to ensure a selection of applications that best meets the needs of the program consistent with the goals and evaluation criteria identified in the FOA. An objective review also ensures that the grant review process is impartial and fair. Reviewers are carefully chosen by ACF program offices for their ability to critically and objectively assess the quality of a proposed project.

Grant Review Guide Objectives

This guide is designed to improve the quality, consistency, and efficiency of the ACF grant review process. After reading this guide, reviewers and panel chairpersons should be able to:

- Understand the roles and responsibilities of the key players (i.e., reviewer, panel chairperson, and federal staff) to uphold the integrity, professionalism, and impartiality of the ACF grant review process.
- Recognize the importance of adhering to ethical requirements.
- Correctly and effectively analyze grant applications, write evaluative comments, and provide accurate scores in relation to the published FOA.

CHAPTER 1 – OVERVIEW

Administration for Children and Families

ACF is a principal operating division of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and is headed by the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, who reports directly to the Secretary. ACF is responsible for federal programs that promote the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities. ACF programs aim to achieve the following:

- Families and individuals empowered to increase their own economic independence and productivity;
- Strong, healthy, supportive communities that have a positive impact on the quality of life and the development of children;
- Partnerships with front-line service providers, states, localities, tribes, and tribal communities to identify and implement solutions that transcend traditional program boundaries;
- Services planned, reformed, and integrated to improve needed access; and
- A strong commitment to address the needs, strengths, and abilities of vulnerable populations, including people with developmental disabilities, refugees, and migrants.

Division of Discretionary Grants (DDG)

The Division of Discretionary Grants (DDG) is part of ACF's Office of Administration. DDG is responsible for the business management and other non-programmatic aspects of the discretionary grants process. These activities include, but are not limited to, reviewing grant applications for budgetary concerns; providing consultation and technical assistance to applicants and recipients, including interpretation of grants administration policies and provisions; and administering and closing out grants. Grants Management Officers (GMOs) are the focal points for receiving and acting on requests for prior approval or for changes in the terms and conditions of awards.

The primary job of the GMOs is to ensure consistent application of the ACF grant review process to all project areas. During the grant review training session, DDG will present information pertaining to the issues of confidentiality and conflict of interest. DDG, in consultation with the program office, makes the final determination on any application identified as ineligible for review (i.e., a late application, over the funding limit, submitting a paper application without a waiver, and any other approved disqualification determined by the program office).

ACF Program Offices

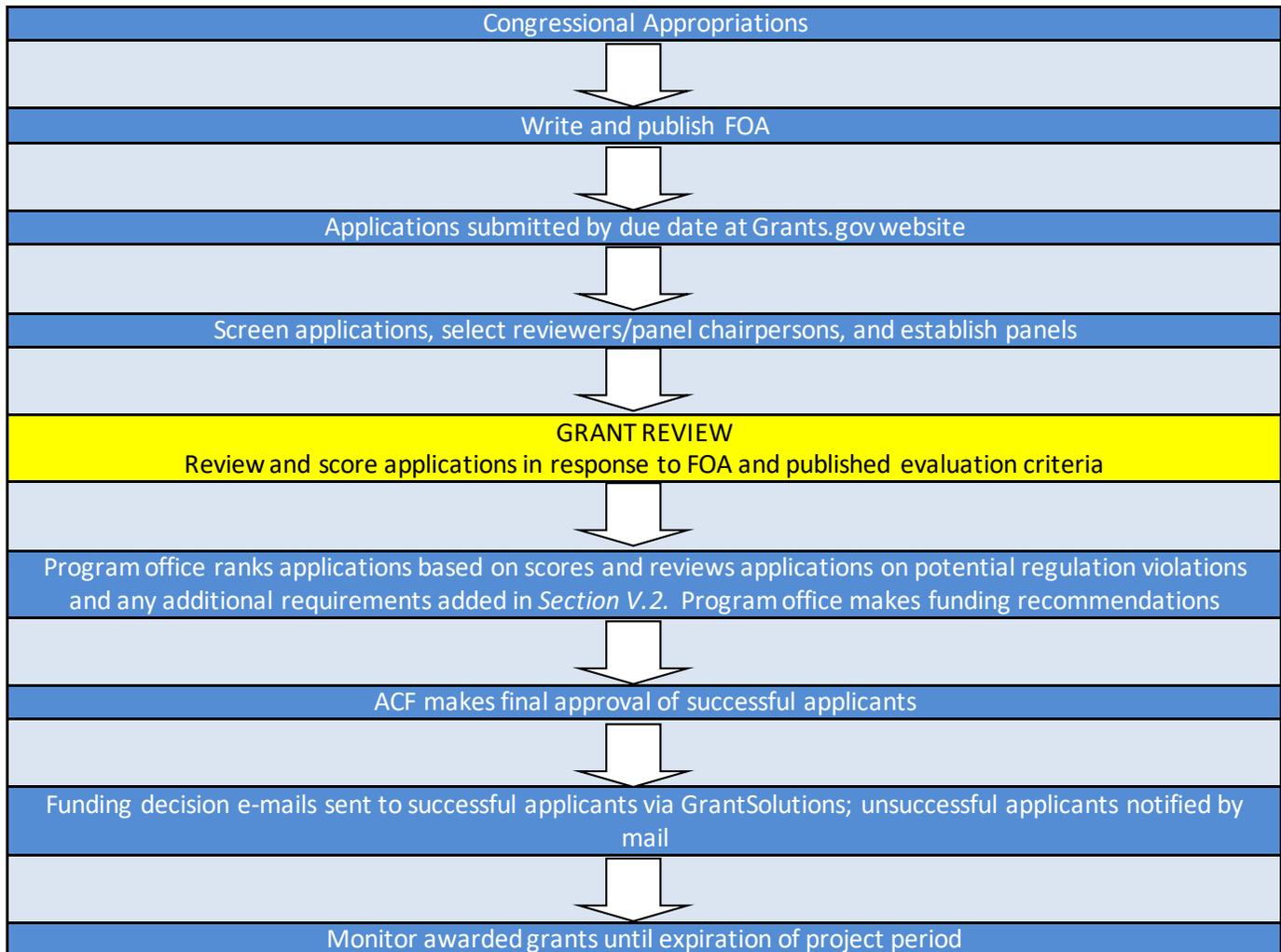
ACF has 11 program offices that publish FOAs and convene grant reviews. They are the Administration for Native Americans, Children's Bureau, Family and Youth Services Bureau, Office of Child Care, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Office of Community Services, Office of Family Assistance, Office of Head Start, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Office of Refugee Resettlement, and the Office on Trafficking in Persons.

Program offices are responsible for writing a FOA for each of their grant programs, recruiting and selecting grant reviewers, providing reviewer training, managing the grant review process, and ultimately deciding which applications to fund. Program offices maintain some flexibility in how they structure and manage grant reviews, and details of the grant review process vary between offices.

CHAPTER 2 – GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

Each discretionary grant application that is reviewed receives a comprehensive and impartial evaluation by a panel of peer reviewers. This chapter will give an overview of the grant review process, types of grant reviews, and the roles and responsibilities of key players during the grant review process. **It is important to note that key players, duties, and responsibilities may vary depending on the program office overseeing the grant review and the type of grant review being conducted. For any areas not covered in this guide, such as FOA and program-specific information, reviewers need to refer to guidance provided by the respective program office.**

The figure below provides an overview of the discretionary grant making process at ACF.



ACF Grant Review Structure

ACF generally conducts remote reviews to evaluate discretionary grant applications. The grant review is conducted in panels that contain a minimum of at least three reviewers and a panel chairperson. The number of review applications for each panel is based on the number of applications received for the FOA.

The **field or remote review model** entails delivering applications to individual panel members electronically via the Application Review Module (ARM) system. ARM is a web-based secure system accessible to the reviewers, panel chairperson, and federal staff. It facilitates the communication between the reviewers and panel chairperson with regard to submitting comments (strengths and weaknesses) and scores in a timely manner. Chairpersons use ARM to summarize all panel members' final scores and comments from panel discussions and display them in a PDF format report for the Final Summary Report. Federal staff and contractors can use the system to receive instant reporting and real-time monitoring on the overall progress of a review, or the progress of individual panels or panel members.

During the remote review, panel members individually read, evaluate, write comments, and tentatively score the application in preparation for the panel discussions. Rather than meeting in person, reviewers communicate via e-mail and telephone to discuss each application, assign scores, and assist the panel chairperson in completing a Final Summary Report. This document records all of the panelists' final scores, the averages of those scores, and panel's consensus on comments supporting the scores.

Grant Review Overview

The grant review is an important process that requires a commitment from the reviewers, panel chairpersons, federal staff (i.e., Review Director (RD) formerly known as Priority Area Manager (PAM), Panel Manager, (PM) formerly known as Sub Area Manager (PM), and the federal contractor. It is important to note that some of the roles involved will vary among program offices; some may not use a PM. **Reviewers and panel chairpersons must adhere to the review structure designated by the program office.**

Reviewers and panel chairpersons are selected from a pool of candidates on the basis of their general or specialized work experience in a program area and previous experience as reviewers or chair. Their responsibilities include reviewing and analyzing applications in response to the FOA and published evaluation criteria.

In order to complete tasks on time, reviewers and panel chairpersons need to comply with the scheduled deadlines established by the ACF program office. This will entail some independent work, but will also involve panel meetings. Depending on the type of review, these panel meetings may be via phone or in person. These meetings are confidential and only open to reviewers, panel chairperson, the PM and/or RD, and federal contractor. The purpose of these panel meetings is to discuss the reviewers' assessed scores and the strengths and weaknesses of the application under review.

In review of the evaluation criteria, the panel writes and submits comments and scores in the ARM system for the panel chairperson to use in writing the Panel Summary report. The Panel Summary report describes the consensus of the panel reviewers' comments (strengths and weaknesses) and identifies reviewers' individual scores based on each criteria section (e.g., Objectives and Needs for Assistance, Approach, Budget, etc.). The full panel reaches this summary based on individual reviews of each application in response to the published evaluation criteria. Comments must be consistent with the application's scores, be well written and clear, not mix a strength and weakness in one comment, and provide adequate detail and justification.

If marked differences of opinion about an application exist among reviewers, the panel chairperson and reviewers will discuss the reasons for these differences and seek consensus. The program office may provide specific guidance on how to define what is an acceptable point spread between reviewers.

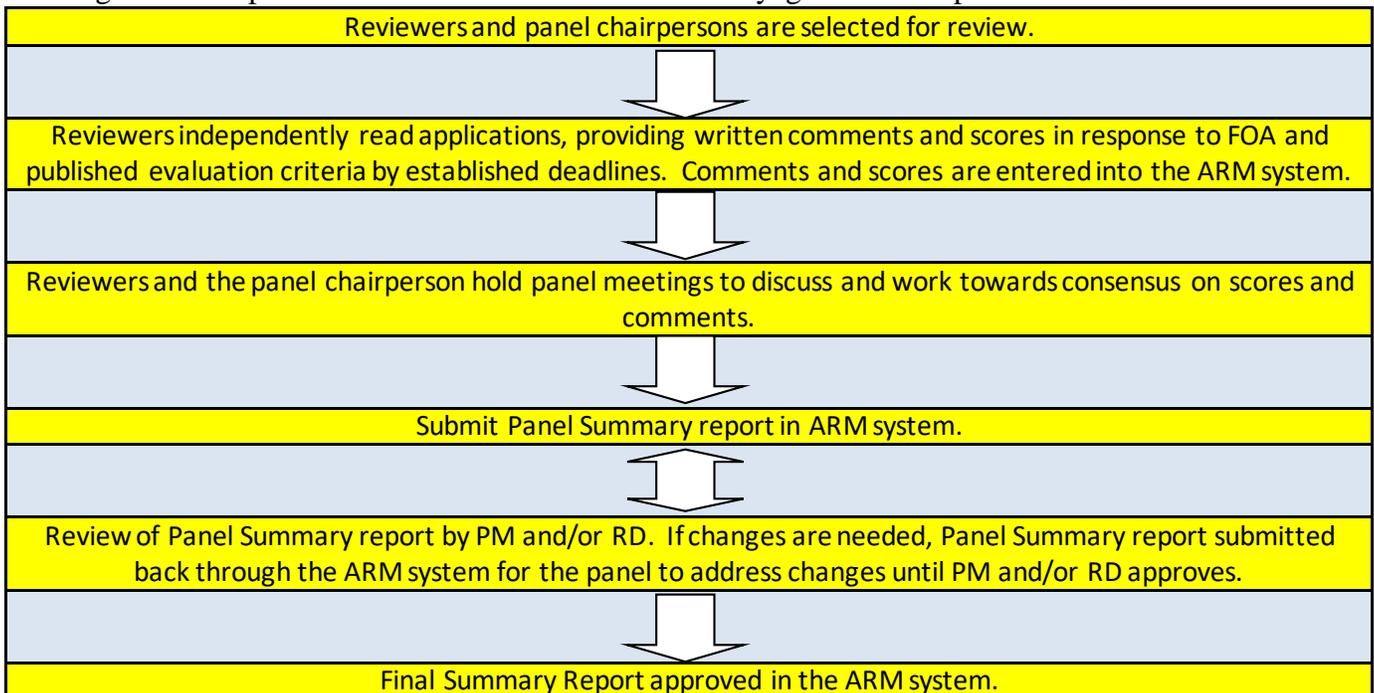
Reviewers need not allot the same points per criteria, but there should not be a wide point difference between reviewers. A wide point spread would indicate that there are conflicting views as to whether the applicant has successfully addressed the criteria as stated in the FOA. In instances where panel members are unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion, the panel chairperson should seek assistance from the PM and/or RD. The review process may involve several iterations of rewriting comments and revisiting scores to reflect a consensus of the reviewers' interpretation of the evaluation criteria in the published FOA. When this happens, reviewers must make any changes to their scores and/or comments in the ARM system. The revised draft of the Panel Summary report is then submitted through the ARM system to the PM and/or RD.

The PM and/or RD may return the Panel Summary reports through the ARM system to the panel for clarification or revision of comments. Reviewers must assist the panel chairperson; this may include writing new comments based on feedback or rewriting previous comments. Revised comments should be resubmitted as soon as possible to the PM and/or RD for additional review and final approval.

Each application must be judged on its own merits and not compared to other applications. In addition, reviewers and the panel chairperson must use the published evaluation criteria found in Section V.I. Criteria of the FOA to review applications. Creating templates based on the FOA's published evaluation criteria to be used during the review (e.g., cut and paste the criteria into a Word document) is not allowed.

Reviewers and the panel chairperson shall not collaborate with other panel members from different panels during the grant review process. In addition, reviewers and the panel chairperson may not seek additional outside information on the application or organization in review even if a link is provided in the application (e.g., doing an internet search on an organization). If a reviewer has any questions, they may seek guidance from the panel chairperson and/or PM/RD for further clarification.

The figure below provides an overview of the discretionary grant review process at ACF.



Grant Review Key Players

Reviewers

Responsibilities of a Reviewer

Key Principles

Reviewers will:

- Respect and collaborate with fellow panel members.
- Read the entire FOA, paying particular attention to *Section I. Program Description*, *Section IV.2 The Project Description*, and the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria*.
- Possess relevant knowledge of the program area and agree to the requirements for the grant review's integrity, time commitment, and workload (e.g., extensive reading and writing, lengthy discussions).
- Possess good writing and analytical skills, and be proficient with computers and typing.
- Be ready to commit and contribute a fair amount of time and effort throughout the entire grant review. Reviewers must be able to read the entire application and assess how well the applicant addresses the FOA evaluation criteria. Reviewers must complete the initial scoring and comments independently, without conferring with other people or resources.

During the Review

The responsibilities of reviewers will vary according to the program office and the type of review (i.e., remote, on-site, or hybrid). Some of the following responsibilities may differ depending on the review selected.

Reviewers will:

- Participate in all scheduled training sessions provided by the ACF program office and federal contractor.
- Adhere to training guidelines outlined in this handbook and by the respective ACF program office.
- Complete the Conflict of Interest (COI) and Confidentiality Statement via the ARM system. Reviewers will need to review the form and acknowledge before moving forward to their review. In addition, reviewers will need to confirm their COI status for each application on their panel at the application level.
- Thoroughly read the assigned applications, paying particular attention to the goals and objectives in *Section I.*, the application requirements in *Section IV.2.*, and the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria* of the FOA. Accuracy and thoroughness are important, and, if necessary, reviewers must re-examine the applications to determine if any information was overlooked during the initial read. Each application must be reviewed separately and not compared to other applications.
- Provide written evaluative statements and assign scores in response to the applicant's proposal and the published FOA's evaluation criteria prior to the panel meeting. Submit all information in the ARM system.
- Participate in the panel meeting discussion of all comments (e.g., "Does this strength [or weakness] accurately reflect the application's content, evaluation criteria, and scores?") when the panel chairperson presents the combined statements for the Panel Summary report.
- Collaborate with panel members and the panel chairperson to finalize the comments and scores for an approved Panel Summary report.

- If applicable, provide feedback on the grant review process using the ACF evaluation form.

Panel Chairpersons

Responsibilities of a Panel Chairperson

Key Principles

Panel chairpersons will:

- Respect and collaborate with fellow panel members, provide assistance to the reviewers, and mentor new reviewers in the process.
- Possess relevant knowledge of the program area, and agree to the requirements for the grant review's integrity, time commitment, and workload (e.g., extensive reading and writing, lengthy discussions) throughout the entire grant review.
- Possess good writing and analytical skills, and be proficient with computers and typing.
- Possess good facilitation skills, including, but not limited to: an ability to set ground rules, keep meetings on track, recognize problems and respond appropriately, and mediate conflict as needed.
- Be facilitators and leaders for their assigned panel of reviewers, and set the tone and direction once their panel begins the grant review process.
- Read and establish a thorough understanding of the FOA, paying particular attention to *Section I. Program Description, Section IV.2 The Project Description*, and the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria*; and be able to respond to questions and concerns identified by panel members.

During the Review

The responsibilities of panel chairpersons will vary according to the program office and the type of review (i.e., remote, on-site, or hybrid). Some of the following responsibilities may differ depending on the review selected. Generally, panel chairpersons will:

- Attend all training sessions and be able to provide a summary and clarification for panel members on content covered. Facilitate introduction of panel members and establish ground rules.
- Facilitate the provided schedule and/or establish a panel meeting schedule. Adjust the schedule as needed to meet deadlines established by the program office.
- Read all of the assigned applications.
- Complete the COI and Confidentiality Statement via the ARM system. Reviewers will need to review and acknowledge the form before moving forward to their review. In addition, reviewers will need to confirm their COI status for each application on their panel at the application level.
- Report to PM and/or RD if any application might not be eligible for review (based on disqualification factors outlined in *Section III.3. Application Disqualification Factors* in the FOA).
- Maintain open communication with PM and/or RD regarding progress, group process, and any emerging issues related to panel functioning.
- Facilitate reviewers' participation in panel discussions to help ensure that each application receives an objective review.
- Check reviewer comments for clarity, completeness, appropriateness, and grammar/syntax. Check for contradictions between strengths and weaknesses. Check that comments include sufficient justification based on the application. Ensure that review comments are based solely on published FOA evaluation criteria.

- Seek to resolve any markedly incongruent comments and scores between the reviewers on their panel. The chairperson should encourage movement toward consensus. (Some program offices may define a point spread that describes an acceptable range of scores between/among reviewers).
- Compile reviewer comments for the Panel Summary report and submit to PM and/or RD through the ARM system.
- Complete any and all changes requested by the PM and/or RD (in collaboration with reviewers) and resubmit the Panel Summary report as soon as possible through the ARM system.
- If applicable, provide feedback on the grant review process using the ACF evaluation form.

Helpful Hints for the Panel Chairperson

1. Establish ground rules early with your panel reviewers. For example, if you are not comfortable receiving calls before or after a certain hour or if you prefer no texting, clearly convey these expectations to your panel members.
2. Ensure respect throughout the process; this is important for the grant reviews to proceed smoothly.
3. Ask open-ended questions.
4. Be aware of group dynamics; if challenges arise, address them immediately. If unable to resolve them, inform your PM and/or RD.
5. Ask reviewers to expand on their comments with specific examples from the application and not repeat evaluation criteria.
6. Practice problem solving and consensus building.

Federal Staff

*Panel Manager (PM)**

*Process will vary among program offices; some may only use a Review Director (RD). Reviewers must accord with the structure designated by the program office.

The PM is a member of the federal staff designated to assist the panel. The duties of a PM will vary according to the requests of the RD. PMs are responsible for tracking the progress of several panels of reviewers and keeping the RD apprised of how the work of the panels is progressing. PMs are available to answer chair and reviewers' questions and review the Panel Summary reports for consistency with the FOA evaluation criteria. PMs must be present throughout the grant review process and accessible to panel members each day of the review session. Some of the duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Promote a positive review environment.
- Assist in the training of reviewers and chairpersons, as needed.
- Listen and/or attend panel meetings.
- Provide technical assistance to reviewers and panel chairperson, as needed.
- Encourage and assist panels to complete their tasks efficiently and effectively.
- Review Panel Summary reports in the ARM system for accuracy and any inconsistencies with the FOA. If any issues are noted, send the reports back to panel chairperson for revision.

- Maintain communication with the panel chairperson in order to quickly resolve any problems or other issues that arise.
- Convey any needs and/or problems to the RD as soon as they arise.

Review Director (RD)*

*Process and responsibilities of RD will vary among program offices. Reviewers must accord with the structure designated by the program office.

The RD is a program expert within the program office for the project under review and is responsible for ensuring the grant review runs smoothly. Some of the duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct or coordinate training sessions for reviewers and panel chairpersons on or prior to the first day of the review. These sessions explain the grant application process, the evaluation criteria, federal requirements (e.g., conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements, confidentiality, and the responsibilities of panel members and federal staff).
- Oversee all of the panel reviews to ensure that each application is thoroughly and objectively reviewed.
- Provide technical assistance to the PMs, panel chairpersons, and reviewers, as needed.
- Listen and/or attend selected panel meetings to assess progress, work with the PMs to resolve problems and clarify issues, and reassigns applications from one panel to another when a conflict of interest exists. If a panel has an irreconcilable problem that prevents it from functioning effectively, the RD has the authority to either reassign or remove reviewers or panel chairpersons.
- Verify that all applications are reviewed and scored. Ensure that comments on the Panel Summary reports are grammatically correct, provide detailed justification for the scores, are not mixed between strength and weakness statements, and align with the appropriate section. Furthermore, the RD reviews the comments to see that they correspond to the appropriate published FOA evaluation criteria and substantiate the scores. If scores and/or comments are not adequately substantiated, the RD will require revisions before approving the Panel Summary report. Once the Panel Summary reports are confirmed to be correct and complete, the RD approves them in the ARM system.

In general, the PM and/or RD are the federal program office representatives in charge of the grant and provide assistance throughout the grant review process. They should not impede the integrity of the peer review. For example, PMs and/or RDs may not direct a panel to give a certain numerical score to a particular strength or weakness comment. They may, however, direct a panel to revisit scoring and comments if they are not consistent (e.g., scoring high with important weaknesses identified or providing further justification and examples within a comment for a high score). In addition, since the PM and/or RD can read an application, they can question the panel's assessment of comments only in relation to *Section V.1 Criteria* in the FOA. The PM and the RD are impartial in the process, ensuring that the process is credible and fair.

Federal Contractor

ACF finds that securing an independent, non-governmental contractor is often an efficient way to facilitate an effective and impartial grant review. The federal contractor may be given a variety of responsibilities including, but not limited to:

- Contacting and confirming potential reviewers and panel chairpersons;
- Making the necessary logistical arrangements for the review session;

- Issuing payment to reviewers for time during reviews;
- Tracking received applications and preparing them for the review;
- Providing on-site assistance with ARM and IT; and
- Lending general assistance to ACF staff.

Chapter 2 Review Questions

1. As a reviewer or panel chairperson, can you create your own template of the evaluation criteria to assist during the review if it is based on some of the information in the published FOA and FOA evaluation criteria?
2. There is an 80-page limit for the application and an applicant references a website within their approach. The link brings the panel to more information on their program since they did not have space to include their organizational capacity and experience related to the project. As a reviewer or panel chairperson, can you look this information up since it is referenced in their submitted application?
3. The panel chairperson is responsible for writing initial comments for the application in review. True or False
4. You have submitted a Panel Summary report to your PM or RD, and they return it to the panel because the comments reflect a significant weakness. Can the PM or RD request that you reduce the score by five points? Can the PM or RD request that you rewrite the comments to reflect what is requested in *Section V.1* of the FOA?

Answers can be found in [Appendix A](#)

CHAPTER 3 – ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

Reviewers and panel chairpersons play an important role in maintaining the quality and integrity of the grant review process. They must fully understand and comply with the following requirements to ensure an uncompromised and ethical review:

- The protection of the confidentiality of applicants’ proprietary information.
- The elimination of any conflict of interest that could affect the unbiased, objective review of an application.

Ethical Requirements

Prior to reviewing applications, ACF requires all reviewers and panel chairpersons to complete the *Certification Form Regarding Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure for Reviewers of Grant Applications* in the ARM system. There are two separate checks for conflict of interest and confidentiality in the system. Prior to starting the review, reviewers and panel chairpersons can acknowledge electronically via the ARM system that they do not have a conflict of interest and will ensure confidentiality. In addition, reviewers and panel chairpersons are to confirm their conflict of interest and confidentiality status for each application on their panel at the application level.

Confidentiality

At no time when reviewing applications, or after, shall panel members discuss the applications, comments, recommendations, evaluations, review scores, names of applicants, name of other reviewers, or names of panel chairpersons with anyone not on their panel. Panel discussions are restricted to panel members only. Applications are submitted to the ACF Program Office in confidence, and panel members must respect that confidentiality. **Furthermore, reviewers or panel chairpersons must never contact applicants concerning the review process of their application before, during, or after the grant review process.** Confirmed reports of any breach of confidentiality will result in immediate dismissal from the review and possible removal from the ACF reviewer database.

Conflict of Interest

ACF requires reviewers and panel chairpersons to notify the PM and/or RD of any personal or financial interest they may have regarding an application as soon as possible. For example, a reviewer or panel chairperson that serves as an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee of the applicant organization, or has a close family member in such a position, is a prime example of a conflict of interest. Any past, present, or anticipated financial relationship/interest of the reviewer or panel chairperson or a family member of either would also constitute a conflict. A reviewer or chairperson must not have submitted an application to the FOA under review. The RD and contractor assign reviewers, panel chairpersons, and applications to panels in a manner intended to avoid possible conflicts of interest, but some conflicts occasionally go unidentified.

When in doubt, a reviewer or panel chairperson must immediately check with the PM and/or RD to clear up any possibility or appearance of conflict of interest immediately. A reviewer or panel chairperson who cannot be totally objective and free from bias must never review an application in question. This responsibility is strictly imposed upon reviewers and panel chairpersons, as an undetected conflict of interest undermines the entire grant review process.

Chapter 3 Review Questions

1. In review of an application, there is a question regarding the applicant's proposal. The Panel Chairperson can contact the applicant to clarify the question. True or False.

Answers can be found in [Appendix A](#)

CHAPTER 4 – REVIEWING APPLICATIONS

This chapter focuses on the different aspects of reviewing applications, including understanding the FOA and reading applications, evaluating applications, evaluating budgets, writing substantive comments about an applicant’s response to the evaluation criteria, and scoring applications.

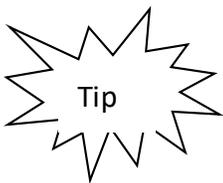
Understanding the FOA and Reading Applications

Reviewers and panel chairpersons must make themselves thoroughly familiar with the entire FOA, in particular *Sections I. Program Description, Section IV.2 The Project Description, and Section V.1 Criteria*. Reviewers will specifically use *Section V.1 Criteria* in the FOA to ensure that they are able to determine whether the application addresses the relevant issues as identified by the program office. As indicated in [Chapter Two](#), panel chairpersons and reviewers must use the published FOA evaluation criteria in *Section V.1 Criteria* to review applications and must not create their own templates based on the FOAs to be used during the review. Reviewers and panel chairpersons cannot cut and paste criteria into a separate Word document for their reviews. The exact wording and points’ distribution for the criteria in the FOA are important, so please make sure that you reference *Section V.1 Criteria* throughout your review.

Once applications are received, panels must consider the number of applications to be reviewed and the number of total pages, and allot an appropriate amount of time for each (including reading, scoring, and writing comments). Some applications may require more time, and others less, but establishing a maximum time for application review early in the process will ensure that subsequent applications receive appropriate attention.

It is important to note that each FOA includes standard language on formatting. ACF has introduced a new requirement on the number of files an applicant can upload. The FOA formatting instructions requires applicants to upload their application in two separate electronic files in Grants.gov. This requirement excludes standard forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms. One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification (e.g., project summary/abstract, table of contents, project narrative, logic model, and budget); the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices (e.g., organizational charts, third-party agreements, letters of support, resumes, and audit reports).

If an application has been reduced due to improper formatting of the submitted application, panel members are only to review and evaluate the information provided in the application given to them to review. **Panel members may want to speculate that missing pieces of the application (e.g., no resumes) were from sections removed to meet FOA formatting and page limitation requirements. However, they must not make such assumptions. If information is missing from the application (e.g., no resumes), and the reviewers comment on this lack based on the FOA criteria, they will need to notate “N/A,” “None,” or “No Page Found” for a specific page number. Applicants will be sent a standardized letter informing them of the reductions within their application.** Each program office has the discretion on page limitation(s) for each application. Please see *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission* for more information.



For applicants that have submitted their applications electronically via Grants.gov, every application will have a generated Table of Contents page. The Table of Contents

page is the easiest way to tell if an application has been reduced due the two-file requirement. This page should be the first page and contain the applicant's name, application number, and project title. The page will also detail a list of files uploaded. In review of the application through ARM, reviewers will be able to see a separate page within the application for each file upload that was approved to be reviewed.

Panel members should always conduct a follow-up review of the application and their comments to ensure that they haven't overlooked any important information. However, if a Panel Summary report has already been submitted and approved by the RD as final, no changes and/or edits can be made to the comments and/or scores unless rerouted back through the ARM system by the RD.

Reviewers and panel chairpersons must critically read the application to evaluate how closely the applicant's program and activities respond to the FOA evaluation criteria. When reading an application, attention should be focused on locating the information that relates to the criteria. Reviewers are encouraged to note important points to be included in the comments and reference page numbers to relevant sections. If no page numbers are listed, reviewers should notate the section in which the information was found.

Evaluating Applications

First, the reviewer must decide what information in the application is pertinent information and addresses the FOA evaluation criteria in *Section V.1* of the FOA. Reviewers must critically evaluate the information to determine how well the applicant has responded to the FOA and evaluation criteria.

Helpful Questions for Evaluating an Application

While the application can only be scored against the published criteria, you may consider these overarching questions in your review:

1. Is the applicant responsive to the FOA evaluation criteria? Does the applicant provide sufficient details to explain how they will implement the program and how they meet the evaluation criteria?
2. Consider each criterion and decide if the applicant's response is complete, realistic, justified, and logically consistent with their overall proposal. Based on your experience and knowledge, are there any challenges or limitations to the applicant's responses to the criteria? Based on your experience and knowledge, is the applicant's proposed plan lacking important features that are necessary for addressing the criteria.
3. Do the ideas presented flow logically with the project narrative? Are the activities outlined in different sections of the application consistent? For example, do the activities listed for the program correspond with funding amounts in the budget?

Evaluating Budgets

A thorough review of the application's budget is essential, even if the budget section is not assigned a large number of points in the FOA evaluation criteria. The budget is a crucial piece of the project that reviewers must take into account to assess whether an applicant's proposal is feasible, reasonable, and accords with the requirements and goals of the FOA and relevant evaluation criteria.

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is input on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C, according to the directions provided with the SFs. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

Helpful Questions for Evaluating a Budget

While the application can only be scored against the published criteria, you may consider these overarching questions in your review:

1. Does the budget align with the FOA goals and requirements? Are the costs in compliance with any funding restrictions (see *Section IV.6*)?
2. Does the total proposed budget appear consistent with the size and scope of the project? Can the applicant accomplish the activities and goals of the proposal with the total amount of money requested? Is the total amount of money requested reasonable or necessary to the activities proposed?
3. Does the proposed budget and budget justification relate logically to the narrative describing the project? Does the applicant's SF-424A and budget justification describe the same project as the project narrative?
4. Are the individual line items (e.g., personnel, travel, materials, and contractors) understandable in terms of what they will cost and what services will be rendered for the proposed project? Do the line items logically link to the activities in the proposed project? Are they necessary or reasonable to support the project?
5. Are there extraneous items of cost that do not appear necessary or reasonable in support of the proposed project? Are there any line items that do not link to activities outlined in the project narrative?
6. Do any individual line items appear inflated (or under-funded) compared to the overall scope or individual tasks proposed?
7. If contractors and/or partners are included, does the applicant provide detail as to how the costs are broken down? Do they accord with the program goals and objectives as listed in the FOA? Are they reasonable and feasible?

Writing Comments

Summary comments are based on the strengths and weaknesses of an applicant's response to the FOA's published evaluation criteria. **Panelists are not expected to comment on information in the application that does not pertain to the specific evaluation criteria.** Each comment must be written to reflect either a "strength" or "weakness" in the way the application addresses the criteria. Depending on how points are allocated for criteria (i.e., per each criterion or total sum of points across criteria), panelists must use the FOA as guidance in program priorities and goals and their professional expertise when writing comments on major strengths and weaknesses.

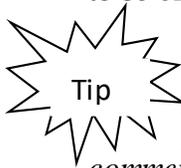
Furthermore, panelists must write comments that are as specific and detailed as possible. General statements such as, "This is a good program," are not helpful for making funding decisions. This

statement does not provide the program office justification for funding an application. The comment must concisely present and evaluate what the application says in relation to the FOA evaluation criteria.

Panelists are asked to provide comments with examples from the application of the applicant's strong and weak points. The comments should be thorough, tactful, and constructive, not frivolous or disparaging. Comments must provide specific information about which elements of the criteria are being considered without reiterating the wording of the evaluation criteria.

Comments must not provide direct advice or technical assistance on how an applicant can improve their application. In writing comments, panelists should avoid hypothetical phrases such as "would have" and "should have," which may lead applicants to believe that following this advice on future applications would lead to success. For example, a comment providing technical assistance may read, "It would have improved the application if more grassroots, public meetings were scheduled during the two project years in order to solicit and gain community input." Comments should be written as factual statements such as: "The project did not propose sufficient approaches to soliciting community input during the project period."

Comments must reflect each reviewer's analysis and justify the score. In addition, it is important for panel members to note the page number from which the information is based. The page number needs to be cited from the actual document itself and not from the page numbers generated by the PDF copy.



The Final Summary Report represents ACF and the impartiality and professionalism of the reviewers, panel chairperson, and the entire peer review grant process. In writing comments, it is helpful to keep in mind that the strength and weakness comments agreed upon by the panel will be included in the Final Summary Report. Applicants will receive a copy of the Applicant Panel Summary report with the average cumulative score and comments to assess their responsiveness to the FOA. The names of reviewers and individual scores will not be released to applicants. As such, it is very important that comments are written grammatically correct, no misspellings, and reflect the analysis of panel members in review of the applicant's response to the FOA and evaluation criteria.

The program office will use the Final Summary Report to guide its funding decisions. However, as noted in *Section V.2. Objective Review and Results* of the FOA, "results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. They are one element in the decision-making process."

Guidelines for Writing Comments

1. Use complete sentences, proper grammar and spelling.
2. Include the application’s page numbers for each comment, where listed. (Since most program offices are using the ARM system, the application will be opened in a PDF copy with its own page numbers. It’s important to cite the page numbers denoted by the applicant and not the pages denoted by the PDF software.) If no page numbers are listed by the applicant, reference the section where the information was found.
3. If pages are removed either due to page limitations and/or formatting requirements, and the panel member finds that the information requested was part of removed pages, the panel member must base their comments only on the information provided in the application given to them to review. Panel members may want to speculate that missing pieces of the application (e.g., no resumes) were from sections removed to meet FOA formatting and page limitation requirements. However, they must not make such assumptions. In notating page numbers, the reviewer can either state “N/A,” “None,” or “No Page Found.”
4. Be specific, detailed, and concise. Justify each strength and weakness statement with examples from the application.
5. Be accurate, but tactful.
6. Evaluate, rather than merely describe.
7. Do not mix strengths and weaknesses in the same comment.

Helpful Words for Strengths

Adequate	Details	Focused	Sound
Appropriate	Documented	Innovative	Specify
Complete	Evidence	Justified	Strong
Comprehensive	Executes	Presents	Thorough
Convincing	Exhaustive	Provides	Unique
Demonstrates	Extensive	Qualified	Viable
Describes	Feasible	Reasonable	

Helpful Words for Weaknesses

Ambiguous	Inadequate	Lacking	Sparse
Confusing	Inappropriate	Limited	Unclear

Contradictory	Incompatible	No Evidence	Undocumented
Discrepancy	Inconsistent	Obscure	Unrealistic
Does Not	Irrelevant	Opposing	Vague
Equivocal	Insufficient	Restrictive	Without

Verbs for Writing Summary Statements			
Provides information about...	Presents	Discusses	
Shows success in...	Reflects	Proposes	
Provides details about...	Explains	Includes	
Provides assurance that...	Details	Gives	
Demonstrates experience...	Specifies	Supports	
Describes procedures...	Ensures	Indicates	
Plans to...	Identifies	Builds	
Demonstrates...	Offers		

Examples of “More” and “Less” Useful Comments

The following statements illustrate the types of comments that might be written for a Project Approach, Project Implementation, or Budget section of an application. For each example, a comment that provides some information is presented, followed by a discussion of why the comment is unsatisfactory, which, in turn is followed by a more informative version of the comment.

Strengths

Less Useful: The applicant’s proposal is aligned with the program’s objective to prepare participants for employment in the healthcare sector.

Discussion: The comment simply restates what was written in the application without indicating why this point is significant.

More Useful: The proposed project is clearly aligned with the program’s objective to prepare participants for employment in the healthcare sector and leads to an industry-recognized certificate or degree. Specifically, the applicant proposes a program in which participants will receive training to become Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), initial job placement, and ongoing training to become Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs). (Pages 2-3)

Less Useful: Third-party Agreements are included in the application.

Discussion: The comment is too general and does not indicate the importance of this strength.

More Useful: The roles and responsibilities of all personnel and partners are described clearly in the proposal. For example, signed third-party agreements are attached for each community partner that describes the leadership, experience, and commitment of each, as well as a timeline for the completion of an MOU. (Pages 20-26)

Weaknesses

Less Useful: The budget justification lacks sufficient details.

Discussion: The comment does not give the basis for this conclusion.

More Useful: The budget does not provide adequate justification for the amounts requested. For example, the line item detail includes \$40,000 for travel, but does not provide calculations, unit costs, or estimation methods to show how the amount was derived. (Page 43)

Less Useful: The applicant's method for determining outcomes and expected benefits is poor.

Discussion: The comment is vague and does not provide an explanation.

More Useful: The applicant's method for determining outcomes and expected benefits lacks specificity. For example, no methods are presented for evaluating "training for low-income individuals." (Page 23)

Comments Checklist

1. Is the information being commented on relevant to the specific evaluation criteria?
2. Does the comment address and justify how well the applicant addresses the evaluation criteria?
3. Does the comment indicate why the information is important?
4. Is the comment clear and concise?
5. Will an appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses for the criteria justify the score?

Scoring Applications

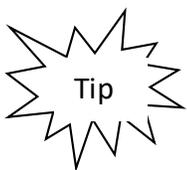
The program office has either allotted points per evaluative criterion statement or to each section of review criteria. If the program office did not specify points per criterion within the FOA, panels will have some discretion on how they allot points within each criteria section. Reviewers can use the full range of points unless there are specific allotted points per criterion. It is acceptable to give the maximum number of points for the criterion or zero points, as long as these extremes are sufficiently supported in the comments and the scores accord with the goals and priorities of the FOA. Most importantly, reviewers must be consistent with how they score all of the applications they review. For

example, a reviewer must use the same analysis for each application they review and not review one more stringent and/or lenient from another.

The numerical scores that reviewer's assign to an applicant's response to the evaluation criteria must be consistent with the comments on the completed Panel Summary report compiled by the panel chairperson.

If the program office chooses not to assign points per criteria, please note that the number of criteria statements under each review section (e.g., project approach/work plan, organizational capacity and experience, project management and staffing, performance measurement and assessment, and budget) do not necessarily reflect an equal distribution of points among the criteria statements.

In these instances, during panel meetings, reviewers and the panel chairperson must identify the most significant strengths and weaknesses of the application and consider their relative importance when assigning scores for each criterion. For example, an application may have only two weakness comments under one review section and five strengths statements. If the two weaknesses are about small unimportant issues, the score would be higher. However, if the weakness statements are about critical issues to the project, the assigned score for that section must reflect this by being lower. Reviewers and the panel chairperson should always double-check scores to assure that the appropriate point scale has been used in relation to the comments written.



Comments must be written to justify the scores. Avoid comments that mix a strength and weakness statement. Either the applicant met the criteria or they did not.

Furthermore, reviewers need to review and score the application as a whole, assessing whether the applicant has provided consistent evidence in support of criteria. For example, an applicant may state in their narrative that their staff has extensive experience working with the target population, as required by the evaluation criteria. However, a further review of key personnel resumes may reveal a lack of experience working with the target population, and the applicant would thus have a weakness associated with this criterion and their score for the relevant criteria would be reduced accordingly.

Case Scenario

Reviewers are scoring an application for a program office using the FOA and the evaluation criteria. Under Project Approach and Work Plan, the criteria requests applicants to include "clear and measurable objectives and provide information about systems and processes that will support performance documentation, tracking, and reporting."

In review of the application, reviewers wrote a strength statement for the applicant that stated, "The proposal presents clear and measurable objectives. For example, 95% of individuals will complete the program, 85% of those completing the program will demonstrate increased skills." Reviewers then wrote a weakness statement that "the applicant does not provide information about systems that will support performance documentation, tracking, and reporting."

The RD sent this Panel Summary Report back because there was conflicting information. Under Project Approach they were given points for presenting clear and measurable objectives. Yet, if the applicant is being cited for having no system to measure these objectives under Performance Measurement and Assessment,

reviewers must review the applicant on the whole and deduct points from both sections. The applicant does not have measurable objectives since they have no performance measurement system in place.

Helpful Hints on Scoring Applications

1. Score applications independently, not against one another.
2. Do not attempt to produce one or more “winning” applications by artificially raising scores. To do so would subvert the impartial peer review process. Likewise, panel members should not score an application with low scores to finish the review early.
3. Do not purposely score applications low to avoid receiving critical review by your PM and/or RD and finish the process early.
4. If the evaluation criterion includes any “requirements” of an application, with no indication that the requirement may be partially fulfilled, do not give points for an applicant that only meets the requirement half way. For example, if the evaluation criterion includes four points for identifying partners and the applicant demonstrates its ability to collaborate with several partners, but it does not identify any partners or demonstrate the partnership specific to the program, then the reviewer should score this as a weakness with 0 points.
5. Verify all scores and check that comments reflect scores. For example, if weakness statement is written in Program Approach in the Panel Summary report, the applicant should not receive a perfect score under Program Approach.
6. Ensure that the reviewer’s final scores do not vary more than a large point spread per criterion. For example, if the Approach is worth 40 points, you would not want reviewers’ scores to respectively be a 13, 26, and 39. There is a wide range of scores, and comments need to be written to justify scores. The range of scores signifies that there is some difference of opinion from reviewers as to how the applicant met the criteria. (Some program offices may define a point spread that describes an acceptable range of scores between/among reviewers). If scores differ to a wide degree, meet as a panel and discuss findings to move toward consensus on the points. In instances such as these, reviewers’ scores need not match one another, but the panel must try to reach some less marked disparities as to the applicant’s response to the FOA evaluation criteria.
7. The panel chairperson must read all comments in the Panel Summary report for accuracy with referenced page numbers, consistency with scoring and the FOA evaluation criteria, and good grammar prior to sending to the PM and/or RD.

Chapter 4 Review Questions

1. As part of the grant review process, the Reviewer is responsible for reading, scoring, and writing comments on their assigned applications. The Reviewer should write the initial comments and score the application before the panel discussions. True or False
2. In review of your first application, all panel members score the application high since the application was quite detailed and met the evaluation criteria. However, a few applications later, in review of another application that is in the same geographic area, you realize that the previous application was not as thorough as compared to the one you are reading. Furthermore, the application provides a noteworthy justification for much needed services in the area. As a panel, you all agree that scores need to be changed on the first application. Can you go back and change the scores and comments?

Answers can be found in [Appendix A](#)

APPENDIX A: Review Questions and Answers

Chapter 2 Review Questions

1. As a reviewer or panel chairperson, can you create your own template of the evaluation criteria to assist during the review if it is based on some of the information in the published FOA and FOA evaluation criteria?

No, panel chairpersons must use the published evaluation criteria to review applications and not create their own templates based on FOAs to be used during the review.

2. There is an 80-page limit for the application and an applicant references a website within their approach. The link brings the panel to more information on their program since they did not have space to include their organizational capacity and experience related to the project. As a reviewer or panel chairperson, can you look this information up since it is referenced in their submitted application?

No, reviewers and/or the panel chairperson may not seek additional outside information on the application or organization in review even if a link is provided in the application.

3. The panel chairperson is responsible for writing initial comments for the application in review. True or False

False. Reviewers are responsible for individually and independently writing initial comments reflective of the applicant's response to FOA evaluation criteria. The panel chairperson, with reviewers' assistance, compiles and edits comments for the Final Summary Report.

4. You have submitted a Panel Summary report to your PM or RD, and they return it to the panel because the comments reflect a significant weakness. Can the PM or RD request that you reduce the score by five points?

No, federal staff (e.g., PM or RD) cannot direct a panel to give a certain numerical score to a particular section.

Can the PM or RD request that you rewrite the comments to reflect what is requested in *Section V.1* of the FOA?

A PM or RD can, however, direct a panel to revisit scoring if the comments do not match the scores or to review and, if necessary, revise comments to match the scores. As a panel, you must review the PM's or RD's comments and see if more information needs to be provided to strengthen and justify the comment and current score or revise the scores to a point spread agreed upon by the panel.

Chapter 3 Review Questions

1. In review of an application, there is a question regarding the applicant's proposal. The Panel Chairperson can contact the applicant to clarify the question. True or False.

False. Reviewers or panel chairpersons must never contact applicants concerning the review process of their application before, during, or after the grant review process. Confirmed reports of any breach of confidentiality will result in immediate dismissal from the review and possible removal from the ACF reviewer database.

Chapter 4

Review Questions

1. As part of the grant review process, the Reviewer is responsible for reading, scoring, and writing comments on their assigned applications. The Reviewer should write the initial comments and score the application before the panel discussions. True or False

True. For more information, please see [reviewer's responsibilities](#) during the review.

2. In review of your first application, all panel members score the application high since the application was quite detailed and met the evaluation criteria. However, a few applications later, in review of another application that is in the same geographic area, you realize that the previous application was not as thorough as compared to the one you are reading. Furthermore, the application provides a noteworthy justification for much needed services in the area. As a panel, you all agree that scores need to be changed on the first application. Can you go back and change the scores and comments?

No. Each application must be judged on its own merits and not compared to other applications. Scores and/or comments cannot be changed.

APPENDIX B: ACF Grant Review Feedback Forms

<u>To be completed by the program office</u>				
Type of Review:				
Remote	On-site	Hybrid	Length of Review	_____
# of Applications per Review Panel _____				

**ACF Grant Review Feedback
Grant Reviewers' Form**

Dear Grant Review Participant,

Your feedback is valuable. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey. We would especially appreciate comments for items that did not meet your satisfaction so we may further improve future grant review sessions. Your feedback is confidential and will not be shared with other members of your panel or the public. Thank you.

Evaluation of Panel Chairperson

Name of Panel Chairperson: _____

<i>1. The panel chairperson clearly established administrative and procedural rules for the review (e.g., established a schedule and ensured reviewers had received all needed materials.).</i>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A

<i>2. The panel chairperson instructed reviewers to use only the guidance from the FOA evaluation criteria in evaluating applications.</i>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A

<i>3. The panel chairperson effectively led daily panel discussions and facilitated meetings.</i>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A

<i>4. The panel chairperson effectively resolved any differences of opinion that arose between reviewers in regard to scoring applications.</i>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A

<i>5. The panel chairperson effectively led the process of developing the Panel Summary reports.</i>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A

<i>6. Overall, the panel chairperson was effective in managing this review.</i>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A

Please include any additional comments in the space below:

Evaluation of the Overall Grant Review Process

1. *The training I received was effective in preparing me for the grant review process.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

2. *The type of review was appropriate and effective.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

3. *The guidance I received from the program office was consistent with the FOA, including the FOA's evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

4. *The time allotted for me to review each application thoroughly, given the number of applications assigned to my panel, was sufficient.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

5. *I received a clear explanation of the confidentiality requirements regarding information about applications and grant review comments and scores.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

6. *Overall, I feel that the grant review process was effective in identifying the strongest applicants.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

7. *Overall, I had a positive experience with this review.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

Please include any additional comments in the space below:

To be completed by the program office

Type of Review:

Remote On-site Hybrid Length of Review _____

of Applications per Review Panel _____

ACF Grant Review Feedback Panel Chairperson's Form

Dear Panel Chairperson,

Your feedback is valuable. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey. We would especially appreciate comments for items that did not meet your satisfaction so we may further improve future grant review sessions. Your feedback is confidential and will not be shared with other members of your panel or the public. Thank you.

Evaluation of the Overall Grant Review Process

1. *The training I received effectively prepared me for the grant review process.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

2. *The type of review was appropriate and effective.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

3. *The guidance I received from the program office was consistent with the FOA, including the FOA's evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

4. *I received clear instructions on managing grant reviewer conflict of interest.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

5. *I received clear explanations on the confidentiality requirements regarding information about applications and grant review comments and scores.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

6. *Overall, I feel that the grant review process was effective in identifying the strongest applicants.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

7. *Overall, I had a positive experience with this review.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

Please include any additional comments in the space below:

Evaluation of Panel Reviewers

Please complete for each reviewer

Reviewer's Name: _____

1. *The reviewer was knowledgeable about the subject matter related to this review.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

2. *The reviewer had adequate computer skills.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

3. *The reviewer participated in all required trainings and meetings.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

4. *The reviewer respected and worked cooperatively with other panel members.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

5. *The reviewer read and clearly understood the applications being reviewed, the funding opportunity announcement, and the evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

6. *The reviewer's summary comments were well-written, specific, constructive, and based on the strengths and weaknesses of an application's response to the evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

7. *The reviewer assigned application scores that were consistent with written comments.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

8. *I would recommend this reviewer for future panel reviews.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

Reviewer's Name: _____

1. *The reviewer was knowledgeable about the subject matter related to this review.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

2. *The reviewer had adequate computer skills.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

3. *The reviewer participated in all required trainings and meetings.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

4. *The reviewer respected and worked cooperatively with other panel members.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

5. *The reviewer read and clearly understood the applications being reviewed, the funding opportunity announcement, and the evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

6. *The reviewer's summary comments were well-written, specific, constructive, and based on the strengths and weaknesses of an application's response to the evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

7. *The reviewer assigned application scores that were consistent with written comments.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

8. *I would recommend this reviewer for future panel reviews.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

Reviewer's Name: _____

1. *The reviewer was knowledgeable about the subject matter related to this review.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

2. *The reviewer had adequate computer skills.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

3. *The reviewer participated in all required trainings and meetings.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

4. *The reviewer respected and worked cooperatively with other panel members.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

5. *The reviewer read and clearly understood the applications being reviewed, the funding opportunity announcement, and the evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

6. *The reviewer's summary comments were well-written, specific, constructive, and based on the strengths and weaknesses of an application's response to the evaluation criteria.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

7. *The reviewer assigned application scores that were consistent with written comments.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A

8. *I would recommend this reviewer for future panel reviews.*

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree N/A