

# Grant Application Reviewing and Scoring

## Roles, Responsibilities, and Helpful Tips

*This document provides guidance and expectations for reviewers to ensure decisions about opioid settlement funds are fair, consistent, and aligned with allowable uses and intended outcomes.*

### What is the role of a grant reviewer?

Grant reviewers are subject-matter experts who help determine how funding can be used most effectively. Using a consistent set of criteria, they review each application to assess:

- How well the project aligns with the goals of the funding
- Whether the work is feasible
- The potential impact on priority populations

Grant reviewers bring an understanding of the funding's purpose, structure, and scoring criteria, which allows them to make well-informed, consistent decisions about which projects are best positioned to use the funds effectively.

### Core Responsibilities



#### Review Applications

- Understand the funding source
- Study the scoring criteria
- Identify conflicts of interest
- Commit to confidentiality



#### Score Applications

- Use the scoring criteria
- Base scores in evidence
- Avoid personal preferences



#### Ensure Compliance with Submission Guidelines

- Check required components
- Confirm adherence to instructions
- Apply standards consistently



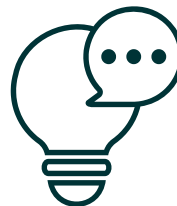
#### Provide Written Feedback

- Align feedback with the scoring criteria
- Feedback should be specific, constructive, and respectful



#### Participate in Discussions

- Share perspectives openly and respectfully
- Ask clarifying questions
- Avoid personal experiences



#### Make Funding Recommendations

- Use scores and criteria to guide recommendations
- Ensure decisions support the purpose of the funding
- Maintain fairness and consistency

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# Best Practices and Tips for Grant Reviewing

- Understand the funding source and grant structure  
Be familiar with the origin and intent of the Opioid Settlement Funds, including eligible uses, requirements, allowable costs, conditions, and reporting obligations.
- Study the scoring criteria and rubric  
The scoring rubric is the primary tool for all funding decisions. Understand how each section should be evaluated and what each score means.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality  
Protect applicant information and internal deliberations.
- Identify and manage conflicts of interest  
Identify and disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest immediately. Reviewers with conflicts must recuse themselves from reviewing, scoring, or discussing impacted applications.
- Apply compliance standards and scoring criteria consistently  
Treat every application according to the same rules and expectations, and apply criteria consistently across all applications. Do not add criteria that are not in the rubric.
- Base decisions on what is in the application  
Evaluate applications using only the submitted materials. Do not consider outside information such as organizational reputation, prior relationships, or previous funding.
- Avoid personal preferences and experiences  
Score based on the rubric, alignment with the grant goals, feasibility, and impact of the project. Do not use personal opinions or experiences with organizations/projects to influence scores.
- Clearly explain your scoring decisions in written feedback  
Describe strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement in a manner that is respectful, constructive, and useful for applicants. Limit comments to elements within the scoring criteria.
- Be open and respectful in discussions  
Make sure conversations are grounded in the rubric and goals of the funding. Listening to diverse viewpoints helps balance perspectives and strengthen decision-making.
- Use scores, criteria, and compliance findings to guide recommendations  
Decisions should reflect alignment, feasibility, impact, and adherence to guidelines. Do not advocate for projects based on personal experience or familiarity.