

Thank you for this opportunity to share some of our thoughts regarding the interpretation of the scoring and ranking process and best practice standards.

The RFA describes the Evaluation Process as a 5 step process. Step 2 states that proposals that pass the technical review will be scored by at least two staff members. Those reaching the 60 point threshold will move to step 3 where scoring is done by the Subcommittee members using the same scoring matrices.

For federal grants, scoring instruction and norming sessions ensure that reviewers are applying the scoring matrix in a similar manner. Reviewers come together to build consensus on the scores to show alignment with the RFA. The results of each of the GMAC Subcommittee scores were extremely inconsistent and did not demonstrate consensus among the reviewers. Scoring between reviewers varied up to 50 points for a single application. The average difference between scores was 20 points leading to questions about the validity of the scoring process. We propose that applications be rescored or that the original scores from Step 2 be used if they are consistent with the matrices provided in the RFA.

A second concern is that reviewers determined populations and geographic regions that they felt were deserving of higher scores, even though this was not part of the matrices. This is evidenced by reviewer comments such as "I scored this project higher because rural outreach is important," and "I've scored them higher because they serve an underserved population." Furthermore in the Disability category, all subcommittee members were from the northern or rural areas with no representation of southern Nevada by subcommittee members. This leads to the perception of biases for agencies of rural and northern Nevada regardless of the distribution of populations in Nevada. We propose that in the future, reviewers are representative of the applicants and include at least one northern, rural and southern GMAC member. We also suggest that the RFA provides guidance to subcommittees on how funding should be distributed fairly throughout the state.

Scoring for the budgets in the Disability category also appeared to be inconsistent based on comments made during the subcommittee meeting. Budget instructions direct applicants that: "... supplies do not need to be priced individually, but a list of typical program supplies is necessary." Our agency used this guideline to complete the budget and one reviewer stated that she took off points because we did not provide a breakdown of supplies. Staff pointed out that the narrative includes the list of program supplies as directed by the RFA, however points were still deducted. The reviewer also stated that points were deducted because we are a government agency and requested the allowed 8% indirect rate while another government agency applicant did not request it. She asked Staff to verify if this was allowable, however, points were already deducted for this item. These are both examples of scoring procedures inconsistent with procedures stated in the RFA.

As an agency that provides oversight of other competitive grant programs, we truly understand how big of an undertaking this process is. We appreciate the transparency of the decision-making process and the opportunity to share our concerns. We ask that the aforementioned disparities be corrected for the current award cycle and for future RFA processes.