

CHAPTER 2. GRANT APPLICATION PROCESSING

2-1 OBJECTIVE. The objective of this chapter is to describe the actions required in processing grant applications by the receiving local HUD FONAP. The grant application processing covers activities from receipt of applications through the review and scoring of applications reviewed.

Section 1. Grant Application Receipt

2-2 HUD FONAP Indian HOME Director. Each local HUD FONAP Indian HOME Director will serve as the immediate contact to the Headquarters Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) with direct grant program oversight for the duration of the review process. The FONAP Indian HOME Director shall:

- A. Serve as liaison between the local HUD FONAP and Headquarters ONAP.
- B. Coordinate and manage the grant application review process.
- C. Work with the person managing the rating and ranking data. This person will assist in the scoring, ranking, and documentation for the Indian HOME program.
- D. Produce a rank order list of applications based on the average score of each application.
- E. Validate and certify the original master log listing of all applications and provide full accountability of all applications received, the corrected deficiencies log, and any rejected applications and the basis for rejection.
- F. Validate the original scoring sheets completed by reviewers as to completeness and correctness.

2-3 RECEIVING APPLICATIONS. Applications shall be received by the local HUD FONAP by the date announced in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and/or the Application Kit. The following steps apply to applications as they are received:

- A. Date/time stamp each grant application the same day they are received.
- B. Enter all submissions in a master log that includes: name of the applicant; date and time application was received; and name of staff person logging in each application. Log in late applications as they are received on the master log as well. See sample of Master Intake and Screening Log in Appendix 3.

2-4 ACKNOWLEDGING RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS. The receiving local HUD FONAP shall acknowledge receipt of all applications received in response to a NOFA. A copy of the acknowledgement shall be retained in the files. The response shall be in letter or note form, and shall include the following:

- A. A brief statement acknowledging receipt.
- B. The date the application was received.
- C. The time the application was received.
- D. A signature of the FONAP Indian HOME Director or designee.

2-5 DATA ENTRY OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED. Following receipt of applications and entries the FONAP master log sheets, the FONAP will establish a systematic tracking process for all applications.

Section 2. Eligibility Requirements

2-6 REVIEW FOR ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. The Indian HOME Program has eligibility requirements that must be met before an application is scored. These include eligibility requirements on the screening reviewer's list and eligibility requirements on the rating reviewer's list. Applications are screened for eligibility requirements on the screening reviewer's list at the same time they are screened for correctable deficiencies. Eligibility requirements are contained in the NOFA.

Section 3. Screening of Applications for Eligibility Requirements

2-7 REVIEW FOR CORRECTABLE DEFICIENCIES AND NON-CORRECTABLE DEFICIENCIES. The screening process begins with a review of each application in its entirety for correctable deficiencies and non-correctable deficiencies. A correctable deficiency is failure to submit a certification and failure to submit a signed certification. A non-correctable deficiency is a failure to meet each eligibility requirement on the screening reviewer's or the rating reviewer's lists. Screening should be performed by a single reviewer as assigned in the local HUD FONAP. If more than one reviewer is involved, each reviewer should place their signature indicating their review. In such a case, the reviewers should initial the items on the checklist they reviewed. Screening instructions and a checklist will be provided by the Headquarters ONAP Development Division based on or in the NOFA issued. See Appendix 3 for a sample "Application Checklist," and "Master Intake and Screening Log."

- A. If an application is determined to contain no deficiencies (either correctable or not correctable), the application will be held for rating in accordance with the reading/rating instructions.

- B. If the reviewer finds a correctable deficiency, the reviewer will follow the procedure described below.
- C. If a deficiency is found that is not correctable, the local HUD FONAP will not consider the application further and will hold the application pending completion of the entire process.

2-8 NOTIFICATION TO APPLICANTS OF DEFICIENCIES. When a deficiency has been identified, a determination must be made as to whether the deficiency is correctable or not. An applicant shall not be allowed to correct any deficiency that would have an impact on the quality of its application. A correctable deficiency is failure to submit a certification and failure to submit a signed certification. If, after review, the deficiency is determined to be correctable, the local HUD FONAP shall:

- A. Place a note on the application record to the effect that the application has a correctable deficiency. Prior to a final determination on funding, advise the applicant of the correctable deficiency and require its correction by the applicant within 14 days of the issuance of notification. The 14 days shall run from the date of the HUD letter to the date the applicant's response is received by HUD.
- B. Follow-up the letter with a call to the applicant to alert them on the matter. Note the name and title of the person you spoke with, as well as the date and time the conversation took place. If the applicant submits incomplete corrections prior to the end of the 14 calendar day period, the applicant should be advised and complete and corrected materials should be requested. The materials must be received by the end of the original 14 calendar day period. Transmittal by facsimile (FAX) is not acceptable.
- C. Attach the letter requesting correction of correctable deficiencies and the corrected deficiencies to each copy of the application.

Section 4. Evaluate Applications

2-9 ASSIGNING REVIEWERS. The FONAP Indian HOME Director shall coordinate the scoring of applications during a one week review. The Indian HOME Director shall:

- A. Identify reviewers for applications. FONAP staff shall serve as reviewers.

- B. Ensure that each application is independently evaluated and scored by at least two reviewers. No one is supposed to provide help to an applicant in the preparation of an application of other than a general nature. Any explanation of program requirements should not benefit the applicant to better its application. To avoid the creation of a conflict of interest or

the appearance of such a conflict, it is important that scoring not be done by any reviewer who has assigned responsibilities for the tribe identified in the application. In no case shall a reviewer score an application that they provided individual technical assistance to the applicant regarding the application submitted or have had any relationship with the applicant that involved any financial interest of the reviewer.

- C. Identify one or more grant panel members. Panel members will be responsible for validating reviewer assignments; collecting/reviewing scoring sheets for correct and complete data; tracking of applications through the review process; and other duties as needed to process applicants. They will provide technical assistance and facilitate discussion with their assigned groups of reviewers.

2-10 TRAINING REVIEWERS. Prior to review and evaluation, the FONAP Indian HOME Director shall provide training to reviewers. The training format (lecture/discussion) is left to the discretion of the FONAP Indian HOME Director. The Indian HOME Director should ensure that reviewers begin and end each day by meeting to address issues and receive clarification.

2-11 READING AND SCORING APPLICATIONS. The Headquarters ONAP Development Division shall provide reading/rating instructions and score sheets. See sample instructions and Application Evaluation Record in Appendix 3. Reviewers are responsible for reviewing and scoring applications according to the NOFA and related notices and instructions. Only applications that have successfully passed screening or only have corrections to correctable deficiencies outstanding are reviewed. The FONAP Indian HOME Director or designee will provide reviewers the assigned applications, score sheets, and a Reviewers Assignment Sheet listing all applications assigned to them. Reviewers shall check to ensure that they have received all the applications listed on the assignment sheet and sign the sheet documenting the receipt of all applications listed.

2-12 DATA ENTRY OF APPLICATIONS SCORED. Following the completion of scoring and validation of score sheets by the FONAP Indian HOME Director, the score sheet information shall be entered into the FONAP Master Assignment Sheet. See sample a Master Assignment Sheet in Appendix 3.

2-13 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY. All environmental reviews will be performed in accordance with 24 CFR part 50, by HUD FONAPs, after application rating and

ranking, but before selection for award, and the process will permit changes in ranking or disqualification on the basis of the environmental review. Sufficient applications will be rated and ranked to substitute for applications changed in rank or disqualified on the basis of environmental review.

