
CHAPTER 3. Selecting Applicants for Funding

3-1 OBJECTIVE. The objective of this chapter is to describe the process to be used for selecting the applicants to be funded from all applicants submitting applications that were reviewed and scored. The selection process varies somewhat for each Resident Initiatives grant program. The procedures described are based on a Headquarters selection of awards to be made.

Section 1. Local HUD Office Responsibilities

3-2 SCORING APPLICATIONS. Upon completion of reviewing and scoring all applications by the local HUD Office, the complete scoring data shall be entered into the data module by the local HUD Office. The data module will then be able to produce reports that list all applications processed for reviewing and confirmation purposes, including verification that data entry is complete, and the difference between the two reviewers' scores for the same application is less than 20 points (or a third reviewer was used and the two closest or either of two identical scores and the third was entered).

The Grant Administrator for the local HUD Office provides notification to the Regional Office that the scoring and data entry process is complete and provides a hard copy of the rank order listing report.

Section 2. Regional Office/Headquarters Responsibilities

3-3 REGIONAL RANKING. Upon receipt of notification from all local HUD Office Grant Administrators of the completion of scoring data entry, the Regional Office shall use the data module to concatenate (combine) the data files and produce a Regional rank order listing of all scored applications.

A. For programs that combine all applications into a common pool (public and Indian housing), the Regional Office shall review the combined rank order listing and resolve any questions/issues with the local HUD Offices as appropriate. Local HUD Office data entry changes shall not be made except to correct discrepancies. The Regional Office shall also confirm that all applications received have been accounted for and disposition recorded. The disposition categories consist of late applications/ineligible applicants (for which no data entry nor screening is performed), uncured/incurable deficiencies, failure to pass threshold, failure to meet minimum score, with the rest eligible for funding.

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- B. For programs that require a separate rank order listing for public housing and one for Indian housing, the Regional Office shall review the public housing related listing and Headquarters, Office of Indian Housing, shall review the Indian housing related listing and resolve any question/issues with the local HUD Offices as appropriate.
 - C. For programs that require a geographic distribution of awards as defined in a Notice of Funding Availability, the geographic selections shall be made first and any remaining applications eligible for funding placed in an overall rank order listing.
 - D. For programs that provide a Regional funding allocation and there are insufficient applications eligible for funding to use allocated funds, the Regional Office shall report to Headquarters the amount of unused funds that are available for reallocation to other Regions.
 - E. Upon completion of review of the rank order listing by the Regional Office and Headquarters as applicable, the approved rank order listings shall be pouch mailed and/or faxed from Regions to the responsible Headquarters Program Office. The final rank order listing and recommended funding amounts shall be in accordance with the results of the review and scoring process. The submission shall be by transmittal memorandum from the Regional Public Housing Director (or Regional Administrator for combined public and Indian housing listing or Director, Office of Indian Housing, for the Indian housing listing). Upon request, the Regional files shall be electronically forwarded to Headquarters.

Section 3. Headquarters Selection

3-4 SELECTING APPLICANTS TO BE FUNDED. Headquarters shall take the following actions to select applicants for funding:

- A. Upon receipt of all rank order listings, the Headquarters Program Office shall compile the appropriate Regional and/or national rank order listing(s) for selection by the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing or his or her designee.
- B. Upon approval of the rank order listing(s) by the Assistant Secretary or his or her designee, taking into account any geographic selection criterion and minimum score if applicable, and the extent of available funding, the Headquarters Program Office shall notify the Regional Offices of the selections made by

transmittal memorandum from the Assistant Secretary or his or her designee to the Regional Administrators with concurrence by the PIH Comptroller's Office to assure that a payment system and procedures are defined and operational.

- C. Where specified in a program Notice of Funding Availability, awards may be made by each Regional Office in accordance with provisions of the NOFA. In such case, the Headquarters selection procedure set forth in paragraphs A. and B. above do not apply.

Section 4. Post-Selection Regional Office Actions

3-5 CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION. Upon receiving notification by Headquarters of the applicants selected for funding, the Regional/local HUD Offices shall submit to the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations (OCIR) information required for Congressional notifications using the most recently issued format and instructions from OCIR.

3-6 NOTIFICATION TO APPLICANTS. Following the release date established by OCIR for notifying applicants, all applicants (excluding late applicants and otherwise ineligible applicants previously notified) shall be promptly notified by letter.

- A. The Regional Administrator shall ensure that the applicants selected to receive an award are notified of the award, in writing, either directly or alternately, if authority exists, by letter from the Field Office Manager/Director, Office of Indian Programs (original to grantee, copy of the signed letter to the Regional Accounting Director to be used in recording funding reservations and, as applicable, copy notifying the appropriate local HUD Office).
- B. The Regional Administrator shall also ensure that the applicants not selected for funding, including those applicants not passing screening or threshold review, are notified in writing, either directly or alternately, by letter from the Field Office Manager/Director, Office of Indian Programs (original to applicant and, as applicable, copy to the appropriate local HUD Office).
- C. The notification letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants should be sent at about the same time, within a few working days of each other. See sample notification letters provided in Appendix 1.

3-7 DEBRIEFING APPLICANTS NOT SELECTED. In HUD's notification letter, applicants are advised that they may request information on why they were not selected for funding and ways they may improve their future opportunities for funding. Debriefings have been and may continue to be conducted for the Youth Sports Program and the Drug Elimination Program by the Resident Initiatives Clearinghouse. Other program debriefings are conducted by the local HUD Office staff. Debriefings should be conducted using the following guidelines:

- A. It is normal HUD policy to notify all unsuccessful grant applicants upon completion of the grant funding round and inform them of the opportunity to be debriefed as to the reason(s) an applicant was not selected for funding. A funding round is completed when HUD announces the selection of recipients of assistance.
- B. The Regional Administrator is responsible for notifying all applicants in writing (for both successful and unsuccessful applicants) except where review and scoring is conducted by Headquarters. Notification letters to unsuccessful applicants are to advise on how an applicant may obtain a debriefing if desired.
- C. The purpose of a debriefing is to explain to an applicant the reason(s) for not being selected for funding and to provide helpful suggestions for improving their chances for being selected in future funding opportunities. The score sheets with reviewer comments are the basic source of the information to use in a debriefing. First, a few "don'ts."
 - 1. Do not tell an applicant there simply was not enough funding as the only explanation why they were not funded; they know someone was funded which means there was some technical reason(s) they did not score high enough to be funded (even though their application may have been scored high).
 - 2. Do not say what the funded application scores were.
 - 3. Do not provide your personal opinion of the results of the evaluation or that you disagree with the results.
 - 4. Do not identify the name(s) of the reviewers. This is not helpful toward achieving the purpose of the debriefing and may cause unnecessary bad feelings toward individuals that should not be so exposed.

5. Do not encourage the applicant to ask for a formal review of the decision. There is no "appeal" procedure although unsuccessful applicants may always write to express their views on the decision.
6. Do not quote all reviewers' comments, especially those clearly not intended for a debriefing (as an extreme example, a comment may be "This application stinks"). Stick to comments that are useful and helpful.

D. On the "do" side:

1. Conduct the debriefing in a scrupulously fair, objective, and impartial manner, and provide only factual information based on the results of the evaluation.
2. Be patient, tactful and polite, especially in circumstances where the applicant appears to be upset with the whole process, explaining how HUD attempts to conduct open and fair competitions and that the HUD reviewers are operating under very strict procedures to be objective.
3. Inform the applicant of the factors used in the evaluation and where they were weak or deficient based on reviewer comments. It would be most helpful to point out where an applicant scored well, in the high range on any factor, as well as where they scored low.
4. Point out areas where additional information would have possibly improved the score on a factor having a score lower than in the high range and what kind of information would have been relevant.
5. Document the debriefing in a note to file or to your supervisor, including the date, persons/organization involved and any issues that were discussed. Summarize the outcome of the debriefing as to it being satisfactory or whether there was some expressed intent by the applicant to pursue matters further, i.e., appeal the decision. Use the debriefing note format provided in Appendix 1, or its equivalent, to record the debriefing.
6. Try to treat each unsuccessful applicant equally in terms of providing the same level of detail and assistance to the extent possible.

- E. Information on successful applicants is available as issued by the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs News Release (or any portion thereof; i.e., for a Region). This includes the total number of applications, the names and addresses of the successful applicants and the funding amounts. Other information requested (i.e., copies of original score sheets--scorer names should not be released, a copy of a funded application) should be requested by the applicant under the Freedom of Information Act.
- F. For late applications, a debriefing consists of only explaining the circumstances for HUD determining the application to be late. The actual date/time received is the controlling factor as recorded on the receiving log sheet. There is no grace period (technically, not even one minute).
- G. Applications that did not pass the screening for deficiencies were not scored. Hence, the debriefing would be limited to explaining the deficiency(ies) that caused the rejection and HUD's notification to the applicant about the deficiency(ies) and why the applicant's response was not acceptable.
- H. On programs having threshold factors (Youth Sports, HOPE 1 Implementation), applications failing one or more threshold factors were not scored. Hence, the debriefing would be limited to explaining the reason(s) that the application failed threshold.
- I. If an applicant asks about appealing/protesting the decision, the applicant should be advised there is no "appeal" procedure but that they may write to express their views about the decision or to request further information or consideration.