



# Welcome to Reviewing Against the Selection Criteria- Program Review

2015 Social Innovation Fund Review  
**Orientation Session III and Ensuring Equitable Reviews**



# SESSION AGENDA:

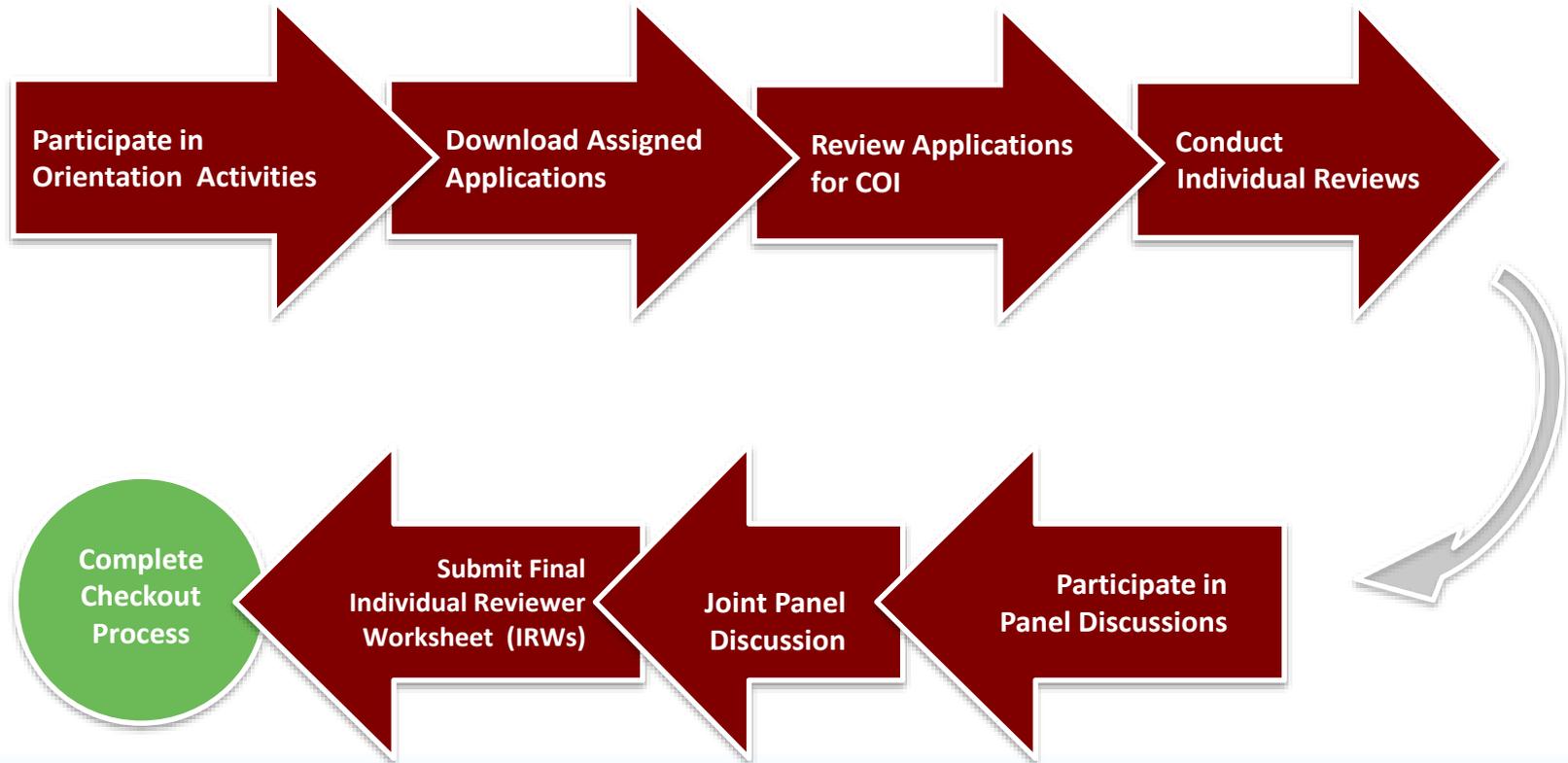
## Competition Overview & Criteria

- Detail the steps of the Review Process
- Discuss your role in the review of the applications
  - Conducting your individual review

## Reviewing Against Program Review Selection Criteria

- Understand the review forms and how they are used
  - The Individual Reviewer Worksheet (IRW) - Program Review
  - Applicant Feedback Summary Report

# External Review Process



# Review Preparation

- Complete all training requirements
  - 2015 Social Innovation Fund Review Handbook
  - The Notice
  - Orientation Sessions
- Receive Panel Assignments
  - Reviewers will Download Assigned Applications
  - Participate in Panel Intro Call (order of applications is determined, panel schedule,...)
- Review each application for COI
  - Submit your signed Confidentiality and COI Statement

- Begin Review!



# Individual Review of Applications

- Applications will be reviewed and discussed in two sets
- Read the entire application and evaluate the sections on your IRW
  - Assess the applications against the Selection Criteria, not other applications
  - Apply your experience and expertise with balance
- Complete your critique of the elements in your IRW
  - Select Rating and comment on Strengths and Weaknesses
  - Utilize appropriate Forms as resource
    - Individual Review Rubric
    - Example Program IRW



Conduct  
Individual  
Reviews



# SIF Selection Criteria and Weighting

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Inadequate
<b>PROGRAM DESIGN (70%)</b>				
a. Rationale and Approach	10	8	6	4
a. Proposal for Subrecipient Selection	15	12	9	6
a. Proposal for Evaluation	30	24	18	12
a. Proposal for Growing Subrecipient Impact	15	12	9	6
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY (15%)</b>				
a. Organizational Background and Staff Capacity	5	4	3	2
a. Subrecipient Support, Monitoring and Oversight	5	4	3	2
a. Strategy for Sustainability	5	4	3	2
<b>COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (15%)</b>	15	12	9	6
Totals	100	80	60	40

# Individual Reviewer Worksheet

**INDIVIDUAL REVIEWER WORKSHEET-PROGRAM**  
**2015 SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND GRANT COMPETITION**  
**PROGRAM REVIEW**

Legal Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Application ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 45 pages of narratives as they print from eGrants for Facesheet, Executive Summary, and Narratives.
- Performance Measures and budget do not count as part of the 45 pages.

# Using the Rubric

## Excellent

- A high-quality, detailed response that addresses all aspects of the Selection Criteria and exceeds some. Strengths are substantial and solid. No weaknesses are identified, or any weakness has a minimal effect on the overall quality of the response. A high confidence that the proposed activities will achieve and exceed the anticipated results.

## Good

- A quality response that addresses most or all aspects of the Selection Criteria. Strengths are substantial, but do not exceed what is required. Weaknesses are low in quantity and minimal in effect on the overall quality of the response. Proposed activities should achieve the anticipated results.

# Using the Rubric cont.

## Fair

- Response addresses some to most aspects of the Selection Criteria, but makes assumptions and leaves aspects unexplained. Strengths are not significant, and some weaknesses affect the overall quality of the response, demonstrating room for improvement. It is unclear how the proposed activities will achieve all of the anticipated results.

## Inadequate

- A low-quality or very weak response that does not address most of the Selection Criteria. Overall response is lacking or inadequate making assumptions in key elements. Weaknesses relating to vague or inaccurate detail are numerous or significantly outweigh the strengths. There is low to zero confidence that the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

# Question 1. Rationale and Approach

## 1. Rationale and Approach (10%)

In determining the quality of an application, please assess the following criteria:

- The applicant's approach as either a geographically- or issue-based Social Innovation Fund (as described in *Section A.1: Purpose of Social Innovation Fund Funding*), including the target community or geographies that they will serve and the Social Innovation Fund issue area(s) on which their programming will focus.
- Whether the applicant make a persuasive case, using statistical information, that they have identified a critical social problem in the target geographical area(s).
- Whether the applicant demonstrates that solutions currently being implemented to address the selected social problem in the target geographical area(s) have not been proven to be effective, are not achieving outcomes at scale, or are too slow to respond.
- Whether the applicant presents a clear, logical theory of change that outlines your investment approach and the specific measurable outcomes that will be achieved through their proposed program. They should convey an intentional approach to solving community problems through their subrecipient investments and clearly explain:
  1. the types of organizations they will invest in and why; and
  2. the value-added activities, including technical assistance or other services, they will provide to their subrecipients in order to align the subrecipients with the theory of change and achieve the desired outcomes.
- The applicant's description of the programming strategy (A or B above) they plan to utilize and why it's the most appropriate for them to achieve your goals
  - Strategy A:** The case they make that appropriate, evidence-based solutions exist to address the identified social problem in the target geography (ies).
  - Strategy B:** The case they make that the solution(s) you propose to implement is: innovative (as defined in *Section A.1: Purpose of Social Innovation Fund Funding*), appropriate for the social problem identified, aligned with your theory of change, and is likely to produce the desired outcomes.
- If the applicant is applying for renewed funding of a currently funded SIF project: whether the proposed activities will further increase knowledge about intervention.
- If the applicant is a current recipient of, or are under consideration for, other federal funding: how the proposed SIF project is distinct from, or will supplement rather than duplicate, other federally funded projects. Please specify the other federal funding sources.

# Question 2. Proposal for Subrecipient Selection

## 2. Proposal for Subrecipient Selection (15%)

In determining the quality of an application, please assess the following criteria:

- The applicant's profile of the type of subrecipient organization they hope to fund and how it aligns with the rationale and approach described above.
- Whether the applicant provide a clear and comprehensive plan for carrying out a competitive subrecipient selection process, that includes:
  - the estimated number of subawards that will be made;
  - the estimated range of subaward amounts;
  - the criteria that will be used to determine prospective subrecipients' fit with their theory of change or successfully contribute to its outcome measures;
  - a general timeline or timeframe outlining when stages of the selection process would be completed. Note: Depending on the strategy being utilized, the subrecipient selection and award process must be completed within **six to eight** months of the grant award.
- Whether the applicant presents a selection process that has a high likelihood of identifying high-performing subrecipients (as defined in *Section A.1: Purpose of Social Innovation Fund Funding*), with the capacity and ability to implement all aspects of a Social Innovation Fund grant.
- The applicant's capacity to successfully implement their proposed subaward selection process, including demonstrated experience selecting and awarding competitive grants to nonprofits.
  - Strategy A:* How they will attract and select solutions that are innovative as defined in (as defined in *Section A.1: Purpose of Social Innovation Fund Funding*).
  - Strategy B:* How they will select subrecipients who are well-suited to implement the pre-defined intervention.
- How the applicant will assess subrecipient applicants for readiness and capacity to implement program growth as a part of the subrecipients' participation in the Social Innovation Fund.
- How the applicant will allocate grant awards so that larger sums are given to those subrecipients with higher levels of evidence to support the growth of their program impact.

## Question 3. Proposal for Growing Subrecipient Impact

### 3. Proposal for Growing Subrecipient Impact (15%)

In determining the quality of the application, please assess the following criteria:

- The applicant's capacity to support subrecipient growth including relevant examples of successful past efforts to support growth through replication or expansion and a description of adequate resources to support successful subrecipient growth as proposed.
- The applicant's theory or approach to growing effective subrecipient program models in alignment with their overall theory of change.
- The characteristics the applicant will use to assess subrecipient capacity for growth and your description of how evidence of effectiveness will be used to determine when or how a program is well-situated for growth.
- How the applicant will support subrecipient growth through technical assistance, data systems or other resources and help subrecipients plan for strategic and effective growth that results in long-term sustainability for the expanded program beyond the three to five year SIF grant period.

## Question 4. Organizational Background and Staff Capacity

### 4. Organizational Background and Staff Capacity

- Whether the applicant makes a compelling case for your ability to successfully support the approach and outcomes that they propose, including a description of their track record and resources.
- The applicant's experience, accomplishments and outcomes operating and overseeing programs in the selected issue area(s) of activity.
- The applicant's experience and capacity to collect and analyze data required for evaluation, continuous improvement, compliance and other purposes.
- The applicant's current organizational budget, the percentage of the budget this grant would represent, and the implications for their organization.
- The experience, qualifications and capacity of staff and contractors to effectively implement the proposed program. Discuss the involvement of management, board members, etc.
- The applicant's ability to develop the necessary systems to maintain a grant program compliant with federal grant requirements, including a description of how they will ensure compliance with CNCS National Service Criminal History Check requirements. For reference, please see Section F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.
- The applicant's commitment to long-term relationships with subrecipients, including how short- and long-term goals will be established.

# Question 5. Subrecipient Support, Monitoring and Oversight

## 5. Subrecipient Support, Monitoring and Oversight

- The applicant's prior experience setting and implementing goals with recipients.
- The applicant's experience evaluating the performance of grant recipients for outcome-focused initiatives.
- The technical assistance and other services that the applicant will provide to subrecipients to support the subrecipients' success in achieving their proposed outcomes.
- The applicant's plan for building subrecipient capacity to develop compliant federal grants management systems.
- The applicant's plan for building subrecipient capacity to achieve scaling, evaluation and other key program goals.
- The applicant's plan for developing subrecipient performance measurement systems and their description of how they will use these to monitor and improve subrecipient performance.
- How the applicant will monitor subrecipients for compliance and for progress towards goals.

# QUESTION 6. Strategy for Sustainability

## 6. Strategy for Sustainability

- Has the applicant demonstrated commitment to continue the investment priorities articulated in this application beyond the life of the grant?
- Does the applicant have a strategy for ensuring that subrecipients are positioned to continue evaluation and sustain program growth beyond the grant lifecycle?

# Question 7 . Budget Justification and Capacity to Raise Match

## 7. Budget Justification

- Whether the budget the applicant proposes is reasonable and sufficient to successfully support program activities, including subrecipient selection, evaluation, program growth, and subrecipient support and oversight.
- Whether the budget is aligned with the application narrative and provides an adequate explanation for expenses.
- (If applicable) Whether the applicant make a compelling case for higher program costs due to an intention to make subawards in areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.

## Capacity to Raise Match

- The applicant's prior experience achieving significant non-federal fundraising goals.
- The applicant's description of match already raised or committed.
- The applicant's plan for securing the total one-to-one non-federal cash match requirement.
- The applicant's capacity and plan for assisting subrecipients to secure their required match.

# 8. Applicant Feedback Summary Comments

**Total Score: \_\_ of 70**

## 8. APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY COMMENTS

After the panel discussion and finalizing your assessment: provide a summary of your review that captures the strengths and weaknesses of the application that had the greatest impact on your assessment. This summary, which will be provided to the applicant in the Feedback Summary Report and may be posted on CNCS' website, must be supported by your ratings and comments in the previous sections.

STRENGTHS:

WEAKNESSES:

# Resources for Quality IRWs

## *Individual Review Rubric*

- Address Selection Criteria Only
- Comments and Rating selection should be aligned
- Do not Address: suggestions for improvement, what “the panel thinks”, etc.
- Avoid making generic comments that can be applied to “any” application
  - (the applicant identified the community needs very well; or the alignment between the problem identified and the proposed solution was strong)

# Resources for Quality IRWs cont.

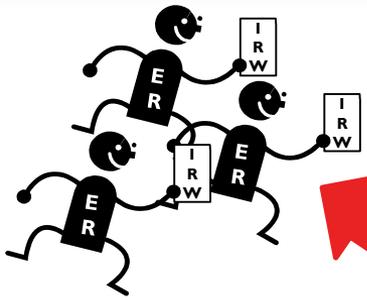
## *Writing Meaningful Comments & Example Program IRW*

- Application information is limited to the reviewed application and no others (no comparisons with other applications, etc.)
- Language is evaluative and does not restate information from Application
- Comments are the Strengths and Weaknesses that had the greatest impact on the Rating
- No inflammatory statements
- Avoid referencing Page Numbers
- Grammar and spelling are correct

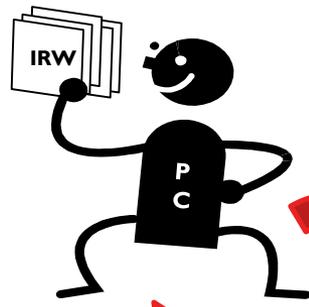
# Saving Your IRWs

- ▶ Save using naming convention:
  - ▶ “PIRW.legal applicant name. last four digits of application ID.Reviewer last name”
    - ❖ Program Individual Reviewer Worksheet (PIRW)
  - ▶ Example “PIRW.SuperApplicant.1234.Smith”

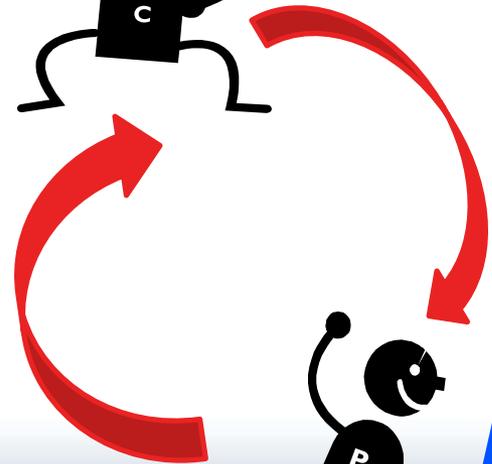
# The IRW Production Cycle steps 1-3



**STEP 1:** External Reviewers (ERs) send IRWs to PC; PC makes comments and returns IRWs to ERs; Panel Discussion occurs; ERs revise IRWs and return to PC



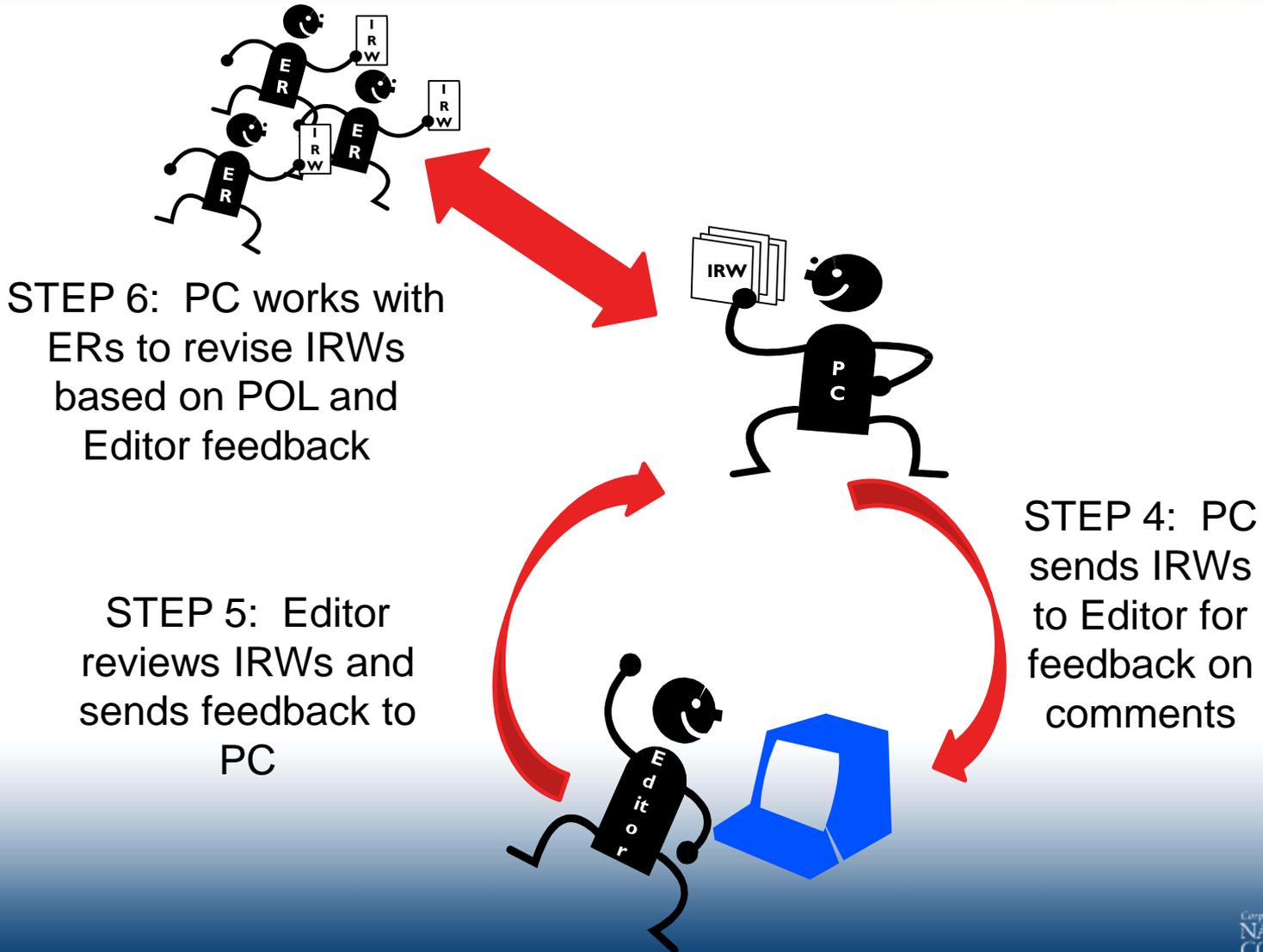
**STEP 2:** PC sends IRWs to POL for selection criteria feedback



**STEP 3:** POL reviews IRWs and sends feedback to PC



# The IRW Production Cycle steps 4-6



# Steps to Complete the Individual Reviewer Worksheet

- Step 1: Reviewer downloads the IRW blank document from the 2015 Reviewer Website.
- Step 2: Reviewer reviews an application and completes a draft IRW; Reviewer saves the IRW using the naming protocol.
  - (PIRW.legalapplicantname.1234.Jones) or
  - (EIRW.legalapplicantname.1234.Smith)
- Step 3: Reviewer sends the draft IRW to the PC for his/her review and feedback.
- Step 4: Reviewer incorporates any feedback from PC.
- Step 5: Reviewer Discusses Application with panel members and makes changes to IRW.
- Step 6: Reviewer sends updated IRW to PC, who sends panel's IRWs to the POL for selection criteria review.
- Step 7: POL provides feedback on the IRW, returns the IRW to the PC.
- Step 8: PC sends panel's IRWs to the Editor for IRW comments review.
- Step 9: Editor provides feedback on the IRW, returns the IRW to the PC.
- Step 10: PC sends IRW to Reviewer to incorporate POL and Editor feedback.
- Step 11: Reviewer sends final version to the PC.

# Reference Information

- Detail the steps of the External Review Process
  - Section 2.2 – The Grant Application Review Process
- Understand the review forms and how they are used
  - Section 3.2 – Key Review Forms
  - Appendix F – IRW Guidance
  - Appendix I – Individual Review Rubric
  - Appendix K – Example Program IRW
  - Appendix L – Writing Meaningful Comments
- Discuss your role in the review of the applications
  - Section 4.1 – Conducting the Individual Reviews
- For more information, consult the Handbook
  - Section 5.2.3 Completing the Individual Reviewer Worksheet (IRW)



# Welcome to Ensuring Equitable Reviews

2015 Social Innovation Fund Review



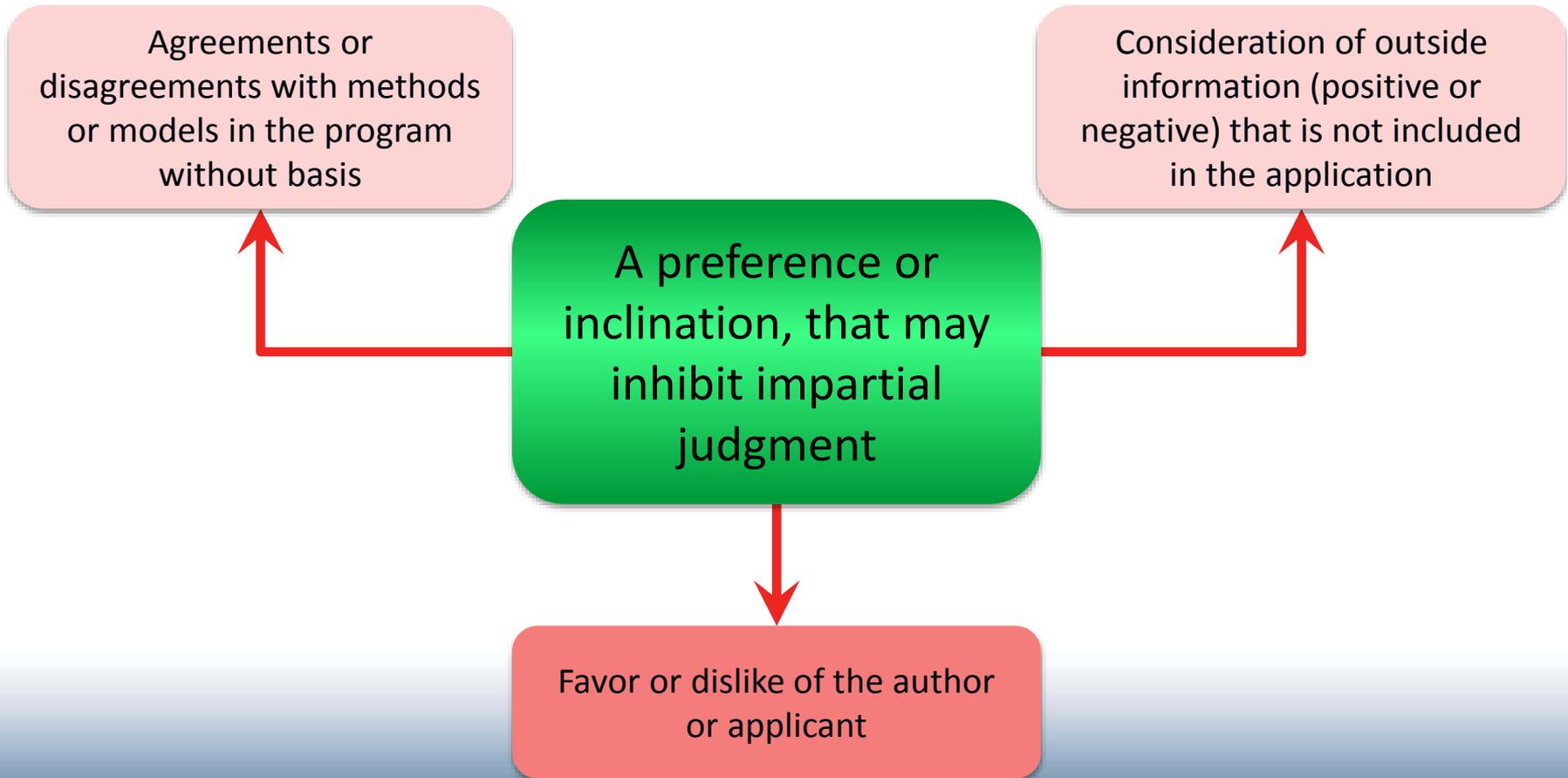
# Objectives

- Describe the importance of equity in the Review Process
- Define potential bias
- Describe Review Participant and CNCS responsibility in Conflict of Interest
- Outline steps to take if potential COI is identified
- List proper disposal methods for all confidential materials
- State the purpose of the Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement for Review Participants

# Equity in the External Review

- Ensure grant application is considered in a fair and equitable process
- Understand the Selection Criteria
- Share Responsibility as a Participant
  - Conflicts of Interest, Bias and Confidentiality

# What is Potential Bias?



# How to Handle Potential Bias



- Often it will be flagged by another participant
- Return to assessment and provide facts only to reconsider assessment
- Exercise consideration and respect, remove emotionalism
- Possible recusal from review of that application

# Conflicts of Interest

- Conflict between private interests and official responsibilities
- CNCS considers both Direct and Indirect COIs
- Consider those around you

# Direct and Indirect Examples of Conflicts of Interest

You are assigned to review an application for an organization for which:

- Has submitted an application in the present competition, or was personally involved in preparing an application
- Could personally benefit if an application submitted in the present competition is selected to receive funding
- Are currently being considered for employment, or (within the last 12 months) had an employment, consulting, advising, or other similar affiliation with the organization
- Holds any office or membership on the organization's governing board, visiting committee, similar body
- Directly own any securities or evidences of debt of the organization

# Direct and Indirect Examples of Conflicts of Interest cont.

You are assigned to review an application for an organization for which:

- Has a financial interest that would be affected by the outcome of this grant competition
- Is a currently enrolled student (in the case of an organization that is an educational institution)
- Has received and kept an honorarium or award from the organization within the last 12 months
- Has collaborated on a project or on a book, article, report, or paper with the organization within the last 48 months, or
- Had any other past or present business, professional, academic, volunteer, or other personal relationship with the organization that could reasonably call into question whether you can objectively participate in the current grant application review process.

# Importance of reporting COIs

- Fair and equitable review
- Preserve integrity

## Who to Contact?

GARP Liaison and Panel Coordinator

# Confidential Information

## Applicant Confidentiality

- Applicant names
- Applicant business information and financial data
- Details about the proposed program
- Review comments and review ratings

## Participant Confidentiality

- Identity of Review Participants during the review
- The link between Reviewers and their comments



# Confidentiality and COI statement

## Process and Purpose

### Read Confidentiality & COI Form

- All Reviewers ensure awareness of responsibility

### Receive the applications



### Flag any potential COIs

### Sign and return to CNCS

- Sign to verify shared understanding and expectations for CNCS Standards in External Reviews

### Maintain appropriate confidentiality

## Next Steps

- Continue Reading 2015 Social Innovation Fund Review Handbook
- Participate in Orientation Session V – Entering IRW Information
- Confirm Completion of Orientation III
  - Email Secret Word to [PeerReviewers@cns.gov](mailto:PeerReviewers@cns.gov)

## Reference Material

- For more information, Consult the Handbook:
  - Section 3.3 – Ensuring Equitable Reviews
- Confidentiality and COI Form
  - Reviewer Resource Web page