

Workforce & Economic Development Division



Request for Application (RFA) Grant Review Process

# Grant Review

# Panelist

# Toolkit

# “Refresher”



### **The Opportunity**

For community colleges to become essential catalysts to California's economic recovery and jobs creation at the local, regional and state levels.

### **The Strategy**

Doing What MATTERS for jobs and the economy is a four-pronged framework to respond to the call of our nation, state, and regions to close the skills gap. The four prongs are:

- Give Priority for jobs and the economy
- Make Room for jobs and the economy
- Promote Student Success
- Innovate for jobs and the economy

**Doing What MATTERS™**

FOR JOBS AND THE ECONOMY



- » The Workforce and Economic Development Division RFA process provides first consideration for the allocation of resources in support of regional sector priorities.
- » Awards will be made when the applications are of sufficient quality to address the requirements of the grant. If resources remain available after the initial review, at-large awards will be considered.

Of note....



## First things first...

- » In the past, the terminology, “Grant Reader” was used to identify those who provided the service of reading and scoring our Grants.
- » In an effort to elevate the value and extreme importance of this role, in line with Federal grant review efforts, your title will now be known as “**Grant Review Panelist.**”
- » Your “Team” will be considered a “**Grant Review Panel.**”

# First things First

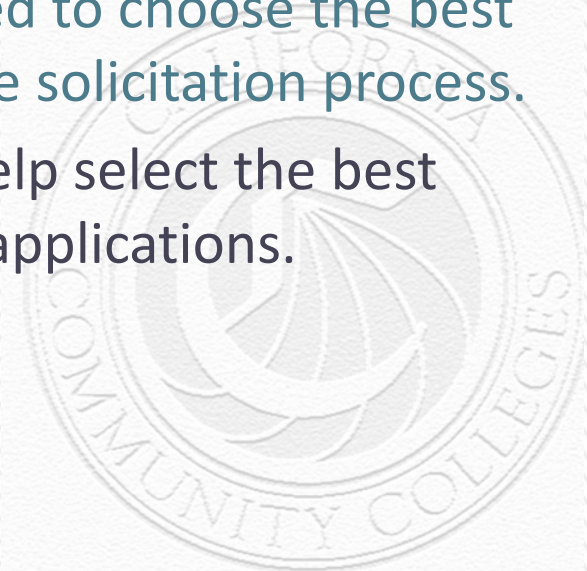


“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

*Margaret Mead*

- » Each year, the Workforce & Economic Development Division convenes grant panel reviews to evaluate and score eligible grant applications.
- » This year we will be awarding approximately \$25M through the competitive grant process.
- » The WEDD Grant Review process is designed to choose the best programs for funding through a competitive solicitation process.
- » Your role as a Grant Review Panelist is to help select the best projects from competitive groups of grant applications.

# Welcome



- » You are selected for your expertise and ability to objectively evaluate the quality of grant applications.
- » Panelists are expected to use their expertise to assess the applications according to the published evaluation found in each specific Request for Application criteria.
- » You accept the responsibilities of thoroughly reading all applications, fully contributing to fair and appropriate scoring, and producing accurate evaluative comments.

As a Grant Review  
Panelist ›

- > We'd like to remind you that each Grant Review Panelist is to hold in the strictest of confidence all applications, related materials, score sheets, scoring, and information about our reader process.
- > The information contained in the grant applications is confidential.
- > **Do not** discuss or reveal names, institutions' project activities, or any other information contained in the applications.
- > Contact us if you have any questions concerning an application, and **do not** contact an applicant directly.

Remember  
Confidentiality!



» The Chancellor's Office takes great care in the determination of which applications each panel reads to insure there are no conflicts of interest.

## How do we do that?

- » All Grant Review Panelist applications are organized by expertise, previous experience, organizations, financial partnerships with particular College Districts, and regions.
- » By considering the regions and existing financial partnerships of panelists, we are able to avoid potential conflicts of interest and assign panels that will deliver an optimum *objective* review experience per application.
  - > Those that are affiliated with Northern Regions read Southern Region applications, etc.
  - > **Those with financial partnerships/interests among particular districts will be not be considered** to review grants involving those districts.

# In the beginning...



- » **No person may serve as a panelist if** a conflict of interest, real or perceived, exists.
- » A conflict exists when the prospective panelist, any member of his or her immediate family, business partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in an organization seeking financial assistance or which may otherwise benefit by an award decision.
- » Additionally, panelists should not serve if they have a close personal relationship with someone whose financial interests will be affected by awarding of the grant or who is a party or represents a party to the grant award process, such as a close relative, friend or former colleague.

# What happens if? >

- » Prospective panelists should note any other biases that may inhibit their ability to fairly and objectively rate an applicant's proposal for a particular solicitation.
- » A bias may also exist relative to organizations that are named sub-recipients or partners in an application. For example, biases could include but are not limited to: biases against a rival school, a rival organization, a rival industry, etc.
- » Any person selected as a panelist must notify the grant officer immediately if, in the course of performing an evaluation of applications, he/she discovers any fact that would disqualify him/her from being a panelist.
- » All selected panelists will be required to have a "Conflict of Interest/Non Disclosure Statement," in file.
- » Contact Katie Faires at 916-323-5863 or [kfares@cccco.edu](mailto:kfares@cccco.edu) immediately if you suspect you may have a conflict.

# What happens if? >

- » A Grant Review Panel is made up of 3 Panelists.
- » As mentioned earlier, each panel is selected according to their expertise, region, and/or district involvement, to maximize objectivity and quality Grant Review outcomes.
- » Identification of each Panelist will remain confidential to the other fellow Panelists.
- » Identification of Panelists on each Panel will remain confidential to all other panels.
- » The assigned applications each Panel reads will remain confidential.

What is a Grant Review  
Panel? >

- » The number of Panels depends on two things:
  - > How many RFAs have been received &
  - > How many qualified Grant Review Panelists are available to review and score.
- » The same goes for how many applications each panel will read.
- » The RFAs received are logged in and are sorted by particular Grant Specification #; industry focus; associated region.
- » Panelists are selected according to these criteria and dates of availability you provided in response to our survey.

# GRP Assignments >

1. Applications will be assigned to Panels.
2. Panelists will then be assigned to Panels.
3. A webpage will be created for each Panel.
4. Each assigned application will be accessible on each panel webpage.
5. Each related score sheet for each application assigned will also be located on that webpage.
6. Helpful reference materials will be available on each webpage.



» Each Panelist will receive an email with the following information:

- ❖ The Panel Number you have been assigned to.
- ❖ Your individual Panelist number.
- ❖ The website link specific to your assigned panel where you will access the applications to score and the related score sheet.



- ❖ **If you did not receive an email,** your services will not be required for this event and we will continue to consider you for future opportunities.

*Your mission should you decide to accept it.....*



» To view and complete the score sheet you must have access to Adobe Reader. You will be able to access a score sheet specific to each application on the webpage link provided.  
<http://get.adobe.com/reader/?promoid=JOPDC>


The score sheet you will be using is an electronic Adobe PDF Fillable form.

## 1. Pull up the score sheet associated with the Application



## 2. Click the “SAVE AS” Button at the top of the form and save to a separate drive immediately!

3. This step is necessary to allow the document to save the scores prior to submission.



Grant Review Panel Rating Booklet		Funding Fiscal Yr:	2013-14
Technical Assistance Provider-Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (CoE) – Competitive Request for Applications Division of Workforce and Economic Development			
RFA Number:	_____	Application District:	_____
Panel Number:	_____	Panelist Number:	_____
Total Possible Score:	<b>100</b>	Total Points Awarded:	<b>0</b>
			<a href="#">Continue to Page 2 of Booklet</a>
86			
<b>SCORE</b>			
Response to Objectives (20 Points possible)		<b>0</b>	
Annual Workplan (30 points possible)		<b>0</b>	

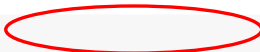
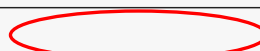


Complete this information before continuing!

## Grant Application Rating Booklet

Funding Fiscal Yr: **2013-14**

Title of RFA – Competitive Request for Applications  
Workforce and Economic Development Division

RFA Number: **13-151-001a** District:   
Panel Number: **GRP-04** Assigned Reviewer Number:   
Total Possible Score: **100** Total Points Awarded: **86**

86

### SCORE

Need (10 Points possible)	<b>7</b>
Response to Need (10 points possible)	<b>17</b>
Annual Workplan (30 points possible)	<b>22</b>
Application Budget/Budget Detail (10 points possible)	<b>13</b>
Project Management Plan Narrative (20 points possible)	<b>19</b>
Dissemination (5 points possible)	<b>3</b>
Overall Feasibility of the Project (15 points possible)	<b>8</b>
Total Points (Out of 100 points possible)	<b>89</b>

Note: A score of at least 75 is required for an award

The other header info is already completed.

Plus, as you are scoring each section, each score will complete on this first page and tally automatically!

# What's the score?

**All the tools that you will need as a Grant Review Panelist are located on your Panel Webpage:**

- The Specific RFA
- The Application to Review
- The related Grant Review Booklet used for scoring.

- » After completing the header, proceed to each section of the Grant Review Booklet, reviewing each section first to get familiar with what should be addressed in the application.
- » Maximum points allowed are provided at the top of each section.
- » Use the handy optional check blocks in each section of the booklet to help you consider each element.
- » Be looking for strengths and weaknesses of each application section as you are reviewing.
- » Enter your points awarded in the space provided.

Tip: Ask yourself as you are comparing and evaluating the merits of the application to the Review Booklet here are examples of questions to ask yourself:

- ✓ Does this application provide clear and convincing evidence of need?
- ✓ Does it strongly connect with the needs and goals of the project?
- ✓ Are there clearly described working partnerships?

Here we go....



Each section of the Review Booklet matches the sections to be addressed in each individual RFA to be considered for scoring. The maximum points that can be awarded for each section is located in the right hand corner following the section title.

You must provide one strength and one weakness for each section.



Reviewer No.

RFA #

Page | 2

### 1.. Need

MAXIMUM POINTS - 10

*Programs and services provided shall be flexible and responsive to the needs identified through the statewide and regional planning processes.* The statewide need within the chosen region will be identified through the elements below. Does this application:

- ☐ I. Define size and common characteristics, projected growth, prospect for positive outcomes, and competitors of businesses and workforce, locations, industry associations, educational partners (including high schools, ROPs, community colleges, universities and others.)
- ☐ II. Describe efforts and focus specific to each of the region's selected priority and emergent sectors, including :
  - Identify and discuss supply and demand gaps in this region's workforce.
  - curricular challenges facing the region within the community college tier of education
  - between tiers of education
  - between higher education and industry
- ☐ III. Discuss the inventory of currently active organizations, bodies, advisories, hubs, centers collaboratives and other entities inside and outside the community (including the Perkins collaboratives and advisories.) c
  - Identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities for improvement
- ☐ IV. Describe opportunities for more effective community and collaboration between constituencies, including CCCC, Sector Navigators, Centers, Community College faculty and administrators K-12 and four-year partner education institutions, the workforce system, credentialing bodies, trade associations, public policy stakeholders, and any other interested parties.
- ☐ V. Does this project reference source(s) for substantiation of the need statement?

POINTS AWARDED: \_\_\_\_\_

Exceptional: 10 Above Average: 9-8 Average: 7 Below Average: 6-0

### Panelist comments on stated need:

Please describe one strength substantiating Section I:

Please describe one weakness regarding Section I:



Black tie is optional,  
comments are not.

Panelist comments on stated need:

Please describe one strength substantiating Section I:

Please describe one weakness regarding Section I:

- » Remember, as you are evaluating each application section it is extremely important to be mindful of strengths and weakness as presented.
- » **It is now a mandatory requirement of the Grant Review Process** to complete the comment section after each section's scores, identifying one strength and one weakness for each.
- » **Remember, both successful and unsuccessful applicants use your comments to improve their operations and their future submissions.**
- » *We are looking for real viability. Based on what they presented, can they deliver?*

Acknowledge and compliment strengths, and offer practical suggestions for improving weaknesses.

**Be thoughtful in your analysis of the project.**

Make your comments concise, understandable, and specific to the individual applicant.

**Be sure your comments correlate with the number scores you provide.**



## Last Page!

**Does this application** provide an example of how its proposed elements work together to catalyze efforts to improve the performance of a region in meeting the workforce development needs of a sector ?

### 7. Overall Feasibility of the Project

MAXIMUM POINTS - 15

#### Overall Feasibility of the Project Maximum Points 15

This is not a category to be addressed separately in the application, but rather is an area rated on the scoring sheet. The reviewers have an opportunity to consider whether the project is realistically capable of attaining the required and proposed outcomes. Reviewers will consider the entire application in the context of the RFA Specification to make a final overall appraisal of the project proposal. The intent is to judge the cohesiveness and viability of the project.

POINTS AWARDED: \_\_\_\_\_

*Exceptional: 15 Above Average: 14-13 Average: 12 Below Average: 11-0*

Panelist Comments on Overall Feasibility:

### To avoid making poor comments, DO NOT:

- ✓ Make derogatory remarks or level harsh criticism.
- ✓ Penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money. (Any eligible institution may receive funds, regardless of need.)
- ✓ Question an applicant's honesty or integrity in your review.
- ✓ Merely summarize or paraphrase the applicant's own words in your comments.
- ✓ Make vague or overly general statements.
- ✓ Offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information.

# Almost there Buddy!



Once you have completed the final page:

## Work Backwards

Check each section for completeness

Have you entered each score and comments?

Did you enter your Panelist #?

Does the district entered match the application you are reading?

## Grant Application Rating Booklet

Funding Fiscal Yr: **2013-14**

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Workforce and Economic Development Division

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Note: A score of at least 75 is required for an award

# Back to the Beginning >

**Before you hit the Submit button**



**Please make sure you have saved your booklet to a separate drive!**

**You may make a copy prior to submission but be sure to destroy upon confirmation of submission.**

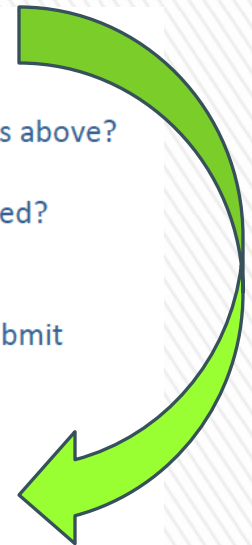
**Once you are confident that your booklet is complete, that you have included the application' district, and that all ratings are complete, simply use the submit button at the bottom of the form.**



Once you have completed your panelist review and ratings:

- Have the ratings for each section been automatically entered in the sections above?
- Have the "Total Points" been automatically entered?
- Have you entered the District name for the application that you just reviewed?
- Did you remember to enter your assigned Panelist Number located in the information email that you received?
- Once you are satisfied that the rating booklet has been complete, please submit using the submit button below.
- You will then receive a confirmation that your booklet has been received.

Submit Rating Sheet Here



# Lessons Learned



- » Once you hit the submit button, you should receive a confirmation message that your score sheet has been received.



- » If for some reason, your booklet will not respond to the submit button, you may email the booklet as an attachment to:

» [WEDDScores@cccco.edu](mailto:WEDDScores@cccco.edu)

- » If there are any questions, an element on the score sheet did not come through for instance, you will be contacted for clarification.

# What next?



- » If you have any questions, concerns over conflicts, technical difficulties completing or submitting your form, or you have a question regarding the interpretation of an RFA section, please feel free to contact:
- » Katie Faires, 916-323-5863 or [kfares@cccco.edu](mailto:kfares@cccco.edu)



Who ya gonna call...



Thanks for your  
generosity of  
time,  
thoughtfulness,  
and service!



- » As a feature of our new Grant Review Process, we will continue to accept Grant Review Panelist applications all year long.
- » Please spread the word. Your subject matter expertise is invaluable and serves to insure that

A shameless pitch  
for more Grant  
Review Panelists

