Mock Scoring Review Guide

dhleonardconsulting.com

Grant Professionals Association
Approved Trainer

Mock Review Overview and Checklist

What is a Mock Review?

A mock review is a valuable tool to evaluate your grant application against the funder's criteria prior to submission. Completing a mock review will help you identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in your application. The mock review process results in detailed comments and scores that you can use to guide revisions to increase your application's competitiveness. The mock review process is geared towards government and large foundation grant applications.

Sounds Great! What Do I Need to Do?

Here are suggested steps for how to create a mock review process for an application as well as how to incorporate the feedback from the review before you finalize an application for submission.

Creating A Mock Review

_____Create a scoring sheet/matrix for scores & comments based on RFP/NOFO *(see template attached!)*
_____Form a group of three colleagues that were NOT lead writers on the application to serve as mock reviewers - if you can find reviewers from outside of your organization, even better!
_____Provide 2- 3 days for mock review

Utilizing Feedback From A Mock Review

_____Take average of three scores
_____Make edits based on areas identified as needing clarification by reviewers
_____As with comments from formal review, take comments into consideration, not as an absolute for success

Do not be dismayed if the scores are initially in the 70s or 80s! The grant project and organization can become so close to the grant team, including the lead writer, that information is taken for granted or overlooked. This is why mock reviews are so important: they provide an outside perspective from people who are not very familiar with the project, application, or organization, mimicking as closely as possible the outside perspective of the funder's reviewers (the *real* reviewers). Grant writing is a collaborative process that must extend beyond the lead writer to have the best chances of success.

Creating and Customizing a Mock Review Template

Here are a few different mock review templates to help get you start.

The first which has limited text in red as a guide, followed by clean copies of two templates for you to customize to the particular application that is undergoing mock review.

The first clean template provides space for individually scored criteria within each section, and the second clean template considers each section scored as a whole rather than via an accumulation of points.

The final template is a document for you to use when the review criteria and scoring guidelines are not available from the grantmaker in a request for proposals (RFP), notice of funding availability (NOFA) or website.

Organization - Grant Program
Scoring Sheet
Total Score: _____out of _____

If the total number of points available is not 100, you can calculate a percentage for reference (i.e. total score 60 out of 80 = 75%).

	Score	**Comments**
Section Name and Total Points Available (i.e. Need for Project, 10 points)		
Narrative criterion from rubric or RFP/NOFO and points available (i.e. The extent to which the school climate impacts academic performance. 0-5 points).		
Total Score (for section)		
Section Name (i.e. Project Design)		
Total Score (for section)		
Section Name (i.e. Evaluation)		
Total Score (for section)		

Add more rows within each section, and add more sections, as necessary.

Overall Comments

Organization - Grant Program
Scoring Sheet
Total Score: _____out of _____

	Score	Comments
Total Score		
Total Score		
Total Score		
Total Score		

Overall Comments:

Mock Scoring Review Generic Format

This scoring sheet is meant to be an internal tool to assist in running an internal mock scoring audit when a firm rubric for application scoring is not provided by a potential funder. Scores are not meant to be a final determination, but a starting point for discussion. The maximum score will be 25. The audit is most effective when you have at least two individuals score a draft proposal in order to consider the average of scores or to look for consistency in comments.

Possible Scores:

1 = Poor ***2 = Fair*** ***3= Average*** ***4= Good*** ***5= Excellent***

Criteria	**Score**	**Comment**
PROJECT PLAN *Things to Consider:* ✓ Program is clearly defined ✓ Addresses a community need ✓ Does not replicate existing services ✓ Involves appropriate partnerships/collaborations ✓ Is at a stage of development that justifies the level of support being requested ✓ The potential funder will benefit from partnering with this organization		
IMPACT *Things to Consider:* ✓ Will project make the community a better place to live ✓ Is there a compelling opportunity to make a difference in the quality of life for target audience ✓ Who/how many will be served ✓ What changes does the organization hope to make through the program ✓ Is there evidence to support their approach ✓ Is the plan for measuring impact clear		
CAPACITY *Things to Consider:* ✓ Is the proposed project consistent with the organization's strategic plan, core values and activities ✓ Organization has adequate resources, staff and skills to carry out the project and respond to challenges		

DH LEONARD
CONSULTING & GRANT WRITING SERVICES, LLC

Mock Scoring Review Generic Format

✓ Organization is working to improve/grow ✓ Organization communicates well/with transparency ✓ There is strong leadership at Board and staff levels ✓ Project will continue after funding (if appropriate)		
FINANCE *Things to Consider:* ✓ Organization's financial condition is stable and has a record of stability ✓ Project budget is clear, detailed, realistic, and costs are reasonable ✓ Grant request is appropriate in relation to total project cost ✓ Financial/in-kind support will be provided from other sources for this project ✓ Realistic plan for future funding		
OUTCOMES *Things to Consider:* ✓ Outcomes are clear and realistic ✓ Measurement methods are appropriate ✓ Outcomes will make a meaningful contribution to addressing the priorities of the funder		

Total Points _____ (out of 25)

Additional Comments:

DH LEONARD
CONSULTING & GRANT WRITING SERVICES, LLC