



SANDAG EVALUATOR GUIDELINES FOR GRANT PROGRAMS

PURPOSE

Thank you for your willingness to serve as an evaluator for the _____ grant program ("the Program"). Evaluators are tasked with assisting SANDAG in selecting which projects will be recommended to receive funding from the Program. These guidelines are intended to provide you with information regarding your role and responsibilities as an evaluator for SANDAG.

ROLE AS AN EVALUATOR

You were asked to assist SANDAG in evaluating applications. The interests of the public with regard to the Program may or may not coincide with the interests of the organization you represent or with your personal interests. Since the funds used by the Program are public funds, however, you will be expected to evaluate applications using objective standards that will best serve the interests of the public.

You will be asked to review written applications from agencies who would like to be awarded Program funding using the evaluation criteria that were included in the Call for Projects. You will be given a scoring file and asked to evaluate each proposal based on the criteria in the Call for Projects. You must use only the criteria listed in the Call for Projects when scoring the applications. Only persons who are members of the evaluation committee may score the applications as part of the selection process.

SANDAG staff may carry out additional tasks as part of the evaluation process that you will not be involved in, such as developing the initial ranked project list from each evaluator's ranked project list, adjusting the initial ranked project list to meet Program requirements, and making the final ranked project list and funding recommendations.

An applicant who is not selected for Program funding may be disgruntled regarding the evaluation process and file a protest with SANDAG. SANDAG has protest procedures for dealing with this scenario. If a protest is filed, the objectivity of the evaluators and the integrity of the evaluation process may be closely scrutinized by persons inside or outside of SANDAG. Additionally, all applications and scoring files are potentially public records subject to disclosure to the public. Therefore, evaluators should exercise care so that their scoring files and other evaluation documents are legible and do not contain comments that could be perceived as ambiguous, discriminatory, or derogatory.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Proprietary or other confidential information that a SANDAG evaluator may be exposed to at SANDAG may never be used in external activities or disclosed to others unless written approval is given in advance by SANDAG's Executive Director or designee.

PROHIBITION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

SANDAG has a policy of nondiscrimination as required by federal and state law due to SANDAG's use of federal and state money to fund contracts. This policy applies to the selection of consultants and contractors. SANDAG's policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, age (over 40), religion, creed, race, nationality, color, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status. All evaluators are expected to abide by this policy when

evaluating applications. SANDAG's policies prohibiting harassment, discrimination, or violence when dealing with SANDAG's employees or using SANDAG's facilities or property also apply. Evaluators suspected of actual or potential discrimination in violation of SANDAG policy will be excused from assisting in the evaluation process.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Conflicts of interest may arise as a consequence of the many and varied roles you play in our community. One of the goals of these Guidelines is to manage real or perceived conflicts of interest. SANDAG has determined that a system of self-disclosure is most effective since conflicts of interest must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Discussion and disclosure generally can resolve issues related to conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest occurs when there is or could be a divergence between an individual's professional, private, or personal relationships or interests and his/her obligations to SANDAG as an evaluator such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the evaluator's actions or decisions are determined by considerations of private benefit, gain, or advantage. A conflict of interest or the appearance of it depends on the situation, and not necessarily on the character or actions of the individual. The appearance of a conflict of interest can be as damaging or detrimental as an actual conflict.

Potential conflicts of interest are not unusual and must be addressed. For example, sometimes people from the private sector are selected to serve as a member of one of SANDAG's evaluation committees because of their experience in a particular industry. Therefore, it is expected that situations may arise where a person that has served as an evaluation committee member may work for a private sector employer or client that will in the future want to submit a proposal or bid to one of the selected Program applicants in response to a future solicitation on an Program-funded project. In order to prevent an actual or perceived conflict of interest, a person serving as an evaluator must disqualify him or herself and the private organization he/she is employed by from submitting a proposal/bid to the agency or receiving compensation from the agency for a prospective period of one year for work related to the Program-funded project for which the agency is conducting its competitive solicitation. This one-year ban also applies to persons who were employed in the public sector when serving as an evaluator, but who eventually take a position as a consultant for, employee of, or owner of a private sector firm. California law states that certain financial interests are automatically a conflict of interest. SANDAG has listed these prohibited interests, as well as others that it chooses to avoid, in the Declaration Concerning Conflicts.

It is wrong for an individual's actions or decisions made in the course of his or her activities to be determined by considerations of personal financial gain or illegal bias. Such behavior calls into question the professional objectivity and ethics of the individual and it also reflects negatively on SANDAG and the agency or employer of the individual. As a SANDAG evaluation committee member you must respect SANDAG's status as a recipient of public funds and conduct your affairs in ways that will not compromise SANDAG's integrity.

For all of the above reasons, evaluators must fill out the "Declaration Concerning Conflicts for Evaluators" and return it to SANDAG before they begin evaluating any applications, and must report potential conflicts that may arise during the evaluation process. Potential conflicts must be reported up until the time an evaluator's role in the evaluation process is complete so that appearances can be separated from reality. If an evaluator believes she/he may have a potential conflict and it arises subsequent to submitting the Declaration Concerning Conflicts for Evaluators, the evaluator has an affirmative duty to immediately disclose any potential conflict of interest to SANDAG. Notification of the actual or potential conflict should be given to the SANDAG staff member overseeing the Program evaluation process. Evaluators with an actual or potential conflict of interest will be excused from assisting in the evaluator process.