**Department of Rehabilitation**

**Interim Grant Solicitation Manual**

**INTERIM GUIDANCE PENDING ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS**

**October 26, 2018**

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# Introduction

This manual is designed to be used by Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) staff during the competitive solicitation process for distributing grant funds using a Request for Application (RFA). This manual describes the steps of the grant solicitation process for grant programs administered through the DOR.

The purpose of the Grant Solicitation Manual (GSM) is to ensure that the solicitation process is:

* Responsive to the needs of the public, grant recipients, and those who receive services under the funded grant.
* Fair and transparent to all stakeholders, including the public and interested parties.

Any deviations from the grant solicitation process identified in this manual shall be for good cause and be documented.

The GSM Toolbox contains forms, templates, and sample documents to be used by DOR staff for guidance and consistency during the RFA process. The toolbox will continue to evolve over time, as needed, to update existing or add new tools to aid in the solicitation process. To access the GSM Toolbox, use the following link (only for DOR staff): [GSM Toolbox](../GSM%20Toolbox%2010.26.18)

All references to statutes and regulations in the GSM and Toolbox are accurate as of the time of publishing. Readers should reference the appropriate statute or regulation to obtain the most current information.

# Commonly Used Terms and Acronyms

The following is a list of terms and acronyms that are frequently used in this Manual:

* Addendum: a written document that clarifies, changes, or revises the solicitation
* ART: Administrative Review Team
* C&PS: Contracts and Procurement Section
* DOR: Department of Rehabilitation
* GSM: Grant Solicitation Manual
* IL: Independent Living
* ILCAD: Independent Living and Community Access Division
* May: optional; permitted to
* OIB: Older Individuals Who Are Blind
* Program: the program (e.g., ILCAD, OIB) releasing the RFA
* Program Deputy: Deputy Director overseeing the Program releasing the RFA
* Program Manager: Manager of the Program releasing the RFA
* Program Staff: Department employees in the Program releasing the RFA
* RFA: Request for Applications (also known as a “solicitation”)
* RFA Program Coordinator: the staff member within the Program releasing the RFA who oversees the development, scoring, and award procedures of the RFA
* RFA Timeline: the schedule of events of the RFA process, from development to grant award
* RFI: Request for Information
* RFP: Request for Proposal
* Shall: Required; mandatory
* SME: Subject Matter Expert. An individual that possesses knowledge and/or experience in a Program area (e.g., ILCAD, OIB, TBI), as described and approved in the evaluator selection materials for the RFA
* Solicitation: RFA
* SSD: Specialized Services Division
* Stakeholders: individuals and organizations with an interest in the Program or the RFA
* TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury
* TRT: Technical Review Team

# PART 1: RESPONSIVE PROCESS

The first guiding principle of the solicitation process is that the solicitation process shall identify the service delivery that is most responsive to the needs of the public, grant recipients, and those who receive services under the funded grant.

# Beginning the RFA Process

DOR employees from the Contracts and Procurement Section (C&PS) work together with DOR Program staff in the RFA process. While Program staff and C&PS generally begin the work and collaborate closely, there are other DOR staff members that may need to be involved in the process at various points before the RFA is released.

The additional staff involved in the RFA process shall vary depending on many factors but may include staff from the Office of Legal Affairs, Deputies, and other impacted DOR Program staff. DOR may seek external subject matter experts (SMEs) to consult on the development of the RFA and scoring criteria and benchmarks. The Program Manager shall work with their Assistant Deputy and Deputy as needed to determine which DOR staff and/or external SME shall be involved in the RFA.

Once the additional staff and external SMEs are identified, the RFA Program Coordinator shall obtain the appropriate signed certification forms from all individuals before they begin participating in the RFA process. For individuals required by law to file a Statement of Economic Interests (form 700), the RFA Program Coordinator shall also obtain their Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. See Section 24: Certifications and Other Documentation for additional information.

DOR may also seek input and feedback from stakeholders before and during the RFA process. The feedback method may include, but not be limited to, Request for Information (RFI), Survey Monkey, advisory body input, or through the bidders’ conference. Documentation to support the RFA feedback process shall be included in the appropriate RFA G drive folder.

# Kick-Off Meeting

Program staff shall organize a kick-off meeting with C&PS, and other DOR staff as needed, to facilitate effective collaboration and ensure that staff involved in the RFA process are sufficiently informed. This meeting is structured to discuss the following:

* Key stages of the grant review process, including the RFA timeline
* Each individual’s roles and responsibilities
* Requirements regarding conflicts of interest, bias, confidentiality, and incompatible activities throughout the process

Prior to the kick-off meeting, C&PS shall confirm that meeting attendees are in compliance with Form 700 and ethics training requirements, as applicable. The names of meeting attendees can be obtained from the Program staff. DOR shall record these discussions in meeting minutes and place a copy in the appropriate G Drive RFA folder.

# Timeline

Prior to the kick-off meeting, the RFA Program Coordinator, in conjunction with C&PS, shall develop a draft timeline with pertinent details to present during the meeting.

The timeline is an internal structure to help guide the RFA Program Coordinator and staff working on the RFA through the various steps involved in the RFA process. Steps such as C&PS and Office of Legal Affairs review are vital to staying on track when developing an RFA. It is essential that all involved parties understand the timeline and their role in helping to keep the RFA release timeline on track. This timeline will be helpful in identifying the Key Action Dates to be included in the RFA.

# Writing the RFA

## Outline of Required Sections in the RFA

The RFA is comprised of many sections that help the potential applicant understand what is being offered and what is required, so the application can be prepared to the specified scope and submitted by the designated deadline.

The RFA shall include the following sections:

* Authority – The code or section that permits the ability to post the grant opportunity.
* Background – A brief synopsis on the program that the grant supports.
* Purpose – A succinct description of what the grant is for, the amount of funding available, overall goal(s), and the intended outcome(s) with metrics for performance and improvement.
* Description of Services – An explanation of the components that each applicant shall address in their submission, including scope of work, targeted communities, and desired activities.
* Minimum Qualifications – A description of requirements for eligibility to apply.
* Key Action Dates – A table with a timeline of events, responsible party, and due dates, such as the following sample:

| Event | Responsible Party | Sample Due Dates |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RFA available to potential applicants | DOR | February 5, 20XX |
| Deadline to submit written questions | Applicant | February 16, 20XX |
| Bidders’ Conference | DOR and Applicant | March 2, 20XX |
| Addendum “Questions and Answers” posted to the DOR website | DOR | March 9, 20XX |
| Application Submission | Applicant | March 23, 20XX by 3:00 pm |
| RFA Screening and Evaluation | DOR | March 26-April 20, 20XX |
| Notice of Intent to Award | DOR | April 27, 20XX |
| Last date to file appeal | Applicant | May 28, 20XX |
| Preparation and execution of grant package | DOR and Applicant | June 1 – June 30, 20XX |
| Grant Effective Date | All | July 1, 20XX |

* Risk Management Plan (if required by the RFA) – This section describes the requirements for the applicants to provide a detailed document of assurances for the safety of participants enrolled in the program funded by the grant. The applicant shall address the areas listed in the RFA, which could include, but not be limited to:

1. Education and Training
2. Policies and Procedures
3. Reporting Systems
4. Background Checks and Fingerprinting
5. Employment of Individuals with Criminal Histories
6. Notification of Personnel Changes
7. Health and Safety Responsibilities
8. Weapons

* Application/Work Plan – This section provides specific categories and subcategories that the applicant shall discuss when drafting the application responses. Also included in this section are the designated points for each scoring category, providing insight for the applicant on which program components to emphasize. Scoring Categories in a work plan typically include:
  + Organizational Structure and Capacity
  + Key Personnel
  + Core Service Delivery
  + Coordination of Services
  + Proposed Budget and Fiscal Planning
* Application Submission Requirements – This section instructs the applicants that applications shall be in an accessible format, contain all required elements, and be delivered by or before the submission deadline.
* Required Format for Application – This section describes the guidelines for ensuring accessibility, submitting the application in both a printed and identical accessible electronic format, and how, where and to whom to deliver the envelope containing the application.
* Electronic Submission – Each application shall provide an accessible electronic copy via email in addition to the printed copies. The electronic submission procedure will be outlined in the RFA.
* Review Process and Criteria – This section describes the typical phases for reviewing applications:
  + The Administrative Review consists of checking each submission for timeliness and completeness of RFA specifications.
  + The Evaluation Panel reviews and scores the applications, using the RFA scoring parameters.
  + The Technical Review Team acts as the consultants to the Evaluation Panel during the evaluation process. The Technical Review Team is comprised of DOR staff who are SMEs of program and administrative policies as it relates to the RFA grant and process.
* Award – This section informs applicants of how and where the award notifications will be posted.
* Appeal Rights – Applicants dissatisfied with an award decision may request a review. This section provides information on the steps and timeline to do so.
* Disposition of Applications – This section informs applicants that documents submitted in response to the RFA become the property of the Department and shall be regarded as public records.
* Agreement Execution and Performance – This section outlines the expected start and completion dates for the awardees and other performance actions.
* Additional Requirements – A general section that provides information on topics such as insurance, debarment, tax delinquency and other terms of doing business with the State.
* Attachments – The final sections are reserved for additional materials such as the document checklist, forms and assurances, risk management plan, grant provisions, and so on.

## Developing Scoring Categories

Program staff shall develop quantifiable criteria for each RFA category to be scored. A description of desired services to be provided by grant projects shall be clearly listed in the RFA for applicants to reference. Each category shall be assigned a numerical score. The categories described in the RFA shall be designed to un-biasedly select applicants’ applications that best fulfill the purpose of the grant funds. The applicant who best describes and clearly relates their program with DOR’s program goals through the specified scoring categories shall be more successful in obtaining grant funding.

Program staff shall clearly separate minimum qualifications and scoring categories in the RFA. Minimum qualifications set a standard for grant applications. If minimum qualifications are not met, the application is disqualified from scoring and will not be considered for grant funding.

DOR typically distributes a total of 100 points for the RFA scoring categories; however, the total scoring points may be higher or lower depending on the purpose and goals of the RFA. The highest points shall be assigned to the category outlining the project design and how it meets the grant goals, and the applicants’ demonstrated capacity to fulfill those goals through the proposed project. Program may establish a minimum score (total points) that applicant proposals must meet to be considered for funding which would be described in the RFA.

## Developing Scoring Benchmarks

The benchmarks shall be included as an attachment in the RFA and provide applicants and evaluators with a guide for scoring by describing what content and quality is expected in responsive applications. A benchmark instruction provides guidance regarding how to evaluate an applicant’s proposed project. The benchmarks are designed so that a quantitative score can be assigned to each category.

Each scoring category has a corresponding benchmark. The benchmark contains a description of content and indicators of the application narrative to be responsive to the corresponding RFA category.

# Review and Approval Process for the RFA before Posting

The RFA Program Coordinator shall obtain the appropriate signed certification forms from all reviewers before they begin participating in the RFA process. If the reviewer is required by law to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), the RFA Program Coordinator shall also obtain their Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. See Section 24: Certifications and Other Documentation for additional information.

Program staff shall develop the needed categories and construct a draft of the RFA, in tandem with a designated C&PS staff member.

Program Manager shall review the completed draft and return it to Program staff if revisions are needed.

Program staff revises and sends clean version to Program Manager

and C&PS for final review.

After final review by both program and C&PS, the Program Manager sends the final RFA to the Program Deputy for review and approval.

Program Deputy notifies Directorate regarding the RFA release date.

Upon Program Deputy approval, the RFA is posted by C&PS.

OPTIONAL Reviewers:

Office of Legal Affairs – Recommended if the RFA is new or substantially different from other RFAs; or upon the recommendation of the Program Deputy or C&PS.

# Bidders’ Conference

Program staff shall organize and host the Bidders’ Conference. A Bidders’ Conference is a required and essential part of every RFA process and provides an opportunity for potential applicants to clarify information and ask questions about the content of the RFA. The purpose of a Bidders’ Conference is to facilitate a process by which potential applicants can hear the responses to questions that were received during the Question and Answer period. Additional questions can come up during the Bidders’ Conference which may receive a response if appropriate. The Bidders’ Conference is also an opportunity for DOR to provide updates or changes to the RFA. All information provided at the Bidders’ Conference shall also be available via an addendum posted to the DOR webpage by C&PS.

The RFA Program Coordinator shall obtain the appropriate signed certification forms from all staff who will participate in the Bidders’ Conference or provide consultation as described in this section before they begin participating in the RFA process. If the staff member is required by law to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), the RFA Program Coordinator shall also obtain their Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. See Section 24: Certifications and Other Documentation for additional information.

## Scheduling the Bidders’ Conference

The Bidders’ Conference is a scheduled event identified on the RFA timeline. To ensure the RFA timeline is followed accurately, Program staff shall coordinate the Bidders’ Conference date, time, location, and call-in number prior to the release of the RFA. The RFA Program Coordinator shall include all details of the Bidders’ Conference in the RFA. Any changes to the date, time, or format shall be made through an addendum to the RFA.

When scheduling the Bidders’ Conference, the RFA Program Coordinator may consider the availability of DOR staff deemed necessary to participate in the Bidders’ Conference such as Program staff, C&PS staff, and staff from other programs that may be impacted by the RFA, as appropriate. Other Department personnel may be present at the Bidders’ Conference, if determined necessary by the RFA Program Coordinator.

## Answering Potential Applicant Questions

The RFA invites potential applicants to send in questions prior to the Bidders’ Conference. The deadline for submitting questions to be addressed at the Bidders’ Conference shall be included in the RFA timeline.

Potential applicants direct their questions to the RFA Program Coordinator or the designated point of contact as described in the RFA. The RFA Program Coordinator distributes the questions to the appropriate Department staff to develop a written response. All questions received by the deadline, including DOR responses, are assembled into the Questions and Answers document that is reviewed at the Bidders’ Conference.

Additional questions may be asked during the conference or received in writing after the deadline, but prior to the Bidders’ Conference. The Questions and Answers document is revised to include the additional questions. The Program Manager shall review the Questions and Answers document to determine if changes in the RFA are necessary. If major changes to the RFA are needed, the Program Manager shall consult with, at a minimum, the Chief of C&PS and the Office of Legal Affairs to determine if an addendum to the RFA should be published.

After the Program Manager’s review, the revised Questions and Answers document shall be published as an addendum to the RFA after the Bidders’ Conference. The publication of an addendum shall be listed in the RFA timeline.

## Developing Responses to Questions and Comments

Program staff shall respond to potential applicants’ questions and comments in writing via the Question and Answers document. Program staff shall ensure that their written responses are clear and concise. All questions shall be responded through the Question and Answer addendum posted during the RFA solicitation process.

If it is necessary to insert or delete a word, phrase or paragraph in the RFA, it is clearer to the potential applicants if the answer expresses the change by showing it rather than describing it. So instead of saying, “eliminate the word ‘not’ in front of the word ‘distribute’ in the second sentence of the third paragraph of Element A”, rewrite the element in total or rewrite the paragraph containing the error.

Program staff may also determine that major changes need to be made to the RFA. If major changes to the RFA are needed, the Program Manager shall consult with the Chief of C&PS, and the Office of Legal Affairs if determined necessary, about publishing an addendum to the RFA.

## Organizing the Bidders’ Questions and Answers

To the extent practical, organize questions and answers that relate to each RFA category. This will help categorize the questions and the answers for program staff, evaluators and applicants.

# Addendum

An addendum documents clarifications, changes or revisions to the solicitation and shall include at a minimum the following information:

* Addendum number (shall be numbered consecutively), solicitation title, and solicitation number.
* Indication of where the revision or change is occurring in the solicitation. This may include deleting and inserting changed solicitation pages.
* Revised or unchanged application due date.

A solicitation may be modified prior to the application response due date. Any addendums to the solicitation shall be in writing. An addendum to a solicitation shall be issued within a reasonable time before the application due date.

The RFA Program Coordinator shall provide C&PS the addendum. C&PS shall post any addendums to the RFA on the DOR Internet.

## Posting Addendum

RFAs and addendums shall be posted by C&PS on the DOR Contracts /Grants Solicitation webpage (<http://dor.ca.gov/Public/Grants.html>).

# Application Submission

Applications shall be received by the C&PS by the deadline specified in the RFA. Any applications received after the specified deadline shall be disqualified and will not be scored. Incomplete applications shall be disqualified and shall not be scored. At the time the Notice of Intent to Award is posted, a letter will be sent to any applicant whose application was disqualified (Refer to Section 15: Issuing the Notice of Intent to Award).

If the RFA is cancelled for any reason, all applications shall be returned to the applicants.

Once the applications are received, the next steps include:

* An administrative review of the application package
* Evaluation panel member selection is finalized
* Empaneled evaluation panel receives orientation, training, and instruction
* Applications are scored
* Post evaluation review is conducted
* Notice of Intent to Award is issued and posted
* Appeal Period
* Grant appeal review if appeals are received
* Decision of grant review committee is rendered
* Grant funds are awarded, and contracts executed

Below is a more complete discussion on the grant solicitation process that occurs after the applications are received.

# Administrative Review

Once the applications are submitted, the Administrative Review Team (ART), which is comprised of a minimum of one program and one C&PS staff, begins reviewing the applications received. The ART’s role is to review the original application packages for completeness using the Administrative Review Checklist to ensure all required documents were submitted by the timeline and the applicant has met the minimum requirements to apply for the grant. The ART staff shall not serve on the evaluation panel.

The RFA Program Coordinator shall obtain the appropriate signed certification forms from all ART members before they begin participating in the RFA process, if they have not submitted one already. If the staff member is required by law to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), the RFA Program Coordinator shall also obtain their Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. See Section 24: Certifications and Other Documentation for additional information.

Any materials submitted that are not required by the RFA shall not be scored. The additional materials shall be separated from the application and returned to the applicant.

Any application that does not contain all of the documentation required by the RFA for submittal will be disqualified and not be scored.

Any application submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed by the ART and not be scored.

C&PS shall confirm that ART members are in compliance with the Form 700 and ethics training requirements, as applicable.

## Non-Profit/Tax Status

The ART will verify registration with the California Franchise Tax Board for the payment of gross receipts tax, and proof of non-profit tax-exempt status pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, 26 USC Section 501(c)(3).

## Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion

State and Federal agencies shall not award assistance to applicants that are debarred or suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs under Federal Executive Order 12549.

Therefore, debarment and suspension eligibility are verified during the Administrative Review process and again prior to grant award.

The grant awardee also certifies by signing the grant agreement that neither it nor its principals or sub grantees are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency. (Reference website: <http://www.sam.gov>).

# Technical Review Team

The Technical Review Team (TRT) acts as the consultants to the Evaluation Panel during the evaluation process. The TRT is comprised of DOR SMEs of program and administrative policies as it relates to the RFA process.

The RFA Program Coordinator shall obtain the appropriate signed certification forms from all TRT members before they begin participating in the RFA process, if they have not submitted one already. If the staff member is required by law to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), the RFA Program Coordinator shall also obtain their Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. See Section 24: Certifications and Other Documentation for additional information.

The TRT is responsible for developing an orientation and instruction guide for the evaluators regarding the process for reviewing and scoring the RFA applications. These documents shall be provided to C&PS for review at least 5 working days prior to orientation day.

As part of the orientation process, the TRT ensures the evaluators receive training and instructions regarding:

* The mission of the department
* The purpose of the grant program
* Relevant regulatory requirements
* The process for evaluating and scoring of the RFA, including provision of comments to support their scores
* Questions related to the process
* Confidentiality, bias, conflicts of interest, and incompatible activities, including obtaining appropriate signed certification forms from all evaluators; and verification of the Form 700 and ethics training completion, as applicable

For additional information, refer to Part 2: Fair and Transparent Process and the Evaluator Orientation Agenda and Script located in the Toolbox.

The TRT is also responsible for reviewing and verifying that the evaluation panel followed applicable scoring instructions and processes in arriving at their final score. If the TRT identifies discrepancies in the scoring or scoring process, they shall elevate the concerns to the RFA Program Coordinator and Program Deputy. The Program Deputy may consult with C&PS and the Office of Legal Affairs and take steps necessary to resolve.

The Program Deputy decides what, if any, action should be taken to address the concerns. The Program Deputy shall document the reason for their decision for the file. Any decision to rescore is made by the Program Deputy in consultation with C&PS and the Office of Legal Affairs, and the reason/justification to rescore shall be documented for the file.

C&PS shall confirm the members of the TRT are in compliance with Form 700 and ethics training requirements, as applicable.

# Selecting the Evaluation Panel

This section will provide an overview of the process of selecting panel members to evaluate applications for the RFA.

## Evaluation Panel Composition

Each RFA shall have an evaluation panel with a minimum of 2 members, but preferably 3. Each evaluation panel may include a diverse membership of DOR employees and outside partners, selected from individuals and organizations that have at least a general knowledge of the grant program being solicited and about DOR. The following is a sample make-up for a panel of 3:

* DOR SME
* Community Member/Stakeholder SME
* DOR employee(s) from other programs and other divisions

An internal or external SME is defined as an individual that possesses knowledge and/or experience in a program area (e.g., IL, OIB, TBI).

Alternate panel members: Depending on the need, program staff may identify at least one alternate evaluation panel member as a contingency. This alternate member will only be part of the Evaluator Orientation and will not score applications or participate in scoring discussions, unless one or more of the selected members can no longer participate.

### Criteria for Selecting a Panel

Based on the purpose of the RFA, Program staff shall determine the knowledge and experience necessary when establishing the criteria for selection of the evaluation panel.

Program staff shall develop the invitation for evaluators and provide to C&PS review. The invitation shall be posted by C&PS on the DOR Internet solicitation page at <http://www.dor.ca.gov/Public/Grants>. The invitation shall include that potential evaluators clearly describe their knowledge and experience for each relevant criterion in their bios. The invitation for evaluators shall identify criteria that will disqualify potential evaluators who may have bias, the appearance of bias or conflicts of interest.

The evaluation panel members shall possess knowledge of and/or work/volunteer experience relevant to the RFA. The following criteria are examples and shall be considered and tailored for each RFA:

* Program subject matter (e.g. TBI, IL, OIB services)
* Knowledge of the RFA grant topic
* State contracting, grant, and/or general administration
* Related program subject matter (e.g. vocational rehabilitation, disability community experience, assistive technology, etc.)
* Providing services to or working with individuals with disabilities
* Non-profit organization

The Program Manager and the RFA Program Coordinator shall review the bios of all potential evaluators and may choose to request a resume and/or interview the potential evaluators as part of the evaluation panel selection process when appropriate. As part of the review, the Program Manager and RFA Coordinator shall confirm the availability of the potential evaluators to score applications based on the RFA’s timeline.

Using an evaluation panel matrix, the Program Manager identifies and submits bios of the proposed evaluators to the Program Deputy and Chief of C&PS for review to address any potential concerns or perceptions of bias or conflicts of interest. If concerns arise, the Office of Legal Affairs may be consulted before final approval of the selected evaluation panel is made.

The RFA Program Coordinator shall obtain the appropriate signed certification forms from any staff involved in reviewing and approving evaluation panel members before they begin participating in the RFA process, if they have not submitted one already. If the staff member is required by law to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), the RFA Program Coordinator shall also obtain their Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. See Section 24: Certifications and Other Documentation for additional information.

Once the evaluation panel selection is finalized and approved by the Program Deputy, the Program Manager shall notify the Chief of C&PS confirming the final evaluators and provide the names and bios.

Potential evaluators shall certify that they do not have a conflict of interest, incompatible activity, bias or the perception of bias both prior to being empaneled, and after being empaneled by the TRT and informed of the applicants, to ensure all potential conflicts are disclosed and addressed. Written documentation shall be maintained in the G drive folder regarding selection of evaluators.

# Scoring

Scoring is a methodology by which an application will be evaluated based on the scoring categories in the RFA.

### Benchmarks for Evaluation Panel Use

Each evaluator uses the benchmarks to determine the general quality level of the response to each category (such as: poor, good and excellent) then assigns a score by choosing one of the points within the range of the benchmark quality level.

Scoring is accomplished by each evaluator by comparing the quality of the applicants’ narrative against each scoring category identified in the RFA. A score is determined by the quality of the applicants’ approach to meet the program goals as described in the RFA. At a minimum, the evaluators shall provide a comment in any category that has received a maximum or minimum score.

Evaluator comments shall be substantive and relate to the criteria associated with the category.

# Procedure for a Tiebreaker

The method of the tiebreaker shall be provided in the RFA. Below is an example of a permissible tiebreaker in the event of a tie bid:

* The TRT shall break the tie by awarding the grant to the application with the highest score in the category with the highest points possible. If those scores are the same, the TRT shall break the tie by awarding the grant to the application with the highest score in the category with the second highest points possible, and so on to break the tie. If there is still no apparent winner, a coin toss shall be performed.

# Post Evaluation Review

An independent reviewer or team who has not been part of the RFA process shall be selected by the Administrative Services Deputy Director to review and verify that the evaluation panel followed the applicable scoring instructions and processes in arriving at their final scores. The review will also assess any procedural errors, evaluator prejudice, and whether evaluators supported their scores with evidence from the relevant applications before grants are awarded. The Program Deputy shall review the results of the post evaluation review prior to posting the Notice of Intent to Award.

If any deficiencies in the post evaluation review are identified that merit restarting the grant process, rescoring of applications, or convening a new evaluation panel, the Program Deputy or Manager shall document and work with program staff to complete the steps to resolve those issues before moving forward with any actions. Applicants shall also be notified to ensure that they are kept informed of any changes to the process.

C&PS shall confirm Post Evaluation Review member(s) are in compliance with Form 700 and ethics training requirements, as applicable.

# Issuing the Notice of Intent to Award

## Description

Once the scores have been tallied and the awardee(s) identified, and prior to issuing a Notice of Intent to Award, the Program Deputy shall inform the Director and Chief Deputy Director of the intended awardee(s) and provide a summary of the evaluation process.

Designated staff from C&PS shall post the Notice of Intent to Award on the Department’s website (<http://www.dor.ca.gov/Public/Intent-2-Award-Notices.html>). Concurrently, C&PS staff shall send letters to any applicants whose applications were disqualified.

## Content

A Notice of Intent to Award contains the following information:

* Name(s) of the successful organization(s)
* Length of the grant period
* Guidelines for reviewing the funding decisions, information about applicants’ appeal rights, and requesting public records
* Contact name and email for additional information regarding the award decision

## Approval Process to Issue the Notice of Intent to Award

Program staff shall compile the needed elements and draft a Notice of Intent to Award. C&PS shall review and provide comments as needed.

Program Manager shall review the completed draft, and return it to Program Staff for revision, if needed.

Program Staff revises and sends a clean version to Program Manager and C&PS for final review.

After final review by both Program and C&PS, Program Manager sends to Program Deputy for review and approval.

Upon Program Deputy approval, C&PS staff shall post Notice of Intent to Award on the Department’s external website.

OPTIONAL Reviewers: Office of Legal Affairs, if the RFA is new or substantially different from other RFAs; or upon the recommendation from the Program Deputy or C&PS.

# Record Keeping and Retention Guidelines

C&PS shall create a master folder in the G:\Public Folder\Grant Information at the onset of each RFA process (specific folder for each RFA). Program and C&PS shall utilize this centralized G drive folder as both a working folder and to save all documents relevant to the RFA’s grant solicitation process, to include, but not be limited to, the following:

* Applications
* Evaluator scoring sheets
* RFA and any addendums
* Kickoff meeting and meeting minutes/documentation
* Stakeholder input (e.g., RFI, Survey monkey results)
* Bidders Conference
* Notice of Intent to award
* Evaluator selection and orientation materials
* Executed grant agreements
* Evaluator invitation, bios, and evaluator selection
* Signed certification forms for conflict of interest, bias, incompatible activities, and confidentiality
* Ethics training completion verifications
* ART and TRT reviews
* Emails pertinent to the process (justifications or decisions)
* Grant Review Committee: Appeal letters, decisions, and relevant documentation (after appeal process is complete)

C&PS shall maintain an original signed copy of the grant(s), any addendums and any official notifications associated with the grant agreement.

At the end of the RFA process, Program staff and the Grant Review Committee Chair shall provide C&PS with all hardcopy documents related to the grant solicitation process for retention purposes.

Records, both electronic and hard copy, shall be retained consistent with DOR’s records retention policy.

# Appeals

The RFA shall contain information about the applicants’ appeal rights and appeal procedure. The RFA shall describe how the appeal will be reviewed, which applicants shall be notified of the appeal, and under what circumstances and how the affected applications may be rescored.

The RFA shall include a reference to California Code of Regulations, title 9, section 7334(d)[[1]](#footnote-2) which states:

(d) Applicant Appeals.

(1) Any applicant for a grant who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Department relative to an application for or discontinuation of grant funding may request a review by the Department. The request shall be in writing, clearly identify all issues in dispute, contain a full statement of the applicant's position with respect to each issue, and contain pertinent facts and reasons in support of the applicant's position. The request shall be submitted to the Department within 30 days of the date of the notification of action.

(2) The Department's Grant Review Committee reviews all such requests. The Committee shall be appointed by the Chief Deputy Director and shall consist of up to three Departmental employees, selected at the Chief Deputy Director's discretion. The Committee shall review the request and shall notify the appellant in writing of the decision within 30 calendar days of the date of the request.

(3) The decision of the Grant Review Committee is final.

Applicants shall email appeals to [grants@dor.ca.gov](mailto:grants@dor.ca.gov) and C&PS shall acknowledge receipt via email. C&PS staff shall regularly check the [grants@dor.ca.gov](mailto:grants@dor.ca.gov) inbox while an RFA process is underway and for 30 calendar days after the Notice of Intent to Award is issued.

As soon as an appeal is received, the Chief of C&PS will notify the Chief Deputy Director with a copy to the Program Deputy and Program Manager. Program Deputy or Manager shall also immediately notify the Office of Legal Affairs to request an attorney to advise them during the appeal process. The Department attorney assigned to the appeal shall work with Program staff to respond to the appeal and to present Program’s position to the Committee.

The Chief Deputy Director shall appoint a Grant Review Committee that shall consist of up to three Department employees selected at the Chief Deputy Director’s discretion. The Chief Deputy Director shall notify C&PS that the selected members for the Grant Review Committee are in compliance with Form 700 and ethics training requirements, as applicable.

The Committee shall review the appeal, any responses to the appeal by Program and affected applicants, and any records relevant to the appeal. The Committee shall deliver its decision within 30 calendar days of the date the applicant’s appeal request is received by DOR. The Committee shall notify all affected parties of its decision in writing. The decision of the Committee is final.

# Grant Review Committee

This section is intended as a guide for the members of the Grant Review Committee. This section shall be provided to the Grant Review Committee in the event of an applicant appeal.

The Chief Deputy Director appoints the Grant Review Committee, as required by state regulations. Before the Chief Deputy Director appoints the Committee, a designated executive assistant in the Director’s Office shall obtain the Chief Deputy Director’s signed certification form, Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. After the Committee members are appointed, the designated executive assistant shall obtain their signed certification forms. If the Committee member is required by law to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), the designated executive shall also obtain their Form 700 and ethics training certificate of completion. See Section 24: Certifications and Other Documentation for additional information.

California Code of Regulations, title 9, section 7334(d)[[2]](#footnote-3) states:

(d) Applicant Appeals.

(1) Any applicant for a grant who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Department relative to an application for or discontinuation of grant funding may request a review by the Department. The request shall be in writing, clearly identify all issues in dispute, contain a full statement of the applicant's position with respect to each issue, and contain pertinent facts and reasons in support of the applicant's position. The request shall be submitted to the Department within 30 days of the date of the notification of action.

(2) The Department's Grant Review Committee reviews all such requests. The Committee shall be appointed by the Chief Deputy Director and shall consist of up to three Departmental employees, selected at the Chief Deputy Director's discretion. The Committee shall review the request and shall notify the appellant in writing of the decision within 30 days of the date of the request.

(3) The decision of the Grant Review Committee is final.

## Initial Notification Letter

Once its members have been appointed, the Grant Review Committee shall send a notification letter to the appellant, Program staff, and any intended grantee whose grant award could be affected by the appeal. The notification letter shall include:

* The names, titles and qualifications of the individuals on the Grant Review Committee
* The method for communicating with the Committee (e.g., submission by email only, appointing a single contact person, requiring that parties copy each other on all communication with the Committee)
* Notice that intended grantees may also respond to the appeal in writing to the Grant Review Committee
* The deadline by which information shall be submitted to the Committee in relation to the appeal
* The information and documents on which the Committee will base its decision, including the RFA and any documents submitted for review
* The date on which the Grant Review Committee’s decision will be issued
* A copy of the appeal submitted
* A statement notifying all parties that the decision of the Grant Review Committee is final under California Code of Regulations, title 9, section 7334(d)(3)

## What Information does the Grant Review Committee review?

The Committee shall review the appeal, any responses to the appeal by Program and affected applicants, and the RFA. Depending on the issues raised in the appeal, the Committee may also review the Grant Solicitation Manual, applications of relevant parties, evaluator bios, resumes, scoresheets, scoring guidelines, and other documents related to the RFA.

The Committee shall ensure that the scoring decision is supported by the record. To do this, the Committee will review the documents and evidence presented, and documents related to the RFA as needed.

The Committee’s decision is limited to the issues raised and documents presented in the appeal.

## What Action can the Grant Review Committee take?

After reviewing the appeal, responses, and related information, the Committee makes its decision.

Examples of actions the Committee may take include, but are not limited to:

* Uphold the grant award to the organization indicated on the Notice of Intent to Award.
* Make a determination that applications should be rescored by a new evaluation panel; in this case, the new scores resulting from the rescoring are not part of the Committee’s decision. Therefore, the results of the rescoring are not final and may be appealed.
* Rescore the applications. In this case, the new scores are part of the Committee’s decision. Therefore, the new scores are final and not subject to appeal. If the Committee rescores the applications itself and finds that its scores affect the award outcome, the Committee shall change the grant award accordingly.

## Issuing a Decision

The Grant Review Committee shall deliver its decision within 30 days of the date of receipt of the applicant’s appeal request. The Committee shall document the reasoning behind its decision. The Committee shall notify all affected parties of its decision in writing. The decision of the Committee is final.

# PART 2: FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS

The second guiding principle of the solicitation process is that the solicitation process be fair and transparent.

To keep the solicitation process fair and transparent, individuals involved in the RFA shall comply with the following policies related to confidentiality, bias, conflicts of interest, and incompatible activities. The policies are designed to preserve the public trust regarding the Departments grant-making activities. Individuals involved in the RFA include, but are not limited to, Program and C&PS staff working on the RFA, external SMEs, and potential and selected evaluation panel members.

C&PS shall also ensure that all individuals involved in the RFA, including evaluators, received training on confidentiality, bias, conflicts of interest, and incompatible activities.

# Confidentiality

Any individual involved in any aspect of the RFA process – from planning and development through final awards – shall keep all unpublished information about the RFA confidential until the Notice of Intent to Award is issued. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that information related to the RFA is published and distributed fairly to all applicants and the public.

Individuals involved in the RFA process shall not discuss applications or the evaluation process with applicants or members of the public until after the Notice has been issued.

Program staff shall explain to Department staff involved in the RFA, evaluators, and SMEs the need for confidentiality throughout the RFA evaluation process and ensure they sign the appropriate certification form. Department staff shall instruct potential and actual evaluators that they are not permitted to share or discuss any information about the applications, scoring process, or scores with any applicants or members of the public until the Notice of Intent to Award has been issued. Any external SMEs involved in the RFA shall comply with these procedures as well.

To protect the confidentiality of the RFA process, documents related to the RFA process shall be kept in a secure location. Staff shall store electronic documents on the G drive in the appropriate RFA subfolder. Physical documents shall be retained in the RFA file, which shall be kept in a secure location. Staff shall consult with the RFA Program Coordinator for questions related to storage of RFA documents. Refer to Part 1, Section 16, Recordkeeping and Retention Guidelines for more details about the records retention requirements.

# Bias

Bias means a preference for or against any applicant. Individuals involved in the RFA, including Program staff, evaluators, and any internal or external SMEs, shall not be biased toward or against an applicant for the RFA.

Even if bias is not present, Program staff shall also avoid the appearance or perception of bias on the part of an individual involved in the RFA. The appearance of bias may exist if an individual involved in the RFA is or was connected to an applicant for the RFA as an employee, board member, volunteer, recipient of services, or in another fashion. The appearance of bias may also exist if the individual has a relative connected to an applicant.

If the appearance of bias exists on the part of any individual involved in the RFA, the Program shall consult with C&PS and the Office of Legal Affairs regarding the appearance of bias. The individual in question may still work on the RFA if the Program documents, in writing, why it believes actual bias does not exist and if the Program Deputy approves the individual’s continued involvement in the RFA. These policies also apply to any external SMEs and evaluators involved in the RFA.

# Conflicts of Interest

## What is a Conflict of Interest, generally?

California state law describes that a conflict of interest exists if a decision will have a financial impact on the individual involved in the decision. Some of the laws related to conflicts of interest are provided for reference below. For the purposes of individuals involved in the RFA process, a conflict of interest may exist if there is a financial connection or a personal connection between the individual and an applicant for the RFA.

An individual may have a conflict of interest in relation to the RFA process if the individual has a personal or financial connection to an applicant for the RFA.

Some examples of a personal connection are:

* Having a family member employed, current or in past, by an applicant organization
* Serving on the board of an applicant organization
* Current or past employee of the applicant organization

Some examples of a financial connection are:

* Receiving payment from an applicant organization
* Having a family member receive payment from an applicant organization

Certain conflicts of interest shall disqualify individuals from participating in the RFA process. An individual has a disqualifying conflict of interest if they know or have reason to know that they have a disqualifying financial interest in the outcome of the RFA. “Disqualifying financial interest” means that the outcome of the RFA process will have a reasonably foreseeable material effect on the individual or a member of their immediate family or on any of the following financial interests:

* Any business entity in which they or their immediate family has an investment worth at least $2,000
* Any real property in which they or their immediate family has an interest of at least $2,000
* Any source of income, including commission income and incentive income as defined in 18700.1, amounting to a total of at least $500, provided or promised to, and received by them within 12 months before the grant award is made
* Any business entity in which the they are a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or hold any position of management
* Any donor of, or any intermediary or agent for a donor of, a gift or gifts amounting to a total of at least $470 provided to, received by, or promised to them within 12 months before the grant award is made

For more information, please refer to Cal. Gov. Code, tit. 2, section 18700 or contact the Department’s Office of Legal Affairs.

Program staff shall be sensitive to both actual and perceived conflicts of interest. Individuals involved in the RFA process shall be instructed to immediately contact the RFA Program Coordinator if they believe they may have a conflict of interest in relation to their involvement in the RFA. The RFA Program Coordinator may contact the Program Deputy and the Office of Legal Affairs if further analysis is needed. If the Program Deputy determines that a conflict of interest exists, the staff member cannot participate in the RFA process.

Finally, Department staff involved in the RFA shall complete a Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) if they are required to do so by the Department’s Conflict of Interest Code (see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 9, chapter 14). Other state employees shall consult the Conflicts of Interest Codes for their respective departments to determine if they are Form 700 filers.

All state employees involved in the RFA shall also fill out and submit a Certification Form, regardless of whether or not they are required to file a Form 700.

## Select State Laws related to Conflicts of Interest

[Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, sec. 18700](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/I915BA2B8827A449FAE112320FC96DFB9?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default)) states: A public official at any level of state or local government has a prohibited conflict of interest and may not make, participate in making, or in any way use or attempt to use his or her official position to influence a governmental decision when he or she knows or has reason to know he or she has a disqualifying financial interest. A public official has a disqualifying financial interest if the decision will have a reasonably foreseeable material financial effect, distinguishable from the effect on the public generally, directly on the official, or his or her immediate family, or on any financial interest described in subdivision (c)(6)(A-F) herein.

[Cal. Gov. Code sec. 87100](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=87100.) states: No public official at any level of state or local government shall make, participate in making or in any way attempt to use his official position to influence a governmental decision in which he knows or has reason to know he has a financial interest.

[Cal. Gov. Code sec. 87103](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=87103.) states, in part: A public official has a financial interest in a decision within the meaning of Section 87100 if it is reasonably foreseeable that the decision will have a material financial effect, distinguishable from its effect on the public generally, on the official, a member of his or her immediate family…

# Incompatible Activities

Incompatible activities are defined in law and regulation in Cal. Gov. Code sec. 19990 and in Cal. Code Regs., tit. 9, section 7142. DOR staff involved in the RFA are expected to comply with those provisions and shall not engage in any employment or other activity which is incompatible with their duties related to the RFA. Other individuals involved in the RFA shall not engage in any employment or other activity which is incompatible with their participation and duties related to the RFA.

In particular, evaluators shall not engage in any employment or other activity which is incompatible with their duties as an evaluator for the RFA. Program staff shall provide all potential evaluators with information on incompatible activities before the evaluators are empaneled. Program staff may use the Information Sheet for Evaluators contained in the Toolbox for this purpose.

All potential evaluators shall be instructed that they are expected to comply with the incompatible activities’ information provided. If a potential evaluator feels that they cannot comply, they shall contact the RFA Program Coordinator as soon as possible. A potential evaluator who cannot comply with the incompatible activities’ information cannot serve on the evaluation panel.

Finally, if the individual involved in the RFA is a Department employee, Program staff shall confirm a copy of the employee’s DR641 – Incompatible Activities Statement is on file before the evaluators are empaneled.

# Addressing Bias, Conflicts of Interest, and Incompatible Activities with Evaluators

TRT shall communicate with potential evaluators about bias and conflicts of interest before the evaluation panel members are empaneled. TRT shall explain to potential evaluators what conflicts of interest are, and the need to avoid them. TRT shall also explain the need to avoid bias and the appearance of bias. TRT shall provide information and the certification form to all potential evaluators. If the evaluators are unable to certify/sign the certification, they cannot participate in the evaluation process.

Program staff shall review the bios of each potential evaluator to determine if a conflict of interest, incompatible activity, bias, or the appearance of bias exists. An individual shall not serve on the evaluation panel if there is evidence of a disqualifying bias or conflict of interest.

Program staff shall also be careful to avoid the perception or appearance of bias on the part of an evaluator. If the appearance of bias exists on the part of any evaluator, the Program shall consult with C&PS and the Office of Legal Affairs regarding the appearance of bias. The individual in question may still serve as an evaluator if the Program documents, in writing, why it believes actual bias does not exist and if the Program Deputy approves the evaluator’s continued involvement in the RFA.

Program staff may ask the potential evaluators follow-up questions about their connections to any applicant. There are certain connections that, on their own, do not constitute a conflict of interest. For example, a potential evaluator may have attended the same social function as an employee or board member of an applicant organization. This connection alone does not constitute a conflict of interest. Also, social media connections such as Facebook “likes,” Twitter follows or retweets, or LinkedIn connections do not, on their own, constitute a conflict of interest.

To determine if a conflict of interest, incompatible activity, bias, or the appearance of bias exists, the Program staff may ask potential evaluators questions such as:

* Does the potential evaluator work for an applicant, either as an employee or as a volunteer? Have they worked for, or with, an applicant in the past?
* Does the potential evaluator serve on the board of an applicant, or did they ever do so in the past?
* Does the potential evaluator have a financial connection to an applicant? For example, are they paid by the applicant, directly or indirectly, as an employee, contractor, lobbyist, etc.?
* Will the potential evaluator face a monetary gain or loss as a result of the grant award?
* Does the potential evaluator receive services from an applicant, or have they received services from an applicant in the past?
* Does the potential evaluator have a family member who works or worked for an applicant?
* Does the potential evaluator have a family member who serves or served on the board of an applicant?
* Does the potential evaluator have a family member who receives or received services from an applicant?
* If letters of recommendation were submitted with applications, is the evaluator associated with one of the recommenders?

A potential evaluator that answers “yes” to any of the above questions or discloses an association to an applicant shall be reviewed further to determine if they can serve on the evaluation panel. If Program staff has further questions about a potential evaluator’s ability to serve on the evaluation panel, they shall consult with the RFA Program Coordinator, Program Manager, and the Office of Legal Affairs as needed. The individual in question may still serve as an evaluator if the Program documents, in writing, why it believes that there is no bias, conflict of interest, or incompatible activity; and if the Program Deputy approves the evaluator’s continued involvement in the RFA.

Certain conflicts of interest will disqualify potential evaluators from participating in the RFA process. Refer to Section 21: Conflicts of Interest, Part A for more details on what constitutes a disqualifying financial interest.

# Certifications and Other Documentation

The RFA Program Coordinator shall provide all individuals involved in the RFA with Information and Certification sheets corresponding to their role in the RFA process. Potential evaluators shall certify that they do not have a conflict of interest, incompatible activity, bias or the perception of bias both prior to being empaneled, and after being empaneled by the TRT and informed of the applicants, to ensure all potential conflicts are disclosed and addressed. Further, that the evaluators understand the requirement to keep all information confidential. The certification shall be signed before the evaluators meet to review applications. The signed forms shall be collected by Program staff before the evaluators are empaneled. Program staff shall retain documentation verifying the date the signed forms are collected. For example:

* If the signed forms are emailed to Program staff, the email with the date and time of receipt shall be retained with the signed form.
* If the signed form is mailed or hand-delivered to Program staff, the form shall be date-stamped.
* If Program staff wish to use an alternative form, they shall consult with the Office of Legal Affairs and the C&PS. Program staff shall also document in writing the reason for the use of the alternative form.

If the evaluator is a State employee, C&PS shall request the evaluator’s most recent Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), if the evaluator is required by law to submit one. They shall also request a copy of the State employee evaluator’s current ethics training certificate of completion. C&PS shall ensure the receipt of this form before the evaluation panel is empaneled. State employee evaluators shall also sign the Certification Form and provide the signed form to Program staff before the evaluators are empaneled.

All state employees involved in the RFA shall also fill out and submit a Certification Form, regardless of whether or not they are required to file a Form 700.

For any evaluator who is disqualified for conflict of interest, incompatible activities, bias or perceived bias, the RFA Program Coordinator, in conjunction with the TRT, shall document the reason in the RFA G drive folder.

# Responding to Public Records Act Requests

Under the California PRA, anyone is entitled to view or obtain a copy of a public record maintained by DOR (See [Cal. Gov’t. Code sec. 6250 et. seq.](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=7.&title=1.&part=&chapter=3.5.&article=1.)). A request for records may be made at any time and in any format. There is no special form for PRA requests.

From the time that the Notice of Intent to Award is posted, Program staff shall expect that applicants and other members of the public may request records related to the RFA.

All documents related to the RFA process are public record. So once the Notice of Intent to Award is issued, Department staff may disclose documents related to the RFA, including applications and score sheets, to the public.

## Receiving a PRA Request

A request for records under the PRA may be made to DOR’s Communications Office. Communications will send a copy of the request to the RFA Program Coordinator, the Program Manager, and the Chief of C&PS.

Alternatively, a request for records under the PRA may come directly to Program staff. As soon as Program staff receives a request for records, they shall contact Communications at [Legislation.Communications@dor.ca.gov](mailto:Legislation.Communications@dor.ca.gov) . Program staff shall provide Communications, and the Chief of C&PS, with a copy of the PRA request and the date on which the request was received. If an attorney in the Office of Legal Affairs has been assigned to this RFA, notify them of the PRA request as well.

## Gathering Records to respond to a PRA Request

Under state law, the Department is required to respond to PRA requests within ten calendar days. In this response, the Department must notify requestors as to when the records will be available. Communications will work with appropriate DOR staff to clarify exactly what documents are being requested and to respond to the PRA request. Communications shall instruct Program and other DOR staff on how to gather and provide the necessary records to Communications.

## What is subject to Disclosure under the PRA?

Most documents created for an RFA shall be subject to disclosure under the PRA. This includes, but is not limited to, applications submitted, scoring instructions, evaluator bios, and score sheets.

Most emails are also subject to disclosure under the PRA, with the exception of attorney-client privileged communications. If any communications related to the RFA were to or from a Department attorney, contact the assigned attorney to discuss the PRA request. The attorney may want to review the emails being considered for disclosure before the records are released to the requestor.

For questions regarding disclosure of records under the PRA, contact Communications or the Office of Legal Affairs.

## Releasing Records in response to a PRA Request

Communications is responsible for the release of records to the requestor. Communications will instruct appropriate DOR staff to provide them with the records, so they can prepare them for release.

1. The regulation as cited below is current as of the time of publication of the GSM. At the time of an appeal, Program staff shall verify whether the regulation has changed. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The regulation as cited below is current as of the time of publication of the GSM. At the time of an appeal, Program staff shall verify whether the regulation has changed. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)