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# The Panel Review Process

## FALCON

### November 3, 2018

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Past Panel Manager**

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BIOENERGY, CLIMATE,  
AND ENVIRONMENT

FOOD PRODUCTION  
AND SUSTAINABILITY

YOUTH, FAMILY,  
AND COMMUNITY

FOOD SAFETY  
AND NUTRITION

INTERNATIONAL  
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# USER INSPIRED SCIENCE TRANSFORMING LIVES

*“Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.”*

[Oprah Winfrey](#)



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# ***Every step of the process is based on Integrity – first and last***

## **Presentation Topics:**

- **Evaluation Criteria**
- **Role of Panel Managers and Panelists**
- **Panel Types - In Person or Virtual**
- **The Review Process**
- **Volunteering to Serve as Panelists**
- **Anything on Your Mind!!!!**



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# Evaluation Criteria

- **Peer Review Process**
- **Program Evaluation Criteria in RFAs**
  - **Scientific Merit**
  - **Qualifications of the Project Team**
  - **Institutional Capability and Availability of Facilities**
  - **Project Planning and Management**
  - **Relevance to Agriculture and Program Priorities**
- **Program Description in RFAs**



# Role of the Panel Manager

- **Temporary NIFA Employee to Manage the Process**
- **Selects Panelists who are active in Education, Extension or Research**
  - **Not submitting to program**
  - **Expertise, Ethnicity, Gender**
  - **Blend of Experience with Panel Reviews**
  - **Institutional Affiliation (public, private)**
  - **Geographic Distribution**
  - **Professional Rank or Title**
- **Considerations – COI, Confidential, Research Misconduct, Implicit Bias, Respect**
- **Processes – Structured, Timely, Repetitive, Solicit All Voices**
- **Assign Proposals and Monitor the Review Process**
- **Guide, Orientation, Training**
- **Read All Proposals**
- **Conduct Panel Review, Debrief Panel, Report to NIFA Administrator, Review Panel Summaries, Written Report**
- **NO OPINION ON PROPOSALS**



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# Role of the Panelists

- **Understand Program Purpose and Evaluation Criteria**
- **Read Assigned Proposals (primary, secondary, tertiary)**
- **Conduct Independent, Individual Reviews**
  - **Prepare Written Summary and Rating**
- **Review Other Assigned Panelist Reviews**
- **Read All Proposals (as time allows)**
- **Actively Participate in the Panel Discussions**
- **Contribute to the Written Panel Summary**

*Note: Panelists selected (who) and panel discussions (what) are confidential !!!*

# Panel Types – In Person (seated) or Virtual

- **In Person Panels**
  - **Historically the Norm**
  - **Travel to and from**
  - **Removed from “Home”**
  - **See and Feel the Discussions**
  - **Networking**
- **Virtual Panels**
  - **USDA Goal Alignment**
  - **Reduced Costs, Environmental Footprint, Easier for Panelists, Panelist Surveys, Literature**
  - **Rigor and Quality Consistent with In Person Panels**
  - **Time Zone Differences**
  - **Potential Distractions – Drop In Visitors, Phone, Teaching, Technology**



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# Review Process

- **NIFA Peer Review System (PRS)**
- **Individual Reviews, Written Summary, Rating**
- **Review Team Reviews**
- **Discussion with Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, Others**
- **Consensus Positives, Negatives and Overall Synthesis**
  - **Overall Rating and Ranking with “Placement on Board”**
  - **Panel Team Written Summary**
- **All Proposals Initially Ranked – then Final Re-ranking**

*Note: Specific Panel discussions of individuals are confidential !!!*





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# Volunteering to Serve

- **Secure Support from Institutional Administrator**
- **Contact Relevant NIFA National Program Leader**
- **Have a Current Presence on the Web**
- **Talk to Colleagues who have Served**
- **Benefits: Improved Successful Grant Applications**
- **When asked, communicate and do an excellent job!!**



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# Questions?????