

Welcome to Peer Reviewer Orientation

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) Administration for Community Living U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Home Page¹ and Slides 1 and 2

Welcome to the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research Online Peer Reviewer Orientation.² NIDILRR supports research, development, and related activities designed to contribute to improved community living and participation, employment, and health and function outcomes of people with disabilities. NIDILRR funds are awarded competitively through a rigorous peer review process. This online orientation is to provide general information about NIDILRR's peer review process.

The following information will make your experience with this training better:

- This training has been designed to fit a 1024 by 627 or bigger screen. If this frame fits your monitor, you should be fine. If not, please adjust your screen resolution.
- The training has been tested in Firefox, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Safari and Opera. At present it has played fine in these versions, but if you encounter a problem, please try another browser.
- You will need [Flash Player](#) to play this content.
- Other resources in this presentation include PDFs and Microsoft Word documents. You will need [Adobe Reader](#) and a program capable of reading Word documents. Word Viewer is no longer available to download. Microsoft recommends using the Word Mobile App or an online document portal such as Google Drive or Dropbox.
- There is audio content only on 2 slides —Sample Panel Discussion (slides 25 and 26). Closed captioning has been included for these slides.

¹ To access on line: <https://naricforms.naric.com/>

² The contents of this web site were developed under a contract from the Administration for Community Living's National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (contract #GS-06F-0726Z). However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and Human Services, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

- If you are using a keyboard for navigation, we have followed Adobe’s best practices guide and have set the training to advance when you select “enter” or “return” from the keyboard.
- Resource materials, such as sample documents, are available through links on the first page of the online training.

HELP Slide

Access the Help button on the lower left side of the screen

How to Use this Training

Screen Settings:

- For optimal viewing of this course, please make sure your screen settings are at least 1024 by 627

Navigation:

- In the lower right section of the screen are the Back and Next buttons that allow the user to move backward or forward throughout the orientation. The button on the top left, Menu, takes you to a slide with the links to each of the major topic areas.
- There are also three icons below the navigation buttons:
 - cc: turns closed captions on and off
 - audio symbol: turns the course audio on and off
 - x: exits the orientation

Program Help:

- For questions about NIDILRR or the Peer Review Process please contact NIDILRR at: NIDILRR-Grants@ACL.HHS.GOV
- If you would like to volunteer to be a Peer Reviewer please send a letter of interest and resume to: NIDILRR-Grants@ACL.HHS.GOV

Resources Slide

Access the Resources button on the lower left side of the screen

Select each item to download:

- [ARM Reviewer Process Model 6 User’s Manual](#)
- [ARM Primary Reviewer Process Model 6 User’s Manual](#)
- [Sample Technical Review Form \(TRF\)](#)
- [Sample Summary of Panel Discussion](#)

For help with the ARM software, contact the Helpdesk

Phone: 1-866-424-2637

Email: reviews@grantsolutions.gov

Menu Slide

Access the Menu button on the upper left side of the screen

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Objective

The objective of this orientation is to provide general information about NIDILRR's peer review process and peer reviewer responsibilities.

- If you are serving as a peer reviewer for a competition, you will find useful information about your role and specific procedures to follow.
- If you are interested in becoming a peer reviewer for NIDILRR, you will gain an understanding of the general requirements for peer reviewer participation.

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Orientation Topics

This orientation addresses the following main topics:

- Introduction
- The Peer Review Process
 - Pre-Review
 - Panel Discussion
 - Post-Review
- Competition-Specific Information
- Conclusion

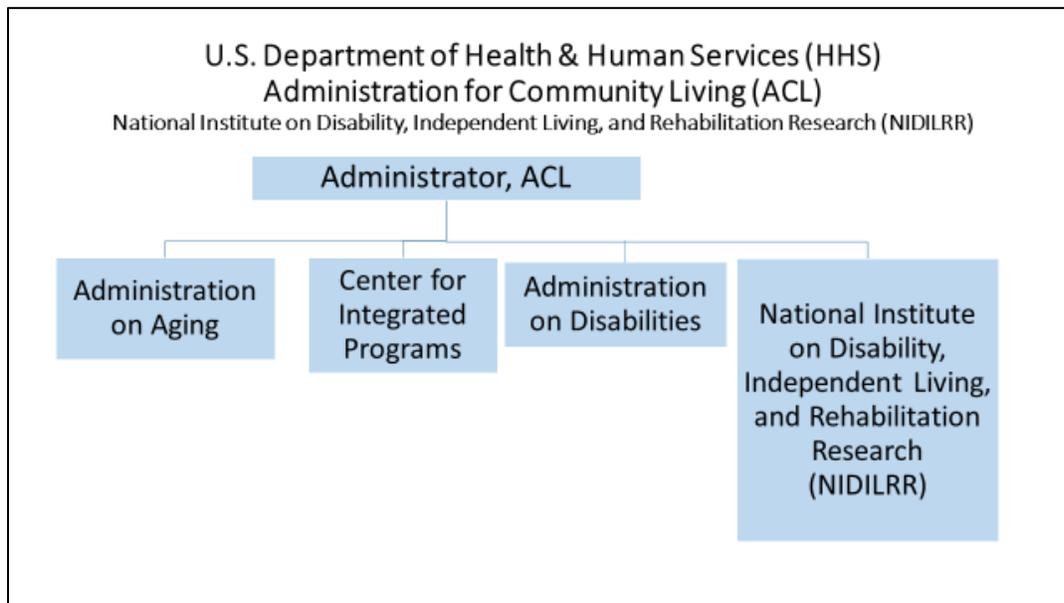
NEED HELP?

If you need help operating the training or have a program question for NIDILRR, select the Help button in the lower left corner. To view Resource files, select the Resource button.

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Introduction: About NIDILRR

NIDILRR is part of the Administration for Community Living at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as shown in the organizational chart below. The legislative authority for NIDILRR is Title II of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended.



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Introduction: About NIDILRR

NIDILRR's mission is:

- To generate new knowledge and to promote its effective use to:
 - Improve the abilities of individuals with disabilities to perform activities of their choice in the community, and
 - Expand society's capacity to provide full opportunities and accommodations for its citizens with disabilities.

Learn more about NIDILRR:

<https://www.acl.gov/about-acl/about-national-institute-disability-independent-living-and-rehabilitation-research>

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Introduction: Importance of Peer Review

- At NIDILRR, the results of the peer review process directly inform funding decisions. Therefore, your participation in peer review is critical and contributes to shaping the direction of the field.
- The purpose of peer review is to obtain the best assessments of researchers and other experts, including individuals with disabilities, regarding applications submitted for funding.

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Introduction: General Peer Review Requirements

- **In NIDILRR reviews, you must thoroughly read, score, and discuss every application that is assigned to your panel.**
- Peer review at NIDILRR is conducted electronically. You must complete online forms and participate in panel discussion via teleconference.
- Participation in peer review is a significant time commitment:
 - **Pre-Review Requirements:**
 - Prior to the review, you will receive applications and other review materials. Applications are available in PDF/Word formats.
 - You must immediately review the applications for conflict of interest and alert NIDILRR's Competition Manager to any concerns.
 - You must read and score all applications individually, and enter initial scores and narratives into NIDILRR's online system for peer review before the first day of the panel review meeting.
 - **Panel Requirements:**
 - As a Peer Reviewer you must commit 3 days for Panel review, and be fully available on each of those 3 days.
 - You must participate in the discussion of all applications.
 - Immediately following the panel's discussion of an application, you can revise the scores and comments that you previously entered, as needed.
 - You will be named Primary Reviewer for some applications. As Primary Reviewer, you will lead discussion and prepare summaries of the panel discussion for those applications.
 - You will be named Secondary Reviewer for some applications. As Secondary Reviewer, you will take notes on the discussion and help the Primary Reviewer prepare the summary of panel discussion for those applications.

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Introduction: Key Roles

There are several key participants in the NIDILRR peer review process.

1. **NIDILRR Competition Manager:** oversees entire competition.

2. **NIDILRR Panel Monitors** are two staff members who are assigned to each panel. Panel Monitor One facilitates panel discussion and provides technical assistance while Panel Monitor Two provides feedback to the reviewer on the technical review forms.
3. **The Logistics Contractor** provides administrative and coordination services.
4. **Accommodation Specialists:** NIDILRR provides interpreters and readers as needed to ensure full participation of reviewers with disabilities.

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Introduction: Confidentiality

NIDILRR safeguards the confidentiality of each applicant. You are strictly prohibited from discussing the elements listed below with anyone not involved in the review process, at any time; or from discussing them with your fellow panelists outside of the formal panel discussion.

- Applications
- Comments
- Evaluations
- Review scores
- Names of applicants
- Names of other reviewers

**NIDILRR also maintains your confidentiality as a reviewer.*

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Introduction: Conflict of Interest

NIDILRR screens reviewers and applications for conflict of interest in advance of the review. We need reviewers' help in detecting a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict exists if one or more of the following situations is present:

The Reviewer

- Serves as an employee or consultant to an applicant.
 - You agreed to serve as an employee or consultant on a project for which funding is being sought in an application under review, or have been offered the opportunity to do so and have not yet accepted or declined, pending whether a grant is awarded.
- Has personal financial interests in the outcome of the competition.
 - Your personal financial interests will be affected by the outcome of the competition.

- Helped prepare an application in the competition.
 - You helped prepare an application in the competition, even if you have no financial interest in the outcome of that application.
- Has a relationship with an entity or individual that has a financial interest in the outcome of the competition.
 - Relationships include:
 - a) Your spouse, child, a member of your household, or any relative with whom you have a close relationship;
 - b) Any employer you have served within the last 12 months;
 - c) Any person or organization with whom you are negotiating or have an arrangement concerning future employment; and
 - d) Any professional associate with whom you are currently (or within the last 12 months) conducting research or other professional activities.
- Has a personal relationship with an applicant, which may be perceived as a conflict.
 - You have, or have had, a personal relationship that would impair your ability to impartially review any application in the competition.

IMPORTANT

Review all applications for conflict of interest upon receipt and report potential conflicts to the NIDILRR Competition Manager within 3 days.

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Pre-Review: Materials

Before the review, you will receive a packet of materials and instructions. The packet includes:

- A copy of all applications
- Guidance and forms pertinent to the review process
- Required administrative forms
- Instructions to access the electronic peer review system that NIDILRR uses for all grant reviews.

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Pre-Review: Application Review Module (ARM)

The GrantSolutions Application Review Module (ARM) is a web-based peer review system that is used to collect reviewer scores and comments. NIDILRR staff will access the system to monitor reviewer progress.

You must register to use the ARM system as soon as you receive your packet of applications and materials.

You will need to carefully read the [ARM Reviewer Process Model 6 User's Manual](#), and [the ARM Primary Reviewer Process Model 6 User's Manual](#), register, and ensure your information is properly saved and submitted in the system. This is essential to the success of the process.

Adobe Acrobat Reader can be downloaded here: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

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Pre-Review: Application Review Module (ARM)

Tips for Success with ARM:

- Write and save your narrative and scores on your hard drive and then copy and paste them into the forms on the system. Be sure to paste into the correct area.
- When working in ARM, save your work frequently. Hit the save button as often as possible, including as you move from one screen to the next.
- To help ensure the quality of your work, please use the spell check feature in ARM to be sure your spelling and grammar are correct.

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Pre-Review: Application Review Module (ARM) (Continued)

Tips for Success with ARM:

- As a reviewer, use the Application Selection Screen in ARM to view a list of the applications that you are responsible for reviewing, and to access the review forms that you must complete for each application.
- Do not finalize the Technical Review Form for any particular application until the panel has discussed that application, and you are certain that your scores and comments are ready to be submitted to the NIDILRR panel monitor.

NEED HELP?

Should you have any questions about the ARM software, please contact the Helpdesk at 1-866-424-2637 or email reviews@grantsolutions.gov.

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Pre-Review: Individual Review Process

Upon receipt of applications and before the Panel Discussion, you must complete several tasks:

1. Read the application package and familiarize yourself with the program purpose and application requirements. Check each application for conflict of interest and immediately notify the Competition Manager with any concerns within 3 days of receipt of the materials.
2. Thoroughly read and score every application that is assigned to your panel. Write preliminary comments, assign initial scores and save your information in the ARM system for every application.
3. Prepare for assigned role as Primary or Secondary reviewer per the panel assignment sheet.

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Pre-Review: Technical Review Form (TRF)

Prior to the start of the discussion, you will read each application assigned to your panel and complete a Technical Review Form (TRF) in ARM. The form is intended to assist you in providing a detailed review of each application.

- The TRF includes the evaluation criteria as stated in the Application Package. Only these criteria are to be considered when reviewing an application.
- Each criterion has one or more subcriteria for you to consider when scoring. A maximum score for each criterion is indicated. You assign scores (whole numbers only) to each of the criteria.

[View sample TRF](#)

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Pre-Review: Scoring

Please follow these guidelines below when scoring applications:

- Consider only information contained in the application. Personal knowledge of the applicant or opinion should not be considered in scoring.
- Consider each application independently. Do not compare applications.
- Score applications according to the criteria.
- Deduct points in proportion to the extent of the weakness. You must provide a written rationale in the TRF when you deduct points under a criterion.
- You must provide a description of strengths whenever you provide full points under a criterion.
- You may adjust your score at any time before or immediately following the teleconference panel discussion of each application.

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Pre-Review: TRF Comments/Rationale

Below are NIDILRR guidelines for providing accurate and constructive feedback.

- Be specific.
- Evaluate rather than describe.
- Document your evaluation with specific page references.
- Be tactful, constructive, and avoid pejorative comments.
- Use proper grammar, correct spelling, and complete sentences.

View sample of well-written comments:

The applicant addressed the subcriterion about “data collection and measurement techniques” rather well. They provided thorough, well-referenced information about the validity and reliability of the data collection tools that they plan to use and the general appropriateness of those tools for their target population (application pages 57-60). Related to the subcriterion on data collection and measurement, however, I did have some concerns about the potential data collection burden on the research participants. The tools that they plan to use in their data collection efforts are all quite long, and their proposed use of 7 different tools in one survey (as described on page 61) is likely to lead to attrition from their sample.

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Pre-Review: TRF Comments/Rationale (Continued)

Avoid these shortcomings below in preparing your comments.

- Comment provides too little information (e.g., “yes” or “good”).
- Comment summarizes the application and does not give critical analysis of the application's fit with the selection criteria.
- Comment is not clearly related to the criterion.
- Comment is inconsistent with scores.
- Comment is inaccurate.
- Comment is facetious, pejorative, or otherwise inappropriate or unprofessional.
- Comment contains judgments that are outside the scope of responsibility of the reviewer.

View sample of comments that will be returned for revision:

[Note: This sample intentionally includes misspelled words]

Data plan=mostly ok. One big concern, though. Applicant must not have been thinking clearly when they decided to use all of these different tools in their survey. Way too many, so there's no way people are going to finish. They're smart enough to know this, so this part of the proposal should have been a lot better. But, the applicant is a great school, so they'll probably be able to do data collection pretty well.

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Pre-Review: Entering Scores and Comments

When entering your scores and comments into ARM:

- It is recommended that you **SAVE** often throughout the process.
- It is also good practice to write and save your narratives and scores on your hard drive or other storage device, and then copy and paste them into the TRF in ARM, being careful to paste into the correct criterion windows and the correct TRF.

Do not finalize your TRF for any particular application until after the panel has discussed that application, and you are certain that your scores and comments are ready to be submitted to the NIDILRR panel monitor.

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Panel Discussion

- The next part of the Peer Review process is the panel discussion which is held via teleconference and is typically scheduled for 3 full days. *Please be sure your schedule is free for each of the 3 days.*
- Each panel is composed of 3-5 reviewers who have been selected for complementary areas of expertise.
- The purpose of the panel teleconference is for the expert reviewers to discuss each application with each other. Reviewers bring different areas of expertise to the panel. It is critical that every reviewer come fully prepared to discuss every application in detail, so that the evaluation of each application is based on the panel's full range of expertise.
- The discussion will inform each reviewer's final score.

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Panel Discussion: Primary and Secondary Reviewer

Primary and Secondary Reviewers are designated for each application. Their responsibilities are listed below. These are additional responsibilities, above and beyond the full review that each reviewer provides for each application that is assigned to the panel.

Primary:

- Presents overview of application based on abstract.
- Prepares the Summary of Panel Discussion based on the panel's feedback, after the discussion is completed.

Secondary:

- Takes notes during panel discussion.
- Helps Primary Reviewer complete the Summary of Panel Discussion if needed.

General Reviewers: All reviewers provide a full review of each application that is assigned to the panel.

Slide 24**Panel Discussion: Panel Monitors**

Panel Monitors are NIDILRR staff members who serve as facilitators and advisors. They ensure the panel follows Department of Health and Human Services guidelines and do not participate in the substantive discussion of the applications.

Panel Monitor (PM1)

- Coordinates logistics and communications.
- Provides information on procedures and policy.
- Facilitates and monitors the panel discussion.
- Reviews the Summary of Panel Discussion document

Panel Monitor (PM2)

- Reviews and provides feedback on the TRF to individual reviewers by e-mail.
- Checks TRFs for adequacy and completeness.

Slides 25**Panel Discussion**

Reviewers bring different areas of knowledge and experience to bear on the discussion. The panel discussion follows a standard process to ensure all perspectives are heard.

Slide 26**VOICEOVER:**

[Note: The following is a transcript of the discussion that can be heard when viewing the presentation. Closed captions can be activated when viewing the presentation]

The NIDILRR Panel Monitor, Primary Reviewer, Secondary Reviewer, and other reviewers all play a part in the panel discussion.

The Panel Monitor welcomes everyone and facilitates the panel discussion starting with the Primary Reviewer's opening statement.

NIDILRR Panel Monitor: "Hi everyone. Let's jump right into your discussion of the application submitted by Central State University. Leah, you're the Primary Reviewer for this application. Can you please give us a brief overview of what they're proposing – just to re-orient everyone to this particular application?"

The Primary Reviewer gives an overview of the application, usually based on the abstract. The panel then moves on to a criterion-by-criterion discussion of the application.

Leah (Primary Reviewer): "Sure. Thanks. Hi everyone. In this application, the applicants propose to develop a phone-based intervention to enhance the physical activity and health outcomes of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As inputs to the development of this intervention, they plan to draw upon some pilot research that they've done recently. They also plan to seek regular input from an advisory committee that will include people with intellectual disabilities, their families, and relevant health service providers. They plan to test whether the intervention is attractive to, and usable by the target population by rolling it out among a sample of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

One at a time and in order, each of the reviewers shares his/her evaluation for Criterion A.

NIDILRR Panel Monitor: "Thanks. Leah. Now I'd like to ask you to begin the discussion of the first review **critterion**: Importance of the problem."

The Primary Reviewer begins this discussion by giving his/her initial score and comments for Criterion A.

Leah (Primary Reviewer): "Ok. Great. My initial score here is 13 points. I think they did a good job of describing how their project is going to further the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act. I also liked their description of the demographics of their target population of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They did a pretty nice job of describing the need for their project, with their description of national statistics about health outcomes for this population. I noted, however, that some of the references that they drew upon to describe the demographic and health picture for this population were more than five years old. Because they weren't drawing on the most recent data, I didn't think they established the need for their project as well, or as convincingly as they could have. So, that is why I took off the points that I did. That's all I have. John – you were the secondary reviewer. What did you think?"

Then the Secondary Reviewer gives his/her initial score on Criterion A, and shares his/her thoughts and comments with the rest of the group.

John (Secondary Reviewer): “Thanks, Leah. Those are good points. I took off quite a few more points, though, because I would have liked to see the applicant be more specific about their target population. I wasn’t as convinced by their overly broad description of the population of people with ID/DD. This is really a broad and diverse population, and, for a specific development project like this, it doesn’t seem helpful to put all people with ID / DD into one big category. I gave them 8 out of the possible 15 points, because I don’t think they captured or explained the diversity of this population very well – and the implications of that diversity for the intervention that they’re developing. So – that is my feedback on this **critterion.**”

The Panel Monitor is there to ensure that the discussion remains relevant to the criterion and that the discussion continues in sequence.

NIDILRR Panel Monitor: “Thanks John. Now that we’ve heard from the primary and secondary reviewer on this criterion, I’d like to ask the rest of the panelists to tell us about their initial scores and feedback for the “Importance of the Problem” criterion. Mary...?”

The others on the panel will discuss Criterion A in turn, if they have additional points to make.

Mary (Reviewer): “Thanks. John, I really appreciate your thoughts on the way they’ve described their target population. I hadn’t considered that as closely as you did, and I think I’m going to bring down my score a bit to reflect that. So for this criterion, I’m planning to give them a 7 out of 15. In addition to your concerns about the target population, I did not think this applicant made a compelling case that their intervention is addressing a specific need for this population. On pages 9 through 11 of their application, they broadly established that health outcomes can be improved for this population. But, they didn’t explain how a telephone intervention might meet that need. I feel like I need a lot more information about the specific need for health-related communication or prompting in the everyday lives of this population, before I can be sure that they’re addressing a real need. So, I just wasn’t convinced about the need for the proposed work.”

Reviewers may, and often do, alter their scores for an application based on what they learn from each other during the criterion-by-criterion discussion.

Steve (Reviewer): “You all have made some great points. While I understand what you’re saying about their description of the target population, and the need that they’re addressing for the target population, I must say that I was pretty convinced by the case that they made on both of these fronts. There is a real need for improvement in this area, and I think the kind of support and prompting that they’re proposing with this intervention can meet a real need that I see every day in the field. While they don’t

address it specifically in this section of their proposal – I think their heavy reliance on the input of people with ID/DD on their advisory committee will help make sure that the intervention is relevant, and meeting a real need in an appropriate way. They have a good description of their plan for the advisory committee on page 45 and 46 of the application. That information helped me as I scored them under this criterion. I originally gave the applicant 15 points under this criterion, but I agree with John’s point about the lack of specificity in their description of the target population. I’m going to give them a 13 on this criterion, and I’ll share that feedback with them as well.”

NIDILRR Panel Monitor: “Thanks everyone. That was a great discussion of your thoughts and initial scores on this criterion. Now that you’ve had a chance to hear everyone’s thoughts, would any of you like to make any further points about this specific criterion?”

Leah (Primary Reviewer): “You all have made really great points. I agree with you all about the need for further specification of the target population. I’m going to bring my score down a bit to reflect that. My score for this criterion will be an 11 or 12.”

John (Secondary Reviewer): “It was great to hear the different thoughts about the extent to which the project addresses a significant need in the target population. Mary and Steve both made great points here, and I can see both sides. While they could have addressed this criterion more specifically here in this section of their proposal – I agree with Steve that the applicant’s proposed use of direct input from the target population will really optimize the relevance of this intervention for the target population. I’m planning to leave my score the way it is, and focus my feedback on their specificity about the target population.”

Panel monitors may also interject to maintain the collegiality of the discussion, or address questions about the Department’s peer review policies and procedures.

NIDILRR Panel Monitor: “That’s fine John. NIDILRR doesn’t require that you come to a consensus on each point that is made, or on your scores. We just ask that you give the applicant information about the discussion that took place behind divergent scores, if the reviewers’ final scores on an application differ significantly. You’ll provide that information in the “Summary of Panel Discussion” document that the primary reviewer writes. Mary and Steve – do you have anything else to add, related to “Importance of the Problem?””

Mary (Reviewer): “I have nothing more to add.”

Steve (Reviewer): “Nothing more from me, either.”

NIDILRR Panel Monitor: “Ok, thanks. Now let’s move on to discuss your thoughts and feedback under the next criterion – design of development activities. This criterion has the largest number of points associated with it, and more sub-criteria to consider, so we’ll spend more time discussing this.”

End of Panel Discussion

The panel then moves on to a discussion of the application in terms of Criterion B. Reviewers move through this same criterion-by-criterion discussion until all of the criteria are covered.

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Panel Discussion: Summary of Panel Discussion

The Summary of Panel Discussion is a document prepared by the Primary and Secondary Reviewers at the conclusion of the discussion.

- The Summary of Panel Discussion summarizes the major strengths and weaknesses of the application as captured in the group discussion. It does not simply repeat what reviewers have written in their individual TRFs.
- The Summary of Panel Discussion provides explanation for unresolved discrepancies in the reviewers’ evaluations of any criteria.
- After review and discussion of a summary of panel discussion document, reviewers accept the document in ARM, or reject the document in ARM and send comments to the reviewer who drafted it.
- The final Summary of Panel Discussion is submitted by the Primary Reviewer in the ARM system.

[View example of a Summary of Panel Discussion](#)

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Panel Discussion: Etiquette and Tips

To be effective as a method for peer review, the teleconference requires the cooperation of peer reviewers in the following ways:

- Come to the panel meeting on time and prepared.
- Devote full time and attention during the call.
- Ensure privacy and freedom from interruptions.
- Use a land line, not a cell phone.

- Exercise special consideration when speaking during the teleconference (e.g., speaking slowly and clearly).
- Support your position with evidence.
- Apply patience, courtesy, and tact.
- Respect the perspectives of all reviewers.

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Competition Specific Information

NIDILRR uses nine different program funding mechanisms to support research. The research priority and selection criteria are specific to the program and the competition.

A general description of the different programs can be found at:

<https://www.acl.gov/about-acl/about-national-institute-disability-independent-living-and-rehabilitation-research>

The Competition Manager for each competition will provide reviewers with additional guidance relevant to the specific program and competition.

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NIDILRR'S Stages Framework

“Stages of Research” and “Stages of Development” Framework

- In some of NIDILRR's grant competitions, we ask applicants to specify the stage of research and/or development they are proposing. We ask applicants to specify and justify the stage of research and/or development, to help ensure that we are supporting research and development that has a solid foundation, and builds upon the existing stages in specific areas.
- ***NIDILRR views no single research/development stage as more important than another.***
- We defined the stages of research in NIDILRR's final program regulations, published in 2016: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/05/11/2016-10853/national-institute-on-disability-independent-living-and-rehabilitation-research>

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Stages of Research

Select each stage of research to see a definition:

1. *Exploration and discovery* means the stage of research that generates hypotheses or theories through new and refined analyses of data, producing observational findings and creating other sources of research-based information. This research stage may include identifying or describing the barriers to and facilitators of improved outcomes of individuals with disabilities, as well as identifying or describing existing practices, programs, or policies that are associated with important aspects of the lives of individuals with disabilities. Results achieved under this stage of research may inform the development of interventions or lead to evaluations of interventions or policies. The results of the exploration and discovery stage of research may also be used to inform decisions or priorities;
2. *Intervention development* means the stage of research that focuses on generating and testing interventions that have the potential to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Intervention development involves determining the active components of possible interventions, developing measures that would be required to illustrate outcomes, specifying target populations, conducting field tests, and assessing the feasibility of conducting a well-designed intervention study. Results from this stage of research may be used to inform the design of a study to test the efficacy of an intervention;
3. *Intervention efficacy* means the stage of research during which a project evaluates and tests whether an intervention is feasible, practical, and has the potential to yield positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Efficacy research may assess the strength of the relationships between an intervention and outcomes, and may identify factors or individual characteristics that affect the relationship between the intervention and outcomes. Efficacy research can inform decisions about whether there is sufficient evidence to support “scaling-up” an intervention to other sites and contexts. This stage of research may include assessing the training needed for wide-scale implementation of the intervention, and approaches to evaluation of the intervention in real-world applications; and
4. *Scale-up evaluation* means the stage of research during which a project analyzes whether an intervention is effective in producing improved outcomes for individuals with disabilities when implemented in a real-world setting. During this stage of research, a project tests the outcomes of an evidence-based intervention in different settings. The project examines the challenges to successful replication of the intervention, and the circumstances and activities that contribute to successful adoption of the intervention in real-world settings. This stage of research may also include well-designed studies of an intervention

that has been widely adopted in practice, but lacks a sufficient evidence base to demonstrate its effectiveness.

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Stages of Development:

Select each stage of development to see a definition

1. *Proof of concept* means the stage of development where key technical challenges are resolved. Stage activities may include recruiting study participants, verifying product requirements; implementing and testing (typically in controlled contexts) key concepts, components, or systems, and resolving technical challenges. A technology transfer plan is typically developed and transfer partner(s) identified; and plan implementation may have started. Stage results establish that a product concept is feasible.
2. *Proof of product* means the stage of development where a fully-integrated and working prototype, meeting critical technical requirements is created. Stage activities may include recruiting study participants, implementing and iteratively refining the prototype, testing the prototype in natural or less-controlled contexts, and verifying that all technical requirements are met. A technology transfer plan is typically ongoing in collaboration with the transfer partner(s). Stage results establish that a product embodiment is realizable.
3. *Proof of adoption* means the stage of development where a product is substantially adopted by its target population and used for its intended purpose. Stage activities typically include completing product refinements; and continued implementation of the technology transfer plan in collaboration with the transfer partner(s). Other activities include measuring users' awareness of the product, opinion of the product, decisions to adopt, use, and retain products; and identifying barriers and facilitators impacting product adoption. Stage results establish that a product is beneficial.

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Conclusion

- Peer review is a critical process needing your careful scoring of each application. It provides the basis for funding decisions and helps build a strong field of disability and rehabilitation research.
- As a reviewer, you will read and provide initial scores and comments on each of the applications. NIDILRR uses ARM to allow you to read and score applications.
- The merits of each application will be discussed during the teleconference panel discussion within the structure of the peer review criteria. Reviewers are able to adjust their scores and feedback to reflect the expertise and perspectives of the other members of the panel.

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Conclusion (Continued)

Thank you for participating in the Peer Reviewer Orientation

- If you have any questions or are interested in volunteering to be a reviewer, please select the Help button below to contact NIDILRR.
- If you want to access any of the downloadable files within the orientation, select the Resources button below.

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