

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

As a Reviewer, you are asked to identify and clearly state major strengths and weaknesses for each published review criterion. Your statements should be constructive and absent of bias and outside information. Please keep in mind that your comments will be read by the applicant, and therefore should be appropriate and helpful to the applicant. The following are some guidelines to crafting statements of strengths and weaknesses.

- Use complete sentences (present tense) with language that presents your ideas fully. Incomplete sentences and fragments delay the work of producing a cogent and cohesive combined summary statement.
- Depersonalize your criticisms. When describing a weakness, always refer to *the application's* weaknesses, not *the applicant's* weaknesses. Try to avoid using phrases like “fails to” and other negative statements. For instance, instead of stating “The applicant fails to demonstrate organizational expertise,” write “The application does not clearly demonstrate the organization’s expertise.” The difference is subtle but significant.
- Avoid arcane jargon. Terminology used widely and commonly in the field is acceptable, but niche jargon should be avoided. If you are using uncommon or recently coined terms, please explain them.
- Provide a clear and succinct synopsis of the project in the “Overview” in your own words. Do not retype the introduction of the application.
- Write in the third person (i.e., “The applicant plans to...”) rather than the first or second person, (i.e., “This Reviewer feels...” or “In the opinion of this Reviewer...”). The final summary statement will be the combined opinions of all of the application Reviewers. The strengths and weaknesses listed should be simple, declarative statements of opinion.
- Provide definitions for acronyms when used for the first time.
- Remember that each application is to be evaluated on its own merit. The evaluation should reflect a clear, objective, explicit, and justified assessment of the application. The Reviewer should write the strengths and weaknesses based on how well the applicant develops the proposed project and the extent to which the project is responsive to the published criteria.
- Use the same published review criteria for all assigned applications.
- Avoid comparing one application’s content, process, or budget to any other assigned application. Each application should be reviewed independently, and be assessed and analyzed based on the facts presented within the application.
- Avoid scoring an application based on your personal experiences, outside knowledge, and personal feelings of the application’s feasibility.
- Avoid complex formatting in the document. Reviewers are asked to use only basic formatting (i.e., bold, italic, underline, bullets, and tabs). Please refrain from using numbered bullets.

Provide information that helps the applicant understand why a particular statement or recommendation was made.

## GRANT REVIEWER REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Visit the HRSA web-site <http://www.hrsa.gov>
  - In the upper left corner of the page click on “Grants”  
<http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/default.htm>
  - On the left side of that page under “Review,” click on “Be a Grant Reviewer.”  
<https://grants.hrsa.gov/webReview/>
  - After reading the introduction page, click on the hyperlinked word “registering.”  
<https://grants.hrsa.gov/webReview/registration.asp>
- Register, completing basic contact information and obtain a user name and password
  - Save and continue – **making a note of your user name and password**
  - This is a different system than HRSA’s Electronic Handbook (EHB), so if you are a grantee you will need a different name and password
  - Accept the rules
  - To continue you must verify your e-mail address
    - An e-mail will be sent to the address you registered with, you will have to follow that link to continue the application.
- Log in after e-mail verification to view the options
  - There is a voluntary orientation of “Grant Reviewer Training” to review. This will give you of the HRSA review process.
  - Begin Application (There are 5 sections to complete)
    - You will be provided with a number, jot down the number for reference
  - Personal:
    - Some information will be pre-populated for you
    - Nomination information – ORHP does not require or provide
  - Work information:
    - You will be asked if you are involved in a HRSA grant
    - You will be asked if you are a consultant for a HRSA program
      - If either is yes, you will still be able to continue
  - Background information:
    - Occupation: list your current job title
    - Specialty: This is where you have the opportunity to indicate you have expertise in rural health. Please place Rural Health as a specialty.
    - Setting/Work Place: There are a few rural choices: Clinic, rural; Hospital, rural; Rural; Rural Integrated Healthcare System
    - Credentials: When you include a clinical degree here you will need the license number and other associated information
    - Degree: List all degrees
  - Reviewer Experience: List any experience on reviews for any federal agency
  - Resume/CV: Please upload the most up-to-date version of your resume or CV
- Then save the completed application and submit. You will receive a confirmation e-mail that your application was received
- Submitting the application does not guarantee that you will be selected as a HRSA reviewer. Your application may be subjected to credential and background screening.