

## GUIDELINES FOR ADAI SMALL GRANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute  
University of Washington

There are two Small Grant application cycles each year (deadlines March 15 and October 15). At an initial review meeting, each proposal receives a detailed review by at least two members of the Small Grants Review Committee, a careful discussion of scientific merit by the full committee, and then a vote on the grant's overall merit. Written comments and documentation of the committee's discussions are presented to a Final Review Committee, which selects the top grants for funding. Anonymous comments of the reviewers are returned to the investigators to provide constructive feedback, which is often used to improve a non-funded grant for future re-submission.

1. The reviewing procedure is as follows:

- A. Each grant will be sent to all individuals on the Committee for review; two Primary Reviewers will prepare written reviews and carry the major responsibility for presentation and discussion at the meeting.

The format for ADAI small grant reviews is intended to provide useful information to the applicants and to resonate with the criteria that are used for the review of NIH proposals. We hope that this procedure helps the applicant identify the aspects of their proposal that were judged to be strongest or weakest as you see it. We use the Overall Impact Score to organize our review process. Please provide scores for the other six categories as well to help the applicant organize their response to your critique should they decide to resubmit a revised application.

Our scoring system corresponds to the NIH system as well, with a score of "1" being superior and "9" being without merit. We anticipate that proposals scored higher than "5" are not felt to be ready for funding, and please try to consider that it is valuable to have a spread of scores so that fair consideration of the relative merits of each proposal can be achieved. The critique can be in paragraph format (i.e. not "bulleted" as in NIH format).

### **Overall Impact and Summary**

- Your overall assessment of the merit of the proposal, its appropriateness for funding, and a succinct statement of the key factors that guided your overall score.

### **Significance**

- The extent to which the proposal addresses questions that are scientifically important and have the potential to have a meaningful impact on the field. Please also consider the likelihood that this proposal might lead to additional extramural funding, the likelihood that the research plan can achieve the stated goals, and relevance of the project to drug and alcohol issues (this is broadly interpreted).

### **Investigators**

- The qualifications of the investigative team. Encouraging the development of early career investigators and/or the entry of established investigators into a new arena are considered funding priorities for this program.

### **Innovation**

- The extent to which the proposal addresses new questions and uses original strategies and that the trajectory of the research will make a meaningful contribution to the field.

#### **Approach**

- A critique of the proposal with regard to the appropriateness of the subjects to be studied, the measures to be made, the experimental design, approach to data analysis.

#### **Mentoring Plan (if applicable)**

- The appropriateness of the project for the trainee and the environment, the qualifications of the applicant and of the mentor to supervise the applicant's progress.

#### **Budget**

- The appropriateness of the budget for the proposed scope of work; any recommendations for substantial alterations to the budget.

- B. At the review committee meeting, grants will be ranked on scientific merit primarily. A scoring system using scores ranging from "1" to "9" based on the current NIH scoring system will be used. All Committee members vote on every grant, except as noted below. The purpose of the Small Grants Program is to stimulate scientific investigation relative to alcohol and drug abuse. Thus, special priority will be given for innovation and the potential that the project will provide significant support for future applications for outside funding. Investigators new to the field and junior faculty are particularly encouraged. Continuation grants are seldom considered for funding.

The Primary Reviewers' written comments, along with the mean rating scores of the Committee and the Chairperson's summary of the Committee's discussion will be presented to the Final Review Committee for its deliberation.

2. The following guidelines are used to review budgets:

Approximately \$100,000 is awarded each year through the Small Grants program at ADAI. Due to budgetary limitations:

- A. Travel (other than for research subjects), secretarial support, and publication costs are not funded. Please note that faculty salaries (excluding visiting faculty) including associated benefits may be included for up to 25% of the total budget requested.
- B. Priority in funding will go to direct research support.
- C. The maximum award to faculty and research scientists is \$30,000. The maximum award to predoctoral students and postdoctoral fellows is \$20,000. Applications with budgets in excess of these amounts may be considered; however, these must be exceptionally meritorious proposals and will have required consultation with the Institute's Director **before submission**. All budgets should be reviewed to determine whether cuts can be made that will not jeopardize the ability of the investigator to accomplish the objectives of the proposal.
3. To aid in evaluation of resubmitted grant proposals, notes from the previous review meeting will be available to the Committee.

4. Reviewing applications by individuals known to the Committee:
  - A. A Committee member may submit a proposal. However, he/she must leave the room when the proposal is under consideration. Committee members must also leave if a proposal is being considered in which they have a substantial interest.
  - B. No Committee member should vote on a proposal in which he/she has a substantial interest.
  - C. Insofar as possible, proposals will not be assigned to a reviewer from the same department as the Principal Investigator.
5. All proposals, Committee reviews, ratings for each grant, and related materials are maintained in ADAI files. Committee reviews and ratings are stored as confidential documents, and the identity of reviewers is not disclosed.
6. The Committee decisions are subject to review and final approval by the Final Review Committee.
7. Every effort will be made to notify applicants of funding decisions within twelve weeks of submission. Committee members will be sent notification of which proposals were funded and in what amount.