



NATURAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE GRANT PROGRAM Review and Award Recommendation Procedure

1) APPLICATION REVIEW AND SCORING

- a) **Staff Review:** Once submitted, the Heritage Coordinator will review each application for eligibility and completeness and may contact applicants if questions arise.
- b) Once the application deadline has passed, the Heritage Coordinator will organize each eligible application, assign an application number, and send all applications to the Heritage Conservation Council (HCC) for review. Along with the grant applications, the Heritage Coordinator will also send the following to each grant reviewer: a blank scoring matrix that has been prefilled with information about each application (project title, organization, project category, history with Natural and Cultural Grant Program, etc.), the scoring rubric, a conflict of interest disclosure form, and reminders of annual priority themes, equity considerations, and other considerations included in the Grant Guidelines.
- c) **Individual Review:** The HCC which consists of seven members appointed by the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners, are the sole reviewers of the grant applications. Each grant reviewer will have at least 10 days to independently review and score each application they are eligible to review based on the criteria outlined in the Grant Guidelines and utilizing the provided rubric (See Conflict of Interest section below for information about individual recusals from scoring). Each reviewer will send their completed scoring matrix and conflict of interest disclosure form to the Heritage Coordinator. The Heritage Coordinator will then anonymize the scores and provide an analysis of the collective application scores to the HCC prior to the award recommendation meeting.

2) AWARD RECOMMENDATION MEETINGS

- a) **Meeting Schedule:** There will be at least one Award Recommendation Meeting held for Heritage Conservation Council members to discuss the applications received and determine recommendations for the distribution of the grant awards. Award Recommendation Meetings will be open to the public and may be held in-

person or online, however no public comment is allowed during the meetings. More than one meeting may be required to adequately recommend awards.

- b) **Goals of Award Recommendation Meetings:**
 - i) Fairly review each application, considering the project goals, deliverables, and budget based on the stated review criteria and alignment with the goals of the Natural and Cultural Grant Program as established in the Grant Guidelines.
 - ii) Reach consensus on recommendations for how to distribute available funds to eligible project proposals.
- c) **Consensus Decision Making Model:** All funding recommendations made by HCC will be based on consensus decision making. Final funding recommendations shall be agreed on consensus of HCC members participating in the review of the grant applications. To learn more about this decision-making model, visit [shortconsensus.pdf \(seedsforchange.org.uk\)](https://seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus.pdf).
- d) **Procedure of the Award Recommendation Meeting(s):**
 - i) The HCC Chair will facilitate the discussion of the applications, maintaining the organization of the meeting and ensuring the goals of the meeting are met.
 - ii) To begin the meetings, applications will be discussed in the following order:
 - (1) Major Grant Proposals from highest scored to lowest scored
 - (2) Target and Seed Grant proposals from highest scored to lowest scored
 - iii) Application review matrix scores should lead the discussion and be referred to as discussions on each grant application unfold. While the scores themselves do not necessitate funding or not funding a project, they should be valued in the award deliberation process.
 - iv) Each application that is brought up for discussion should conclude with a recommendation of next steps which may include funding in full, partially funding, not funding, or tabling the project for further discussion at a later point.
 - v) Once all applications have been discussed, the HCC will assess any decisions that have been preliminarily made and determine how much funding remains to allocate. Discussions will continue until all available funds have been allotted. The HCC may choose partially fund projects or require that certain conditions be met by the applicant in order to receive the grant award.
 - (1) Project feasibility with allotted funding will be taken into consideration when making Partial Funding recommendations.
 - vi) The final Award Recommendation Meeting shall conclude once consensus has been reached on recommendations for grant awards.

- e) **Role of the Heritage Coordinator:** The Heritage Coordinator will be present at all Award Recommendation Meetings and their role will include the following:
 - i) Record notes from the council for feedback on applications
 - ii) Keep track of preliminary funding decisions
 - iii) Provide the HCC with specific information about applications or applicant's history with the Natural and Cultural Grant Program
 - iv) Answer questions from applicants or members of the public before and after Award Recommendation Meetings

3) **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- a) Each grant reviewer will submit a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form to the Heritage Coordinator when they submit their completed scoring matrix.
- b) The Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form should indicate whether the grant reviewer has an economic interest in, or acts as an officer or a director of, any outside entity whose financial interests would reasonably appear to be affected by the award of a grant to any applicant with a grant application pending. The grant reviewer should also disclose any personal, business, or volunteer affiliations that may give rise to a real or apparent conflict of interest. Relevant Federally and organizationally established regulations and guidelines in financial conflicts must be abided by.
- c) Individuals with a conflict of interest shall refrain from scoring, commenting, participating in deliberations, or otherwise joining in the HCC's efforts to develop consensus with respect to such grant.

4) **NOTIFICATION OF AWARD**

- a) Upon the completion of the Award Recommendation Meeting, the Heritage Coordinator will draft a memo to the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners with the recommendations as proposed by the HCC.
- b) Once the grant awards have been approved by the Board of County Commissioners, with any changes that may deviate from HCC's recommendations, the Heritage Coordinator will work with organizations that have been awarded funds to complete contracts and send payments.
- c) The Heritage Coordinator will notify all applicants with relevant information at the conclusion of all important milestones including the completion of the Award Recommendation Meeting and the approval of the grant awards by the Board of County Commissioners.
- d) All applicants may contact the Heritage Coordinator for feedback on their application and reasons for why they may or may not have received funding.