

Citizens Review Panel Introduction

Knox County offers several grant programs to area non-profit organizations to enhance the level of community services to its citizens. In order to create a new level of citizen participation and to promote inclusiveness in grant distribution, Knox County will utilize Citizen Review Panels to evaluate grant applications. The individuals who serve on these panels contribute expertise and perspective to the evaluation process and make funding recommendations that affect a variety of services in our community.

Citizens Review Process

Community volunteers help determine the allocation of funds through the Citizens Review Process. Experienced volunteers and professional staff evaluate applications for funding using established criteria. This process and funding criteria are designed to support critical services that are efficient, well managed, accountable and effective. The criterion for funding is based on:

- Level of community need
- Impact on community
- Management efficiency
- Accountability
- Effectiveness
- Accessibility
- Need for incremental funding
- Evidence of sustainability

Panelist Profile

Panelists must be Knox County residents who are age 18 or older. Knox County seeks panelists with working knowledge of and/or professional qualifications in arts, culture, tourism, health, senior and veteran services, youth programs, social services, non-profit management and/or public/private partnerships.

In addition, Knox County looks for panelists who are willing to commit time and energy to the review process and who exhibit sensitivity in making constructive critical judgments. To help reflect the diversity of our community, Knox County considers gender, geographic representation and cultural background when appointing panelists. In addition, a balance among practitioners, administrators, and consumers is preferable.

Knox County is taking significant measures to avoid conflicts of interests at all levels of the review process. Among other efforts, representatives of potential grantees will not be allowed to serve on a Citizen Review Panel reviewing their own application.

Panelists are not compensated for their time, expenses or service.

Nomination

Knox County actively solicits and accepts nominations for panelists on a year-round basis. A nomination form provides information that will be used to evaluate the qualifications of potential panelists. Being nominated does not guarantee an appointment to a panel. Self-nominations are welcome. A panelist may serve no longer than two continuous years.

Panelist Responsibilities

If selected to serve, new panelists must attend a one-hour training session. For each grant round in which you participate, you will:

- Review, evaluate and score grant applications assigned to your panel. (We estimate that it will take approximately 10 minutes to read each application and complete the scoring sheet. We **estimate** that each panel may review 25 - 35 applications.)
- Attend and participate in panel meetings that will last approximately two to four hours. Panel meetings will occur on weekdays during regular business hours or early evening. To ensure fair consideration of all applications, panelists must attend the entire meeting.

In addition, panelists will be requested to make recommendations to improve the grant review process based on their experience following the annual grant application and award process.