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HRA Eligibility Guidelines for Merit Review Process

Eligible organizations are nonprofit organizations that fund extramural biomedical research which has been awarded based on a merit review process much like the NIH peer review process. To be eligible for HRA membership, the merit review system must evaluate applications for scientific and technical merit in a manner free from inappropriate influences.

This involves three critical components.

- Applications must be evaluated for scientific and technical merit by those who have scientific expertise suitable for evaluating the proposed work. Other criteria may be evaluated by reviewers with other expertise including advocates, patients, lay reviewers, etc.
- Any circumstance that might introduce conflict of interest, the appearance of conflict of interest, bias, or predisposition into the review process by any participant in the process, must be managed to avoid inappropriate influence in the review process. Bases for conflict of interest review include financial interests, professional relationships, employment, study section membership, personal relationships, and other interests. Specific conflict of interest policies are determined by each organization.
- Organizations must implement robust procedures to protect confidential information, including guidance to staff and reviewers about not sharing any information contained in applications that is not public, and conducting review meetings in which only review committee members and select staff can participate.

Much like the NIH's core value of integrity, HRA members, all nonprofit funders of biomedical research, are also fully committed to maintaining public trust in the research enterprise by promoting a fair and equitable review process, and supporting our grantees in adhering to the highest standards of research integrity.