



LINEBERGER COMPREHENSIVE  
CANCER CENTER



UNC  
CANCER CARE

# Developmental Grant Review Training

for patient and community advocate reviewers

Fall 2024



# Topics

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- Your Role and Responsibilities
- About Lineberger Developmental Funding Program
- Application and Review Process
- Your Critique
- Tips for Reviewing Grant Applications
- Dos and Don'ts of Grant Review
- Sample Critiques
- The Review Meeting
- Advocate Learning Portal
- Next Steps

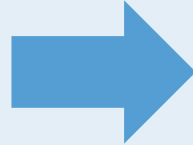


# Your Roles and Responsibilities



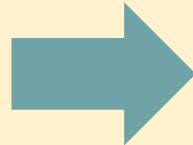
# Your Role

1. Provide a broad, patient perspective on the research project



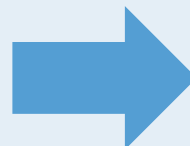
Represent the entire cancer community as a whole

2. Provide patient perspective and/or community impact of the project



Potential of project to benefit patients and the community

3. Ensure issues impacting patients are considered during review

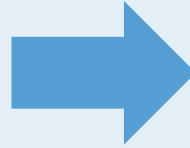


Patient concerns that can include: cultural/religious/racial sensitivities and ethical issues, respect for patients.



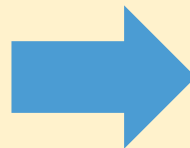
# Your Responsibility

- Read the application and pay special attention to the following sections



- Summary of the project (Hypothesis and Specific Aims)
- Lay abstract
- Impact/Innovation section

- Provide constructive feedback on the impact the proposed research offers



- Using the review guidance questions
- Write the review as strengths and weaknesses for impact/relevance
- Select an impact/relevance score



# About Lineberger Developmental Funding Program



# UNC Lineberger Developmental Funding Program

- To support cancer research programs led by faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and to stimulate new applications for extramural funding.
- All UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center members and UNC Chapel Hill faculty are eligible to apply
- **Two tiers of awards:**

## Tier 1

Pilot Awards  
up to \$50,000  
one year

one principal investigator (PI)

## Tier 2

Stimulus Awards  
up to \$100,000 per year  
one or two years

1-2 principal investigators (PIs)



These change every cycle!

## **Available Targeted RFAs** (priority topics, but general are accepted too)

- Pediatric Cancer Research RFA

## **Calls for Proposals (funding)**

- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Breast Cancer SPORE Developmental Research Program (DRP) Call for Proposals
- Selective Targeting of Pancreatic (SToP) Cancer SPORE Career Enhancement Program (CEP) Call for Proposals
- Selective Targeting of Pancreatic (SToP) Cancer SPORE Developmental Research Program (DRP) Call for Proposals





# UNC Lineberger Developmental Funding Program

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**Within each tier, topic and RFP all proposals are divided into  
3 categories:**

1. Basic Research
2. Clinical and Translational Research
3. Population Science Research



# Application and Review Process



# Application and Review Process

Activity	Basic	Clinical/Translational	Population Science
<b>Application Submission Deadline</b>	October 14	October 14	October 14
<b>Applications sent to reviewers</b>	Week of October 21	Week of October 21	Week of October 21
<b>Written Review Due</b>	November 8	November 8	November 13
<b>Committee Review</b>	November 11 4pm-7pm Pagano	November 12 5pm-6:30pm Zoom	November 15 1pm-3pm LCCC
<b>Chairs</b>	Al Baldwin	Lisa Carey Jon Serody	Andy Olshan



# Confidentiality Statement

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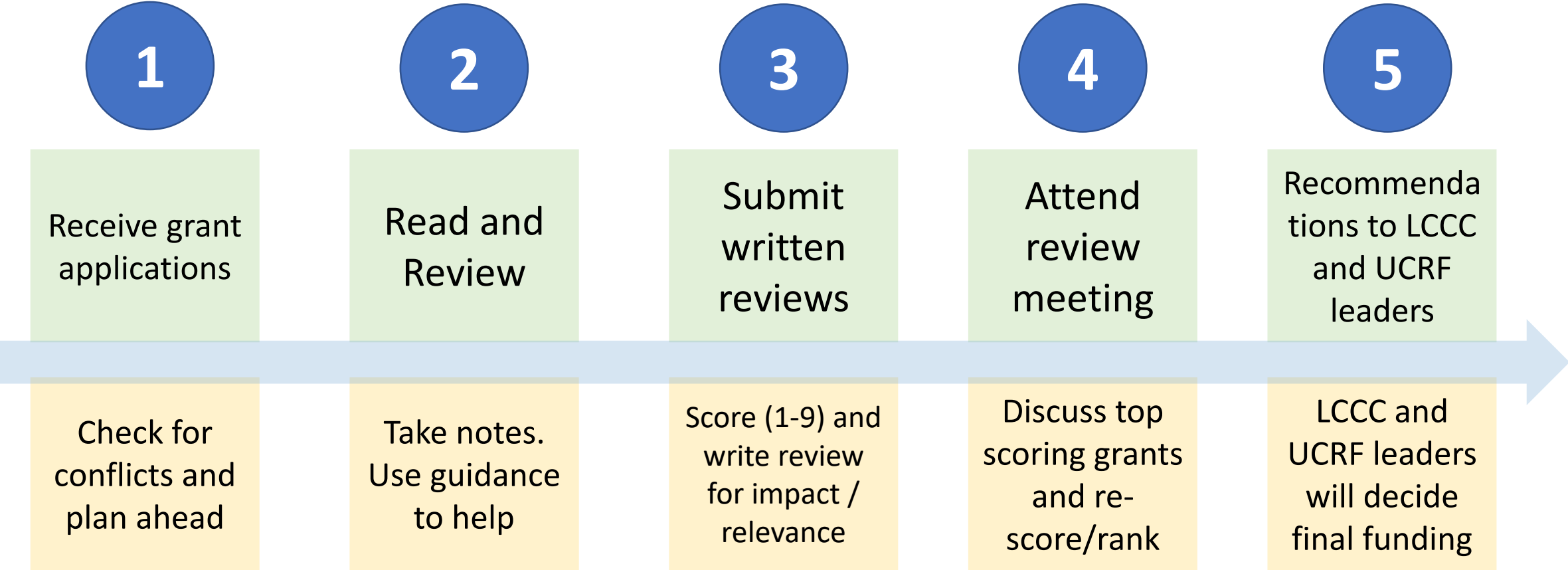
UNC Lineberger has assured applicants that their identity, their applications, and the associated reviews are held in confidence.

Applications, review materials, and meeting proceedings are for the sole use of reviewers and LCCC staff.

By agreeing to review, reviewers certify that they understand the confidential nature of the evaluation and promise not to discuss applications under consideration with anyone outside of meeting deliberations.



# Process



# Receive Grant Applications



# Steps when you receive your applications

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- **Review for a potential conflict of interest**
  - Contact Patty Spears if you have a conflict or need advise on whether you have a conflict
- **Note the time-line and when your critiques are due**
  - Putting it on your calendar can help
- **Make sure you have the time to review the number of grants you received**
  - If you don't think you can review them all in the designated time, contact Patty Spears (we can adjust the #)



# Your Critique





# Review Criteria

Advocate and community reviewers will evaluate each application. They will provide a written critique and numeric score for **one criteria** (below).

## 1. Patient and/or Community Impact and/or Relevance

Advocate and community reviewers will review from a patient care and/or community perspective. They will focus on the study's applicability to patient care and/or community needs.

Advocate and community reviewers do not need to comment on the scientific rigor or methods of the proposal. **Scientific expertise is not required.**



# Review Criteria

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## PATIENT AND/OR COMMUNITY IMPACT AND/OR RELEVANCE

- Has the applicant convinced you of how their research will benefit patients?
- Has the applicant conveyed an understanding of the issues most important to patients, survivors and the community?
- Has the applicant clearly defined the target population and the impact this proposal will have on that population?
- Does the proposal convey a sense of urgency?
- Is this research proposal relevant to cancer patients and/or North Carolina community and population cancer needs and priorities? Explain why or why not.



# Numerical Scoring Guide

**Scoring:** Applications will be scored using the NIH scoring scale of 1 to 9 (whole numbers only) with 1 being “Exceptional” and 9 being “Poor”.

## NOTE

- Use the entire range!
- Begin in the medium range (4-5) and go high (1-3) or low (7-9) depending on strengths and weaknesses
- You should end up with a range of scores

## Whole number scores only

	Overall Strength	Score	Descriptor
	High	1	Exceptional
		2	Outstanding
		3	Excellent
Begin scoring in this range	Medium	4	Very Good
		5	Good
		6	Satisfactory
	Low	7	Fair
		8	Marginal
		9	Poor



# Tips for Reviewing Grant Applications



# Tips for Reviewing Grant Applications

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## Getting Started

- Give yourself enough time to complete your reviews. About 1-2 hours for each application
- Review the reviewer instructions before you begin. Know the criteria you will be evaluating before you begin reading the proposals.
- Skim the entire proposal and then read more thoroughly after you have an idea what the application is about.
- Take notes while you read the application.



# What is in the grant application?

- **Abstract (scientific and lay)**
- **Specific Aims**
- Research Plan
  - Significance
  - **Innovation**
  - Approach
  - Research design
  - References
- Timeline
- Biosketches
- Letters (sometimes)



# Tips for Reviewing Grant Applications

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## Writing Tips

- Make sure you did not summarize the grant as the basis of your critique.
- Remember, you are representing the broad patient/community perspective—focusing on issues affecting all patients/communities.
- Write your review in a constructive way; avoiding inflammatory or derogatory language.
- Address the criteria questions that are appropriate for the grant proposal you are reviewing.
- Write succinct, yet thorough reviews
- Use descriptive language to support the overall score
- Write strengths and weaknesses in bulleted format using complete sentences.



# Tips for Reviewing Grant Applications

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## Scoring Tips

- Try to use the full scoring range.
- Refer to the scoring descriptions to help justify the scores chosen for each criterion.
- Make sure the score reflects your review (numbers of strengths and weaknesses can help you score each application)





# Tips for Reviewing Grant Applications

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## Before you submit your critique:

- Remove first person references (Do not use 'I' or "this reviewer")
- Check the spelling and grammar of your critique prior to submission
- Provide a score and a statement for impact and/or relevance
- Provide an appropriately weighted number of strengths and weaknesses in your comments that reflect the score given for impact/relevance
- Read over your critique to ensure it accurately and clearly portrays how you feel about the application



# Score Sheet

- Fill out 1 form for each application
  
- Fill in the top
  - Committee (select from menu)
  - Reviewer Last Name (your last name)
  - Title of the application
  - Applicant Last Name
  
- Select a score and write strengths and weaknesses for impact and relevance

Committee: Choose an item.

Reviewer Last Name:

Proposal Title:

Applicant Last Name:

### PATIENT AND/OR COMMUNITY IMPACT AND RELEVANCE

- Has the applicant convinced you of how their research will benefit patients?
- Has the applicant conveyed an understanding of the issues most important to patients, survivors and the community?
- Has the applicant clearly defined the target population and the impact this proposal will have on that population?
- Does the proposal convey a sense of urgency?
- Is this research proposal relevant to cancer patients and/or North Carolina community and population cancer needs and priorities? Explain why or why not.

Strengths:

- 

Weaknesses:

- 

Score: Choose an item.

### Scoring Information

**Scoring Instructions:** If you are assigned proposals for both tiers, **Please do not compare Tier 1 applications with Tier 2 applications.**

#### NUMERICAL SCORING GUIDE:

**NOTE**

- Use the entire range!
- Begin in the medium range (4-5) and go high (1-3) or low (7-9) depending on strengths and weaknesses
- You should end up with a range of scores

	Overall Strength	Score	Descriptor
	High	1	Exceptional
		2	Outstanding
		3	Excellent
Begin scoring in this range	Medium	4	Very Good
		5	Good
		6	Satisfactory
	Low	7	Fair
		8	Marginal
		9	Poor

- 1) Use the whole range; start in the middle of the scale as noted in the score key above & go up or down from about a 5
- 2) Whole number scores only



# Score Sheet

- Fill out 1 [form](#) for each application

- Fill in the top

- Committee (select)
- Reviewer Last Name
- Title of the application
- Applicant Last Name

- Select a score and write strengths and weaknesses for impact and relevance

Want to practice?  
Submit **TEST** as your name and reviewer name.

## NEW on-Line Review Submission

[LINK](#)

or



Committee: C  
Reviewer L  
Proposal T  
Applicant  
PATIENT A

Score:

Compare Tier 1 applications

Score	Descriptor
1	Exceptional
2	Outstanding
3	Excellent
4	Very Good
5	Good
6	Satisfactory
7	Fair
8	Marginal
9	Poor

1) Use the whole range; start in the middle of the scale as noted in the score key above & go up or down from about a 5  
2) Whole number scores only



# Dos and Don'ts



# What should you do? And not do?

## DOs

- Score and write strengths and weaknesses for impact and relevance
- Address the score-driving strengths and weaknesses of the project
- Make sure that your written critiques reflect your score
- Provide clear, factual, constructive and fair critiques to applicants in a sensitive manner
- Advise on areas that may need improvement

## DON'Ts

- Do not repeat the project title, description, and specific aims verbatim
- Do not emphasize every minor flaw in the application; focus on the major strengths and weaknesses
- Do not write more than needed to get your point across
- Do not critique the science. Focus on patient/community perspective. If you have a question about the science, ask the scientific reviewers during the review meeting.



# Sample Critique Statements Examples



# Impact/Relevance - **Basic**

## Strengths

- This proposal will address the spread of prostate cancer to other parts of the body, which is a concern of all patients with prostate cancer.
- In colorectal cancer, there is a need for biomarkers to determine who benefits from certain treatments. This proposal will be the basis for identifying these biomarkers.
- Identifying new cancer development genes may lead to useful applications in early detection and new treatments for lung cancer.

## Weaknesses

- The potential for patient impact was not clearly addressed, so it is unclear how this will impact patient care.



# Impact/Relevance – Clinical/Translational

## Strengths

- This is an interesting proposal and will help patients with cervical cancer by developing ways to monitor treatment with a non-invasive test.
- This proposal is likely to help lung cancer patients by developing new ways to identify new therapies that are specific for lung cancers with XYZ gene mutations.
- The applicant shows a strong commitment and understanding of the needs of pancreatic cancer patients.

## Weaknesses

- This is a complicated study for patients, particularly in when consenting of the patient will occur. Consent will be prior to an invasive procedure.
- Consenting patients to a study prior to a cancer diagnosis will be challenging.
- Patient communication should be consistent and planned to alleviate accrual challenges.





# Impact/Relevance – Population Science

## Strengths

- This proposal will address screening of underrepresented populations in NC for colorectal cancer, which will increase screening NC in communities.
- This proposal will identify and address unmet community needs of short and long-term survivors of breast cancer in NC, improving the lives of cancer survivors in NC.

## Weaknesses

- The intervention for community engagement was not informed by community members, which would have strengthened this application.



# Impact/Relevance **General**

## Strengths

- This is a cancer that is important to North Carolina and the applicant highlights this importance in the proposal.
- This proposal is important to all cancer patients in North Carolina.
- This proposal addresses differences in treatment that are common in North Carolina, which is important to all cancer patients.
- This proposal is looking at an unmet need in pancreatic cancer.

## Weaknesses

- The relevance of this project is not clear.
- Connecting with local patients and community members would improve this proposals relevance to North Carolina.
- This proposal does not appear to be addressing a critical need that will eventually lead to an improvement in cancer care.



# The Review Meeting



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# Things to know about the meetings

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- Hybrid Meetings – in person gives the better interaction
- The Committee:
  - Chair
  - Support person
  - Researchers/Clinicians
  - Patient/Community member
- Reviews
  - Each grant is reviewed by 2-3 scientists, 1 patient/community member



# Before the Meeting

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- Review all the review call materials
  - Have your evaluations where you can get to them, printed or on your computer – **YOU NEED TO HAVE YOUR REVIEW!!**
- Write out a list of key points you want to make at the meeting
- Write questions you want to ask during the meeting
- Make sure you have the link for the meeting or know where the in-person meeting will be held



# During the Meeting

**Listen!**

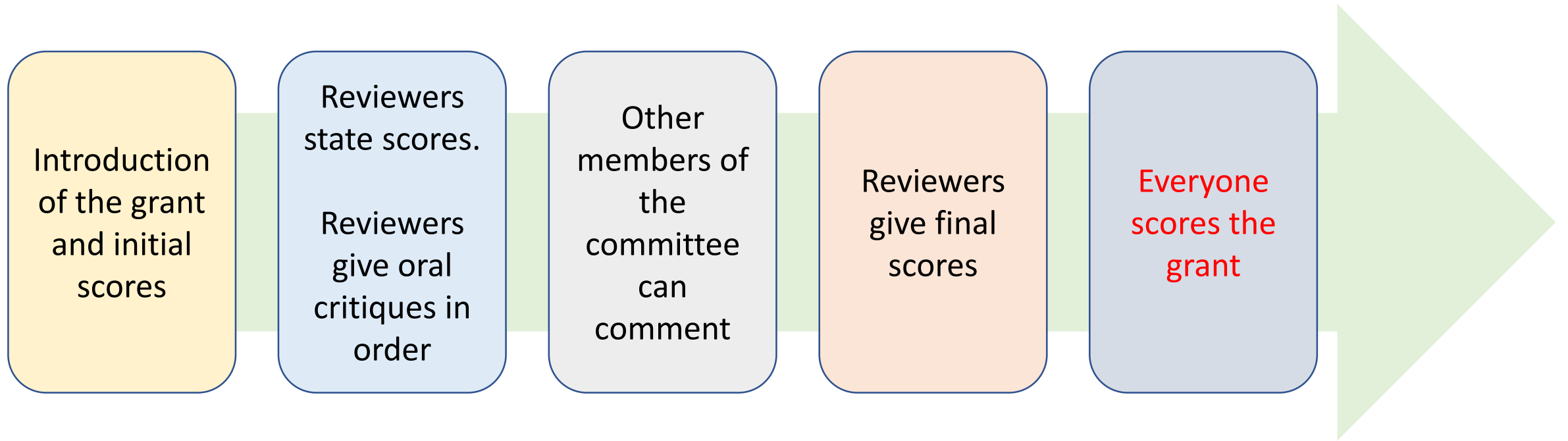
Focus on the patient perspective and importance of the research to patients.

## **RESOURCE**

[Tips for Communicating in a Meeting](#)

- Listen to other reviewers comments
- Be responsive to other's comments
- Concur with others and make additional patient relevant comments.
- Adjust your summarized comments if already mentioned.
- Be succinct and mention the most important points first.
- Be prepared to answer questions.
- Do you have questions for other reviewers?





**DISCUSSION**

Find the grant being discussed if it's yours.

Be ready with your score

Listen to other reviews and plan your oral review.

Focus on what you want to stress

You can change your score based on the reviews

**The entire committee can score**

So, listen – even if it is not your grant



# All materials and recording will be on the...

## Advocate Learning Portal

### Welcome to the UNC Lineberger Patient and Community Advocate Learning Portal

This learning portal is for you as a UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center patient, survivor, family member, or community voice. You will find information that will help you effectively interact with UNC Lineberger researchers and community voice to their research.

Click on the boxes below to find documents and links to informative websites about grant review and applications.

#### [Grant Review](#)

Learn how to be a patient/community advocate reviewer of grant applications

#### [Grant Applications](#)

#### [Plain Language Resources](#)

Learn about plain language and how to write and speak to the public

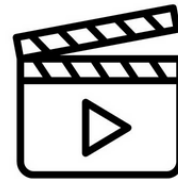
#### [Working with Researchers](#)

### GRANT REVIEW



#### RESOURCES

- [Supporting cancer survivors' participation in peer review: perspectives from NCI's CARRA program](#) by Melissa Gilkey, PhD
- The [Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs](#) (CDMRP) welcomes patients, survivors, family members, and advocates to play a pivotal role in the future of biomedical research funding.
- ASCO – [working with a patient advocate](#) by Patty Spears



#### VIDEO

- [2021 Advocate and Community Reviewer Training](#) – how to review Developmental Funding Program applications.



#### DOCUMENTS

- [2022 Fall Patient and Community Advocate Reviewer Orientation Materials](#)
- [2022 Fall Scoring Sheet](#)





# Next Steps

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- Assignments are coming
- I try to give everyone their first choice, or their second choice
- The number of applications in each committee determines the reviewer assignments
- I try to give 2-4 applications per reviewer, sometimes I need to give more to each reviewer

