Arlington County Racial Equity NOFA

A Journey in Government-Community Partnership

In partnership with United Way of the National Capital Area

Background: The 2021-2022 Community Leaders Group

Who

- BIPOC* community leaders and representatives of community-based service providers
- Arlington County Government representatives
- External SMEs and facilitators, including UWNCA
- Funded by E Pluribus UNUM Fellowship

What

- A working group to center BIPOC community voices in making recommendations for changes to Arlington County's funding processes

Why

- To reform Arlington's human and community services funding by integrating BIPOC voices and lived experiences into the decision-making process, confronting challenges with "The Arlington Way," and co-creating impactful solutions with the community to produce measurable outcomes and reduce disparities
- The resulting funding process will be more transparent, more accessible, and more racially equitable

Challenges with "The Arlington Way" identified by participants in the 2021 Dialogues on Race and Equity and the 2021-2022 Community Leaders Group:

- Priority on relationships
- Lack of transparency and access
- Predetermined outcomes
- Historically disadvantaged BIPOC community members & organizations in favor of the "usual" voices

(*)BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Color

Background: Recommendations

NOFA Structure	• Establish a competitive NOFA that is structured, transparent, and accessible • Offer technical support throughout the process
Proposal Evaluation	• Develop a holistic evaluation approach that invites the community to play a central role in defining needs and evaluating the proposals • Encourage collaboration and community voice when making award recommendations
Funding Awards	• Create mechanisms for greater transparency and flexibility when making award decisions • Provide individual feedback to applicants
Accountability	• Balance a system of structured accountability and reporting which also provides responsive and supportive oversight

Background: Values

Community-Centeredness	• Informed by recommendations from trusted community leaders • Community members have a voice in evaluating proposals • Focused on maximizing positive community impact
Equity	• Creating an opportunity for those who have not historically had access to government funding • Providing access and support for all applicants • Focused on root causes and positive impact
Accountability & Transparency	• Clear and transparent processes • Decisions are informed by community voice • Accountability and transparency for both government and service providers

NOFA Structure: Application

NOFA Application Sections include but are not limited to:

- Population Description
- Program Description
- Evaluation
- Advancing Racial Equity
- Engagement & Community Outreach
- Appendix, including a guide to the questions, definitions of key terms, and sample responses

All applicants will submit the following documents, if available:

- Most recent annual report
- FY 2023 Budget
- Most recent audit
- 501(c)(3) designation letter
- IRS Federal Form 990

Notes:

- Application form will be translated into 5 languages
- Accepting written and audio submissions
- Submissions will be collected in a streamlined, centralized format
- Technical assistance sessions will be available to support applicants in these efforts

NOFA Structure: Technical Support

NOFA information sessions with community

Technical Assistance (TA) throughout application window – up to 4 sessions

Recorded TA sessions are posted to the NOFA website

Formative feedback will inform topics of TA sessions and need for additional sessions

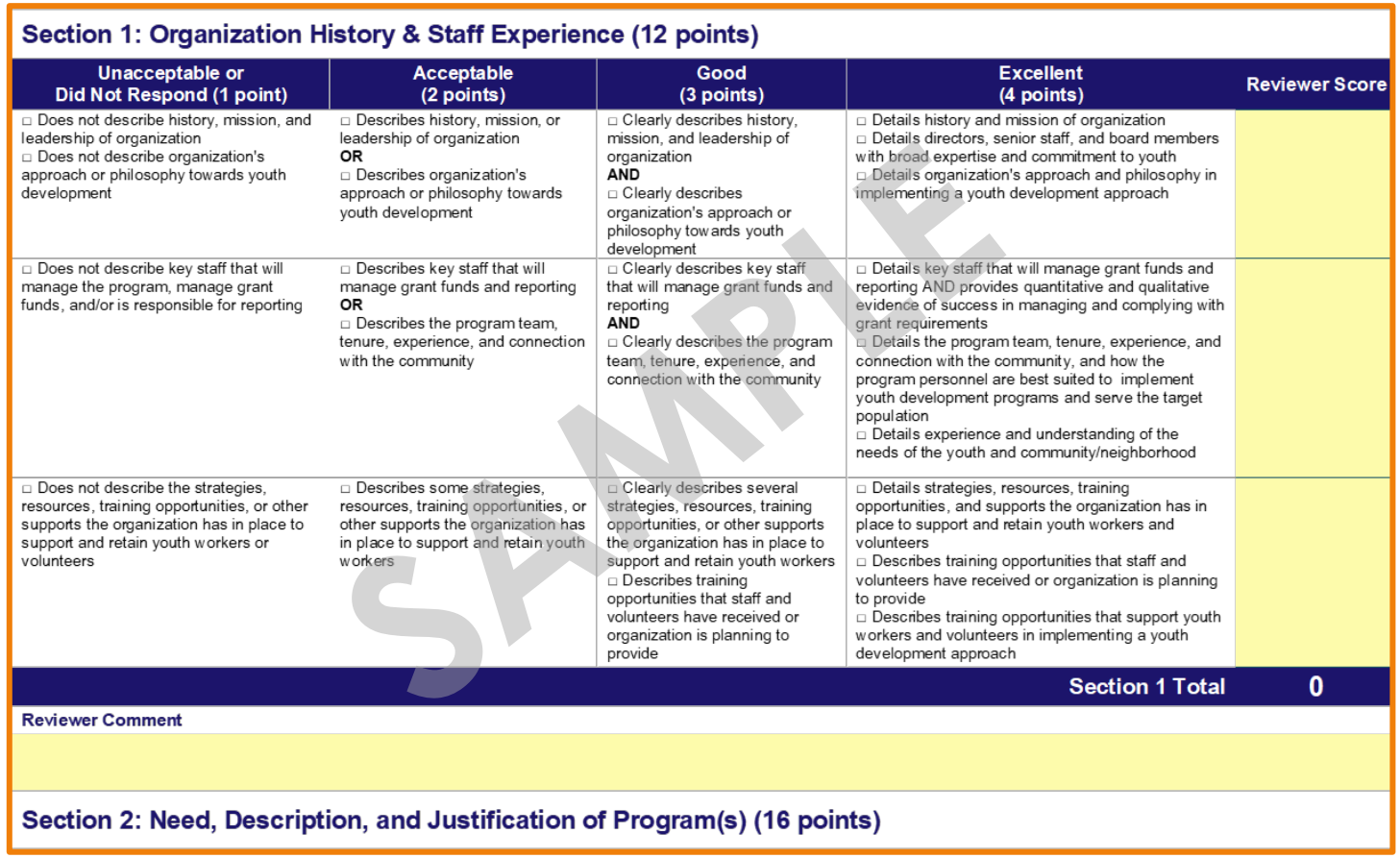
Maximized transparency and access through technical assistance

Proposal Evaluation

Characteristics of a transparent and accountable evaluation process:

- **Detailed rubric** made available to applicants when the NOFA is released
- **Diversified reviewers,** including subject matter experts and community members
- Intentional and low-barrier **reviewer recruitment process**
- **Training for reviewers** to increase their skill and confidence in thoughtful and unbiased evaluation
- Funding recommendations formed by **group consensus**
- All work is **documented** for posterity and transparency

Proposal Evaluation



Section 1: Organization History & Staff Experience (12 points)

Unacceptable or Did Not Respond (1 point)	Acceptable (2 points)	Good (3 points)	Excellent (4 points)	Reviewer Score
□ Does not describe history, mission, and leadership of organization □ Does not describe organization's approach or philosophy towards youth development	□ Describes history, mission, or leadership of organization **OR** □ Describes organization's approach or philosophy towards youth development	□ Clearly describes history, mission, and leadership of organization **AND** □ Clearly describes organization's approach or philosophy towards youth development	□ Details history and mission of organization □ Details directors, senior staff, and board members with broad expertise and commitment to youth □ Details organization's approach and philosophy in implementing a youth development approach	
□ Does not describe key staff that will manage the program, manage grant funds, and/or is responsible for reporting	□ Describes key staff that will manage grant funds and reporting **OR** □ Describes the program team, tenure, experience, and connection with the community	□ Clearly describes key staff that will manage grant funds and reporting **AND** □ Clearly describes the program team, tenure, experience, and connection with the community	□ Details key staff that will manage grant funds and reporting AND provides quantitative and qualitative evidence of success in managing and complying with grant requirements □ Details the program team, tenure, experience, and connection with the community, and how the program personnel are best suited to implement youth development programs and serve the target population □ Details experience and understanding of the needs of the youth and community/neighborhood	
□ Does not describe the strategies, resources, training opportunities, or other supports the organization has in place to support and retain youth workers or volunteers	□ Describes some strategies, resources, training opportunities, or other supports the organization has in place to support and retain youth workers	□ Clearly describes several strategies, resources, training opportunities, or other supports the organization has in place to support and retain youth workers □ Describes training opportunities that staff and volunteers have received or organization is planning to provide	□ Details strategies, resources, training opportunities, and supports the organization has in place to support and retain youth workers and volunteers □ Describes training opportunities that staff and volunteers have received or organization is planning to provide □ Describes training opportunities that support youth workers and volunteers in implementing a youth development approach	
			Section 1 Total	**0**

Reviewer Comment

Section 2: Need, Description, and Justification of Program(s) (16 points)

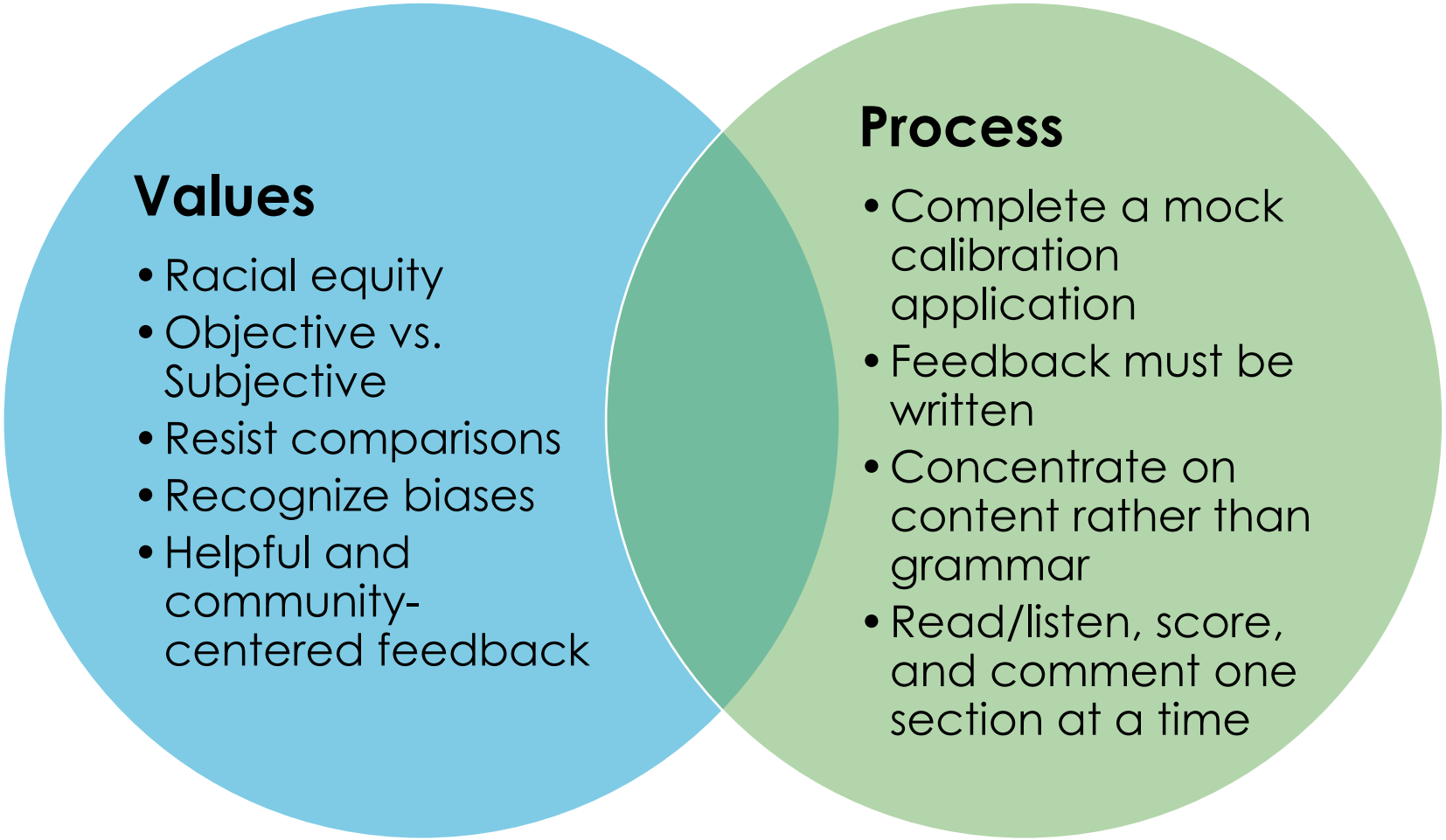
SAMPLE

An informative rubric:

- Is available as soon as the NOFA is released
- Uses a 1-4 Likert Scale
- Provides a checklist for applicants and reviewers
- Ensures all criteria are addressed in the proposal
- Demonstrates the level of narrative detail needed in the proposal for a higher or lower score
- Some sections will be more heavily weighted

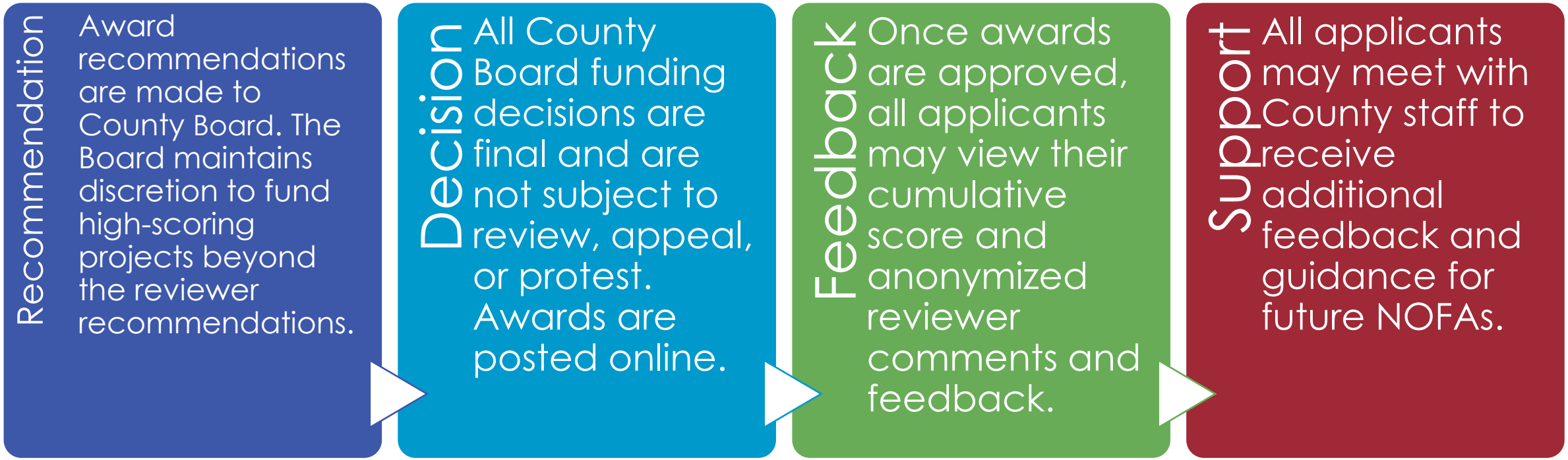
Proposal Evaluation

All reviewers will receive the same training focused on process- and value-oriented topics.



Funding Awards

The post-evaluation process includes:



Accountability

Reporting

- Written progress reports including relevant data and narrative
- Including site visits

Support

- Providing technical assistance
- Follow-up if grantees are facing challenges

Process Review

- Community engagement to understand their perception of process
- Reviewing efficacy at truly meeting needs of community
- Making adjustments to improve in subsequent years

Next Steps: Community Engagement

Summer and Fall 2023 Engagement Plan

Board Presentation – June 2023

Providing overview and update on process

Community Meeting – Summer 2023

Providing overview and update on process

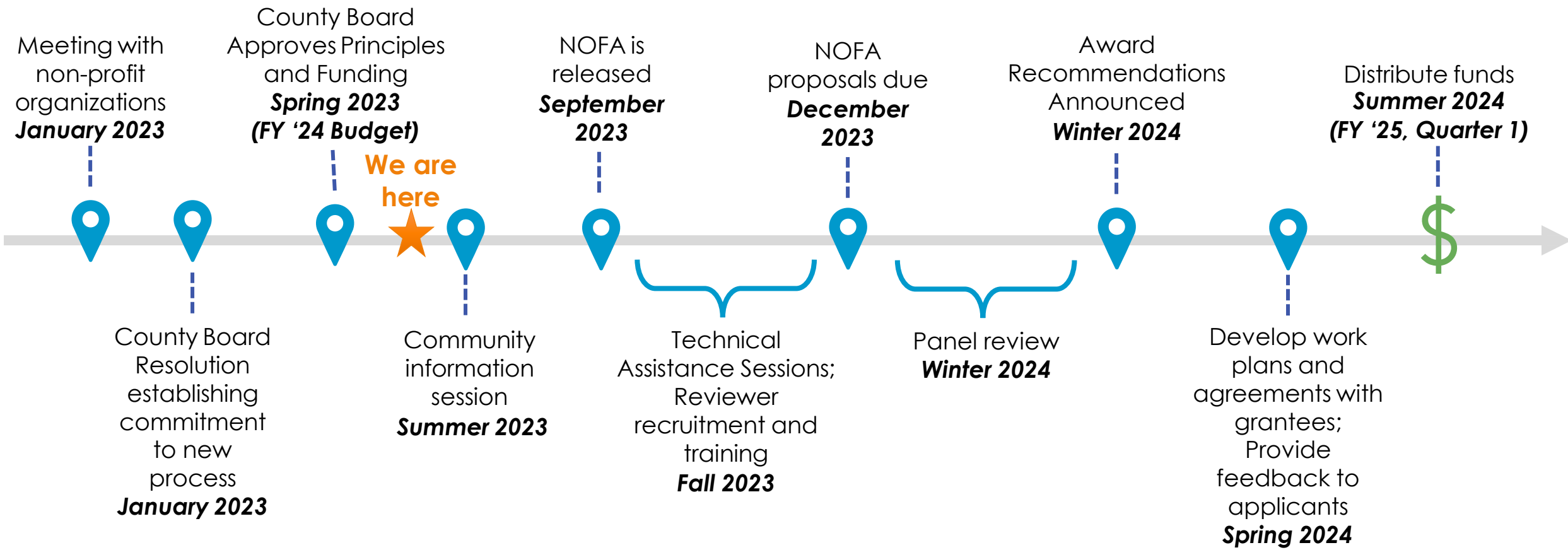
Reviewer Recruitment – Fall 2023

Community members: recruiting from public sites and service locations	Subject Matter Experts: recruiting at department and staff meetings

Other dissemination avenues:

- January community meeting attendees
- DHS clients

Next Steps: Overall Timeline



Questions