**Section 291.55 Prescreening of Grant Applications by the Office**

The Office will conduct a prescreening of all grant applications received by the deadline to identify applicants with the greatest financial need. The steps of this prescreening are provided in this Section.

a) The Office will evaluate whether each application was received by the deadline and whether the applicant has met the eligibility requirements of Section 291.30 as of the application deadline date. Only those applicants that meet these

eligibility requirements will receive further consideration.

b) The Office will determine whether each eligible applicant has submitted a

complete application as provided in Section 291.40. The Office will attempt to assist applicants who have submitted a timely application with submitting any missing information after the application deadline.

c) To assist the Committee in making final determinations of grant awards, the

Office will then rank complete applications of eligible applicants using the following criteria:

1) The Office will use information provided by the applicant on its operating budget, square miles served and population served in developing a ranking of financial need.

2) The Office will divide each applicant's budget by the square miles served to determine the applicant's budget per square mile and will rank the applicants lowest to highest.

3) The Office will divide each applicant's budget by the population served to determine the applicant's budget per person and will rank the applicants lowest to highest.

4) The Office will then average the two rankings of each applicant to reach an overall ranking based on financial need.

d) Applicants that have previously received a grant from the Office under this program will be ranked against each other according to the criteria in subsection (c), but this group of applicants will be ranked below all applicants that have not previously received a grant under this program.

e) Using the ranking criteria identified in subsections (c) and (d), the Office will rank the applications. Based upon the grant amount requested by each applicant, the Office will provide the Committee with complete application information for the top ranked applications equaling at least 1½ the amount of available appropriations for the Committee's determination for that grant cycle.

(Source: Added at 41 Ill. Reg. 10500, effective August 15, 2017)