**Section 974.130 Application Review Process**

a) The Department will accept applications for grant awards during the period specified in the RFA or the grant application.

b) The Department will, based on the organization's annual budget (see Section 974.120(c)(4)) determine an organization's competitive slot in the application process as outlined in Section 21.8 of the Illinois Lottery Law.

1) *Organizations with an annual budget of $300,000 or less,* Category A, *will compete with like size organizations for 50% of the Quality of Life annual fund.*

2) *Organizations with an annual budget of $300,001 to $700,000,* Category B, *will compete with like organizations for 25% of the Quality of Life annual fund.*

3) *Organizations with an annual budget of $700,001 and upward,* Category C, *will compete with like organizations for 25% of the Quality of Life annual fund.*

c) If funds remain in Category A, B or C due to an insufficient number of applications received or due to ineligibility based on application scores, the unused portion from other funding categories may be used for the remaining eligible applicants from the other categories.

d) The Department will perform a technical review to ensure that all required materials are submitted and comply with submission requirements. The review will include whether the application form includes all required information and the applicant's signature and date of signature.

e) Applications will be excluded from consideration for award for the following reasons:

1) Applications are not submitted by the deadline.

2) Applications are missing requested information or required attachments.

3) Applications do not meet all eligibility requirements.

f) The Department will perform a qualitative review to assess the quality of the project in relation to the grant program mentioned in the RFA, statutory requirements, or any other prerequisites corresponding to that particular grant program. The objectives, timeline, budget and budget justification will be evaluated to ensure that they are realistic and necessary for the project. Past performance of the applicant will be considered if the applicant has received Department grants in the past.

g) Grant applications will be scored based the following scoring rubric:

1) Organizational capacity and experience (5 points). Organizational capacity review includes, but is not limited to, whether the applicant is able to provide HIV programming to the intended target audience; is able to organize and operate the proposed project; and has expertise and experience in the area of HIV prevention;

2) Project description (55 points). Project description review includes, but is not limited to, the target audience to be served; how an evidence-based model will be implemented; how proposed interventions will work together; and the specific objectives to be performed;

3) Project management and staffing (10 points). Project management and staffing review includes, but is not limited to, the identification of staff members responsible for the oversight, management, implementation or evaluation of the proposed project; whether the applicant has the type and number of staff needed to perform the proposed project; and whether staff qualifications and requirements are stated and appropriate for the proposed project;

4) Project budget and project budget narrative (5 points). Project budget and project budget narrative review includes, but is not limited to, whether the applicant's detailed budget and justification for expenses is consistent with the proposed program objectives and activities; and

5) Past experience on previous Department-funded HIV/AIDS related grants (20 points). Past experience review includes, but is not limited to, whether the applicant met the objectives of other Department-funded HIV/AIDS related program grants, including, but not limited to, previous Quality of Life grants and African-American AIDS Response Act grants. Applicants that have not received any prior Department HIV/AIDS program grant funding will be awarded the full 20 points.

h) Applications scoring 80-100 will receive grant awards based on available funding. Applications scoring 71-79 will require application revisions and may receive grant awards based on application revisions and available funding. Applications scoring 70 or below will not be considered for grant awards. Application revisions may include, but are not limited to, adjusting the budget or adjusting the scope of work.

i) The grant review will include specific objectives within each of the following criteria:

1) Design and implementation of the grant project (e.g., target audience, summary, measurement strategies);

2) Scope of Work − Overall goals and objectives (e.g., alignment with grant guidelines, realistic goals, objectives fully and completely stated, and measurement tactics clearly articulated for each objective);

3) Timeline (e.g., detailed, realistic and feasible; anticipated obstacles described with strategies to overcome); and

4) Budget detail and justification (e.g., complete and precise, likely to lead to accomplishment of objectives).

j) Applicants will be notified as to whether the grant application is approved, eligible for resubmission, or denied.

k) In addition to the scoring rubric, and based on the particular grant requirements, the Department may consider factors such as geographic need, the ability to serve special populations, and the grantee's history of compliance with grant requirements in determining whether to approve a grant application. Additional criteria will be specified in the RFA.

l) *The Department must, before grants are awarded, provide copies of all grant applications to the Quality of Life Board, receive and review the Board's recommendations and comments, and consult with the Board regarding the grants* (Section 21.8 of the Act).