Open Research Funders Group

Open & Equitable Model Funding Program

February 2022

Open Research Funders Group (ORFG) Overview

- Partnership of philanthropic organizations committed to the open sharing of research outputs
- We believe openness is better for philanthropy, better for science, and better for society
- Collectively ORFG members hold assets in excess of $250B, with total annual giving of $12B +

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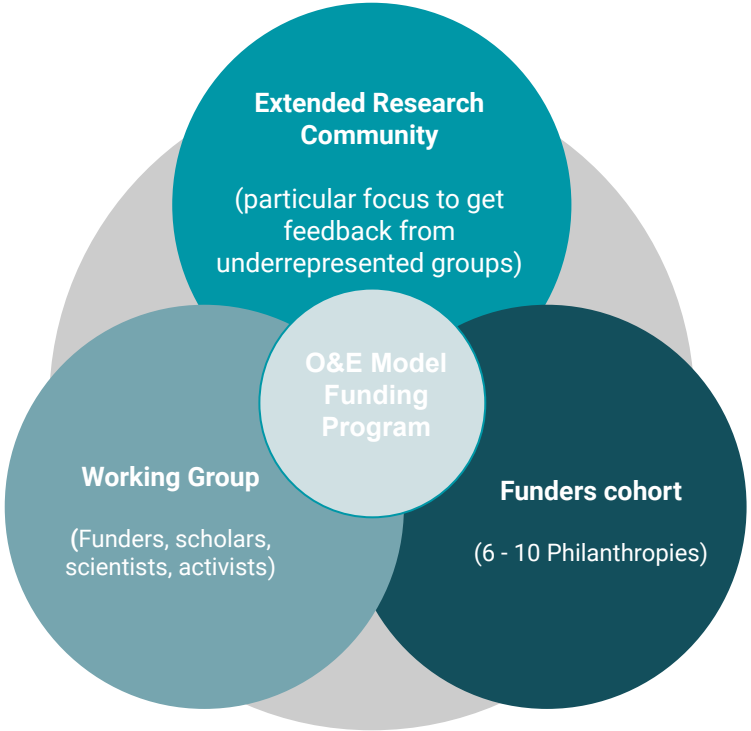
Model Funding Program Components

It is a **community of practice** where **funders**, **experts**, and the **extended research community** identify, develop, contribute, and implement strategies to make existing funding mechanisms more equitable and more open.



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O&E Model Funding Program Overview

Objective: To identify and implement interventions designed to embed equitable and open research practices throughout the grantmaking process.

Scope: To implement, follow up, and document a set of around 40 interventions among a cohort of 4 to 6 funders (ORFG and HRA).

How do we build the Program Interventions?

- ORFG Equity & Open Science Working Group:
  - Representatives from five ORFG members,
  - Seven scholars, scientists, and activists working at the intersection of open research and marginalized communities.

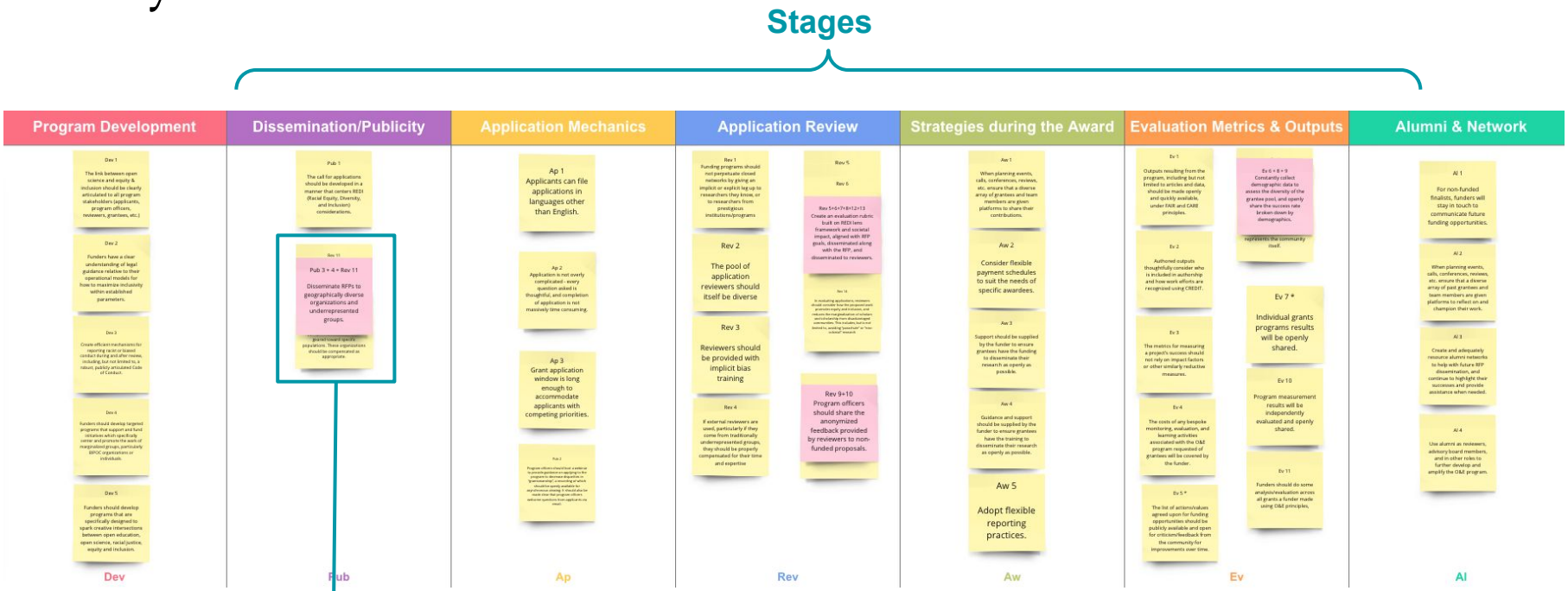
- Good practices identified among our members (ORFG and HRA)

- Continuous feedback from the community
  - Twitter campaigns
  - Open Community Calls

Examples

- Train reviewers and program staff on implicit bias
- Create mechanisms for reporting racist or biased conduct not limited to a Code of Conduct
- The pool of application reviewers should itself be diverse
- Application is not overly complicated

Analysis of Interventions



Example: [Dissemination Publicity]

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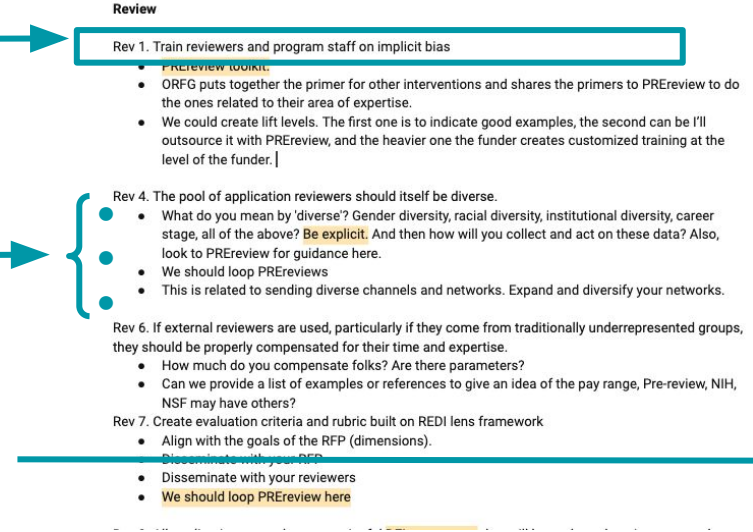
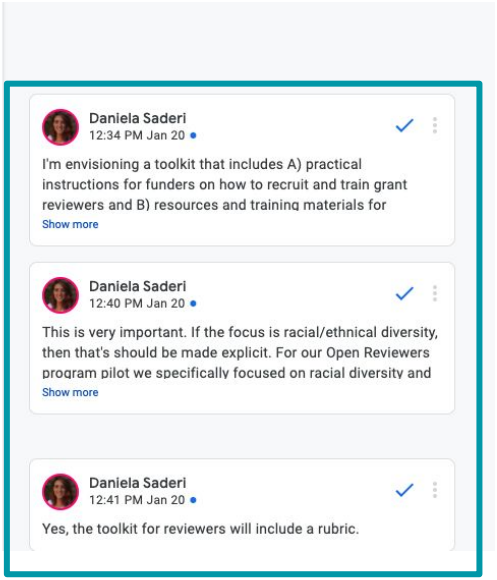
Implementation analysis

Intervention

Implementation mechanics

Collaborative identification of resources





Example: [Rev 1. Train reviewers and program staff on implicit bias]

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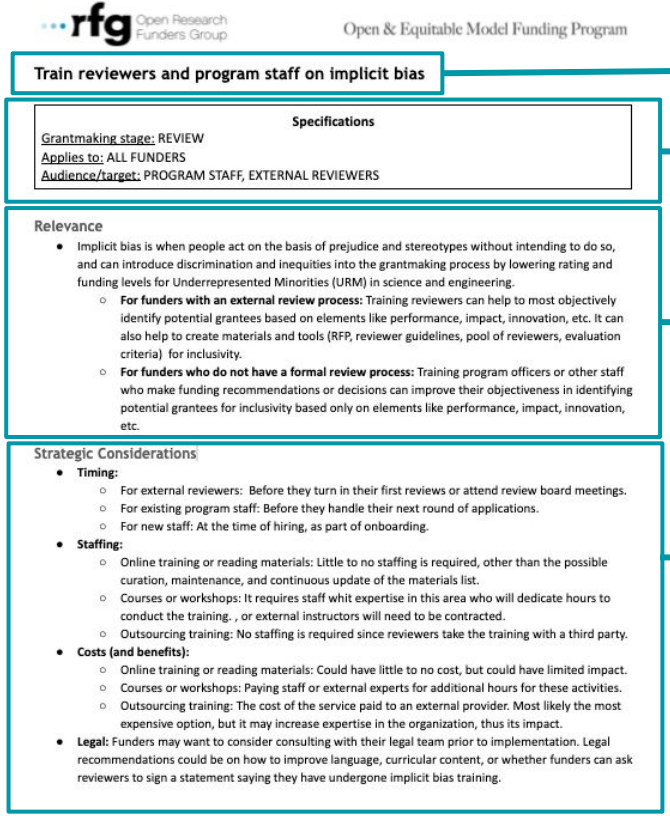
Primer

- Interventions: What
- Primers: How
    - It is a document that contains strategic and concise information on how to implement the interventions, so funders can use it to improve their grantmaking processes.
    - A concrete list of actions (checklists) to create the basis to develop follow-up instruments
    - A dissemination tool easy to consume and to share.

Primer key components: Cover



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Open & Equitable Model Funding Program

Train reviewers and program staff on implicit bias

Specifications

Grantmaking stage: REVIEW
Applies to: ALL FUNDERS
Audience/target: PROGRAM STAFF, EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Relevance

- Implicit bias is when people act on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes without intending to do so, and can introduce discrimination and inequities into the grantmaking process by lowering rating and funding levels for Underrepresented Minorities (URM) in science and engineering.
  - **For funders with an external review process:** Training reviewers can help to most objectively identify potential grantees based on elements like performance, impact, innovation, etc. It can also help to create materials and tools (RFP, reviewer guidelines, pool of reviewers, evaluation criteria) for inclusivity.
  - **For funders who do not have a formal review process:** Training program officers or other staff who make funding recommendations or decisions can improve their objectiveness in identifying potential grantees for inclusivity based only on elements like performance, impact, innovation, etc.

Strategic Considerations

- **Timing:**
  - For external reviewers: Before they turn in their first reviews or attend review board meetings.
  - For existing program staff: Before they handle their next round of applications.
  - For new staff: At the time of hiring, as part of onboarding.
- **Staffing:**
  - Online training or reading materials: Little to no staffing is required, other than the possible curation, maintenance, and continuous update of the materials list.
  - Courses or workshops: It requires staff whit expertise in this area who will dedicate hours to conduct the training. , or external instructors will need to be contracted.
  - Outsourcing training: No staffing is required since reviewers take the training with a third party.
- **Costs (and benefits):**
  - Online training or reading materials: Could have little to no cost, but could have limited impact.
  - Courses or workshops: Paying staff or external experts for additional hours for these activities.
  - Outsourcing training: The cost of the service paid to an external provider. Most likely the most expensive option, but it may increase expertise in the organization, thus its impact.
- **Legal:** Funders may want to consider consulting with their legal team prior to implementation. Legal recommendations could be on how to improve language, curricular content, or whether funders can ask reviewers to sign a statement saying they have undergone implicit bias training.

Intervention
- What

Specifications
- When
- Who

Relevance
- Why

Strategic considerations
- Timing
- Staffing
- Costs and benefits
- Legal

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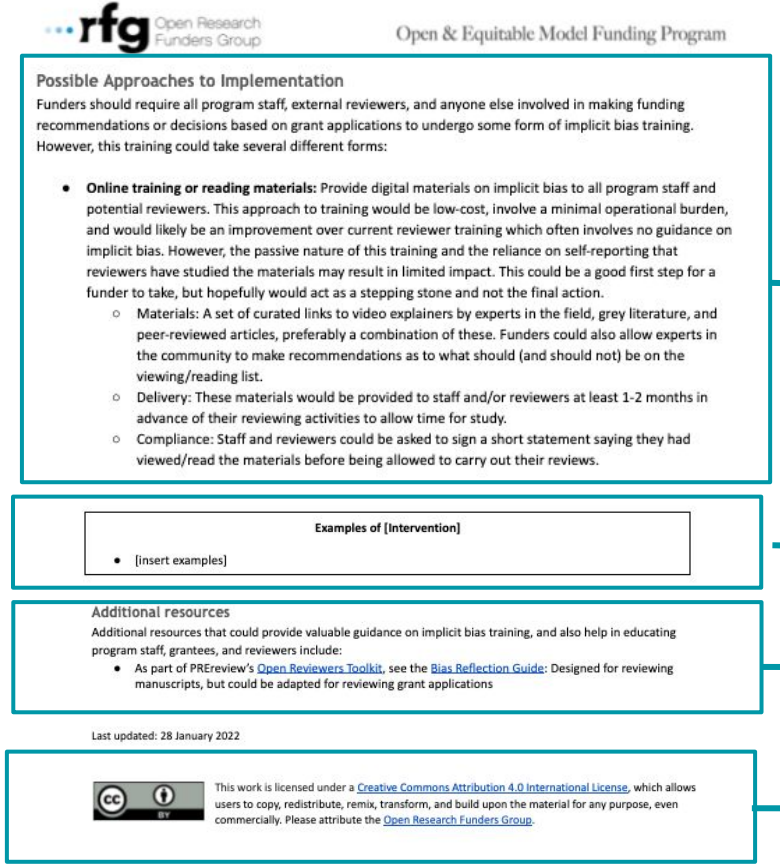
Primer key components: body



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Possible Approaches to Implementation

Funders should require all program staff, external reviewers, and anyone else involved in making funding recommendations or decisions based on grant applications to undergo some form of implicit bias training. However, this training could take several different forms:

- **Online training or reading materials:** Provide digital materials on implicit bias to all program staff and potential reviewers. This approach to training would be low-cost, involve a minimal operational burden, and would likely be an improvement over current reviewer training which often involves no guidance on implicit bias. However, the passive nature of this training and the reliance on self-reporting that reviewers have studied the materials may result in limited impact. This could be a good first step for a funder to take, but hopefully would act as a stepping stone and not the final action.
  - Materials: A set of curated links to video explainers by experts in the field, grey literature, and peer-reviewed articles, preferably a combination of these. Funders could also allow experts in the community to make recommendations as to what should (and should not) be on the viewing/reading list.
  - Delivery: These materials would be provided to staff and/or reviewers at least 1-2 months in advance of their reviewing activities to allow time for study.
  - Compliance: Staff and reviewers could be asked to sign a short statement saying they had viewed/read the materials before being allowed to carry out their reviews.

Examples of [Intervention]

- [insert examples]

Additional resources

Additional resources that could provide valuable guidance on implicit bias training, and also help in educating program staff, grantees, and reviewers include:

- As part of PREreview's Open Reviewers Toolkit, see the Bias Reflection Guide: Designed for reviewing manuscripts, but could be adapted for reviewing grant applications

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Possible approaches to Implementation

Example

Additional resources

Primer licence

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Q&A

- Do you have any questions or comments about the program?
- Do you have suggestions about initiatives, good practices we should look at or people we should talk to?
- Do you feel primers are the right way to provide guidance?
- What other types of information or guidance would be useful for your organization?
- Would you like to participate in the first funder cohort?

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