

Methodology for Application Review Process

1. First Level of Review: Application Responses

The initial review will focus on the applicant's responses in the application itself, specifically addressing Initial and Primary Eligibility criteria.

a) Eligible Applicants:

- If the applicant's responses indicate that they meet the eligibility criteria, the application will proceed to the document review stage.

b) Ineligible Applicants:

- If the responses indicate ineligibility, the application will be flagged as denied. A brief explanation (one to two sentences) will be provided to the applicant to help them understand why they were denied and how to improve their application in the future.

2. Second Level of Review: Document Review

The second level of review applies only to applicants who have answered the eligibility questions affirmatively. These applications will be categorized into the following groups based on document verification:

a) Approved:

- Applications that meet all criteria and have the necessary documents will be moved forward for funding based on the availability of funds. Applicants will be notified via email that they are equity eligible.

b) Denied:

- Applications that fail to meet the criteria will receive a denial email, including the reason for the denial.

c) **Deficient (Positional Change):**

- These applications have minor, correctable issues. Initially, these would have been denied, but corrections are possible based on supporting documents or other relevant materials. Examples include
 - I. Missing 2023 tax extension documents, though 2022 taxes were submitted.
 - II. Missing ownership attestation for applicants with less than 50% ownership.
 - III. Missing secondary residency document.
 - IV. Mismatch between ownership documents and Secretary of State records.
 - V. Business taxes provided instead of personal income taxes.

Note: Applicants in this category will be placed lower in the queue than those approved or deficient (no positional change).

d) **Deficient (No Positional Change):**

- These applications have more complex issues that were not anticipated. Examples include:
 - I. Arrest/conviction/asset forfeiture records mentioning “Drug-Related” without specifying cannabis-related offenses.
 - II. Income verification provided through photos of Medi-Cal or EBT cards, which are issued once and do not confirm current eligibility.
 - III. Single residency document submitted in the current residency field, but approved documents submitted elsewhere (e.g., tax returns for income eligibility or a residential grant deed for proof of right to operate).

3. Queue Positioning for Deficient Applicants

Applicants in the **Deficient (Positional Change)** category will be placed lower in the queue for funding than those in the **Approved** and **Deficient (No Positional Change)** categories. If issues arise that are not covered by the current criteria, the placement in the queue will be determined on a case-by-case basis, with further clarification to be provided as needed.

4. Additional Criteria for Document Matching

a) **Grant Deed and Residency Match:**

- If the grant deed is submitted as proof of the right to use a site, it must match the property listed on the residency status document.

b) **Tax Returns and Residency Match:**

- If tax returns are submitted for proof of income, the address on the tax return must match the document submitted for current residency.

Note: Moving forward, tax returns should not be used as proof of residency unless specific criteria are met.