

Role and Responsibilities of Consumer Advocates in Peer Review

A peer review meeting includes a variety of individuals with different perspectives. Although the actual number of participants varies depending on the number of individual components and disciplines in the research applications or proposals, peer review groups typically involve 10-30 people.

Peer review groups consists of a mix of senior, mid-level, and more junior scientists to provide a balance of established and emerging scientific perspectives.

The **role of the consumer advocate** in peer review is to provide the patient/public perspective in the assessment of scientific excellence. CARRA members serve as lay representatives, giving those affected by cancer a voice in the peer review process.

Consumer advocates have several **responsibilities** when participating in a peer review. The NCI expects a CARRA member to:

- Be a full participating member of the review panel, with full voting status.
- Have a good understanding of peer review procedures.
- Read grant application materials carefully.
- Prepare written critiques of grant applications.
- Present the collective perspective of people affected by cancer during discussions about grant applications.
- Understand human subjects requirements in research.
- Increase the level of attention provided to patient issues and outcomes in proposed research.
- Avoid actual conflicts of interest and/or the appearance of conflict.
- Maintain strict confidentiality before, during, and after the review.
- Be open-minded, professional, and diplomatic.
- Communicate frequently with your Scientific Review Administrator (SRA), and ask questions as needed.

IMPORTANT

Scientists on a peer review panel represent their scientific viewpoint rather than their personal viewpoint. CARRA members are expected to represent the collective views of people affected by and at risk for cancer as opposed to one's personal experience. It is very important not to voice your personal or political agenda in the peer review process.