

**PN-2017-G05**

**Issuance of the Protocol for Office of Public Affairs Review of Draft Competitive Grant Solicitations**

**Effective Date:** August 8, 2017

**Resources:**

[Protocol for Office of Public Affairs Review of Draft Competitive Grant Solicitations](#)

**Purpose:** This Policy Notice establishes the Protocol for Office of Public Affairs Review of Draft Competitive Grant Solicitation.

**Background:**

The Office of the Administrator has directed that all competitive grant solicitations be reviewed by the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) before they are posted on [Grants.gov](#) and before there is any external engagement (e.g., discussions with external stakeholders regarding priorities or other aspects of the competition) relating to the solicitation. This protocol establishes the process for OPA review.

**Actions:**

Program offices must begin following the referenced [Protocol](#) immediately. Any competitive grant solicitations that have not already been cleared by the Office of Public Affairs must go through the process set forth by the Protocol. No solicitations will be reviewed, published, or approved by the Grants Competition Advocate's office without obtaining approval from OPA first.

## Protocol for Office of Public Affairs Review of Draft Competitive Grant Solicitations

The Office of the Administrator has directed that all competitive grant solicitations be reviewed by the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) before they are posted on [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) and before there is any external engagement (e.g., discussions with external stakeholders regarding priorities or other aspects of the competition) relating to the solicitation. This protocol establishes the process for OPA review.

1. **Program Office Initiates OPA Review Process:** When a program office has a final draft of a solicitation that would otherwise be ready for review through the Next Generation Grants System (NGGS) by the Office of Grants and Debarment's Grants Competition Advocate's Office (GCA's Office) they must first send it to John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs in OPA, for review and approval before they transmit it through NGGS for GCA review.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Program offices must submit a copy of the draft solicitation via email to John Konkus at [konkus.john@epa.gov](mailto:konkus.john@epa.gov). They must also copy Bruce Binder, Senior Associate Director for Grants Competition, on the email and all subsequent email communications with John Konkus regarding the solicitation, at [binder.bruce@epa.gov](mailto:binder.bruce@epa.gov).
  - b. The email to John Konkus must include the name, email address, and telephone number for the program office's point of contact (POC) to respond to any OPA questions or comments on the solicitation.
2. **OPA Reviews Solicitation:** John Konkus will review the solicitation within 3 business days of receiving it from the program office.
  - a. If he has any concerns, comments, or questions on the solicitation, he will contact the POC listed in the email. If he has any competition or legal concerns he may also contact the GCA's Office.
  - b. The program office will work directly with John Konkus to resolve any issues on the solicitation. The program office may seek assistance from the GCA's Office and/or OGC/ORC as necessary to resolve any issues.
  - c. If John Konkus has no concerns, or his concerns have been addressed, he will contact the POC to communicate OPA's approval of the solicitation.
  - d. After receiving OPA approval, program offices may engage in appropriate external outreach with the grant community regarding the solicitation consistent with the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy and GCA guidance. However, if this engagement results in any substantive changes to the draft solicitation approved by OPA, the program office must resubmit the solicitation to John Konkus for another review (see Step 1).
3. **Program Office Submits OPA-Approved Solicitation for GCA and OGC/ORC Review:** Once OPA has approved the solicitation, the program office must submit the opportunity to the GCA's Office for review via NGGS as is the current practice. The GCA's Office will forward it to OGC/ORC for review as appropriate.
  - a. The program office must include a statement in the comments field of the "Work Flow" section of the NGGS opportunity indicating that OPA has approved the solicitation (and the date of the approval) and/or may attach any written approval received from John Konkus in the "Work Flow" section of the opportunity in NGGS.
  - b. The program office must attach a copy of any comments or revisions made by John Konkus to the solicitation in the "Work Flow" section of the NGGS opportunity.
  - c. If during their review of the solicitation the GCA's Office and/or OGC/ORC raise any comments or concerns with the solicitation that impact or relate to any comments from OPA, they will work with OPA and the program office to resolve the issues.
4. **Solicitation is Posted:** Program offices may post their solicitation on their website only after receiving approval from OPA and the GCA's Office (and OGC/ORC when applicable). The GCA's Office will then post it on [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) consistent with the established process.

---

<sup>1</sup> Program offices may still work with the GCA's Office and OGC/ORC when developing the solicitation to address any competition or legal issues with the competition prior to sending it to OPA for review.