MIRROR TOOL

CHICAGO BEYOND→

Chicago Beyond is a philanthropic organization which developed the Mirror Tool based on their practices in addressing unconscious bias. This is designed for reviewers evaluating applications in the funding process.

When we participate in a funding process, our goal as reviewers is to contribute to high quality decisions. Unconscious bias skews all human decision-making. Research[*] shows that we can reduce it by slowing ourselves down, in real time, and bringing unconscious factors into our own view.

Chicago Beyond invites you to take the help of this Mirror Tool. It is designed to enable you to make more conscious choices as you score applications. When we use a tool like this, we introduce real-time friction and decrease ambiguity in our thinking. This approach helps us to examine our conclusions and vet our own rationales. It gives us vocabulary to understand unconscious factors that may be at play. As a result, the perspective we intend to contribute comes forward, instead of scoring that may be based on what is familiar, confirmation bias, or other common, very natural human tendencies in decision-making.

To begin, please take three deep, cleansing breaths.

Next, review one application in full. As you review the application, you can take the help of this Mirror Tool to mark which biases you notice may apply. You may jot down notes, or simply mark 'X' to indicate your awareness of the bias.

Then, enter your draft scores into the Mirror Tool, noticing your reasoning for each score. If you notice a connection between bias and your reasoning, you may choose to revisit your scoring, including by reviewing the application again, before you submit.

In Chicago Beyond's experience, tools and practices like this have helped people with very different types of expertise to see our own rationales more clearly, and distinguish what is intentionally driving our decisions from what we unwittingly factor in. This leads to more effective individual and collective participation, and higher quality decisions.

Additional Resources: Chicago Beyond's guidebook, *Why Am I Always Being Researched?*

* Stanford University Professor and MacArthur "Genius" Grant awardee Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt has published extensively on this topic. More *here.*

COMMON TYPES OF BIAS

Beauty Bias

Be aware of and challenge assumptions that a beautifully written application or a beautifully produced video is connected to the impact and durability of the actual work, or the capacity of the team to execute the work.

Places to look: How are you influenced by the application's writing style or video production quality? Standard grammar, perfect spelling, and sleek presentation in some cases accompany highly impactful community work, and in some cases do not. How are you influenced by the organization or applicant's name (research shows consistent significant bias towards Anglo sounding names), or physical attributes of people in the video?

Affinity Bias

Be aware of whether your assessment of an application is drawing on something that you like or dislike, or something that is familiar or unfamiliar that the application recalls for you.

Places to look: What is your first impression of this organization drawing on? Does the application remind you of yourself or someone or something you like or dislike? Discomfort with an application may come from our relevant previous experience, or may simply signal that the work challenges or is unfamiliar to us. If you assess this work is risky to fund, why specifically?

Halo/Horns Bias

Be aware of whether one great thing you identify in an application is having a halo effect that influences your view of the rest of the application. Similarly, be careful not to allow one shortcoming you identify in an application to have a horns effect, beyond its due.

Places to look: Is there one thing in the application that is taking most of your attention? Try reviewing the application again, setting aside the one point that you notice is unduly influencing you.

Confirmation Bias

Be aware of whether you are giving high or low scores to an application based on whether the work lines up to your own preconceived beliefs, rather than the evidence presented by the organization.

Places to look: Notice your own proximity, level of expertise, or preconceived belief relating to the work of this organization. How might this impact how you assess the work's track record or potential for impact? What evidence in the application do you find convincing and why specifically?

Contrast Bias

Be aware of whether you may be unconsciously favoring certain characteristics: bigger organizations and bigger budgets over smaller ones, more established organizations over newer ones, organizations with male over female or gender nonconforming leaders, etc.

Places to look: How might characteristics you favor impact how you assess whether the capacity of the organization is strong? Might you be comparing this organization to another organization or application that you recently interacted with, leading you to unconsciously favor certain characteristics?

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	Beauty Bias	Affinity Bias	Halo/Horns Bias	Confirmation Bias	Contrast Bias	Additional notes	Criterion #1	Criterion #2	Criterion #3	Criterion #4
Application name/#	I notice…	I notice…	I notice…	I notice…	I notice…	I notice…	Insert score	Insert score	Insert score	Insert score

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