

# Modernizing Basic Minimum Requirements (BMR) Review for OJP Peer Review Support Services

A Human-Centered, AI-Enabled Approach

Automating Eligibility Determination while Preserving Human Judgment through Human in-the-Loop (HIL)

**Presented By:**

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**Focus Areas:**

Grant Modernization • Peer Review •  
Modernization • AI – Assisted Review • Digital  
Transformation

# The Need for Modernization in OJP's Basic Minimum Requirements (BMR) Review

The BMR review is OJP's initial gate in the multi-stage peer review process, ensuring applications meet eligibility and completeness requirements before advancing to merit review. This critical first screening determines which applications progress, making accuracy and consistency paramount to the integrity of the entire grants process.

However, current manual BMR processes face significant operational challenges, threatening efficiency and fair access. These processes are time-consuming, inconsistent, error-prone, and difficult to scale during peak application periods, creating vulnerabilities across the review workflow.

Optimal Solutions Group, a leader in policy research, has partnered with Revelo Software, manufacturer of eReviewer and AcquisitionAI, to deliver a comprehensive modernization solution. This joint team combines federal grants expertise with proven technology platforms. Early pilots of eReviewer have shown a **greater than 50% reduction in review cycle time** while maintaining rigorous quality standards.

### Human Error & Fatigue

Manual reviewers experience cognitive overload, leading to missed requirements and inconsistent application of eligibility criteria across cases.

### Inconsistent Criteria Application

Varying interpretations of NOFO requirements by reviewers create fairness concerns and potential challenges to award decisions.

### SAM.gov Validation Errors

Manual SAM.gov lookups are prone to timing issues, mismatched names, and incomplete validation of active registration status.

### Grants.gov Manual Verification

Manual verification of proposal title, organization information, grant amount requested and alignment with JustGrants submission is time-consuming and potentially error prone.

### Missed Exclusion Checks

Manually cross-referencing federal exclusion lists increases the risk of overlooking debarred or suspended organizations.

### Audit Vulnerability

Incomplete documentation and inconsistent decision records complicate demonstrating compliance during audits or reviews.

# A Proven, AI-Enabled Modernization Path: eReviewer + AcquisitionAI

The foundation of our modernization approach rests on two mature, integrated platforms that have been battle-tested in federal and state grant environments. **eReviewer** serves as a secure, modern Peer Review Management System (PRMS) specifically designed for government requirements. Built with federal compliance at its core, eReviewer provides FedRAMP-ready hosting infrastructure, comprehensive end-to-end reviewer lifecycle management, and structured workflows that generate audit-ready logs automatically. The platform has been successfully deployed across multiple agencies including TEDCO, CMS, USAID, and the Department of Education, demonstrating its versatility and reliability in diverse federal contexts.

## eReviewer

### Platform Capabilities

- FedRAMP-ready secure hosting environment compliant with federal security and privacy standards (FISMA, NIST)
- Consolidated peer reviewer recruitment, onboarding, training, and technical assistance (TTA) lifecycle
- Configurable workflow engines adaptable to any NOFO structure
- Real-time collaboration tools with integrated version control
- Comprehensive audit trails and compliance reporting capabilities
- Role-based access controls and conflict-of-interest screening mechanisms

## AcquisitionAI

Streamline Market Research

### Intelligence Layer

- Continuously updated SAM.gov entity data integration
- Automated entity type classification and validation services
- Real-time excluded entity flagging and debarment checks
- Active SAM registration status verification
- IPEDS institution validation for higher education applicants
- IRS nonprofit determination data integration (future capability)
- OIG exclusion list monitoring (future capability)

**AcquisitionAI** complements eReviewer by providing a curated, continuously updated intelligence layer over SAM.gov and federal entity databases. This sophisticated data aggregation system maintains current information on entity types, exclusion statuses, and SAM registration details. The integration between eReviewer and AcquisitionAI through secure APIs enables the automation of 70-85% of all BMR checks that would otherwise require manual research and validation.

01	02
<b>Entity Eligibility Verification</b> Automated confirmation that applicant organizations meet NOFO-specified entity type requirements	<b><u>SAM.gov</u> Active Status</b> Real-time validation of current, active registration status without manual lookup
03	04
<b>Nonprofit Status Confirmation</b> Cross-verification against IRS determination letters and state incorporation records	<b>Exclusion List Screening</b> Comprehensive checking across federal debarment and suspension databases
05	06
<b>Accreditation Validation</b> Verification of required accreditations or certifications when specified in NOFOs	<b>IPEDS Verification</b> Verification of institutions of higher education to validate institution type, degree-granting status, and accreditation status
07	
<b>Document Completeness</b> Automated detection of missing required attachments and incomplete application sections	

These automated capabilities directly address the high-risk challenges inherent in manual BMR processes. Where manual **SAM.gov** validation creates timing vulnerabilities and human error risks, AcquisitionAI provides instantaneous, accurate verification. Where inconsistent criteria application threatens fairness, eReviewer's structured workflows ensure uniform standards. Where incomplete documentation exposes programs to audit findings, the integrated system creates comprehensive, timestamped records of every check and decision.

This modernization approach transforms BMR from a labor-intensive bottleneck into a streamlined, reliable gateway that protects program integrity while accelerating time-to-award.

# Human-in-the-Loop (HIL) AI: Ensuring Accountability, Transparency, and Reviewer Authority

While automation drives efficiency, the Revelo approach recognizes that eligibility determinations carry significant consequences for applicants and require human judgment, particularly for complex or edge cases. Our Human-in-the-Loop (HIL) model ensures that artificial intelligence serves as a powerful tool for reviewers rather than a replacement for human expertise and accountability. In this framework, AI provides suggestions, pattern detection, and completeness verification, but humans maintain full authority over all final decisions. This approach balances the speed and consistency of automated checks with the nuanced judgment that experienced grant professionals bring to ambiguous situations.

Transparency and explainability form the cornerstones of trustworthy AI-augmented review. Every AI-generated suggestion in the eReviewer platform includes clear reasoning that reviewers can examine, question, and override. The system maintains detailed logs of all AI analyses, human decisions, and the rationale for any overrides, creating an audit trail that demonstrates both technological capability and human oversight.

This documentation proves invaluable during program reviews, responding to applicant inquiries, or defending determinations in appeals processes.

### Human Review

Reviewer examines AI findings and exercises professional judgment

### Final Decision

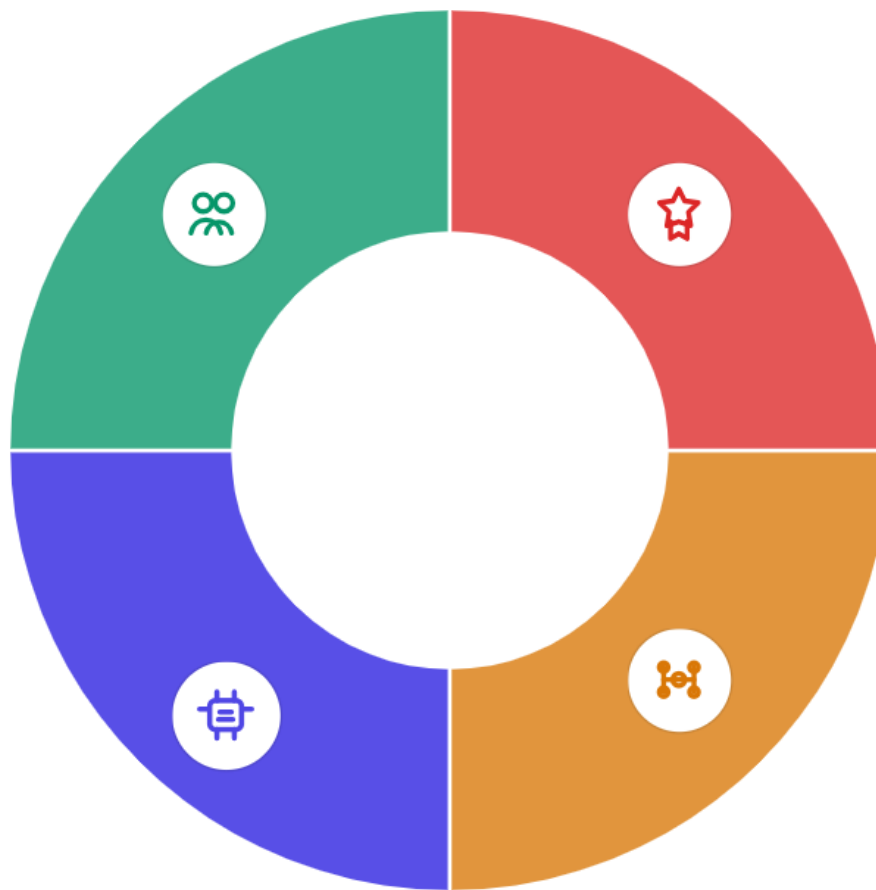
Reviewer makes authoritative determination with full transparency

### AI Analysis

System performs automated BMR checks and flags potential issues

### System Learning

AI incorporates reviewer decisions to improve future suggestions



# Automated Cross-Validation Triggers

The system incorporates intelligent confidence thresholds that automatically escalate uncertain cases for additional human review. When AI confidence falls below predetermined levels, whether due to ambiguous documentation, conflicting data sources, or novel fact patterns, the platform triggers mandatory cross-validation protocols.

A second reviewer examines the case independently, and any discrepancies between the initial AI analysis and human reviewers prompt supervisory review. This multi-layered approach catches edge cases that might slip through either purely manual or fully automated processes.

The HIL model serves as the critical risk mitigator for pitfalls inherent in both extremes of the review spectrum. Purely automated systems risk missing nuanced eligibility factors, misinterpreting unique organizational structures, or applying rigid rules where programmatic discretion should apply. Purely manual processes suffer from the inconsistencies, errors, and inefficiencies documented in current BMR operations.

By positioning AI as an intelligent assistant that enhances rather than replaces human judgment, the HIL approach delivers the best of both worlds: the speed and thoroughness of automation combined with the wisdom and accountability of experienced reviewers. This framework ensures audit-ready compliance while dramatically reducing high-impact risks such as inconsistent decisions, lost documentation, and missed exceptions that require professional interpretation. Most importantly, it maintains the human authority and responsibility that federal grant stewardship demands.

## Confidence Threshold Protection

Cases requiring human judgment receive it automatically, no application falls through the cracks due to over-reliance on automation.



## Evidence of Impact: Faster Processing, Higher Consistency, Lower Costs

The modernization approach outlined in this white paper is not theoretical, it builds on documented successes across multiple federal and state implementations. Real-world pilot programs and operational deployments have generated compelling evidence that AI-augmented peer review delivers measurable improvements in speed, quality, and cost-effectiveness. These results demonstrate that modernization can achieve the dual goals of better stewardship of taxpayer resources and improved service to the grants community.

50%

### Faster Review Cycles

Reduction in time from receipt to eligibility determination

37%

### Reduced Processing Time

Time savings in comprehensive peer review workflows

28%

### Improved Consistency

Increase in decision consistency across reviewers

89%

### Reviewer Confidence

Satisfaction ratings from reviewers using AI tools

30%

### Cost Savings

Reduction in operational costs across federal implementations

The eReviewer platform has achieved a remarkable 50% reduction in review cycle times across pilot implementations while simultaneously improving scoring consistency. This acceleration stems from automation of routine checks, elimination of manual data entry, and streamlined workflows that guide reviewers through structured evaluation protocols. Importantly, these efficiency gains did not come at the expense of quality, pilots documented improved consistency in how eligibility criteria were applied across similar applications, addressing one of the most significant vulnerabilities in manual review processes.

## Operational Improvements

- Reduced administrative burden on program staff
- Elimination of duplicate data entry and validation steps
- Real-time visibility into review progress and bottlenecks
- Automated reminders and deadline management
- Standardized documentation reduces audit preparation time

## Quality Enhancements

- Enhanced conflict-of-interest detection and management
- Consistent application of NOFO requirements
- Reduced risk of missed exclusion list checks
- Comprehensive audit trails for all determinations
- Better documentation of reviewer rationale and decisions

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*“The integrated eReviewer and AcquisitionAI solution transforms BMR from a time-consuming bottleneck into a streamlined gateway that actually improves quality while reducing burden. We’re not just automating the old process; we’re reimagining how eligibility review should work in the modern era.” -Tracye Turner, President, Revelo Software*

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The partnership of Optimal Solutions Group, Revelo Software, and Abt Global offers OJP a proven, repeatable path to modernization. This team brings together policy expertise, secure technical platforms with federal deployment experience, and research rigor to ensure successful implementation. The business case extends beyond immediate efficiency gains: eReviewer employs rules-based automation and configurable workflows to streamline BMR and related screening processes, delivering lower operational costs through reduced manual effort, decreased risk of costly audit findings or award protests, and improved scalability to manage application volume spikes without proportional staff increases.

eReviewer is designed to support, not supplant, expert judgment by organizing application materials, standardizing eligibility verification, and presenting relevant information in a consistent, auditable manner. By reducing administrative burden and ensuring uniform application of requirements, the platform enables reviewers to devote greater attention to evaluating the technical rigor, feasibility, and practical utility of proposed projects, resulting in a more consistent, transparent, and high-quality peer review process from initial screening through final award recommendation.

## Conclusion: A Ready-Now Modernization Path for OJP Peer Review Support Services

The Basic Minimum Requirements review is the essential first gate in OJP's peer review, directly impacting the fairness and stewardship of federal resources. Modernization must begin here, ensuring accurate, well-documented eligibility determinations build the foundation for subsequent review steps.

### Accuracy

Automated verification eliminates manual errors and ensures current information.

### Consistency

AI-assisted structured workflows ensure uniform application of NOFO requirements.

### Auditability

Comprehensive logging creates defensible records for OIG reviews and inquiries.

### Reduced Cost & Burden

Automation frees staff for higher-value tasks and improves scalability.

### Human-Centered Transparency

AI suggestions are transparent, with humans retaining full decision authority.

OJP has the opportunity to lead the next generation of fair, efficient, AI-augmented grantmaking. By modernizing BMR review with proven technology that keeps humans in control, OJP can set the standard for federal agencies leveraging AI to improve operations while maintaining accountability and transparency.

The integrated eReviewer and AcquisitionAI solution, leveraging our Human-in-the-Loop framework, delivers these essential qualities by addressing vulnerabilities in current manual processes.

## Contact

### Contact Optimal Solutions Group

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### Contact Revelo Software

For eReviewer and AcquisitionAI platform information

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*"OJP can lead the next generation of fair, efficient, AI-augmented grantmaking—while ensuring humans remain in control of every eligibility decision." – Mark Turner, Ph.D., President – Optimal Solutions Group*

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