



Anonymous Review Process

Music Therapy Access Fund accepts applications year-round for therapy grants and internship scholarships. The Board of Directors reviews applications in September and March, notifying applicants of award status before the end of the month of review. Applications received on or before February 28 will be reviewed in March. Applications received on or before August 31 will be reviewed in September.

The review process outlined below includes numerous considerations to minimize potential reviewer bias. We reduce the influence of potential bias by ensuring that no reviewer can consider the identity of any applicant, by dividing the review process to prevent any individual reviewer from gaining outsized influence, and by establishing the President and Vice President—the board members with oversight and organizational responsibilities for the review process—as disinterested parties through excluding them from the evaluation and ranking of applications.

The President of the Board begins the review process by confirming eligibility and anonymizing all applications, assigning an identification code. For music therapy grants, a board-certified music therapist reviews submitted assessments/treatment plans to ensure funds awarded support our mission.

Next, the Vice President of the Board produces review documents and distributes them to the remaining board members and invited reviewers. Each reviewer evaluates only one portion of the application, and the received review document includes only that information organized by identification code. For example, the reviewer responsible for financial information receives only the financial information portion of therapy grant applications, and the reviewer responsible for the first essay question of internship scholarship applications receives only those essays.

Each reviewer assigns each application a numerical ranking, with one (1) being the most aligned with our mission according to the evaluation of the assigned portion. Only the financial need section of the therapy grant applications is scored differently, with the reviewer assigning an absolute score determined by considering applicants' household income compared to Texas median household income and other factors instead of assigning relative rankings.

After concluding evaluation of their assigned portions, all reviewers send the Vice President their complete application rankings. The Vice President then tabulates a composite ranking by adding the numbers assigned by all reviewers and placing applications in order from lowest score (most aligned with our mission) to highest. For therapy grants, financial need will serve as the tiebreaker. Dropping the highest number will break potential ties for internship scholarships.

The President reviews and confirms application rankings as reported by the Vice President. Upon the President's final confirmation of application rankings, Music Therapy Access Fund awards funding according to availability. The number of grants or scholarships awarded may vary between cycles, but the highest ranked application will receive funding, followed by the next highest ranked application, as far down the order as the budget allows.