

BOARD POLICIES

Upper Merion Township

**SUBJECT: BOARD OF COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE
AND DISBURSEMENT GUIDELINES NO. 2014-37**

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2014 AMENDING NO. 2014-36

Abstract:

The Board of Supervisors will establish the Board of Community Assistance (BCA) to review the Township program of need-based community issues. The BCA will provide greater community participation and input into local government. This Board Policy is an orientation and informational tool to assist interested non-profit and/or 501 (c) organizations, presents a statement of purpose, policies and guidelines outlining the role, operation, and responsibilities of the Board of Community Assistance. **(For details of the 501 (c) organizations, see Appendix A)**

Membership and Term of the BCA:

Membership on the BCA will consist of five (5) members; two (2) chosen by the Valley Forge Casino Resort (VFCR) and three (3) Township citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The VFCR will notify the Board of Supervisors when its chosen members on the BCA have changed.

There will be no set term for the VFCR appointees and will serve on the BCA at the pleasure of the VFCR.

The terms of the Township appointees will be as follows: One (1) Township appointee will serve a one-year term; one (1) will serve a two-year term; and one (1) will serve a three-year term. Future terms for the appointees will be a three-year term.

VFCR	No set term
Township (1)	From appointment until 1/1/2014
Township (1)	From appointment until 1/1/2015
Township (1)	From appointment until 1/1/2016

A Chairperson will be selected from the membership of the BCA during January of each year at its re-organization meeting. A member of the BCA who receives a majority of votes of the BCA will be appointed as Chairperson. Board members of the BCA can support their own seat for Chairperson.

The staff liaison to the BCA is the Township Manager or his designee.

The Board of Supervisors will appoint a liaison to the BCA.

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In 2009, the Upper Merion Township Board of Supervisors adopted Board Policy No. 09-14 approving procedures for appointments to Township Boards, Committees, Commissions and Authorities. Please refer to this Board Policy when a vacancy exists on the BCA.

Applications can be obtained on-line at the Township's website, www.umtownship.org, in person at the Township Building or by phone to 610-265-2600. Applications remain on file for a period of one year from the date of filing unless the applicant requests withdrawal. Applicants shall be interviewed by at least two (2) members of the Board of Supervisors. In the event an applicant is not selected, the application will remain on file for one year for consideration in filling future vacancies. Appointments are made by the Board of Supervisors at regular business meetings. All applicants are notified by mail as soon as a decision has been made.

Meeting Schedule:

The BCA will meet a minimum of every other month, and will meet more frequently as necessary to evaluate cases of need. In times of urgency, the Chairman may create additional meetings as needed. Cases are defined as a completed application of eligible organizations that explain its need-related issue, contact information, requested amount of financial assistance, and related documents such as photos, plans, and reports made to other municipal interests and departments of the municipality. All documents submitted or issued from Upper Merion Township relating to the request must be included with the finished application. This requirement includes police reports, requests of other citizen boards, and permits.

Purpose of the BCA:

- To advise the Board of Supervisors for the disbursement of all monies received by the Township from the VFCA for the use of assisting non-profit and/or 501 (c) organizations and college scholarship recipients. All other monies received for disbursement from other sources will be considered in the same manner as set forth here.
- To make an annual report to the Board of Supervisors including all monies received and the disbursement of these monies to non-profit and 501 (c) organizations proven to meet the need as established by this Board Policy. This annual report will include a total of all monies received, name, address, amount disbursed, and a description of the need.
- To offer all non-profit and/or 501 (c) organizations in the Township the ability to appeal to the BCA for consideration in a time of need.
- To enhance the partnership between VFCA and Upper Merion Township to offer charitable assistance and support to the needy non-profits and 501 (c) organizations in the Township.

Limits of Powers and Duties of the Board of Community Assistance

The BCA recognizes its position as a board which acts in an advisory function to the Board of Supervisors and cannot enforce or create regulations. BCA accepts the limits of their powers and duties by the Board of Supervisors. For the funding issued by Valley Forge Casino Resort, the board is entrusted to screen and approve monies to eligible community organizations found to be in need as defined in this Board Policy. All management and disbursement actions by the BCA will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for final approval and disbursed to applicants by the Township's Finance Director.

The BCA recognizes confidentiality must be maintained regarding all application documentation and applicant statements. Due to the laws of privacy regarding legal and health documents, this information will be viewed during the applicant's case and considered confidential throughout all parts of the application process.

Township Position on Conflicts of Interest

The Board of Supervisors has adopted Board Policy No. 93-38, of July 22, 1993, as the Code of Ethics of Upper Merion Township and only applies to the Township appointees on the BCA. It is the public and corporate responsibility of the Township to ensure its officers and employees maintain the highest ethical standards in the course of their official duties. Under this Board Policy, "Officer or Employee" is defined to include the Board of Supervisors' citizen appointees. Financial disclosure of interests by certain individuals in decision-making positions within Township government is required. Statement of Financial Interest (State Ethics Form) will be completed before May 1 each year.

When a matter in which members have a direct or indirect financial interest comes before the citizen board, commission, committee or authority, member(s) must disqualify themselves from participating in deliberations or abstain from voting. Members shall explain in writing why they are abstaining. This letter shall become part of the minutes of the meeting. After making such disqualifying statement, the member should leave the table and return only upon conclusion of the matter. If there is any doubt as to whether to abstain, the Township Solicitor will provide guidance.

Applicant Eligibility:

- Organizations must be classified as tax-exempt under Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code and not classified as a private foundation/public charity, under Section 509(a). Individuals, with the exception of college scholarship recipients, and for-profit organizations are not eligible for funding.
- Churches and religious organizations may be eligible to receive funding for activities that are non-sectarian and benefit the larger community.
- Government agencies, including township departments and citizens boards, may be funded to carry out a specific program or project.
- Organizations can also submit applications through a sponsoring organization if the sponsor has 501(c) status, is not a private foundation under 509(a) and provides confirmation of its willingness to act as the fiscal sponsor.

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- Offer programs or services consistent with the BCA's funding priorities.
- Organizations must provide its services to residents of Upper Merion Township.
- Applicants must demonstrate documented need for the program or service that will have a positive impact on the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- Applicants must define a detailed process for tracking and reporting outcomes of the proposed project or service in order to be considered. If the BCA awards funding, the agency must submit a progress report at six months and one year of the funded year.
- Requests shall include the ability to sustain the impact of the project or service after funding ends. Funds awarded shall not replace existing and ongoing operating funds of the organization.

Determination and Priority of Need:

- The BCA provides funding for a variety of purposes that address the priorities within Upper Merion Township and to strengthen the effectiveness and capacity of non-profit organizations doing the work.
- Program and project grants support specific efforts through which an organization carries out its mission, including new or existing programs and projects, which can be ongoing or limited to a specific time period.
- The BCA will consider special requests to unforeseen situations or time-sensitive needs. However, funds for such grants may be very limited. Current grantees are not precluded from submitting a special request.
- Reasonable belief the amount of monies requested meets and does not exceed the needs presented by the 501(c)(3) organization.
- Reasonable belief the need presented to the board was not caused by negligence of the applicant.
- Reasonable belief the distributed monies are issued to a 501(c) organization with all pertinent facts included in the application and no facts have been hidden or misrepresented to the BCA by the organization.
- A financial burden which is beyond reasonable belief to be paid by the 501(c) non-profit organization.
- Information and application received from organizations/agencies giving aid to the needy within the Upper Merion Township.
- Structural and property concerns of the organization creating safety issues for the owner or community.
- Sanitation concerns creating a safety or health issues for the owner or community.

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- Twenty-five (25%) percent of the grants will be audited annually. The audits will be paid by the fund.
- Applicants will consider the cost of assisting with the need for funding and remain under the funding limit imposed by the BCA. This process for applicants will include estimates, reports and other documentation to support the cost of the applicant's request.
- Cultural, Arts and Humanities Organizations whose customary and primary activity is to promote music, theater, drama, history, literature, the arts or other similar cultural activities.
- Education which addresses the educational scholarship needs of Upper Merion Township residents who are young people, ages 17-25. Requests under this category will be tied into a community service program.
 - To provide college scholarship monies for academic worthy students in accordance with the guidelines and eligibility for an Upper Merion Township Employee Scholarship as evaluated and recommended by the scholarship's Board of Trustees.
 - The student GPA score will be reviewed and be a consideration for all grants under the Education category.
 - The amount of community service that the recipient would have to perform to satisfy the BCA grant rules will be based on the scholarship amount rewarded, as follows:
 - \$7,000 to \$10,000 : 50 hours
 - \$5,000 to \$6,999: 40 hours
 - \$3,000 to \$4,999: 30 hours
 - \$ 1,500 to \$2,999: 20 hours
 - \$ 500 to \$1,499: 15 hours
 - Student transcript will be submitted with all applications.
 - All individual scholarships shall not exceed \$10,000.
- Workforce Development/Economic Opportunity which provides job readiness and skills training as well as support services for workers with low to moderate skills.
- Health and Wellness which improves access to health care, reduces health care disparities and promotes nutrition.
- Environmental Sustainability which seeks to promote production systems that sustain people and the environment by reducing waste, promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources.
- Historic Preservation to preserve, rehabilitate, restore, and reconstruct historic buildings, structures and related sites, mainly those listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing resource in an historic district.
- Development opportunities for youth including:
 - Young people's interest in long-term civic engagement in their community.
 - Opportunities to reach youth who otherwise would not have the opportunity to develop leadership skills in an area unfamiliar to them.

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- Opportunities to gain knowledge of and experience with people of different cultural, racial, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Emergency Shelter Operations

Amount of Grant and Required Matching Grant:

A maximum grant shall be \$20,000 except for individual education scholarships which shall not exceed \$10,000, which will be exempt from a match. The following schedule will be used to require matching funds from the applicant.

- Grants below and up to \$ 5,000 – No match.
- Grants from \$5,001 to \$10,000 – 2% matching funds from the applicant.
- Grants from \$10,001 to \$15,000 – 3% matching funds from the applicant.
- Grants from \$15,001 to 20,000 – 4% matching funds from the applicant.

Maximum grants will only be considered for the most serious cases of established need. If a case is determined to be of need by a majority vote of the board, the board will approve the request of monies and application of the eligible organization. This case will then be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. The BCA reserves the right to deny an application through voting that is found to be of need but the requested amount of financial assistance is too great. In this instance, the BCA must inform the eligible organization of the reason(s) for denial of the application. The eligible organization may reapply for financial compensation. The Chairperson of the BCA may recommend a lower grant for financial assistance and the amended application from the eligible organization may be resubmitted as early as the next meeting of the BCA. However, if a grant is approved and distributed to the eligible organization, the organization may not submit repetitive applications for grants until the next calendar year.

Grants must be spent within one (1) year of the award or returned to the Board of Community Assistance. However, extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Application Deadline:

Grant applications must be submitted for consideration by the BCA by **March 15th** of each year.

BOARD REVIEWED POLICY ON: **9/13/2012, 1/10/2013; 2/21/13; 6/4/14**

BOARD ADOPTED POLICY ON: **November 13, 2014**