

Muskegon County Board of Commissioners

Grants Management Policy

Policy No. 2011-165

Approved: April 12, 2011

The Office of Grants Coordination oversees the process for seeking grant funds and accepting awards on behalf of the County of Muskegon. Grant funds may be used to support and advance the mission of the County of Muskegon. The following policies and procedures are intended to assist Department Directors, Elected Officials, Court Administrators and staff in the process of developing and submitting proposals for grant funding.

“Grants” are defined as awards of money or property gained by the County of Muskegon through a response to a Request for Proposal or other form of funding announcement from an external funding source.

Grants Coordination

Purpose

In order to fulfill its mission of providing high quality service to its citizens, the County of Muskegon may seek as many sources of revenue as possible to supplement the funds provided through taxes as well as state and federal appropriations. This policy section provides standard procedures for the preparation of proposals and their review to ensure coordination and to avoid duplication in developing and making application for specially funded programs.

Grants Submission and Approval Process

The Office of Grants Coordination must review all proposals that will be submitted by County of Muskegon Department Directors, Elected officials, Court Administrators and outside-of-County organizations that impact the County of Muskegon prior to submission of the proposal to a funding agency. The Office of Grants Coordination will coordinate the appropriate channel of internal review and will communicate whether a proposal is approved or disapproved for submission. The method of internal approval for the submission of an application will be based upon dollars requested and/or nature of the request. It is the responsibility of the project leader to notify the Office of Grants Coordination in a timely fashion of the intent to apply for external funding.

Review and Approval Procedure for Grants

1. Grants over \$25,000, federal grants, or any grant requiring cash or in-kind matching funds must be pre-approved by the County of Muskegon and the County Board of Commissioners.
2. Department Directors, Elected Officials, Court Administrators and staff seeking grants over \$25,000, federal grants or any grant requiring cash or in-kind matching funds

must submit a motion to the Ways and Means Committee and the Board of Commissioners requesting approval to submit the grant application. Motions for the Ways and Means Committee and the Board of Commissioners meetings are due to Administration at least seven working days prior to the meeting. Corporate Counsel recommendations must be included as part of the motion.

If you are planning to write a grant for more than \$25,000, one going to a federal agency, or one that requires cash or in-kind matching funds, you must submit an INTENT TO APPLY form to the Office of Grants Coordination (OGC) at least three weeks prior to the grant deadline. The Intent to Apply form, along with an example of a completed form will be available on the County of Muskegon's website. Recognizing the ongoing nature of the grant development process, complete information is not required for the Intent to Apply; however, the form should be filled out as accurately as possible. The form may be completed electronically or by hand, and submitted by email, fax, or inter-office mail to the OGC.

The OGC will review and forward the Intent to Apply to appropriate Elected Officials, County Directors and/or managers and will provide a decision within five business days. This review process insures that the County of Muskegon is aware of and approves the purpose, amount, and action plan of complex grants. If a decision not to apply is made after receiving pre-approval, please advise the OGC. A motion to request approval of the Ways and Means Committee and the County Board of Commissioners can be submitted after the review decision is rendered.

If you are not sure if your project meets this criterion, please contact the OGC early in the grant consideration process.

3. ALL grants must be submitted for review prior to submission of the application to the grant funder.

A complete copy of your grant application, including an itemized budget must be received by the Office of Grants Coordination one week prior to the application deadline. Application materials can be sent via email (preferred) or through inter-office mail. The OGC will review and forward the application to appropriate County Administrator and/or Directors for approval, and will provide a decision within three business days. This review process will ensure that 1) the project is consistent with the goals, objectives and program efforts of the County of Muskegon; 2) the County of Muskegon has the capacity to accomplish proposed activities; and 3) the grant conditions of acceptance is not in conflict with the policies of the Board of Commissioners, or State and federal law. Additionally, in some cases, the County of Muskegon is allowed only one application under a particular grant competition and the review process will therefore prevent eligibility conflicts.

Technical Assistance

The Office of Grants Coordination offers technical assistance to staff and outside organizations planning to develop a formal proposal for the benefit of the County of Muskegon.

The Office of Grants Coordination provides services for the preparation and submission of high-quality competitive proposals, including but not limited to: (1) information regarding current funding opportunities, (2) project development and application preparation, (3) project implementation and stewardship, and (4) access to the centralized "Grants Register" database.

- (1) Assistance under Information Regarding Current Funding Opportunities includes:
 - * Searching private and governmental resources to identify relevant funding opportunities;
 - * Summarizing information regarding opportunities for placement on the Grants Coordination Website/Intranet and quarterly grants newsletter.
- (2) Assistance under Project Development and Application Preparation includes:
 - * Analyzing foundation and governmental grant guidelines;
 - * Facilitating the development of project designs;
 - * Researching, writing, and editing support for proposal narrative and budget;
 - * Preparing application forms and assurances;
 - * Identifying staff in the County of Muskegon and/or external partners who might be interested in or helpful with the development of the proposal;
 - * Suggesting connections to existing County of Muskegon programs;
 - * Coordinating the submission of complete and accurate applications within grant deadlines;
 - * Conducting grant research, writing, and management workshops
- (3) Assistance under Project Implementation and Stewardship includes:
 - * Ensuring internal grant-related procedures are completed (boiler plate, budget coding, etc.)
 - * Assisting with routing of all grant-related legal paperwork
 - * Providing overall implementation support, including but not limited to project accountability, outcome tracking, changes to scope and budget, and reporting
- (4) Management of centralized "Grants Register" database to serve as the County of Muskegon's clearinghouse for grant application development and submission. The register will track proposals that are in development, have been submitted and have received decision notification. Application copies will be housed in the Office of Grants Coordination and will be available for review of writing samples and best practices.

Acceptance of Award

All external grants, regardless of value, must be reported to the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners for their acceptance as well as entry into the County of Muskegon's financial and budget system. The Office of Grants Coordination handles placement of awards on the County Board of Commissioner's committee or board agenda and should be immediately contacted upon receipt of award notification.

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Grant Expenditures: Please consult the procurement guidelines for all questions relating to purchasing (Central Services) and creating new positions (Budget Department and Human Resources). Be mindful of procurement guidelines when developing grant budgets and activity timelines as some processes may require 2-3 weeks for approval and set-up. Please contact OGC with any grant expense or timing concerns.

Grant Reports: Each entity receiving a grant is responsible for the completion and submission of the performance, both financial and programmatic, by the deadlines established by the funder. The Office of Grants Coordination will assist any department if there are questions about the reports. In the absence of the County Administrator, the Director of Finance and Administrative Services will sign the performance reports.