

BOARD POLICIES

Upper Merion Township

SUBJECT: BOARD OF COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE AND DISBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

NO. 2020-01

DATE: August 6, 2020

AMENDING NO. 2014-36, 2014-37

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 1/1/2021
Township (1)	From appointment until 1/1/2022
Township (1)	From appointment until 1/1/2023

A Chairperson will be selected from the membership of the BCA during January of each year at its reorganization 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.

Vacancies on the BCA:

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 meetings. All applicants are notified by mail as soon as a decision has been made.

Meeting Schedule:

The BCA will meet a minimum of at least once a year and the BCA may establish additional meetings as needed.

Purpose of the BCA:

- To advise the Board of Supervisors for the disbursement of all monies received by the Township from the VFCR 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 provide information to the Board of Supervisors on an annual basis including all monies received and disbursement of these monies.
- To enhance the partnership between VFCR 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. All management and disbursement recommendations by the BCA will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for final approval and disbursed to the appropriate party 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. The BCA shall have the right to convene in executive session should it be legally permissible.

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

Township Position on Conflicts of Interest (Continued)

include the Board of Supervisors' citizen appointees. Financial disclosure of interests by certain individuals in decision-making positions with the Township government is required. Statement of Financial Interest (State Ethics Form) will be completed before May 1 of each year.

When a matter in which member 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.

Grant Application Eligibility, Criteria and Rules

- Eligible organizations include but are not limited to those organizations which provide services to needy or disadvantaged residents; promote community services, culture, arts or the humanities including music, theater, drama, history, or literature; educational activities, mental activities, physical activities or sports, preserve the history or environment of Upper Merion Township including sustainability; and/or promotes the public safety, health or general welfare including emergency services of Upper Merion Township and/or Upper Merion Township residents.
- Organizations must be classified as tax-exempt under Section 501c of the Internal Revenue Code and not classified as a private foundation/public charity, under Section 509a.
- Organizations must provide its services to residents of Upper Merion Township though services do not have to solely be provided to residents of Upper Merion Township.
- Individuals with the exception of scholarship applicants as outlined in the section **Scholarship Application, Eligibility, Criteria and Rules** are not eligible for BCA funds.
- For profit organizations are not eligible for BCA funds.
- 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, as well as the Upper Merion Area School District and its various departments and 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 501c status, is not a private foundation under 509a and provide confirmation of its willingness to act as the fiscal sponsor.
- Applicants must provide information related to tracking and reporting outcomes of the proposed project or service in order to be considered. If the BCA awards a grant, the recipient organization must submit a status report when requested by the BCA.
- There must be a reasonable belief on the part of the applicant that the amount of monies requested does not exceed the needs presented by the 501c3 organization.

Grant Applicant Eligibility (Continued)

- There must be a reasonable belief on the part of the applicant that the need presented was not caused by negligence of the applicant.
- The applicant is responsible for providing all pertinent facts included in the application and no facts have been hidden or misrepresented to the BCA by the organization.
- The BCA may request additional information and/or documentation including receipts from any applicant
- The BCA may formally audit up to twenty-five (25%) of the grants per year. The cost of any audit may be paid by the BCA.
- All organizations applying for grants must adhere to the following: "I will not discriminate on matters of a person's race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, handicap or disability" and sign a statement acknowledging this is in the application.
- Organizations which receive a grant above \$5,000 are required to provide matching funds based on the value of the grant. The matching funds requirement can be fulfilled by the BCA and/or the Township Finance Director subtracting the matching fund requirement from the overall award. The matching fund requirement for grants received by an organization from the BCA are as follows:
 - 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
- 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.

Scholarship Application, Eligibility, Criteria and Rules

- Graduating high school seniors who reside in Upper Merion Township and are continuing their education after high school graduation are eligible for scholarships for trade school, community college, colleges and/or universities
- Educational requests under this category are tied into a community service proposal.
- Factors the BCA may utilize to determine whether an applicant receives a BCA scholarship and the value of the scholarship may include but are not limited to: quality of proposed community service project, financial need, extra-curricular activities, involvement in the community, obstacles overcome, grades, standardized test scores, projected educational expenses, other scholarships received and special circumstances.

Scholarship Application (Continued)

- The amount of community service that the scholarship 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

- The BCA may request any documentation from the applicant the BCA deems necessary and may directly contact the applicant and/or the applicant's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to evaluate the application.

- Scholarships shall not exceed \$10,000 per applicant. A \$10,000 scholarship shall be known as the Von Steuben Scholarship. Scholarships valued between \$5,000-\$9,999 shall be known as Ronald G. Wagenmann scholarships.

Staggering and Stipulations:

The BCA may in its discretion provide full funding or partial funding for a grant application. The BCA may also in its discretion stagger a grant or scholarship into multiple parts to be disbursed at different times. The BCA may also stipulate that grant or scholarship funds be awarded only upon a recipient meeting condition(s) precedent and/or condition(s) subsequent.

Rescission:

The BCA may rescind in-full or in-part a grant or scholarship for reasons including but not limited to: fraud, disillusion, misrepresentations and/or falsifications in an application; material change; failure to adhere to the terms of a grant or scholarship; failure to disclose material or pertinent information; failure to complete a project as required; withdrawal or expulsion from higher education for any reason including academic, behavioral violation or violation of an honor code; failure on the part of the recipient to use the funds in a timely manner; and/or instability of the recipient organization.

Transfer:

The BCA may under special circumstances transfer funds allocated for a grant or scholarship back to the Upper Merion Township Foundation.

Application Open Periods and Deadlines:

Each year the BCA shall establish at least one application open period and one application deadline. The BCA may vote to adjust the date of an application open period(s) and/or deadline(s). Should the BCA establish additional application open periods and deadlines, it may restrict the criteria for applicant eligibility beyond what appears in the guidelines.

BOARD REVIEWED POLICY ON:

**9/13/2012; 1/10/2013, 2/21/13; 6/4/14; 5/14/20; 7/9/20;
8/6/20**

BOARD ADOPTED POLICY ON:
