

## ***BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS / GRANT POLICIES***

Approved by Board of Commissioners: 9 February 2015

Updated: 7 February 2022

Amended: 5-June 2023

### **Community Grant Policy and Procedure**

**A. Purpose:** The Sullivan County Board of Commissioners recognizes and endorses the provision of financial assistance to non-profit agencies located within Sullivan County. The Commissioners also acknowledge their fiduciary responsibility and obligation under state statutes to act as overseers of any and all funds allotted to the County from the taxpayers of Sullivan County and other regulatory/governmental entities. It is with these intentions the Sullivan County Board of Commissioners established a "Community Grant Policy and Procedure."

**B. General Concept:** As an underlying principle, "[t]axes may not be imposed for the benefit of private persons or for private uses" and "[a]n appropriation of public money for a private purpose is forbidden whether the money therefor is to be raised in the first instance by borrowing or by a tax levy..." from *Opinion of the Justices*, 88 N.H. 484 (1937). That opinion also stated that public contributions should not be granted to a private organization unless that organization takes on some obligation to benefit the public and, further, that the public (in this case, the County) has some ability to enforce and obtain that benefit for the public. In general, the decision regarding whether and to whom Sullivan county taxpayers make charitable donations should be a personal one and not one made by their government. That said, services provided by certain agencies may fill gaps in critical services that Sullivan County and/or its 15 municipalities would be obligated to provide through direct services, welfare support, or other general assistance if these agencies did not exist.

**C. Policy:** The Sullivan County Board of Commissioners may include in the annual budget the disbursement of grant resources to registered charitable non-profit agencies or other similar agencies or organizations that serve Sullivan County residents. The intent of these funds is to give support to and assist the applying non-profit agency during the developmental stage of a program or to maintain existing programs that meet the criteria listed below. Ideally, the total of all contributions to non-profit agencies will be no more than 2% of the County's General Fund budget.

**D. Criteria:** Community grants may be awarded when there has been a clear demonstration that the agency provides a critical service to Sullivan County residents that the County or its 15 communities would otherwise be asked to provide. To demonstrate their eligibility for a grant appropriation from Sullivan County, requesting agencies must meet the following criteria:



1. The agency should offer services throughout Sullivan County and those services must be available to all County residents;
2. The agency should provide a service that Sullivan County or its 15 communities would otherwise be asked or obligated to provide either directly (e.g., through the municipal welfare function);
3. The services provided by the agency directly or indirectly reduce public expenditures;
4. The agency can demonstrate that they have conducted regular fund raising activities and actively apply for other funding opportunities through foundations, local groups and municipalities, state and federal (if applicable);
5. The agency clearly demonstrates a financial need for public funding; and
6. The services provided by the agency benefit Sullivan county region.

Unless otherwise approved, County grant funds may not be used for administrative purposes or for meals, alcohol and/or travel to conferences.

E. Procedure:

A. Notice: The Sullivan County Commissioners Office will use local media sources, email distribution lists, and a newspaper ad to announce that the grant application period has opened. This usually happens in the February/March timeframe. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to attain the Grant Application and to be mindful of the process.

B. Grant Application: Applying agencies must use the grant application referenced by this policy. The most current application format will be provided by County staff as part of the announcement process on the SullivanCountyNH.gov website in a pdf format, but is available in Word with Excel budget page, upon request by sending an email to [commissioners@sullivancountynh.gov](mailto:commissioners@sullivancountynh.gov) or calling 603-863-2560.

C. Review Process:

1. A completed funding application form must be submitted by the agency no later than the deadline announced for that fiscal year. Agencies submitting late or incomplete funding applications will not be considered.
2. Regardless of previous history of funding or non-funding, an application will be required of all agencies seeking funding in a particular budget year and each application will be reviewed carefully each year.

3. The County Commissioners and County Manager will review each application to determine whether the agency satisfies the criteria necessary to be eligible for a County grant. If yes, the Commissioners will include all or a portion of the agency's funding request in its proposed budget. If no, the request will not be included in the proposed budget presented to the Executive Finance Committee (EFC). However, information provided to the EFC will list all applications received and whether they are not included in the budget or included in full or in part.

4. Representatives from the social service agencies requesting funding may be invited to meet with the Board of Commissioners to discuss the merits of their grant applications. It is possible that the EFC will seek a subsequent meeting with applicants.

5. The Executive Finance Committee will recommend the final budget to the County Convention, usually in late June.

*Revised and readopted by the Sullivan County Board of Commissioners at its meeting of February 9, 2015. Approved by the Board of Commissioners 7 February 2022*

Amended by the Board of Commissioners  
5-June 2023

  
County Manager

  
Commissioner, Chair

  
Commissioner, Vice-Chair

  
Commissioner, Clerk