

City of Sebastopol COUNCIL POLICY



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BACKGROUND

The Community Benefit Grant Program provides an excellent opportunity for the City of Sebastopol to support critical neighborhood projects and helps fulfill the community's vision. It has been the practice of the City Council to consider the contribution funding of community-based programs conducted by non-profit 501 (3) (c) organizations that actively enhance the quality of life for Sebastopol residents.

The Community Grants program is developed with a philosophy of partnership whereby Council recognizes the vital role that individuals, community groups and organizations play in contributing to the creation of a vibrant and sustainable City. In return, Council provides a range of grants to encourage and support individuals and groups in the community to engage in activities that advance the quality of life in the City of Sebastopol.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a basis for Council to allocate funds in an equitable and effective manner. Council acknowledges that the provision of grants is an important role for local government, and is an essential way in which Council can directly support the local community.

Council will apply appropriate management practices to ensure that there is a balance between responsibility administering public funds, and supporting the community in a practical and effective manner.

The Community Benefit Grant Fund is intended to provide funding to local non-profit organizations for specified community benefits programs and/or projects that will:

1. Address an unmet/under-met and ongoing community need;
2. Demonstrate long-term impact and quality outcome;
3. Benefit a large cross section of community residents and/or businesses;
4. Leverage additional funding to support the program;

The Community Grants policy is strongly related to Council's Goals and Objectives as well as its vision and mission statements. The goal is to operate the Community Benefit Grant Program following related Council policies, plans and activities such as:

1. Social Plans including Youth Plan, Cultural Arts, and Positive Aging/Elders;
2. Community Participation;
3. Festivals and Public Events;
4. Economic Development; and
5. Marketing Strategy, Tourism, Community Outreach

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POLICY

1. Non-profit organizations must file an application for the Community Benefit Grants Program. Applications must be submitted by March 31 of each year for funding the following fiscal year. Applications must be submitted to the Finance Department prior to each deadline. Application forms may be obtained from the Finance Department, 7:00 A.M to 5:30 P.M., Monday through Thursday, or off the City website page (www.cityofsebastopol.org).
2. Public funds shall be made available only when the funds are to be expended for a community program that will contribute to the quality of life for Sebastopol residents.
3. The City Council shall strive to appropriate one percent of General Fund revenues.
4. No organization may apply for funding if it failed to meet any of the post application requirements from the prior year (see paragraph 11, 12 & 13).
5. Funds will not be allocated to:
 - a. Political action committees, political candidates, or political campaigns;
 - b. Any organization conducting a religious activity;
 - c. Organizations conducting a fund-raising event or activity;
 - d. For the rental of the City owned facilities.
6. Funding requested from membership based adult organizations will not be considered if the funds requested are to be used to directly benefit its members and not the community at large.
7. Funding requested from youth sports group will be considered only if the request is to support the youth sports group in a regional, state or national competition, but not for travel out of the country, and provided that the requesting group is predominately composed of Sebastopol residents.
8. Requests for funding will be considered by the City Council only during the periods determined in this Council Policy and submitted on the appropriate application form.
9. Funding of a program will not constitute a precedent for contributions in subsequent years.
10. All applications will be submitted to the Finance Department for analysis and recommendation to the Budget Subcommittee and ultimately to the City Council. In its evaluation, the Budget Subcommittee shall consider and evaluate the following criteria:
 - a. The non-profit status of the organization.
 - b. The number of citizens within the community that will benefit directly by the expenditure as well as the ratio of Sebastopol residents served to the total number of individuals served.
 - c. Adherence to the stated policies of the City of Sebastopol.
 - d. Whether or not a public need will go unmet without the contribution
 - e. The degree to which the goodwill of the City of Sebastopol will be promoted.
 - f. The degree to which the cause has been recognized as a contribution to the community



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- g. Whether or not the contribution could expose the City to civil liability
 - h. The amount of the request.
 - i. Whether the ratio of administrative costs to program costs exceeds 25% of the program budget.
 - j. The degree to which the members of the organization have engaged in fund-raising activities.
 - k. Whether or not the organization has applied for funding from other Sonoma County cities.
 - l. Whether or not the organization has received CDBG (Community Development Block Grant Funding).
11. After review, the Budget Subcommittee shall make a recommendation to approve, deny, or modify the funding request and approve as modified.
12. Post Application Requirements:
- a. Not discriminate in employment or in clients served because of race, religion, national origin, or sex.
 - b. Be accountable for revenue and expenditures through standard bookkeeping procedures. An annual audit or review at the applicant's expense may be required, with the results available to the City of Sebastopol upon request.
 - c. Provide access to periodic reviews by City staff and City Council for purposes of monitoring the program.
 - d. Provide the City with an interim end of the year full financial accounting and narrative report by the close of May 31.
 - e. The year-end report shall be submitted in writing, and may be brief but should include a financial summary indicating how funds have been expended during the period and a narrative commenting on development of the program. The end of the year shall be within 30 days after May 31. This report must include a complete financial statement detailing all expenditures of the City monies for the program(s) covered under the grant and a narrative report on the project and its significance. The financial and narrative report should compare actual expenditures and accomplishments with the budget and objectives cited in the original proposal.
13. Funded applicants must return to the City any unexpended funds at the end of the one-year funding period, or whenever, the City determines that the applicant has not performed in accordance with the approved program proposal.
14. Any funds returned in accordance with the policy shall be returned to the City General Fund, to be allocated in accordance with the policy.
15. City moneys shall be used only for the purpose and program(s) duly authorized and in accordance with the approved budget. Any deviation from the approved program proposal may be made only with the City's prior written approval. If not, funds must be returned immediately to the City.

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16. Each year, and in accordance with the established time line, the City Council will develop its funding allocations within the following categories for Community Benefit Grants Funding:

- a. Parks and Recreation, including but not limited to:
 - i. Outdoor Recreation
 - ii. Youth services and athletics
 - iii. Hospitality Program

- b. Arts and Cultural, including but not limited to:
 - i. Event and Tourism Resources
 - ii. History and Culture Education
 - iii. Music & Theater Events

- c. Environmental Quality and Sustainability, including but not limited to:
 - i. Clean air quality / pollution control
 - ii. Climate action initiative
 - iii. Go Green! Support

- d. Health & Community/Human Services
 - i. Health and Safety, Food / Nutrition
 - ii. Crisis Intervention Facilities
 - iii. Senior Citizen Resources

- e. Economic Vitality
 - i. Workforce training
 - ii. Business development, incubation or acceleration
 - iii. Business attraction, retention / expansion program