

Merrimack County



**Merrimack County Social Services Grant
Program Request for Proposal (RFP)
Release Date: September 1, 2023
Application Due: 4:00 pm September 29, 2023**

Solicitation: RFP20230901

Purpose

Given the impact of state and federal funding reductions and relationship of current economic conditions to the community's ability to continue or increase its level of personal charitable giving, the County has seen an increase in the number of requests and dollars requested by social service agencies which provide a variety of services to Merrimack County and other residents in the region. As this activity has picked up, so has the need for a clear, well-defined policy to guide the budget allocation of the County's limited resources.

General Concept

As an underlying principle, the County of Merrimack is prohibited from appropriating funds for the benefit of private persons or for private uses. In order for the County to validly donate to a deserving non-profit organization, *Opinion of the Justices, 88 N.H. 484 (1937)* requires a 'quid pro quo' in that County funds cannot be granted to a private organization unless that private organization takes on some obligation to benefit the County; and, further, that the County has some ability to enforce and obtain that benefit for the public. The decision regarding if and to whom Merrimack County residents want to make charitable donations should be a private decision and not built into their tax rate. That said, the services provided by certain agencies may fill gaps in critical services that the County of Merrimack would otherwise be obligated to provide through welfare or other general assistance laws if these agencies did not provide such relief.

Policy Statement

County appropriations to social service agencies will be awarded provided that there has been a clear demonstration that the agency provides a critical service to Merrimack County residents that the County would otherwise need to cover through providing these services itself, or as a county welfare function. As a broad guideline, the county welfare function will be defined as providing the basic necessities of life that an individual, for whatever reason, is unable to pay for. Merrimack County will continue to safeguard the funds that county taxpayers entrust to its Commissioners and Delegation; as such, there are procedures in place to ensure that grant agencies are expending funds in a manner consistent with allowable financial and programmatic standards under 2 CFR §200, the financial guide for the US Treasury.

To demonstrate their eligibility for a county appropriation from the County of Merrimack, requesting agencies will be required, as a critical component of the application form, to address in the application narrative, that they meet *all* of the following 5 criteria; –

- The agency serves a core group of Merrimack County residents;
- The agency provides a critical service that the County of Merrimack would otherwise be obligated to provide either directly as a County service or would need to pay for through its county welfare function;
- The services provided by the agency directly or indirectly reduce County expenditures;
- The agency must clearly demonstrate a financial need; and
- The services provided by the agency demonstrably enhance the quality of life in the Merrimack County community.

Proposed County Funding Application Process

Those agencies who are currently receiving County appropriations and any other agencies requesting information on securing a County appropriation will receive notice of the posting of the RFP.

- A completed funding application form must be submitted electronically through the Jotform application platform* by the agency no later than the deadline posted in the letter of notification. Agencies submitting late or incomplete funding applications will not be considered as part of the County Funding Application Process (regardless of when their request to be considered and/or an application form was received). *(*Link to application enclosed at end of document*).
- 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.
- Applicant agencies are required to have a Board of Directors. Please include a list of your Board of Directors with positions identified.
- Agencies are required to submit the requested Agency Certifications From and Certificate of Authority Form.
- All social service or non-profit agency funding applications in their entirety will be presented to County Staff for a recommendation of whether to include the donation in the county budget that is prepared by the Board of Commissioners and presented to the County Delegation. The recommendations of the County Staff are presented to the Merrimack County Board of Commissioners, along with the applications as supplementary information. Agencies will be discouraged from sharing information not specifically requested in the application form such as glossy brochures, informational pamphlets, etc.; if received, these items will not be made part of the supplementary budget information provided to the Board of Commissioners.
- County Staff will make an initial determination as to whether the agency satisfies the 5 criteria necessary to be eligible for a county appropriation. If **yes**, County Staff will review all applications materials included by the agency's funding request and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for inclusion into the proposed County budget for the then current fiscal year. If **no**, the request will not be recommended by County Staff to the Board of Commissioners for inclusion into the proposed County budget.
- Indirect Cost Rate (General agency expenses that are not directly related to the project): Agencies will be allowed to budget an indirect cost rate using one of two methods:
 - If your agency has a negotiated indirect cost rate with the United States Treasury, you may budget the negotiated rate into your county application.
 - If your agency does NOT have a negotiated cost rate, you may budget a 10% de minimus indirect cost rate. Your application will not be approved if you budget more than 10% OR your approved negotiated rate.
- Representatives from requesting agencies for funding may attend the appropriate Public Meeting where the Grant Agencies portion of the proposed budget will be discussed with the Board of Commissioners and the assigned Delegation committee.

- The Board of Commissioners will determine what agencies are clearly serving Merrimack County residents and satisfy all of the 5 criteria; the requests of these agencies will be included in the proposed budget to go before County Meeting.
- A scoring matrix will be utilized to assess the following components:
 - Problem Statement, to Include Number of Merrimack County Residents Served and Demographics
 - Program Design/Implementation
 - Financial Need Explanation
 - Budget Detail and Narrative
 - Sustainability
- A committee of four county officials will be scoring each application and the scores will be combined to determine eligibility for funding.

Successful Grant funding agency reporting requirements.

All grant applicants understand the following reporting requirements are an absolute necessity as condition to receipt of funds from Merrimack County;

1. Annual audits are a requirement for the application process. If you are a recipient of a grant in the current fiscal year, a year/end audit is required. If your social service or non-profit does not perform annual audits, please provide unaudited financials and an explanation of why audited financials are not available.
2. During the fiscal year covering the grant award, you must provide quarterly reports to the Board of Commissioners demonstrating how the grant funds are expended each quarter, for what purpose and how many Merrimack County citizens were served by your organization. These reports will be due thirty days following the end of the quarter to be reported on. If you cannot provide this information, please detail to County Staff the reasons you cannot comply with this directive.
3. Year–end report that summarizes the quarterly reports for that fiscal year and highlights new services and/or expansion of those services to Merrimack County residents where Merrimack County funds assisted in the provision of those services.
4. All payments to grantee agencies will be on a reimbursement basis only. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted either monthly or quarterly and must be submitted in a format to be provided by Merrimack County no more than fifteen days following the end of the reporting period. Backup documentation for expenditures is not required to be submitted with the reimbursement requests; however, backup documentation must be provided upon request. All backup documentation must be retained by the grantee agency for a period of three years following the disbursement of the final grant payment.
5. All funds must be expended in accordance with your submitted and approved budget. Requests to deviate from the approved budget must be submitted in writing and approved by Merrimack County in advance. Failure to do so could result in freezing of funds and/or reimbursement to Merrimack County for unauthorized expenditures.
6. Periodic monitoring visits/desk reviews may be conducted by Merrimack County grant and financial staff to ensure that funds are being expended according to the approved application.

7. Ethical Requirements: From the time this RFP is published until a contract is awarded, no bidder shall offer or give, directly or indirectly, any gift, expense reimbursement or honorarium, as defined by RSA 15-B, to any elected official, public official, public employee or family member of any such official or employee who will or has selected, evaluated, or awarded an RFP, or similar submission. Any bidder that violates this requirement shall be subject to prosecution for an offense under RSA 640:2.
8. Agency Rights: Merrimack County reserves the right to waive minor or immaterial deviations from the RFP requirements, if deemed to be in the best interest of the County.

Applications will only be accepted through the Jotform application platform. To access the application form, click here: [FY2024 Merrimack County Social Service Grant Program Application](#).

Questions can be directed to:

Johanna Houman - jhouman@merrimackcounty.net or 603-796-6874, or

Jessica Riendeau - jriendeau@merrimackcounty.net or 603-219-0627 x2151.