



## Opioid Settlement Fund Application Review Policy

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### BACKGROUND

The City of Bangor recognizes the serious and ongoing impact of the opioid crisis on individuals, families, and the broader community. As a steward of opioid settlement funds, the City is committed to ensuring these resources are distributed through a fair, transparent, and accountable process. The goal is to maximize the effectiveness of funded initiatives by supporting evidence-based strategies, strengthening local capacity, and promoting prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction efforts that will create lasting positive change.

To support this commitment, Bangor has partnered with the Maine Opioid Settlement Support Center (MOSS) to design its grant application and review process. The MOSS Center provides technical assistance to Maine communities to support the allocation and deployment of opioid settlement funds. This collaboration ensures that Bangor's approach is aligned with statewide standards and incorporates federal best practices for competitive grants, including merit-based review, conflict of interest safeguards, and transparency in decision-making.

#### 1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for reviewing applications for opioid settlement funds in the City of Bangor. This policy outlines our process for ensuring that funding decisions are made consistently, transparently, and in alignment with both local priorities, statewide standards, and federal grant review principles. The process is designed to identify and support high-quality, high-impact initiatives that address opioid-related harms, advance community well-being, and contribute to a coordinated response to the opioid crisis in the City of Bangor.

#### 2. Structure of Application Review

- **Reviewer Training:** All reviewers will receive training on the scoring rubric, conflict of interest (COI) policies, confidentiality, and ethical standards for merit-based grant review processes.
- **Reviewer Selection:** The City of Bangor Opioid Settlement Fund Committee will oversee application review; committee members reflect diverse perspectives and subject-matter expertise. Applications will be assigned to reviewers with relevant

expertise. Committee members have the right to recuse themselves from the application review process.

- **Multi-Reviewer Assessment:** Each application will be reviewed and scored by two independent, non-conflicted reviewers from the City of Bangor Opioid Settlement Fund Committee.

### 3. Conflict of Interest Policy

- **COI Disclosure:** Reviewers must disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest before the review process begins.
- **Recusal:** Reviewers with conflicts must recuse themselves from scoring and from participating in any consensus panel discussions on affected applications.
- **Reviewer Assignment:** Application will be assigned to reviewers based on conflict of interest considerations to ensure impartiality.

### 4. Review Process

- **Merit-Based Review:** Applications will be evaluated solely on the published standardized scoring criteria outlined below:
  - **Adherence to Application Instructions:** Application is clear, comprehensive, and professional, has been submitted by the deadline, all fields are complete, and all documents requested are present.
  - **Organization Information and Description:** Organizational mission, purpose, and current community impact are clear, current staff are trained and qualified for current positions, and there is clear evidence of the need for the organization's work. The organization's structure is explained, showing it can implement its proposed project, including existing collaborations for support if necessary.
  - **Project Description:** Project goals, objectives, and expected outcomes are clear. The project is aligned with strategies in Exhibit E, and the project is highly likely to complete expected outcomes and has shown flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing community needs.
  - **Priority Population and Geographic Area:** Project serves the assigned subdivision's geographic area; organization has demonstrated familiarity in working with the priority population.
  - **Data to Support Need:** The organization has provided reliable, accurate data that clearly illustrates the need for the program/project they are proposing. The data is easily accessible and readable for reviewers.
  - **Timeline:** Project timeline is feasible to complete within the expected timeframe, aligns with all project guidelines, and is logical and clear.
  - **Scope of work:** The scope of work is feasible for the organization and funding structure, and there is a clear, logical connection between outputs, outcomes, and the project timeline. If there are partnerships, the roles of the partnerships are clear, and letters of commitment are complete and attached.

- **Data Tracking:** Objectives align with Exhibit E and follow SMARTIE guidelines (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound, Inclusive, Equitable). Identified tracking measures are clear, attainable, and connected to the objectives.
- **Sustainability:** The applicant has stated a viable and logical plan for when funding is fully expended. The organization's financial statements and other documents exemplify financial health and organizational sustainability.
- **Budget:** Narrative for the budget is clear and detailed; overall funding amount requested is feasible for the program.
- **Detailed Rubrics:** A standardized rubric will guide reviewers to ensure consistent and objective scoring.
- **Objective Scoring Strategy:** A clear numerical scoring framework will be used, enabling consistent evaluations across applications.

## 5. Panel Review and Funding Recommendations

A review panel will convene for:

- **Consensus Discussion:** The review panel will meet to discuss applications with significant scoring discrepancies or those near the funding threshold.
- **Prioritization:** Applications will be prioritized based on scores, available funding, and strategic goals.
- **Recommendations:** Final funding recommendations will be submitted to the Bangor City Council for review and approval.

## 6. Documentation, Transparency, and Feedback

- **Recordkeeping:** All reviews, scores, and panel decisions will be documented and retained.
- **Applicant Feedback:** Applicants will be notified of final decisions and will receive summary statements with strengths and weaknesses.
- **Evaluation:** The review process will be periodically evaluated for fairness, consistency, and effectiveness.

## 7. Oversight and Governance

The review process will be overseen by the City of Bangor Opioid Settlement Fund Committee. Final funding decisions will be made by the Bangor City Council in accordance with applicable opioid settlement fund MOU guidelines and city governance procedures.

## 8. Alignment with Federal and Statewide Standards

Bangor's opioid settlement fund review process is designed to be:

- Standardized across reviewers and applications,
- Transparent and impartial, free from conflicts of interest
- Aligned with the principles of fairness, equity, and evidence-based decision-making.

The City of Bangor's review framework is consistent with those being adopted by other Opioid Settlement Committees nationally and across Maine, ensuring a coordinated and accountable approach to effectively distributing opioid settlement funds.

## **SUMMARY**

The City of Bangor is committed to ensuring that opioid settlement funds are managed with integrity, transparency, and accountability. By following this review policy, the City seeks to maximize the impact of these resources, support initiatives that save lives, and strengthen the community's collective response to the opioid crisis. This framework reflects Bangor's dedication to fairness, equity, and evidence-based decision-making.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information regarding the City of Bangor's opioid settlement fund grant application processes, please email [city.manager@bangormaine.gov](mailto:city.manager@bangormaine.gov) to reach the City Manager's Office.