Community Service Award Guidelines

The Massage Therapy Foundation (MTF, "the Foundation") advances the knowledge and practice of massage therapy by supporting scientific research, education, and community service.

The MTF Community Service Awards program provides support for community-based massage therapy projects to serve populations in need worldwide.

IMPORTANT DATES

Application Cycle & Submission Portal Opens: November 1, 2026

Completed Applications Due: February 1, 2027 at 11:59pm CST

Notification: Mid-July 2027

Earliest Start: September 1, 2027

OBJECTIVES

Awards are granted to provide therapeutic massage and bodywork to communities or groups who have little or no access to such services and who are marginalized by society, with the intention of enabling such communities to achieve their health potential. Awards may also be granted to provide therapeutic massage and bodywork in more mainstream contexts where it is not yet available. These awards are designed to promote working partnerships between the therapeutic massage and bodywork professions and community-based organizations.

The Massage Therapy Foundation defines massage as "the application of manual techniques, and adjunctive therapies, with the intention of affecting the health and well-being of the client," and massage therapy as massage applied in health-supportive or adjacent settings by trained and credentialed massage therapists. Applicants must ensure compliance with state or local regulations regarding therapeutic massage and bodywork practice.

ELIGIBILITY

Community Service Awards are available to organizations or affiliates of organizations which:

- Have been in existence for at least one year in the respective State or Province;
- Are tax-exempt under schedule 501(c)(3) in the United States, or a qualified non-profit charitable organization in other countries;
- Currently provide therapeutic or other service programs to the community (the Community Service Award must be used to provide therapeutic massage and bodywork in conjunction with these programs);

- Have designated a qualified staff member (herein known as the Project Leader) and a qualified practitioner (herein known as the Massage Therapy Coordinator) to oversee this program;
- Projects should not duplicate services already provided by the applicant organization, and should demonstrate sustainability after the award period has ended; and
- Practitioners must provide proof of professional liability insurance coverage. Certificates of insurance should be uploaded to appropriate appendix within the application form in the grant portal.

Community Service Awards are not granted to individuals. Community Service Awards will not be granted to organizations which employ or otherwise have an ownership or contractual relationship with officers or trustees of the Massage Therapy Foundation, members of the Community Service Award Proposal Review Committee ("Review Committee"), or any spouses, domestic partners, children, descendants, spouses of descendants or any other individuals related to any officers or trustees of the MTF or to members of the Review Committee.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Organizations wishing to apply for an MTF Community Service Award must submit a completed application through the online grant portal. Create a profile and start an application at:

https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=massagetherapy

The application form must be completed in its entirety and requested appendixes attached.

CONDITIONS OF AWARD

The applicant organization must retain adequate accounts and records of all MTF Community Service Award funds received and disbursed. Records and accounts must be sent to the MTF each quarter until the termination of the award period, and such records must be retained for two (2) years following the termination of the award period.

Award Recipients shall prepare and maintain appropriate records of all project activities, duration and extent of services provided, demographics of participants, and the duration and extent of participation. Such records must be sufficient to enable MTF to qualitatively evaluate or measure the project's functions and determine whether all project activities have been and will continue to be consistent with the project's objectives and anticipated goals. The Project Leader is responsible for submitting this information in quarterly reports to MTF. Reports should include photographs and video material showing or describing use of the Award funds.

Procedures for maintaining confidentiality of client records must be specified.

Applicant organizations must submit documentation showing that all reasonable measures will be taken to assure the safety and health of the participant(s) in the project according to guidelines set by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, as well as any other laws, rules or regulations enforced by any state or local government agencies, including but not limited to privacy laws such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

of 1996. Such records must be sent to MTF every ninety (90) days until the completion of the award period and retained for two (2) years following the completion of the award period.

Award recipients are required to use MTF Community Service Award funds to pursue only that community service project and those project objectives described in the application unless prior approval from MTF has been obtained for a change of the project objectives. In this case, the organization must submit the proposed changes to MTF for consideration and must receive written approval before any such changes or modifications are implemented.

MTF officers, or their duly authorized representatives have the right, during regular business hours, to make periodic visits to verify and monitor the status of the community service project, proper administration of the funds, and the appropriateness of all expenditures as established by the MTF.

MTF has the right and obligation to withhold or withdraw funding if the stated conditions are not met, the project is no longer feasible, the recipient no longer meets eligibility requirements, there is evidence of unethical behavior, or for any other reason determined by MTF to be in the best interests of the Foundation. Award recipients must return to the MTF all unspent funds and, upon the Foundation's request, all funding disbursed for ineligible items.

Community Service Award Recipients are required to complete and file all necessary forms with the United States Internal Revenue Service, Revenue Canada and/or the appropriate governmental tax services in the State, Province, or Country in which the organization is registered, if applicable.

MTF retains the right to produce a summary of the preliminary project and/or final reports for publication on the Foundation website and/or in any publication or marketing outlet at the Foundation's discretion.

DURATION AND VALUE OF AWARDS

MTF Community Service Awards will be granted for a 12-month period. The value of each Award will be up to $20,000 and must be used within the specified period for which it has been awarded. Any unspent funds must be returned to MTF. Funding needed to support the continuation or completion of the project beyond either the designated completion date or the budgeted amount of the original award must be requested in a new application.

EVALUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

All Award applications shall be reviewed in an open competition process by the Community Service Award Proposal Review Committee. The Foundation will use its best efforts to keep confidential all personal information submitted as part of a community service application or obtained throughout the course of an award period, and shall use such information only for the review of the application, evaluation, and administration of the Award; except that the Foundation may publish personal information necessary to promote and publicize the Award and the results of the project.

Applications shall be judged on the following criteria:

- The importance of the population to be served, the potential of massage therapy to enhance the well-being of this population and the perceived need for the project in the community-at-large;
- The extent to which the project's goals, objectives and procedures are clear, specific, attainable, measurable, and likely to be accomplished within the proposed time span;
- The clarity of the outcome of the proposed project. Please include sample evaluation forms for committee review;
- The demonstrated link between the practitioner and the applicant organization; including the extent to which the project is integrated with other programs in the organization, the involvement of organization staff in this project; and collaboration with other individuals or organizations involved as applicable.
- The qualifications of the Project Leader and Massage Therapy Coordinator in the form of a resume and list of supporting certifications including demonstrated massage therapy, community service expertise, and specialized experience and training with the population to be served by this project;
- The availability of the Project Leader and supporting staff and/or facilities required for successful completion of the proposed project;
- The clarity and appropriateness of the budget; and
- The perceived sustainability of the project.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLEGENCE (AI) & MACHINE LEARNING USE

MTF supports responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. AI's use without appropriate attribution is prohibited. Any permitted AI use—such as for brainstorming, summarizing, or creating figures—must be fully disclosed in the application, including the tool used, purpose, and extent of assistance. Failure to disclose AI use may result in disqualification. ***AI content must never replace the applicant's own intellectual contributions*** **and submissions that are primarily AI generated will not be reviewed.** Limited editorial assistance from AI (e.g., grammar checks) does not require disclosure. **See MTF's full AI policy for applicants.**

ELIGIBLE EXPENSE ITEMS

Eligible expense items include: salaries/wages for those involved in the community service project, including partial allowances for a Principal Therapist and co-therapists to cover some release time from other activities necessary for the pursuance of the project; marketing, relevant supplies, e.g., massage oil and case history forms; travel necessary for the community service project and grant writing costs and/or administration expenses.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSE ITEMS

Items ineligible for Community Service Award Funds include: capital construction of facilities and equipment, staff child care; entertainment. Although indirect costs request for funding are discouraged, the Review Committee may consider some of the following up to $500: purchase of standard equipment such as computer, massage tables; costs incurred prior to the awarding of the Award and contingency allowances.

REPORTING

MTF Community Service Award recipients must submit:

- Quarterly reports throughout the award period and a final report at the conclusion including a financial reporting. Reporting reminders will be sent by the Foundation to Project Leader prior to reporting dates. Videos should be emailed to MTF staff;
- The final report describing the rationale, procedures, program evaluation, and any future plans for continuance of the project;
- All reports must contain full financial accounting and a description of the progress of the funded project. Such reports shall be the property of MTF, the same being entitled to use each report and any of its contents in any manner it deems fit.

PROMOTION / PROJECT AMPLIFICATION

MTF seeks to promote and amplify funded work via a variety of outlets. Promotion and amplification efforts are not intended to nor will they supersede dissemination planned by the Project Leader or Community Partner through publication, conference presentation, or otherwise.

From the project start and intermittently as appropriate/applicable:

- By the project's first quarterly report, a 1-2 minute video describing the project is to be submitted to MTF for MTF and AMTA websites, promotions, and otherwise.
- Participate personally or through another project collaborator in video podcast interviews about the project conducted by the MTF and/or AMTA.
- Present at MTF's International Massage Therapy Research Conference (IMTRC) (every three years; next conference takes place in 2028) and/or American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) National Convention (annual) to disseminate project experiences and findings back to the therapeutic massage field.

At project conclusion, project personnel will provide or contribute to:

- a 300-word blog describing the project results for publication on the Foundation's website.
- An ~1200-word article for the AMTA trade periodical, *Massage Therapy Journal*, outlining in lay language the project, results, impact, and next steps of the community service work for the group.

For up to two years after service project completion, the award recipient agrees to submit copies of any publications stemming from the work with a cover sheet indicating the name of the publication venue, date of submission and publication (if applicable), and acceptance date.

Award recipients are required to acknowledge funding and support from the Massage Therapy Foundation in all publications and media coverage concerning the community service project. Award recipients are encouraged to seek media coverage of the project. Any publication or other transmission of information resulting from the project must include a prominent disclosure indicating sponsorship/funding from MTF.

All applications must be submitted through the online grant portal:
https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=massagetherapy

Please direct all inquiries to:
Annie LaCroix, Associate Director – Operations
alacroix@massagetherapyfoundation.org

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500 Davis Street, Suite 950
Evanston, Illinois 60201

For more information about the Massage Therapy Foundation, visit:
www.massagetherapyfoundation.org