



Policy: CS-B03 Health Care Reserve and Funding Policy

Department: Corporate Services

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

Revision Date:

Review Date: January 1, 2027

1. Coverage

This policy specifically applies to the Health Care Reserve Fund and budgeting process for Bruce County.

2. Purpose

To govern the administration of the proper allocation and use of the County's Health Care Reserve Fund, as well as the procedure for receiving and evaluating funding requests in accordance with the annual budgeting process. The policy aims to ensure a sustainable level of funding while mitigating the impact of funding requests on the tax levy.

3. Policy Statement

The County recognizes the important role of local hospitals and health care providers in creating and maintaining healthy and vibrant communities in Bruce County. Capital costs have increased steadily, and increasingly communities are being required to fundraise for additional equipment and capital expenditures to support the continued delivery of quality health care services in and around the County. Health care services benefit all residents of the County, and the County's taxation ability gives it the opportunity to make an impactful contribution to these important services.

This policy aims to simplify the application process for both the applicants and the County, along with its eight lower tiers. By managing the program at the County level, organizations can submit a single request instead of multiple requests at different levels. This approach centralizes the funding from one tax levy, rather than distributing it across both upper and lower tier budgets.

4. Legislative Authority

4.1 All Reserve and Reserve Funds will be managed in accordance with the Municipal Act, specifically:

- a) Section 289 (4) (f): In preparing the budget, an upper-tier municipality may provide for such reserves as the upper-tier municipality considers necessary.
- b) Section 417: allows a municipality to provide in its budget for the establishment or maintenance of a reserve fund for any purpose for which it has authority to spend money and that a municipality may by by-law provide that the money raised for a reserve may be spent or applied to a purpose other than for which the fund was established.

5. Definitions

“Budget” is the financial tool used as a means for identifying the resources necessary to achieve the corporate annual goals and objectives while maintaining acceptable service levels to our ratepayers.

“Capital costs” relates to assets purchased with a useful life that benefit the organization for more than one year.

“Health Care Provider” includes any not-for-profit organization that provides medical and health related services such as but not limited to a hospital foundation, hospice, or other organization providing a health-related service.

“Operating” relates to purchases that support the day-to-day activities to maintain service levels but have a time limited benefit.

“Reserve Fund” refers to funds set aside by approval of Council and not restricted by legislation. These funds are established by a council resolution through the adoption of the budget.

6. Procedure

a) Contributions to Reserve

- a. Annually, the County will contribute 0.5% of the previous year’s tax levy to the Health Care Reserve Fund.
- b. The reserve will comply with the Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy.
- c. The reserve balance will be reviewed annually, and recommendations will be made by staff regarding contribution levels based on the available balance and requests.

b) Use of Reserve

- a. Projects are eligible for consideration to receive funds from the Health Care Reserve Fund if they meet at all of the below criteria:
 - i. Funding capital or equipment requirements only.
 - ii. Have received provincial approval, if required.
 - iii. Create service improvements and respond to an identified need in the community.

- iv. Are located in the County, or in a location where County residents represent at least 20% of patients served.

b. Additional Notes on Exclusions and Application

- i. Requests for funding of local physician recruitment are ineligible under this policy.
- ii. The County will not make corporate financial contributions to health care fundraising events. (ie. Golf tournaments, galas, etc.).
- iii. County departments may provide in-kind contributions that align with their corporate strategic goals or initiatives.
- iv. All requests must be made to Bruce County directly
- v. The County will only consider providing funding for requests that meet the criteria specified in the Health Care Funding Request form and are not already funded by a lower tier.
- vi. The County will limit long-term funding agreements to a maximum of five years.

c) Request Process

- i. Requests for funding must be submitted to the County Clerk in writing using the request form.
- ii. All requests will be reviewed for eligibility under the requirements and a report to council will be submitted annually identifying all requests received and which met the eligibility criteria. At this same meeting applicants will be invited to submit a deputation to address Council directly on their request.
- iii. Council will provide direction on which requests to include in the first draft of the annual budget. Council may request amendments to amounts or timelines from the original request.
- iv. Funding of projects from the reserve will be considered approved once the annual budget containing the request has been approved or upon a separate budget amendment resolution of Council if required.

d) Reporting Requirements

On an annual basis staff will report to Council the current reserve fund balance, a five-year projection of the reserve with current approved long-term commitments and proposed funding requests as well as give recommendations, if applicable, on any changes required to the annual contribution level or minimum reserve balance target.