

PUBLIC INTEREST PROJECTS POLICY

1. MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

- 1.1. OPIRG McMaster's Mission is to empower students and community in exchanging ideas and taking action on diverse social justice and environmental issues by connecting individuals, groups, organizations, and resources.
- 1.2. Our vision is to engage, inspire, and empower all to achieve positive change through grassroots initiatives.
- 1.3. Our values are Consensus, Environmental Responsibility, Anti-oppression, empowerment, creativity and innovation, and equity and inclusivity.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. Public Interest Projects (PIPs) are OPIRG-supported, student-run projects organized around anti-oppression principles and directed towards research and/or positive action on social justice and environmental issues in the public interest. Public Interest Projects allow students to tackle real and practical issues at the grassroots level. These projects may include various events but overall will aim for tangible and visible action, going a step further than raising awareness.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1. DEFINITION

- 3.1.1. A Public Interest Project is a distinct and independent organizational form that is accountable to OPIRG McMaster first, and operates in accordance with this policy.
- 3.1.2. A Public Interest Project must be autonomous, student-led and run, and must not be currently receiving operational funding or guidance from the McMaster Student Union, the University, or any other external group, association or organization. Groups

that represent a chapter or sub-grouping of any other existing internal or external association or organization are not eligible for Public Interest Project status under this policy, and should seek OPIRG assistance through our Supporting Grant and opportunities for partnership.

3.2. PURPOSE

- 3.2.1. A Public Interest Project is directed towards action in the public interest and encourages positive contributions to the local and/or global community.
- 3.2.2. A Public Interest Project is issue-based, demonstrates a clear focus, and is reflective of OPIRG's commitment to environmental and social justice.
- 3.2.3. The Public Interest Project focus is based on credible and defensible positions or research, is constructive in nature, and demonstrates reasonable community support.
- 3.2.4. The Public Interest Project focus must be respectful to all members of the McMaster, Hamilton and global communities.
- 3.2.5. Public Interest Projects are encouraged to fundraise to support group activities and/or research, but the majority of the group's work and resources must be directed towards its mandate.

3.3. STRUCTURE

- 3.3.1. All Public Interest Projects must be student-led. Public Interest Projects may define their own organizational structure and are not required to operate like MSU Campus Clubs.
- 3.3.2. While Public Interest Projects are not required to have formal leadership, each Public Interest Project must provide OPIRG McMaster with two reliable contact persons in leadership positions in their Public Interest Project. Both of these contacts must be full-time undergraduate McMaster University students. These two contact persons commit themselves to attending mandatory OPIRG McMaster Orientation as well as Workshops on Consensus Decision Making and Anti-Oppression and/or any

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other sessions deemed mandatory by OPIRG McMaster. Failure to attend the mandatory training is a violation of this policy and may result in defunding.

3.4. BECOMING A PIP

- 3.4.1. Public Interest Projects are bound by their successfully approved Public Interest Project Application. All Public Interest Project Applications will be reviewed by OPIRG McMaster and approved or rejected by its Board of Directors. All Applications will be reviewed against OPIRG McMaster's objectives and all Public Interest Project concepts must adequately meet all of the criteria outlined in Section 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.
- 3.4.2. Applicants are required to use the most recent iteration of the Public Interest Project Application Form. This Application form shall list all application requirements. All information requested by the Public Interest Project Application form is considered mandatory for applicants wishing to be considered for Public Interest Project status.
- 3.4.3. The OPIRG McMaster Public Interest Project Application Form is considered a part of this policy and shall be reviewed at the end of each budget year and revised and approved by the OPIRG McMaster Board of Directors if deemed appropriate by that body. The standard Application Form is to be made available to potential applicants through the OPIRG McMaster Website.

3.5. AVAILABLE SUPPORT

- 3.5.1. All successfully approved Public Interest Projects are granted access to support until the end of each budget year. The types of support available to groups may include, but is not limited to:
 - 3.5.1.1. Access to the Public Interest Project Start-Up Funding to provide reimbursement for expenses;
 - 3.5.1.2. Ability to request additional Special Project Funding;
 - 3.5.1.3. Reasonable use of the OPIRG McMaster name and logo in promotions;

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- 3.5.1.4. Room bookings or similar facilitation in accessing University resources;
 - 3.5.1.5. Access to OPIRG equipment including printing, button-making, data projector and other OPIRG listserv and supports;
 - 3.5.1.6. Institutional support such as assistance in volunteer recruitment, organizing, planning and/or training;
 - 3.5.1.7. Any other reasonable request to access a resource held by OPIRG McMaster.
- 3.5.2. OPIRG support must only be directed towards project activities and/or research, and are not to be re-directed towards other groups or individuals, inside or outside the University.
- 3.5.3. Support for Public Interest Projects may be suspended or revoked at any time through a decision by the OPIRG McMaster Board of Directors if there is the reasonable belief the actions or decisions of a Public Interest Project threaten the credibility, reputation, working relations, or other interests of OPIRG McMaster, its Public Interest Projects and/or community partners. Should support be revoked, the McMaster Board of Directors shall provide immediate notice of suspension, and also shall provide a written reason for their decision to suspend within two weeks of the decision.

3.6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 3.6.1. Public Interest Projects are required to submit an Annual Report to be submitted to OPIRG McMaster at the end of that year which will be used (in part) to complete an annual evaluation conducted by OPIRG McMaster. Completion and submission of Annual Reports are the responsibility of a Public Interest Project's contact persons and must include the following:
- 3.6.1.1. A comprehensive overview of all work (research and/or action) completed by the Public Interest Project throughout the budget year;

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- 3.6.1.2. An up-to-date list of key contact persons and active volunteers in the Public Interest Project.
- 3.6.1.3. A self-evaluation of the Group's work, including a fair assessment of the Group's ability to complete its goals as outlined in its Application, and identification of areas of strength and weakness.
- 3.6.1.4. A vision for the Public Interest Project's future, including any plans to re-Apply as a Public Interest Project in future budget years, any proposed future work, and any new opportunities for OPIRG McMaster to support the Public Interest Project.
- 3.6.2. Annual Reports may be returned to Public Interest Project contact persons for revision should the Reports be considered by OPIRG McMaster to be incomplete. Failure to submit an Annual Report will be noted and be considered in any future Applications or re- Applications made by the Public Interest Project or its contact persons.
- 3.6.3. Previously approved Public Interest Projects are required to re-Apply for Public Interest Project status at least once each Budget Year, and their submitted Annual Reports will be considered in the approval or rejection of these re-application requests.
- 3.6.4. Public Interest Project contact persons are entitled to request and review their Public Interest Projects completed Evaluations.
- 3.6.5. Public Interest Projects are required to submit the Event Report form immediately after hosting any external events. Completion and submission of the Event Report form are the responsibility of a Public Interest Project's contact persons. The Event Report form will be reviewed by the appropriate OPIRG board and/or staff member(s) for follow-up, if deemed necessary.