



Local Government Research Paper Award

Application

The Municipal Education and Research Foundation (MERF) will annually be granting up to three awards in the amount of \$500 to current students in diploma or degree-granting programs, for outstanding research papers on the subject of municipal administration and/ or management. The awards will be judged on technical competence, significance of findings, originality and clarity of expression.

About the Award

- o The award will consist of up to three \$500 prizes, to be paid by MERF; a certificate; and possible submission of the paper for publication in a Journal of Municipal Research. Winning papers will also be posted on the MERF website.
- o If runners-up are designated, they will receive letters of "honourable mention," signed by the MERF Board Chairperson, but shall not share in the award.

To Apply

- Submit your completed paper to MERF by June 30, of the Calendar year. Electronic submissions are preferred.
- The Cover page must include the paper title, a single-spaced 75 word summary/abstract, primary author's name, address, phone & e-mail address, and the name of the institution where the student is enrolled.
- The research paper should include the title and the name of the author

Eligibility

- Submitted papers must be written by students enrolled in a degree or diploma granting academic institution during the current academic year. Doctoral theses are not eligible.
- Wordage -the length of the research paper must be between 3,500 and 5,000 words in length (not counting appendices)

- Papers submitted must be endorsed by a faculty sponsor for submission to the contest.
- Papers submitted must represent original research (not literature reviews) and may not have been published elsewhere. *
- The submitted papers must present original research conducted primarily by the entrant. Some assistance by other individuals (such as the student's faculty advisor) is permitted, and the paper may be co-authored with them, as long as the student is the FIRST author.
- Submitted papers must use an approved reference style and must be submitted in a form that meets the publication standards for professional research journals. Specific evaluation procedures will be established by MERF.

Deadlines

- Papers must be submitted to MERF by not later than 5:00 PM on June 30 in each year. All papers submitted shall be acknowledged upon receipt.
- Selection of award winners shall be made and the winners notified within 60 days of the submission deadline.

*Submissions may be verified to ensure the originality of submitted material.

**Completed Research Papers must be submitted to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Education and Research Foundation via email to:
merf@amcto.com**

MERF Research Paper Award Selection Criteria

- The content of each paper shall be appraised in terms of technical competence, significance of research findings, originality, and clarity of expression.
 - Format, style, and organization will also be judged.
 - The maximum number of points that can be given to a paper is 100. The highest score for each of the evaluation criteria is:
 1. Content (50 marks)
 2. Organization (20 marks)
 3. Style (10 marks)
 4. Grammar and Mechanics (10 marks)
 5. Basic Factors (10 points)
1. Content (50 marks)
 - a. The research paper demonstrates clear, independent and original thinking with the potential to inspire debate and critical thought.
 - b. The report demonstrates clarity of expression, showing a clear purpose or thesis which remains the focal point of the paper throughout.
 - c. The subject has been explored in-depth.
 - d. The paper demonstrates relevance to municipal government, administration or management, and identifies outcomes that can be implemented in a reasonable time-frame.
 - e. The research paper is not a mere collection of information – rather it demonstrates the writer’s ability to analyze the gathered information and make clear, practical and sound recommendations based on the analysis.
 2. Organization (20 marks)
 - a. The research paper is well organized, coherent and easy to read.
 - b. The paper demonstrates a strong grasp of research methodology and illustrates that the writer has the ability to:
 - i. Frame a clear question
 - ii. Develop an appropriate research design
 - iii. information that are consistent with the conceptual framework developed

- c. References are properly cited throughout the research paper and in the bibliography.
3. Style (10 marks)
- a. The paper clearly indicates its audience and consistently uses the appropriate tone to address this audience.
 - b. The writer makes appropriate use of sections, sub-headings and paragraphs to hold and keep the reader's interest.
 - c. The paper demonstrates smooth transitions from paragraph to paragraph and from point to point. Each point is comprehensively dealt with before the writer moves to the next point.
4. Grammar and Mechanics (10 marks)
- a. The language is free of errors of grammar, spelling and style
 - b. Ideas and concepts are presented in concise language without unnecessary wordage
5. Basic Factors (10 points)
- a. Wordage -the length of the research paper is between 3,500 and 5,000 words in length (not counting appendices)
 - i. There will be a deduction of 5 marks per 500 words less than the minimum
 - ii. There will be a deduction of 5 marks per 500 words more than the minimum
 - iii. There will be a deduction of 10 marks for unnecessary repetition of ideas/concepts in order to increase wordage.
 - b. The report uses at least 8 to 10 secondary sources

There will be a deduction of 10 marks for papers citing fewer than 8 sources.