



Community Grants Policy

Dedicated to a better Brisbane

This policy outlines Council's approach to providing grants to community organisations and represents Council's policy about grants to community organisations as required by section 187 of the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012*.

Council's grants program provides support to community organisations in recognition of their vital contribution made to Brisbane's development and community well-being.

This policy demonstrates and outlines Council's role in supporting the community. Community grants extend the community's capability to conduct activities, create opportunities for community capacity building, develop and maintain sustainable community infrastructure and build strong partnerships for community benefit.

This policy assists Councillors and Council employees to achieve consistency in corporate processes and procedures when developing, assessing, monitoring, acquitting and evaluating grants.

This policy identifies:

- the definition of a grant and a community organisation
- the definition of Councillor's discretionary funds
- how to distinguish between a grant, donation, sponsorship, discretionary funds and subsidy
- types and objectives of grants to community organisations
- general eligibility criteria for community organisations wishing to apply for grants
- the procedure for assessing, approving and acquitting a grant to a community organisation.

Applicability

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council employees, contractors and consultants.

This policy applies to all Council grants, and Councillor discretionary funds provided for community projects; but does not apply to sponsorships, subsidies or donations.

This policy is made in compliance with Council's obligations in sections 186 and 187 of the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012*.

Council may give a grant to a community organisation only:

1. if Council is satisfied:
 - 1.1. the grant will be used for a purpose that is in the public interest and
 - 1.2. the community organisation meets the criteria stated in this policy; and
2. in a way that is consistent with this policy.

Legislation

City of Brisbane Regulation 2012

Definitions

Community organisation means an entity that carries on activities for a public purpose or another entity whose primary object is not directed at making profit.

Councillor's discretionary funds are funds in Council's operating budget that are budgeted for community purposes and allocated by a Councillor at the Councillor's discretion to a community organisation for a community purpose.

Donation means a voluntary gift given, typically, to a non-related charitable, public purpose or not-for-profit organisation, without any material benefit or advantage being received by Council in return and provided without any conditions or contractual obligations. For more information, see *AP200 Donations Policy*.

Grant means a payment provided to a community organisation for a specific community purpose, and includes the payment of a Councillor's discretionary funds to a community organisation for a community purpose. A grant is generally part of an approved Council program, with the understanding that there will be a defined outcome that directly or indirectly benefits the public, but with no expectation of commercial return to Council. Grants are subject to conditions (particularly reporting and accountability, a requirement for the funds to be expended for the direct purpose they were granted and recognition of Council for the grant) as detailed in funding agreements.

Sponsorship is the right to associate the sponsor's name, products or services with the sponsored organisation's service product or activity, in return for negotiated benefits such as money or promotional opportunities.

Subsidy means a form of government financial assistance paid to a business or economic sector. A subsidy can take several forms which are conditional upon meeting specific criteria. A subsidy can be used to support businesses and to encourage activities that would otherwise not take place. For example, a subsidy would form part of the total cost of a particular scheme or project providing public services (e.g. an apprentice scheme or health research).

Policy

(a) Principles

This policy provides a framework for Council's grant program. Council undertakes to apply the following principles:

- transparent, equitable, open and effective processes, and decision making in the public interest
- sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services
- democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement
- good governance of, and by, Council
- ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and Council employees.

Council acknowledges its role in supporting, assisting and partnering with community organisations that provide important services that meet community needs, and further Council's aims and objectives.

Funding priorities for individual grant programs will be reviewed to ensure relevance to achieving Council's objectives.

This policy is linked to Council's *Corporate Plan 2016-17 to 2020-21 – 2017 Update* including:

- Program 3 – Clean, Green and Sustainable City
 - Outcome 3.1 Sustainable and Resilient Community
- Program 4 – Future Brisbane
 - Outcome 4.2 Enhancing Brisbane’s Liveability
 - Outcome 4.3 Approving Quality Development
- Program 5 – Lifestyle and Community Services
 - Outcome 5.1 Thriving Arts and Culture
 - Outcome 5.3 Active and Healthy Community
 - Outcome 5.4 Social Inclusion
- Program 8 – City Governance
 - Outcome 8.3 Strong and Responsible Financial Management.

(b) Community grants objectives

The community grant programs help to deliver Council’s citywide outcomes stated in *Brisbane Vision 2031* – including but not limited to outcomes of a friendly and safe city, active and healthy city, vibrant and creative city and clean and green city.

The grants Council provides supports Council’s vision for Brisbane and includes, but is not limited to, arts and culture, history and heritage, community development and capacity building, environment and sustainability and sport and recreation.

The objectives of Council’s grants are:

- to provide support to community organisations in recognition of the vital contribution made to Brisbane’s development and community wellbeing
- to provide a means for community organisations to address current and arising issues and trends
- to provide an opportunity for social inclusion and community engagement for the community of Brisbane
- to provide transparent, equitable, open and effective processes and decision making.

(c) General eligibility criteria

Individuals and not-for-profit organisations are eligible to apply for Council grants.

An applicant applying for a grant must operate within the Brisbane Local Government Area (LGA) or be able to demonstrate that the project will benefit residents of the Brisbane LGA.

The applicant must:

- have appropriate insurance and workplace health and safety policies in accordance with the funding agreement
- demonstrate that the grant will be used for a public purpose
- have met all acquittal conditions of previous Council grants and have no debt to Council
- be financially viable.

If a community organisation is not incorporated, the organisation may apply for a grant provided that the application is auspiced and administered by an incorporated community organisation. An incorporated community organisation may auspice one or more unincorporated community organisations. The auspicing community organisation may also lodge applications on its own behalf. The auspice requirement set out in this paragraph does

not apply to unincorporated community organisations applying for funds from a Councillor's discretionary funds.

Council will publish additional eligibility criteria for each type of grant when applications are requested from the community.

An entity that is not a community organisation is not permitted to apply for Council grants.

(d) Practices

The community will be informed of the relevant guidelines pertaining to the grant program and include information on:

- program priorities
- criteria and eligibility
- acquittal requirements and
- administration processes.

The procedural implementations are documented in grants procedures manuals (the manuals) maintained by Council's Community Grants Unit. The manuals are maintained in collaboration with all internal stakeholders.

The manuals include, but are not limited to:

- a checklist of processes from receipt of applications to acquittals
- templates and documents including:
- assessor training manual
- grant procedures for specific grant programs
- document/file management/record keeping procedures
- evaluation and performance reporting requirements.

The SmartyGrants online grants system is used to manage the full lifecycle of each grant program and key associated documents, including application, assessment, administration and acquittal forms. Grant guidelines are available on Council's corporate website. Grant applicants may access application forms via Council's corporate website.

As soon as practicable after an amount has been allocated from a Councillor's discretionary funds, the name of the community organisation, amount and purpose of the allocation will be published on Council's corporate website.

(e) Grants priority development

Priorities for each grant program are contained in the grant guidelines published when the grant applications are made available to the community.

Priorities will be based on an examination of:

- evaluation of previous years grants program effectiveness
- Council's corporate objectives and strategies, and current service provision
- arising trends and issues in the community and not-for-profit sector
- key public policy agendas
- gaps in existing service provision within the community
- the amount of funding available for disbursement.

The effectiveness of each grant, and each grant program, including guidelines and criteria is reviewed annually.

(f) Grant assessment processes and accountability mechanisms

All applications from community organisations for a grant must be fully completed and supported by financial quotations or project/works cost estimates. Incomplete applications will not be accepted or further considered by Council.

Council will undertake financial checks of community organisations to determine a community organisation's financial viability before providing grants to them from either Council's grants program or a Councillor's discretionary funds program.

Once accepted by Council, all applications (excluding applications for funding from a Councillor's discretionary fund) will be assessed against the guidelines and eligibility criteria set for each grant. If an application:

- meets the guidelines and eligibility criteria; and
- is scored against assessment criteria above other eligible applications in a closed round; and
- the allocation of funding does not exceed the amount stated in the availability notice (where applicable),
- the application will be recommended to the appropriate delegate for approval. Approval from the appropriate delegate is not required for a decision to allocate a Councillor's discretionary funds.

If the application is approved for funding by the appropriate delegate, the applicant will be notified and provided with a funding agreement for execution. The funding agreement will include obligations for the community organisation to properly acquit the grant in the form required by Council.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via letter following the decision of the appropriate delegate.

(g) Conflicts of interest

Councillors and Council employees have obligations under the *City of Brisbane Act 2010* and the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012* in relation to declaring and managing conflicts of interest.

A Councillor seeking to allocate the Councillor's discretionary funds to a community organisation for a community purpose must, prior to making the allocation, inform the Chief Executive Officer of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. The Chief Executive Officer will provide direction, and where required, approval for a discretionary funding application where a Councillor has declared a real or perceived conflict of interest.

A Council employee assessing or otherwise managing a grant application must, as soon as practicable, inform the relevant Branch Manager of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. The branch Manager will provide direction about assessing and managing the grant application.

(h) Acquittal requirements

All community organisations who receive grants under the Community Grants program or from a Councillor's discretionary funds program must acquit the funding received and demonstrate that the grant was used in accordance with the approved application.

(i) Roles and responsibilities of Council employees and Councillors

Grants Unit:

- Management of grant administration process

Specialist Program Area:

- Development of grant program guidelines
- Assessment of applications and development of funding recommendation documentation
- Assessment and approval of acquittal reports

Comparative Assessment Committee members:

- Review of assessment process and funding recommendations

Appropriate Delegate:

- Review and final approval of funding recommendation documentation

Councillors:

- Letters of support to community grant applicants
- Assessment, approval and approval of acquittal reports of Councillor discretionary funding

(j) Councillors' discretionary funding for community projects

The objective of a Councillor's discretionary funds is to support community purposes that build stronger communities and contribute to the life of the city and address community issues. Eligible applicants include community organisations and Councillors for projects with a community purpose.

Unless otherwise expressly stated, sections (a) to (i) apply to applications for an allocation of a Councillor's discretionary funds to a community organisation for a community purpose.

Allocation of discretionary funds by Councillors

A Councillor may use the Councillor's discretionary funds in any of the following ways:

1. to spend for a community purpose
2. to allocate for capital works of Council that are for a community purpose, but only with prior approval from the Establishment & Coordination Committee
3. to allocate to a community organisation for a community purpose.

A Councillor:

1. may allocate the Councillor's discretionary fund only to community organisations that have applied for funds in the way stated in the availability notice
2. must allocate the Councillor's discretionary funds in a way that is consistent with this policy

3. must not allocate the Councillor's discretionary funds for supplying administrative or support services for performing the Councillor's responsibilities
4. must not allocate the Councillor's discretionary funds to a community organisation for a community purpose during the period starting on 1 January in the year a quadrennial election must be held and ending at the conclusion of the election.

Please refer to *AP209 Election Period Policy* for more information and guidance about spending and allocating a Councillor's discretionary funds in the year a quadrennial election must be held.

Councillor's discretionary fund criteria

In addition to section (c) of this policy, the criteria for a Councillor to decide how to allocate discretionary funds to a community organisation is guided by the contribution projects will make towards achieving Council's vision, including but not limited to the following.

- Friendly, safe city – Encourage projects that respond to local community issues.
- Active, healthy city – Encourage projects that increase participation in community sport, recreation, physical health and activity.
- Clean, green city – Encourage projects that address environmental issues in the local community.
- Vibrant, creative city – Encourage arts and cultural projects that stimulate the local community's creativity and cultural development.

In applying these criteria to applications from community organisations for discretionary funds, Councillors must also consider the priorities for the allocation of Councillor's discretionary funds in the discretionary funding guidelines.

- Funding applications must also be assessed against and required to address:
 - evidence the project meets the objectives of the discretionary funding
 - evidence the project is realistic with regard to the following:
 - aims and objectives of applications
 - timeframes
 - support from the community
 - budget
 - additional costs/in-kind costs.
 - evidence that the funding demonstrates benefits for the community.