

COVID-19 Relief Fund Guidelines:

Palmerston North City Council recognises the need to support community groups who may have experienced an increase in demand or a loss of income or unexpected costs due to COVID-19 restrictions and offers additional support to community groups through the COVID-19 Relief Fund. Individuals or businesses engaged in delivery of a community event effected by Covid19 restrictions are also eligible to apply.

1. Funding Priorities

The COVID-19 Relief Fund assists community groups or individuals to survive the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To be considered for funding applicants must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Experience an increase in demand for the applicant's services due to COVID-19;
- A loss of anticipated income due to COVID-19;
- Unexpected costs due to COVID-19.

2. Funding Opportunities

Grants are dependent on evidence that the group or individual meets the funding criteria.

- Groups may apply up to two to four times a year for funding.
- The limit is \$10,000 per application (to an annual total of \$20,000)
 - This may include applying for a variation if applicants find that the projected demand at the time of an earlier application has not matched actual demand.

3. Allocation Process

Our objective is a rapid response and we aim to assess applications within two weeks.

Potential applicants must complete an online application form. An allocation panel will assess the applications and may seek advice on aspects of the application from independent experts before determining the funding allocation.

Funding allocations will be reported to Council and on the Council website after the end of each financial year.

Grants will be awarded throughout the year, until all funds have been allocated.

All decisions by the allocation committee are final.

4. Assessment Criteria

The allocation panel will look at:

- The viability of the organisation or the individual's business.
- Whether the organisation or individual's business has had an increase in demand due to COVID-19, evidenced by:
 - Service records comparing levels of service or enquiries received to the same time last year,
 - Evidence of increased costs required as a result of a change in the way a service is delivered,
 - Financial records showing the impact of the increase in demand.
 - Forecasted increase in demand (letters of support could be provided as evidence)

- Any other information
- Actual of loss of income due to COVID-19 that threatens the individual’s business or organisation’s survival, evidenced by:
 - Financial records comparing the income received to the same time last year,
 - An explanation of any fundraisers or similar that could not go ahead due to COVID-19,
 - Correspondence from any funder advising that approved grants have been recalled due to COVID-19.
- Unexpected costs due to COVID-19, evidenced by:
 - Retrospective costs of purchasing IT equipment during level 4 lockdown,
 - COVID-19 Resources (e.g. printing for communication)
 - Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).
 - Evidence of expenditure is required.

5. Eligibility requirements

The eligibility requirements below are as per the Support and Funding Policy (2022) with the exception of retrospective, additional costs incurred by groups or individuals as a direct result of responding to the lockdown. These retrospective, additional costs will be eligible.

a) Eligible Applicants

The primary beneficiaries of the COVID-19 Relief Fund grants will be not-for-profit, charitable and voluntary organisations. These groups are often referred to collectively as ‘community organisations’ because they are established with the primary purpose of providing a benefit to the wider community.

Individuals or businesses engaged in the delivery of a community event are also eligible to apply.

b) Ineligible Applicants

Community grants as covered by this policy are not available to:

- Political parties
- Internal applicants (for example to fund projects, programmes or facilities run by Council or its employees)
- Palmerston North City Council and Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs)
- Other local authorities, government agencies or public sector entities

c) Eligible Expenses for Grant Funding

The following expenses are eligible:

- Salaries, wages, professional fees (e.g. artists’ fees) and volunteer expenses
- Administration and office expenses
- Accommodation expenses including rent, leases, maintenance, insurances and utilities
- Costs integral to service delivery (e.g. vehicle expenses for a mobile social service)
- Marketing, advertising, website and printing costs; and
- Programme expenses such as materials, equipment hire, venue hire and tutor’s fees.

d) Ineligible Expenses for Grant Funding

The following expenses are not eligible:

- Debt servicing or repayment
- Legal expenses
- Activities that promote religious ministry or political purposes and causes
- Medical expenses.

In a competitive funding environment, the following may be a lower priority for funding:

- Retrospective costs (where the activity has already taken place), unless this is necessary as a condition of the grant or Council is satisfied there are other mitigating circumstances [refer to note under 5. “retrospective, extra costs incurred by groups as a direct result of responding to the lockdown will be eligible.);
- Fundraising events or activities, especially where the beneficiary is a third party (e.g. charity events, sponsored walks), unless we determine the event has a wider community benefit beyond its primary purpose as a fundraiser.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Organisations or businesses affiliated in some way to elected members or employees of Council can still be considered for grant funding. However, organisations in this category should note any possible conflict of interest (or perception of a conflict of interest) in their application to ensure any necessary steps can be taken to mitigate this. Elected members or council employees involved in funding decisions are also required to note any possible conflict of interest (or perception of a conflict of interest) and will not be involved in any assessment or decision-making related to these applications.