



Waikato Regional Council Community Transport Grant Fund Policy

Policy Statement

Community Transport supports our communities by providing flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs. It often represents the only means of transport for many vulnerable and isolated people, often older people, or people with disabilities.

Community transport typically:

- a) relies on volunteers and fundraising
- b) has low operating costs and draws very highly on community good will to deliver higher value services than to a public transport equivalent
- c) can generate significant benefits for communities by reducing isolation, enabling access to healthcare, education, and social opportunities.
- d) is an effective transport solution in smaller towns and rural areas and complements council's public transport network.

The Council established a contestable fund through the 2022/23 Annual Plan to better support community transport providers.

Purpose

Policy Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to identify the framework for Community Transport Grant (CT Grant) applications, general conditions, the prioritisation criteria to target application selections and the payment and contractual arrangements.

Grant Purpose

- Waikato Regional Council (WRC) wishes to encourage and support work done by community transport providers within the Waikato region by providing a grant toward operations.

Grant Funding

- Fund has a value of \$300,000 per annum, for community transport grants, with a maximum grant of \$20,000 per application.

Policy Principles

- **Funding Outcomes**
 - With this funding Waikato Regional Council aims to support the ongoing value added to communities through community transport groups.
- **Applicants eligible to apply**

- This funding is available to community transport groups who can demonstrate that they
 - are based in Waikato region
 - serving an area where public transport does not currently meet people's needs for participation
 - will retain a legal entity status:
 - incorporated societies, or
 - registered charitable trusts, or
 - a maori reservation/marae, or
 - a limited liability company fully owned by one of the above;
 - are a not-for-profit, non-government, or non-commercial organisation
 - comply with applicable legislation;
 - are able to manage financial accounts and meet reporting requirements.

- **Allocation Criteria**
 - Applications will be prioritised using the following criteria:
 1. Applicant has not received a CT Grant Fund allocation in the current financial year.
 2. Applicant will be primarily serving an area where there is not currently public transport adequate to meeting people's needs for participation.
 3. Applicant demonstrates responsiveness to community need.
 4. Applicant intends to provide transport to best suit their community's needs.
 5. Applicant intends to provide transport which supports people to remain in their chosen community.
 6. If Applicant has received previous funding from WRC, they have met all terms of the previous funding agreement.
 7. Preference will be given to organisations whose primary activity is community transport.
 8. Preference given to an applicant who requires funding to support running costs (e.g. vehicle repairs, fuel costs, staff training, insurances, booking and accounting software, etc) over innovative pursuits.

- **Fund Budget**
 - The CT Grant fund budget available per annum is \$300,000. A maximum grant of \$20,000 is available per application.
 - Where the full budget is not claimed by the initial financial year's applications, council assessors may distribute the remainder of funding to existing applicants as appropriate.

Annual CT Grant Fund Application Evaluations

- CT Grant Fund applications will be assessed and awarded through a contestable evaluation process annually.

- Applicants will complete an online application through an online portal such as SmartyGrants.
- Applications will be assessed by Council representatives and a determination will be made if there are any relevant grant conditions.
- Where applications exceed the annual grants budget, applications will be prioritised and/or grants reduced.
- **Support for applicants**
 - WRC staff will be available to provide advice to applicants and to answer any questions regarding eligibility or criteria.
- **CT Grant obligations & Payment**
 - Successful applicants will be required to:
 - Sign a WRC funding agreement (Doc# 25622881) which will identify the approved grant value, conditions, and the length of service obligation.
 - Operate within the terms imposed by the funding agreement.
 - Complete accountability report template (at 6 and 12 months) including information such as patronage values, volunteer hours, and types of trips undertaken. Council will use this to develop up-to-date reports on the success of its community transport support.