



# City of Aspen Grants Program: Review Guidelines and Funding Process

## Review and Funding Process

**Step 1:** After submittal, each application is reviewed by city staff to ensure eligibility and organizational financial health. All applications meeting minimum requirements are passed on to the appropriate grants review committee.

**Step 2:** Each application is reviewed by a committee community volunteers according to the scoring definitions and rubric included below. Committee members assess each application on a score of one to five for each review criterion. All scores are weighted and combined, to create a final aggregate score.

**Step 3:** These scores are then input into an objective funding formula, designed to provide consistency and equity for all grant applicants. This formula is used to provide recommendations on funding amounts for each application based on review committee scores, total funding requests, and the grants program budget.

**Step 4:** Then funding recommendations are reviewed by the grants steering committee, and City Council, for final approval.

**Step 5:** Grant awardees are notified, contracts are signed, and funds are dispersed.

## Committee Scoring Definitions

Score	Title	Criteria Description
5	Exceptional	Many strengths and no impactful weaknesses or flaws.
4	Above Average	Many strengths and few impactful weaknesses or flaws.
3	Average	Some strengths and some impactful weaknesses or flaws.



2	Below Average	Few strengths and several impactful weaknesses or flaws.
1	Poor	Minimal strengths and many impactful weaknesses or flaws.

### Committee Scoring Rubrics

Δ Before the grants review process begins, committee members are trained in how to use the scoring definitions and rubrics, as well as in best practices to ensure that each application is assessed on its own merit against the scoring criteria. Applications with a high degree of scoring variability will be selected for further discussion among committee members prior to finalization.

	<b>1 – Poor</b>	<b>2 – Below Average</b>	<b>3 – Average</b>	<b>4 – Above Average</b>	<b>5 – Exceptional</b>
<b>Community Impact (30%)</b>	Application is likely to have little or no meaningful positive community impact.	Application demonstrates some potential to have a meaningful positive community impact.	Application demonstrates moderate potential to have a meaningful positive community impact.	Application demonstrates strong potential to have significant positive community impact.	Application demonstrates strong potential to have exceptional positive community impact.
<b>Alignment (30%)</b>	Application has little or no alignment to grants program philosophy and relevant strategic focus area.	Application has some alignment to grants program philosophy and relevant strategic focus area.	Application has moderate alignment to grants program philosophy and relevant strategic focus area.	Application has strong alignment to grants program philosophy and relevant strategic focus area.	Application has exceptional alignment to grants program philosophy and relevant strategic focus area.
<b>Innovation (20%)</b>	Application shows little or no creativity and does not attempt to address community	Application shows weak creativity and does little to address community issues or	Application shows some creativity and attempts to address community issues or	Application is creative and will likely meaningfully address community issues or	Application is creative and is nearly certain to significantly address community



	issues or needs.	needs.	needs	needs.	issues or needs.
<b>Feasibility (20%)</b>	Application has little or no chance of being viable and sustainable. Does not demonstrate appropriate organizational capacity to implement grant.	Application has some chance of being viable and sustainable. Does not demonstrate appropriate organizational capacity to implement grant.	Application has a moderate chance of being viable or sustainable. Demonstrates appropriate organizational capacity to implement grant.	Application is likely to be viable and sustainable. Demonstrates appropriate organizational capacity to implement grant.	Application is nearly certain to be viable and sustainable. Demonstrates appropriate organizational capacity to implement grant.

### Committee Criteria Scoring Considerations

△ In the event the scoring rubric does not provide sufficient detail to make a determination between scores, review committee members may consult or reference or access? the below additional considerations for each criteria to complete their assessment.

Criteria	Higher Scoring Applications Will:
Community Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearly articulate the meaningful and durable impacts in the lives of those directly served.</li> <li>2. Provide a coherent explanation of the broader community benefit of their application.</li> <li>3. Have a track record of success during previous City of Aspen grant cycles, if applicable.</li> </ol>
Alignment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Align with more aspects of the overall program philosophy and strategic focus areas.</li> <li>2. Clearly articulate their alignment with each aspect of the overall program philosophy and strategic focus areas.</li> </ol>
Innovation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Address an issue or need that is demonstrably unmet currently.</li> <li>2. Address community issues or needs through innovation and creativity.</li> <li>3. Provide an effective and compelling rationale for funding.</li> </ol>
Feasibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Align with best management practices and have practical timelines.</li> <li>2. Have a higher probability of success.</li> </ol>



	3. Demonstrate, with sufficient detail, organizational capacity to implement proposal.
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### Financial Stewardship & Equity

Δ The City of Aspen understands that organizations which apply for smaller funding amounts may not have the same organizational resources dedicated to grant writing compared to organizations applying for larger funding amounts. This imbalance of resources could lead to inequities in scoring and funding results. Further, in recognition of the City's organizational value of stewardship, it is essential to ensure that applicants requesting significant amounts of funding are held to an elevated standard to ensure grant funds are used as responsibly and effectively as possible.

To address this, the funding formula has been designed so that smaller requests receive a higher *percentage* of their funding request, at an equivalent final review score, than a larger request.

*Example: A smaller funding request of \$5,000 may need a review score of 4 out of 5 for the funding formula to recommend that 90% of the request be awarded, while a larger request of \$50,000 may require a review score of 4.8 out of 5 in order to receive the same funding percentage.*