



City of Charleston Community Assistance Grant Program: Review & Scoring Guidelines

Review and Funding Process

1. After submission via the online grants platform, Submittable, each application is reviewed by City staff to confirm eligibility, organizational financial health, and the minimum requirements are met.
2. Each application is reviewed by a Grants Committee of internal City staff and a Councilmember.
3. Committee members will assess each application on a score of zero to five for each review criterion.
4. All scores are weighted and combined to create a final aggregate score. These scores are then input into an objective funding formula with the goal to ensure 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 grant program budget.
5. Funding recommendations from the two grants committees are shared with the Charleston City Council for final review and approval at a City Council meeting.
6. Grant applicants are notified of funding decisions. If awarded funding, grant applicants will sign a funding agreement with the City who will disburse funds.

Committee Scoring Definitions

Score	Title	Criteria Description
5	Exceptional	Many strengths and no impactful weaknesses or errors.
4	Great	Many strengths and a few impactful weaknesses or errors.
3	Good	Some strengths and some impactful weaknesses or errors.
2	Average	Few strengths and several impactful weaknesses or errors.
1	Poor	Minimal strengths and many impactful weaknesses or errors.
0	Inadequate	Is not suitable for funding of any amount.

Committee Criteria Scoring Considerations

Criteria	Higher Scoring Applications Will:
Community Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly identify a currently unmet need.• Provide a compelling explanation of how the project addresses this need and benefits the community.• Offer a strong and well-supported rationale for funding.
Community Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quantify and clearly explain the number or percentage of City of Charleston residents served.• Describe meaningful and lasting impacts on the community.• Demonstrate a successful track record in previous City of Charleston grant cycles, if applicable.
Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Align with the City's mission to preserve and enhance the quality of life of the citizens of the City of Charleston.• Clearly explain how the project supports this mission.
Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow best management practices and include a realistic and practical timeline.• Present a strong likelihood of successful implementation.• Demonstrate sufficient organizational capacity, sound financial practices, and the ability to meet all grant reporting requirements.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a clear and detailed plan for sustaining the project beyond the grant period.

Committee Scoring Rubrics

	0 – Inadequate	1 – Poor	2 – Average	3 – Good	4 – Great	5 – Exceptional
Community Need (30%)	Does not identify a relevant or unmet community need.	Identifies a need but provides insufficient explanation or justification.	Identifies a need with limited explanation of its relevance or urgency.	Clearly identifies a need and provides a reasonable case for addressing it.	Strongly justifies a well-defined need with compelling rationale.	Provides a highly compelling and well-supported case for addressing a clearly unmet and urgent community need.
Community Impact (30%)	Unlikely to result in any meaningful community benefit.	Likely to result in minimal positive community impact.	Shows limited potential for positive impact.	Shows moderate potential for meaningful and lasting community benefit.	Demonstrates strong potential for significant and measurable impact.	Demonstrates outstanding potential for deep, lasting, and widespread community benefit.
Alignment (15%)	No alignment with the mission's goals or focus areas.	Minimal alignment with the mission's goals or focus areas.	Partial alignment with some mission goals or focus areas.	Moderate alignment with most mission goals or focus areas.	Strong alignment with the majority of the mission goals and focus areas.	Fully aligned with all mission goals and strategic focus areas.
Feasibility (15%)	Not viable. Lacks demonstrated capacity to implement or manage the grant.	Low likelihood of success due to limited organizational or financial capacity.	Some potential for success but insufficient evidence of capacity.	Reasonable likelihood of success with demonstrated organizational and financial capacity.	High likelihood of success with clear and appropriate capacity to deliver and manage the project.	Excellent likelihood of success with proven capacity, sound planning, and implementation readiness.
Sustainability (10%)	No plan for sustaining the project beyond the grant period.	Minimal description of how the project will continue beyond the grant.	Limited sustainability strategy with unclear long-term support.	Reasonable plan for sustaining key elements of the project.	Strong plan with identified resources or partnerships for long-term continuation.	Comprehensive and well-supported sustainability strategy ensuring lasting impact.