

Election Access Fund

Te Tomokanga — Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga

Applications Panel Meeting

Date:	2 November 2022
Time:	11.00am-12.00pm
Location:	Online via Zoom
Chair:	Leigh Deuchars, Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy Governance and Development, Electoral Commission
Facilitator:	Kath Lys, Senior Project Manager, Electoral Commission
Members:	Jade Farrar Dianne Glenn Huhana Hickey Robbie Watene
Other attendees:	Nil
Apologies:	Nil

Minutes

Election Access Fund context

Discussion points:

It was noted that the Fund is legislated to address costs that disabled people face that non-disabled people do not face. It is not designed to alleviate wider barriers experienced by disabled people. However, Panel members will be able to be flexible in their consideration of access needs within the boundaries of the legislation.

As the work progresses different templates or guidance may be able to be developed for different scenarios and groups of needs.

Circumstances will vary greatly, for example those standing as independents may need more support than those supported by a political party. Political parties should be educated to ensure they are supporting disabled candidates and not over relying on the Fund for this purpose.

It was noted that where an applicant underestimates their costs they can come back for more funding.

Some disabled people have greater disadvantage due to colonialism. Article 31 of the Convention covers intersectionality and could be used to inform future processes.

There are some checks and consequences should someone come through the fund with bad intentions. These include requirements to show that a person is seeking selection (via providing correspondence with a party) or standing as a candidate (via providing their public announcement). Applicants are also informed that the Commission reserves the right to appoint an auditor to investigate funding use and in extreme cases may engage a debt collection agency.

There are no requirements for applicants to have a diagnosis or medical proof of impairment. Consultation feedback did not support use of the medical model. Instead, applicants are required to sign a declaration that they meet the definition in the Convention.

The fund and its processes will be evaluated, and this will involve seeking feedback from applicants. It will be useful to collect demographics to understand who has applied.

Not all disabled people are linked in with disability organisations or with political parties. To reach them and raise awareness of the Fund the Commission has a broad media campaign involving social media and other advertising media.

Actions:

- Kath to circulate the powerpoint slides.
- Kath to replace the word “less” with “fewer” on the application form under minimum wage guidance.

Application Panel processes

Discussion points:

The application process should be reviewed from a Māori and Pacific perspective, and ensure it is inclusive of Te Tiriti. Huhana can help facilitate this through Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People.

Kath will send the Assessment Form to the Steering Group for signoff. Panel meeting processes will be finalised in discussion with the Chair.

The Application Form, Assessment Form and other panel processes will be tested as applicants move through the Fund. Panel members are encouraged to observe and give feedback on how things are working in practice so that improvements can be made.

The Panel is able to give advice for applicants to consider, for example where there may be other types of support that they could explore. This can be documented in the Assessment Form or at the meeting and will be passed on by the Commission team.

Panel members are welcome to share information about the Fund as long as Panel business and individual cases are not discussed.

The Communications Team have suggested that short bios of the panel members be provided on the website, as people are interested in who is on the panel.

It would be helpful to have a template and a monthly due date for claims.

Action:

- Kath to send Huhana key documents for forwarding to Whaikaha.
- Panel members to send Kath any other suggested changes to the Assessment Form.
- Panel members to send Kath a one paragraph bio for the Commission's website.
- Kath to add to the Assessment Form a prompt for advice from the Panel to the applicant.
- Kath to advise a due date for invoices and provide a template.

Chair and Deputy Chair

It was agreed that Dianne will be the Chair and Huhana Deputy Chair of the Applications Panel.

Action:

- Kath and Dianne to meet prior to the first regular meeting of the Panel.

Next meeting

9 November - Panel members to meet the Steering Group. Dianne, Jade and Robbie are able to make this time.

21 November - First fortnightly panel meeting. (NB: There will need to be a special meeting before this date in the event of any applications relating to the by-election being held on 10 December.)