

Election Access Fund
Te Tomokanga — Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga
Applications Panel Meeting

Date: 19 December 2022
Time: 1.00pm-2.30pm
Location: Online via Zoom
Chair: Dianne Glenn
Members: Huhana Hickey
Robbie Watene
Other attendees: Leigh Deuchars, Electoral Commission
Kath Lys, Electoral Commission
Apologies: Jade Farrar

Minutes

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were adopted with no corrections (Dianne/Robbie).

Action points completed:

- Kath to circulate the powerpoint slides.
- Kath to replace the word “less” with “fewer” on the application form under minimum wage guidance.
- 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.
- Kath and Dianne to meet prior to the first regular meeting of the Panel.

Matters arising:

- To date there has been no feedback on the documents sent to the Māori and Pacific advisory groups at Whaikaha. Huhana reported that they are extremely busy at present.
- Panel members were asked to submit invoices at the end of each month, even if it is for a small amount. This is preferable for the Commission’s finance processes.

Update from Electoral Commission staff

Communications:

Stakeholders including political parties have been emailed to remind them about the Fund and reinforce the message that people can apply more than once. This was in response to feedback that some thought they had to budget for both their selection and campaigning expenses at one time.

Disabled people's organisations have been provided with content for newsletters and social media, and many have shared this.

A paid social media post to advertise the Fund on the Commission's Facebook and Instagram pages was run and will be run again in late January. Negative comments are heavily moderated when these posts are live. Huhana noted that some negative comments also came through Linked In, in response to a positive post from someone who was considering applying.

A printed handbook version of the application guidelines will be sent out to sector stakeholders and political parties in January.

The external media company will be running radio, print and social media advertisements in 2023.

The communications campaign is aimed at getting the balance right between ensuring there is enough advertising to raise awareness and avoiding the perception of over-spending on advertising an initiative that impacts a small number of people.

Applications and Enquiries:

Two applicants have met with Chantelle and are currently pulling their application material together. Hopefully one will be ready for the next panel meeting.

There was an enquiry from someone who is involved in setting up a new political party and may apply later, and another person who asked if the fund would pay for advertising and other campaigning costs. A few others requested support for disability costs but were not standing for Parliament.

Application Panel Assessment Form:

Two additions have been made to the form:

- Guidance on rates for NZSL interpreters and transcribers has been added to the support assistance rates.
- The equipment and technology policy has been added, as the Panel may wish to advise the Commission on individual cases. Although hiring or leasing equipment or technology for the election period is preferred, in a small number of cases it may be

more practical for items to be purchased. Fund recipients will be allowed to keep them except in cases where:

- there could potentially be (or be perceived to be) improper electoral advantage, and/or
- the item has high retail sale potential.

This will generally not be an issue as most equipment will be person specific.

Overall:

The project is at the point of completing the last few documents, tidying up filing and creating tools to track and manage enquiries and applications.

Tools and guidance material are being tested with enquirers and applicants.

Evaluation of the development of the fund is underway, as is planning for longer term tasks such as ongoing staffing and the Ministerial review of the Fund post 2023.

Discussion:

Dianne shared the Fund's newsletter blurb with Business and Professional Women and will also share with National Council of Women and Pacific Womens Watch. Huhana has promoted on social media and knows of a few people considering applying but feel it is too early at this stage. Some would have applied for local body elections if it had been possible.

Dianne was asked by someone from a local body if they could promote it through local authorities, even though it relates to central government.

For purchased equipment it was suggested that people could be given the opportunity to purchase the item at a reduced rate at the end of the election period. This is not uncommon.

Action:

- Kath to send the Fund information for newsletters to panel members.
- Kath to ask the Communications Team whether promoting the fund through local authorities would be helpful.
- Kath to investigate the possibility of selling equipment and technology purchased through the fund back to fund recipients at a reduced rate.

Any other business

Invoicing: It is preferable for the Commission's Finance team to receive invoices at the end of each month, even if they are small, so that there is no need for accruals.

Next meeting

Monday 16th January 2023, 1pm