



DISCRETIONARY GRANTS PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Adopted March 10, 2026

PURPOSE

The Discretionary Grants Program is intended to support eligible organizations in carrying out Projects that advance a legitimate public purpose and provide a direct and demonstrable benefit to the Town of Seabrook Island (the "Town"), including, but not limited to, its residents, property owners, visitors, and/or businesses. Grant funds shall be used to promote community wellness, civic engagement, cultural and historical awareness, economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and wildlife conservation in a manner consistent with applicable law, Town policy, and sound fiscal accountability.

As used herein, the term "Project" means any program, activity, initiative, or undertaking for which funding from the Discretionary Grants Program is requested or awarded.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Discretionary Grants may be awarded by the Town to organizations that:

- Are recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- Are established for benevolent, social welfare, scientific, educational, environmental, philanthropic, humane, patriotic, public health, civic, or other eleemosynary purposes, or for the benefit of public safety personnel;
- Employ a charitable purpose or appeal as the basis for solicitation; or
- Are units of local government created or authorized by the State of South Carolina, including counties, municipalities, school districts, and special purpose districts.

Religious organizations MAY be eligible for grant funding, provided the proposed Project serves a secular (non-religious) public purpose.

Individuals and organizations affiliated with a national, state, or local political party or candidate are NOT eligible for grant funding.

Eligible organizations must allow open membership to all interested persons.

Pursuant to the South Carolina Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act (S.C. Code Ann. Title 33, Chapter 56), charitable organizations that solicit contributions or have contributions solicited on their behalf must register annually with the South Carolina Secretary of State unless exempt. Applicants must provide documentation of their current registration or

exemption status with their grant application. This requirement shall not apply when the applicant is a unit of local government.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Discretionary Grants may be awarded to eligible organizations to support any lawful Project that:

- Promotes community wellness, cultural or historical awareness, or economic development;
- Enhances citizen participation, satisfaction, or sense of place;
- Preserves or protects wildlife and wildlife habitat;
- Supports environmental or wildlife conservation efforts; or
- Increases public knowledge of environmental, wildlife, or community issues affecting the Town.

Projects shall have a connection to the Town. Preference shall be given to Projects occurring within the Town's corporate limits, but other Projects are eligible if they provide a clear and demonstrable benefit to the Town. Such benefit can be to the Town's residents and property owners (including by providing meaningful volunteer opportunities), its business environment (but not to specific businesses), its visitors, or to those who work in the Town.

All grant funds must advance a legitimate public purpose.

Unless expressly authorized by Town Council, grant funds shall NOT be used for:

- **Cash, gift cards, and other items of monetary value** distributed to participants or attendees, provided, non-cash awards, trophies, and other giveaways of nominal value may be permitted;
- **Sub-grants or pass-through funding**, including redistribution of grant funds to other organizations, individuals, or entities not directly approved by the Town;
- **Activities that violate federal, state, or local laws**, regulations, ordinances, or other Town policies;
- **Political activities**, including support of political parties, candidates, campaigns, or ballot initiatives;
- **Religious instruction, worship services, or proselytizing**, however, faith-based organizations may receive funding for Projects serving a secular public purpose;
- **Operating deficits or debt repayment**, including payment of past-due bills, loans, or financial obligations;
- **Alcoholic beverages**, except as expressly approved as part of a permitted community event in compliance with applicable law;

- **Personal expenses**, including stipends, honoraria, or compensation not directly related to the approved Project or not supported by appropriate documentation;
- **Travel expenses** not directly related to Project implementation within, or providing a direct benefit to, the Town;
- **Expenses incurred prior to grant approval;**
- **Administrative overhead** not reasonably allocable to the approved Project, including general office expenses unrelated to the Project; or
- **Any other use which is inconsistent with the approved grant application or the terms and conditions of the grant award.**

Town Council reserves the right to amend or limit eligibility criteria at any time.

GRANT AWARDS

The maximum grant award shall be **\$5,000.00** per organization per calendar year.

The total funding available each calendar year shall not exceed the amount appropriated by Town Council in the annual budget ordinance. The Town is not obligated to award all available funds.

Organizations may submit multiple applications; however, the total amount awarded to any organization shall not exceed \$5,000.00 in a calendar year.

APPLICATION

Applications must be submitted to the Town Finance Director during the calendar year in which funds are proposed to be expended. Unless otherwise authorized, applicants shall use the standard application form prescribed by the Town Administrator.

Application acceptance periods, review schedules, and submission deadlines shall be established annually by the Town Administrator and publicly announced by the Town. Applications shall be accepted until the earlier of October 1st or until all available funds for the calendar year have been committed.

Completed applications shall be submitted to:

Town of Seabrook Island
Attn: Finance Director
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455

REVIEW PROCEDURES

The Town Finance Director shall review all grant applications for completeness. Complete applications shall be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Town's Discretionary Grants Committee (the "Committee").

The Committee shall review each application and provide a recommendation to Town Council. In performing these functions, the Committee shall have the authority to:

- Establish procedures for reviewing applications;
- Request additional information from applicants; and
- Recommend modifications necessary to ensure applications conform to grant criteria.

The Committee shall provide a recommendation to approve (in whole or in part) or deny each request.

Once the Committee has provided a recommendation, the application shall be placed on the agenda for the next Town Council meeting, at which time Town Council shall review the request and make a final decision. Town Council retains final authority to approve or deny all grant applications.

A representative of the applicant must attend both the Committee meeting and Town Council meeting (either in person or virtually) at which the application will be considered. Absent extenuating circumstances, failure to attend the Committee meeting shall be deemed a withdrawal of the application. Failure to attend the Town Council meeting will result in denial of the application.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

In reviewing grant applications, the Committee and Town Council shall consider the following criteria:

- Public Benefit
- Alignment with Program Purpose
- Organizational Capacity
- Project Feasibility and Work Plan
- Budget and Cost Effectiveness
- Measurable Outcomes
- Community Impact and Engagement
- Project Sustainability/Long-Term Impact; and
- Compliance and Accountability

GRANT AGREEMENT

Upon approval of a grant award by Town Council, each recipient must execute a written grant agreement with the Town prior to the disbursement of any grant funds.

The grant agreement shall set forth the terms and conditions governing the use of grant funds and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- **Grant Award Amount:** The total amount of funds awarded to the recipient organization.
- **Project Description and Scope of Work:** A summary of the approved Project, including key objectives, deliverables, and timelines.

- **Authorized Use of Funds:** The specific costs and budget categories for which grant funds may be expended, consistent with the approved application and applicable Town policies.
- **Disbursement Procedures:** The process for requesting disbursement of grant funds, including required documentation and applicable deadlines.
- **Reporting Requirements:** Required financial documentation, performance measures, and final reporting obligations.
- **Compliance Requirements:** An obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, Town ordinances, and program guidelines.
- **Audit and Recordkeeping Provisions:** Requirements for maintaining financial records and making such records available to the Town for review or audit upon request.
- **Indemnification and Liability Provisions:** Terms addressing responsibility for claims, damages, or losses arising from the Project.
- **Termination and Repayment Provisions:** Conditions under which the Town may suspend or terminate the agreement and require repayment of grant funds, including misuse of funds or failure to comply with agreement terms.
- **General Terms and Conditions:** Standard contractual provisions as determined by the Town, which may include insurance requirements, non-discrimination provisions, assignment restrictions, and governing law.

No grant funds shall be disbursed by the Town unless the grant agreement has been fully executed by the Mayor and the authorized representative(s) of the recipient.

Failure to execute a grant agreement within 30 days of the award date shall result in forfeiture of the grant funds, unless an extension is approved by vote of Town Council.

DELIVERY OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant recipients shall submit a written request for disbursement to the Town Finance Director. Disbursement requests shall be accompanied by all required documentation, including invoices and/or paid receipts demonstrating the commitment or expenditure of awarded grant funds.

Disbursement requests must be received no later than December 15th of the calendar year in which the grant funds were awarded. Failure to submit a disbursement request by this date may result in forfeiture of any unpaid grant funds.

All disbursement requests shall be reviewed and approved by the Town Administrator prior to payment. Upon approval, the Town Finance Director shall issue payment to the grant recipient.

Any grant funds that remain uncommitted or unexpended at the end of the calendar year shall revert to the Town's General Fund.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grant recipients shall submit a written report describing the purpose(s) for which Town funds were expended and the overall impact of the Project.

The report shall be submitted to the Town Administrator on or before December 31st of the applicable calendar year, on a form provided by the Town Administrator.

At a minimum, the report shall include:

- A brief summary of the Project;
- A detailed accounting of the expenditure of Town funds; and
- A description of the outcomes achieved and the public benefits provided.

The Town Administrator shall distribute copies of all reports to members of the Committee and Town Council as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the calendar year.