

Business Accessibility Support Fund Operating Guidelines

Tuesday, 4 February 2025
City Community Services and
Culture Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the Business Accessibility Support Fund Operating Guidelines (the Operating Guidelines) (Attachment A) for the 2024/25 Pilot Round of the newly established Business Accessibility Fund (the Fund) for noting.

The Business Accessibility Support Program (BASP) is designed to assist small and medium enterprises in improving accessibility to their premises, information, and services.

The initiative is a key commitment in the City of Adelaide (CoA) Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2024-2028 ([Link 1](#)), endorsed by Council on 14 May 2024 and is funded in the 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

The Fund will support eligible businesses participating in the Pilot Round of BASP, a six-month mentoring program that offers workshops, an accessibility assessment, and one-on-one consultations with an expert access consultant. Participating businesses will be eligible for up to \$10,000 in funding to implement approved accessibility improvements. The Fund aims to expand the customer base and increase the revenue of city businesses by creating more accessible and welcoming environments for people with disabilities and their companions.

The Operating Guidelines have been developed in line with the CoA Funding Programs Policy, adopted by Council on 11 June 2024 ([Link 2](#)), which requires each funding program to establish its own operational and administrative guidelines.

Expressions of interest for BASP opened on 9 December 2024 and closed on 24 January 2025, with the Pilot Round to run from February 2025 to June 2025 ([Link 3](#)). The implementation of the Operating Guidelines will enable the Fund to support eligible businesses selected for the Pilot Round of BASP, assisting them in undertaking approved projects.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 11 February 2025 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL
THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the Business Accessibility Support Fund Operating Guidelines for the 2024/25 Pilot Round of the Business Accessibility Fund (the Fund) as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 4 February 2025.
2. Notes that the Fund will offer up to \$10,000 in funding to a maximum of eight eligible small and medium businesses participating in the Pilot Round of the Business Accessibility Support Program (BASP) from February 2025 to June 2025.
3. Notes that the Fund can be used for physical access upgrades, digital solutions, and relevant employee training to enhance business accessibility and inclusive customer service.
4. Notes that the future of the BASP, beyond the 2024/25 Pilot, is subject to the performance and outcomes of the Pilot, as well as future Council funding for 2025/26 and beyond.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Places</p> <p>Create safe, inclusive and healthy places for our community</p> <p><i>Maintain and improve disability, LGBTQIA+ and vulnerable or minority group access and inclusion</i></p>
Policy	<p>CoA's Funding Programs Policy requires each funding program to develop Operating Guidelines outlining operational and administrative requirements.</p> <p>CoA's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028 (DAIP) includes a key action to lead the development and trial of a Business Access and Inclusion Program.</p> <p>CoA's Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028 includes a priority under Goal 2 - A thriving economy for all: <i>Enable small to medium enterprise (SME) growth to increase the city's contribution to GSP.</i></p>
Consultation	Public consultation on the Operating Guidelines is not required under the Funding Programs Policy.
Resource	Implementation of the Operating Guidelines will be undertaken utilising existing resources.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The <i>Disability Inclusion Act 2018</i> (SA) requires that local governments develop and implement a DAIP.
Opportunities	The Operating Guidelines will enable equitable funding distribution through the BASP, supporting businesses' accessibility improvements. The BASP delivers a DAIP 2024-2028 strategic commitment, and advances CoA's Strategic Plan 2024-2028.
24/25 Budget Allocation	<p>The CoA 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and Budget includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.9 FTE for a Senior Social Planner to lead the development, implementation and review of City of Adelaide's DAIP-related projects. • 1.0 FTE Project Officer to support the implementation of DAIP projects. • \$215,000 for DAIP 2024-2028 implementation (Strategic Projects).
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	The Business Accessibility Support Program is currently unfunded in 2025/26. Future funding is subject to the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget deliberations and decision by Council.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The Operating Guidelines will enable the Fund to operate for the BASP Pilot Round concluding in June 2025, and will support its ongoing implementation in future years, subject to the performance and outcomes of the Pilot, and future Council budget deliberations from 2025/26 and beyond.
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Other grant funding contributors, co-contributions, and in-kind support from businesses towards accessibility improvement projects will be recorded in proposals to access the Fund.

DISCUSSION

1. On 14 May 2024, Council endorsed the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2024-2028 ([Link 1](#)).
2. Goal 4 of the DAIP, titled 'Businesses that are welcoming to more customers', includes a Four-Year Focus to develop a Business Access and Inclusion Program.
3. Under this Four-Year Focus, the DAIP outlines key actions, including:
 - 3.1. The City of Adelaide will develop and trial a Business Access and Inclusion Program to improve the accessibility of businesses in the city through development of skills and knowledge in the sector and through support and incentives for businesses to invest in upgrades that make their venues more inclusive.
4. Administration has completed research and stakeholder engagement to investigate effective, innovative, and sustainable programs used by other leading local governments, including the City of Melbourne, to support and incentivise city businesses. The focus was on identifying programs that assist businesses in growing their revenue and customer base by improving disability accessibility and inclusion across their operations.
5. Based on the research findings and engagement stage, the Business Accessibility Support Program (BASP) has been designed and was supported by the City of Adelaide's Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel at its meeting on 27 November 2024.
6. Expressions of interest in the BASP opened on 9 December 2024 and closed on 24 January 2025.
7. A Pilot Round will run from February 2025 to June 2025, offering a cohort of eight businesses the following support:
 - 7.1. Workshops with experts providing low-cost, high-impact solutions.
 - 7.2. One-on-one consultations with an expert access consultant to identify and implement tailored solutions.
 - 7.3. Resources to support self-assessments of accessibility.
 - 7.4. Up to \$10,000 in funding for approved accessibility improvements, with guidance and administrative support from the City of Adelaide and an appointed access consultant to ensure compliance with relevant standards and effective utilisation of the funding.
8. A total pool of \$80,000 has been allocated to distribute to the Pilot cohort by the end of June 2025.
9. To provide for the administration and enable the distribution of funding support to the Pilot cohort, Administration has established the Business Accessibility Fund (the Fund).
10. In line with the Funding Programs Policy ([Link 2](#)), Operating Guidelines for the Fund have been prepared and are contained in Attachment A.
11. The Operating Guidelines establish the operational and administrative requirements for the competitive funding program, including:
 - 11.1. The purpose and scope of the Fund.
 - 11.2. Amount of funding available.
 - 11.3. Timeframes.
 - 11.4. Eligible and ineligible entities.
 - 11.5. Eligible and ineligible accessibility improvements.
 - 11.6. Assessment criteria and weightings.
 - 11.7. Assessment panel.

Next Steps

12. The Operating Guidelines will be implemented to distribute the 2024/25 Fund pool to eligible businesses participating in the BASP Pilot for approved improvement projects, to be completed by June 2025.
 13. The performance of the Fund for the Pilot Round will be monitored and evaluated and an outcomes report will be prepared following conclusion of the Pilot in 2024/25 to inform any future funding rounds.
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DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028](#)

Link 2 – [Funding Programs Policy](#)

Link 3 – [Business Accessibility Support Program – City of Adelaide website content](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Business Accessibility Support Fund Operating Guidelines

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