



SOUTH WAIRARAPA
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Kia Reretahi Tātau

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND GUIDE

South Wairarapa District Council is committed to driving strong economic growth outcomes that contribute to the district's prosperity, alongside social, cultural and environmental benefits. One way we can achieve this is by investing in local organisations and initiatives through grants that support organisations operating within South Wairarapa and delivering economic sustainability to its people. In particular, the Council is interested in initiatives that grow the local economy by attracting money into the region, rather than re-circulating local money.

Purpose

The purpose of this fund is to support these types of initiatives. This fund can also add strength to local economic development, enhance South Wairarapa as a destination and deliver measurable economic and community benefits. It can be used to invest in projects that stimulate local business activity, increase visitation and visitor spend, create employment opportunities and celebrate our district's unique natural, built and cultural heritage - contributing to a resilient, vibrant and sustainable local economy.

The fund was established by the Council late last year and has a pool of \$180,000 to grant this financial year. There is no guarantee this fund will be available next year. Applications will be assessed on clear criteria by the Economic Growth Committee. This is made of six councillors and includes the Mayor (ex-officio).

The Committee

- Chris Archer - Chair
- Collier Isaacs – Deputy Chair
- Andrea Rutene
- Simone Baker
- Colin Olds
- Rupert Watson
- Mayor Fran Wilde (ex-officio)

Who is eligible to apply?

The primary focus of the fund is to support initiatives delivered within South Wairarapa District. However, projects delivered outside the district may be considered at the discretion of the Committee, where applicants can clearly demonstrate measurable benefits to South Wairarapa communities.

Individuals, businesses, community groups, marae, schools and registered charities based in the South Wairarapa District are eligible to apply, provided they meet the fund's eligibility criteria.

Please note that funding tiers may apply depending on the applicant's organisational structure and time in operation.

Fund criteria

The main criterion is supporting local economic development and enhancing South Wairarapa as a destination.

Projects should support local economic development while enhancing South Wairarapa's appeal as a place to live, work, visit and invest. This may include initiatives that:

- increase visitation, events activity or visitor spend in the district
- support local businesses, producers, creatives or hospitality operators
- strengthen placebased identity, branding or destination experiences
- showcase South Wairarapa's distinct heritage, environment and community assets

Although not the primary criterion, initiatives and events should also, if possible, celebrate, protect or promote the region's natural, built and cultural heritage, including:

- showcasing local history, identity or cultural narratives
- celebrating Māori, iwi, hapū and community heritage
- activating heritage spaces, sites or landscapes through events or programmes
- strengthening community pride, placebased identity and visitor or local engagement

For both criteria initiatives should demonstrate one or more of the following impact outcomes:

- increased income or turnover for ratepayers, local businesses, producers or creatives
- growth in local supply chains through the use of local suppliers, services or contractors
- improved business capability, resilience or collaboration within the district
- job creation (paid or voluntary) sustained employment (including casual, seasonal or contract roles)
- increased and return visitation (day visitors and/or overnight stays) / extended visitor dwell time
- greater awareness of South Wairarapa's distinct heritage, food, wine, arts and natural environment
- enhanced destination experiences through events, activations or place based initiatives



Suitable measures to support your intended outcomes may include:

- number of local businesses or enterprises participating or benefiting
- estimated local spend generated (\$)
- number and type of jobs created or supported
- value of contracts or fees paid to local suppliers or workers
- number of visitors or event attendees (local vs out of district)
- estimated visitor spend (\$)
- nights of accommodation generated
- event attendance, ticket sales or registrations
- digital reach, media coverage or promotional outcomes linked to the destination



Funding Tiers

- Cornerstone Fund (up to \$2,000)
For individuals, small local business grants
- Grassroots Community (up to \$10,000)
For informal groups (groups without a legal structure)
- Grassroots Societies and Charities Fund (up to \$25,000)
Must be a legal entity or partnering with a legal entity that can hold funds on your behalf
- Impact Fund (\$25,000+)
Must meet additional reporting, annual accounts, supporting documentation etc.
- Transformative funds of \$50,000+
May be considered at the EDFC's discretion and delegated to the Council.

The amounts displayed above are a baseline. If you would like to apply for more than is outlined above and do not have a formal group structure, we advise you to partner with a group or organisation with qualifying status.

For more information on how decisions are made, the grants process as well as what we can and can't fund, please refer to our [Community Grants and Funding Framework and Policy](#)

Funding drop in sessions

We will be running "drop in" sessions across the district in February 2026 to support our community through the process. Please keep an eye on our website and social media for details. We highly recommend you attend one of these or speak to our grants team before submitting your application.

For more information on the Economic Development Fund please contact our team below.

Name and area	Contact	Enquiries
Lina McManus Advisor, Funding and Grants	lina.mcmanus@swdc.govt.nz	Economic Development Fund queries
Siv Fjaerstand Lead Advisor, Community Development	siv.fjaerstand@swdc.govt.nz	Community Development queries
General enquiries	grants@swdc.govt.nz	General Grants and Funding queries

