

TOWN OF FRIDAY HARBOR
LODGING TAX FUND UTILITY ASSISTANCE GRANT REQUEST POLICY (COVID)

POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Friday Harbor provides grants on an annual basis to groups, entities, and organizations that apply for lodging tax funds to promote tourism in Friday Harbor. Prior to awarding funds, the Town's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) reviews the proposals and provides the Town Council with their recommendations for awarding these "LTAC grants." This policy is to establish the Council's procedure for funding grants outside of the LTAC process and annual grant cycle for the purpose of providing limited utility bill assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the Town Council with a fair and consistent procedure for addressing funding requests from owners of town lodging establishments for immediate utility bill assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of this policy is to provide a total allocation of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in utility bill payment assistance to eligible hotel, motel, inn, and bed and breakfast owners in an effort to assist these accommodations so they may continue to support tourism in the future.

SCOPE

This policy applies to owners of lodging establishments that meet requirements specified in this document (see Procedure: General Eligibility) and that request funding within a timeframe specified by the Council. The amount of funding assistance provided to each establishment will be based on the number of eligible rooms within that establishment as determined through the grant approval process. The amount of funding per room will be based on the total grant allocation (\$10,000) divided by the combined number of all approved rooms on all grant applications approved during the specified timeframe.

RESPONSIBILITY

Council

- Review and consider staff recommendations for grant awards
- Award funds based on need and merit as outlined in this policy

Staff

- Make request form and policy available to the public
- Confirm requests meet eligibility criteria
- Present all eligible proposals with staff recommendations to the Council
- Inform LTAC members of requests prior to a presentation to Council
- Calculate amount of individual grant awards based on total number of eligible rooms

Finance Officer

-Apply approved utilities assistance grant reimbursement requests from the first 2% lodging tax fund.

PROCEDURE

All utility assistance grant requests must be directed to the Town Administrator and include a completed Utilities Assistance Grant Request form.

General eligibility

1. The hotel, motel, inn, or bed and breakfast, hereinafter referred to as "Hotel," must be located in Friday Harbor and have a utility account with the Town.
2. The Hotel must be legally zoned and possess a 2020 Town business license.
3. The Hotel must be collecting and paying 2020 lodging tax.
4. The Hotel must have been open for business and collecting and paying lodging tax at least six months during 2019.
5. The Hotel may only claim the rooms that are legal transient accommodation units and available to rent on a daily basis.
6. The Hotel must have at least two eligible rooms for rent at a single address or facility.
7. The Hotel may claim a maximum of 20 units per address or facility only.
8. Council decisions regarding eligibility and award are final.

Review

Requests that meet all eligibility requirements will be forwarded to the Council for funding consideration. Town staff will advise applicants of whether and when their proposal will be presented to Council.

The Council may accept, reject, or request more information on the proposal. The Council may allocate any portion of the requested funds as they deem appropriate.

Final response

Utility assistant grants are considered approved when specifically authorized by the Mayor and Council in the form of a resolution of support and a fully signed agreement.

Funding will be provided as a credit for Town utility expenses appearing on the Hotel's utility bill(s) immediately following approval of the fully signed agreement.