

The Helsinki logo consists of the word "Helsinki" in white, sans-serif font, enclosed within a white speech bubble shape with a small tail pointing downwards.

Helsinki

Grant Guidelines for Youth Activities

1 January 2026

Contents

1 Youth activity grants	3
2 General terms and conditions for awarding grants	4
3 Operating grant	6
3.1 Who can receive operating grants?	6
3.2 Grounds for awarding operating grants	6
3.3 Using the operating grants	7
3.4 Rental grant	8
3.5 Operating grant advance	8
3.6 Applying for an operating grant and providing the required information	8
3.7 Start grant	9
4 Hiring grant	10
4.1 Who can receive a hiring grant?	10
4.2 Grounds for awarding hiring grants	10
4.3 Using the hiring grant	11
4.4 Assessment of the hiring grant applicants' performance	11
4.5 Hiring grant advance	11
4.6 Applying for a hiring grant and providing the required information	12
5 Camp grant	13
5.1 Who can receive camp grants?	13
5.2 Eligibility criteria for the camp grant	13
5.3 Using the camp grants	13
5.4 Applying for a camp grant and providing the required information	14
6 Project grant	14
6.1 Who can receive project grants?	14
6.2 Eligibility criteria for project grants	14
6.3 Using the project grants	15
6.4 Applying for a project grant and providing the required information	15
7 Special grant	16
7.1 Who can receive special grants?	16
7.2 Eligibility criteria for the special grant	16
7.3 Using the special grant	16
7.4 Applying for a special grant and providing the required information	16
8 Grant decision process	17
8.1 Applying for grants	17
8.2 Decisions on grants	17
8.3 Notification regarding the grant decision	17
8.4 Payment of grants	18
8.5 Monitoring the use of grants	18

1 Youth activity grants

The City of Helsinki's grant scheme is a tool for implementing the City's strategy. The system is used to develop the operating conditions of civil society and improve the residents' opportunities for empowerment, movement, creation and agency. Helsinki is actively building partnerships with non-governmental organisations and other communities.

In Helsinki, the support and funding of associations engaged in youth activities are the responsibility of the Culture and Leisure Committee's Youth Sub-committee; support for sports and physical activity organisations is handled by its Sports Sub-committee; support for cultural organisations is the responsibility of its Culture and Library Sub-committee; and support for organisations involved in social services, health care and rescue services is the responsibility of the City Board.

Grants from the Youth Sub-committee support Helsinki's early adolescence and youth associations, similar departments and youth activity groups. Camp grants and special grants can also be used to support other associations in Helsinki.

In order to be eligible for a grant, the activities must support the objectives of the Youth Act, and complement and diversify youth activities in the City of Helsinki.

The various forms of grants include an annual operating grant, a salary grant and a camp grant. Project grants, start grants, house club grants and special grants are also awarded.

Grants from the Youth Sub-committee are not awarded for the activities of entities with taxation rights, trade unions, student organisations, statutory student councils or projects related to studies.

According to the Youth Act, youth work and policies are the responsibilities of the municipality. In carrying out this task, the municipality must, taking local conditions into account, create the conditions for youth work and activities by providing services and facilities for young people and by supporting their hobbies and civic engagement

2 General terms and conditions for awarding grants

The general terms and conditions for awarding grants apply to all Youth Sub-committee grants. In addition to these, each type of grant has its own specific conditions and guidelines for reporting the use of the grant.

About the association

1. The registered domicile of an association receiving a grant must be in Helsinki.
2. Two-thirds of the active participants and/or members of an association, section, or activity group receiving a grant must be Helsinki residents under the age of 29 (with the exception of camp grants and special grants).
3. An association receiving a grant, in which less than two-thirds of the active participants and/or members are Helsinki residents under the age of 29, must demonstrate the group's activities through the association's official documents.

Use of the grant

4. The activities receiving support must be targeted at Helsinki residents aged 7–28.
5. The recipients are also required to raise their own funds to carry out their activities.
6. Grants may only be used for the purpose stated in the grant decision. If the grant decision does not specify a detailed purpose, the grant must be used for the purpose stated in the application, in accordance with the grant conditions.
7. Financial records must be kept in a way that allows for the use of the grant to be tracked.
8. A grant awarded may not be redistributed to other entities or individuals.

9. The grant must be used during the period for which it was awarded in the grant decision. If the decision does not specify the period for using the grant, it must be used within the time stated in the application.

Other terms and conditions

10. Grants cannot be awarded to central or national organisations.
11. Grants cannot be awarded to student organisations, equivalent groups or those comparable to them. Grants can also not be awarded to youth activity groups for study-related projects.
12. A grant cannot be awarded for the same purpose from multiple types of Youth Sub-committee grants or budget allocations within the City.
13. In awarding a grant, the decision-maker may use their discretion in exceptional circumstances of a general nature.
14. Grants are awarded on condition that the grant funds are returned on demand.
15. The City has the right to collect its receivables arising from grants awarded to the recipient organisation.

Grants are awarded in accordance with the general grant guidelines of the City of Helsinki and the joint grant principles of the City and the Culture and Leisure Division.

3 Operating grant

3.1 Who can receive operating grants?

Operating grants are awarded to Helsinki-based early adolescence and youth associations that began operating no later than the previous calendar year. An operating grant may also be awarded to an unregistered association, an association's youth section or equivalent.

An unregistered association is required to have rules of the association, its administration, activities and finances must be organised like those of a registered association, and its authorised signatories must be adults.

The youth section or similar must have its own cost centre in the accounts and budget, and its activities must also be reflected in the association's action plan and activity report.

For justified reasons, operating grants may also be awarded to youth associations and sections which do not fully meet the age and/or residence criteria.

3.2 Grounds for awarding operating grants

The decision is based on the association's need for a grant. The need for a grant is assessed by considering the following:

Scope, purpose and nature of the applicant's activities

- number of Helsinki residents aged 7–28 participating in the activities
- regional coverage of the activities
- regional and/or operational need for the activities
- quantity and quality of different activities
- whether the association's activities diversify young people's services in Helsinki.

Financial status of the applicant

- the applicant's assets
- own fundraising
- cost structure
- other grants and subsidies received by the applicant
- in principle, the operating grant may not exceed 80% of the eligible expenditure of the previous period
- cost of the entities facilities (see more on rental assistance).

Young people's participation in planning and decision-making

The association's significance for youth politics and youth education

3.3 Using the operating grants

Costs eligible for the operating grant include the following:

- salaries, fees, their statutory and voluntary social costs, as well as statutory insurance
- cost of recreational activities
- cost of materials
- cost of training
- cost of camps and excursions
- travel expenses and cost of international activities
- rental costs
- administrative costs
- cost of communication and reporting.

Operating grants cannot be used for fundraising, business or investment expenses, nor can they be used to pay off debts or acquire fixed assets. The grant cannot be used for meeting fees or membership fees.

3.4 Rental grant

Rental grants are available to associations eligible for operating grants that rent their facilities. Rental grants are also available to Helsinki-based early adolescence and youth district organisations whose local associations or sections are eligible for operating grants.

A rental grant can be awarded if the association is operating in the premises on four days a week, at the minimum. The rental grant is applied for when applying for an operating grant. The amount requested must be included in the operating grant application.

An association may receive the maximum sum of a single rental grant once a year.

3.5 Operating grant advance

An operating grant advance may be awarded to associations that received an operating grant from the Youth Sub-committee in the previous year. An association may receive an advance of up to 50% of its previous year's grant amount.

An advance is applied for when applying for the grant itself.

3.6 Applying for an operating grant and providing the required information

The operating grant and operating grant advance for the upcoming year must be applied for by 15 December through the City's grant service. The mandatory attachments to the operating grant application are:

- an action plan for the year that the application pertains to
- the budget for the year that the application pertains to
- the financial statement from the previous financial year, including a comprehensive income statement
- the annual report for the previous financial year
- an auditor's or operational auditor's statement on the previous financial year
- the signed minutes of the annual or spring meeting, showing the approval of the financial statement and the granting of discharge from liability

- the rental agreement when applying for a rental grant
- rent payment receipt when applying for a rental grant or in the case of a rent increase
- the rules of the association
- a copy of the association's bank statement or a bank confirmation of the account holder.

The use of the previous operating grant must be reported when an application for a new grant is made. A report must be submitted by the same deadline, even if no new grant is being applied for. This is done by submitting the previous period's information (see the mandatory application attachments) to the partnership unit of the youth services.

3.7 Start grant

Start grants are awarded to early adolescence and youth associations in Helsinki that are starting or relaunching their activities. A start grant can also be awarded to an association's youth section or similar, or to an unregistered association.

The conditions for operating grants apply to the awarding and reporting of start grants. An association cannot receive both a start grant and an operating grant in the same year.

You can apply for a start grant throughout the year through the City's grant service. The mandatory attachments to the start grant application are:

- an action plan for the year that the application pertains to
- the budget for the year that the application pertains to
- the rental agreement when applying for a rental grant
- rent payment receipt when applying for a rental grant or in the case of a rent increase
- the rules of the association
- a copy of the association's bank statement or a bank confirmation of the account holder.

4 Hiring grant

4.1 Who can receive a hiring grant?

Hiring grants are awarded to registered Helsinki-based early adolescence and youth associations or equivalent registered associations that have under their supervision Helsinki youth associations, sub-committees, sections or activity groups, or when the nature of the entity's activities otherwise requires organisation.

For justified reasons, hiring grants may also be awarded to youth associations and sections which do not fully meet the age and/or residence criteria.

4.2 Grounds for awarding hiring grants

The decision is based on the association's need for a grant. The need for a grant is assessed by considering the following:

Scope of the applicant's activities, purpose and need for employees

- number of Helsinki residents aged 7–28 participating in the activities
- quantity and quality of different activities
- regional coverage and focus on Helsinki
- need for coordination/organisation of the activities.

Financial status of the applicant

- the applicant's assets
- own fundraising
- other grants received by the applicant
- share of administrative costs.

The association's significance for youth politics

- youth advocacy
- societal activation
- the uniqueness of the activity.

Guidelines for activity evaluation

4.3 Using the hiring grant

Costs eligible for the hiring grant include the following:

- costs of recruiting an employee
- statutory and voluntary social contributions and statutory insurance related to the recruitment
- travel costs related to the employee's work.

4.4 Assessment of the hiring grant applicants' performance

Associations applying for a hiring grant must undergo an operational assessment every three years. The assessment is carried out by the youth services' partnership unit.

Based on the activity assessment and grant conditions, the Youth Sub-committee designates associations eligible for wage subsidies for a period of three years. However, the associations must each year apply for the grant, submit their report as normal and meet the grant criteria.

4.5 Hiring grant advance

A hiring grant advance may be awarded to associations that received a hiring grant from the Youth Sub-committee in the previous year. An association may receive an advance of up to 50% of its previous year's grant amount.

For special reasons, an advance hiring grant may be awarded to associations that did not receive a hiring grant the previous year, provided that the decision follows the Youth Sub-committee's three-year policy on eligible associations.

An advance is applied for when applying for the grant itself.

4.6 Applying for a hiring grant and providing the required information

The hiring grant and hiring grant advance for the upcoming year must be applied for by 15 December through the City's grant service. The mandatory attachments to the hiring grant application are:

- an action plan for the year that the application pertains to
- the budget for the year that the application pertains to
- the financial statement from the previous financial year, including a comprehensive income statement
- the annual report for the previous financial year
- an auditor's or operational auditor's statement on the previous financial year
- the signed minutes of the annual or spring meeting, showing the approval of the financial statement and the granting of discharge from liability
- the names and membership numbers of the sections/groups under a district organisation or an equivalent
- the rules of the association
- a copy of the association's bank statement or a bank confirmation of the account holder.

The use of the previous hiring grant must be reported when an application for a new grant is made. A report must be submitted by the same deadline, even if no new grant is being applied for. This is done by submitting the previous period's information (see the mandatory application attachments) to the partnership unit of the youth services.

5 Camp grant

5.1 Who can receive camp grants?

Camp grants are awarded to Helsinki-based associations that organise camp activities during school holidays and free time.

The applicants must organise at least four camps during the period. The camps can be overnight and/or day camps. An overnight camp must last for at least three consecutive nights, while a day camp must last for at least four consecutive days. The duration of the day camp days must be at least six hours.

Each camp must have at least eight participants aged 7–16 from Helsinki and the camps must be open to all children and young people in Helsinki.

In exceptional cases, a grant may also be awarded for a non-standard number of camps.

5.2 Eligibility criteria for the camp grant

The grants for camp activities are awarded based on the number of camp days. A camp day is calculated by multiplying the number of Helsinki residents aged 7–16 who attended the camp by the duration of the camp.

There may be a difference between overnight and day camp grants.

Camp grants are awarded for the period 1 November – 31 October. Two decisions will be made on grants. The first decision is based on the plans while the second is made once the period has ended, based on the actual situation.

5.3 Using the camp grants

Costs eligible for the camp grant include the following:

- transport, material, food, communication, insurance and rental costs of camps
- cost of hiring camp personnel
- statutory and voluntary social contributions and statutory insurance related to the recruitment of camp personnel.

5.4 Applying for a camp grant and providing the required information

Camp grants for the new period must be applied for by the end of October through the City's grant service.

The camp grant for the past period must be reported by the end of October through the City's grant service.

The associations receiving the camp grant must itemise the income and costs of the camps as an individual cost centre in their accounts. The cost centre calculation must be submitted along with the grant usage report or by the same deadline through the City's grant service.

6 Project grant

6.1 Who can receive project grants?

Project grants are awarded to Helsinki-based early adolescence and youth associations, youth activity groups and house clubs.

For specific reasons, project grants may also be awarded to other associations active in youth work.

6.2 Eligibility criteria for project grants

A project grant is a one-off grant for a youth activity project that aims to promote the participation and wellbeing of young people. It can be used to organise or participate in a project, event or occasion.

Project grants are awarded as one-off grants to self-directed youth activity groups and to youth groups within associations. Additionally, project grants are awarded for development and cooperation projects between associations.

For house clubs, project grants are awarded for organising youth activities.

Project grants are not awarded for projects that fall under the association's action plan or its regular activities. However, it may be granted for projects by young people within the association's activities that arise from the young people's need during the operating year and otherwise meet the grant eligibility criteria.

Grants for the same project and its continuation projects can be awarded for a maximum of three years in total. Multi-year projects are required to submit a schedule and evaluation plan when applying for the first grant.

Grants for projects intended to last one year are only extended in exceptional cases.

As a rule, project grants are not awarded for administrative costs or for projects intended to generate profit.

A grant cannot be awarded if the use of a previous project grant has not been adequately reported.

6.3 Using the project grants

The grant provider decides on the costs eligible for the grant and the period during which the grant may be used.

The project grant cannot be used to purchase fixed assets.

6.4 Applying for a project grant and providing the required information

Project grant applications must be submitted before the project or event, and grants can be applied for throughout the year through the City's grant service.

The use of the grant must be reported in accordance with the instructions given in the grant decision.

7 Special grant

7.1 Who can receive special grants?

Special grants can be awarded to non-profit organisations and youth activity groups in Helsinki.

The application conditions for special grants are always announced separately.

7.2 Eligibility criteria for the special grant

The special grant is a themed grant awarded according to the current terms and conditions approved by the Youth Sub-committee.

7.3 Using the special grant

Eligible expenses for the use of a special grant are approved on a per-grant basis. The grant provider decides on the costs eligible for the grant and the period during which the grant may be used.

7.4 Applying for a special grant and providing the required information

Special grants are applied for at separately announced times. The application and its attachments must be submitted by the deadline to the City's grant service.

The use of the grant must be reported in accordance with the instructions given in the grant decision.

8 Grant decision process

8.1 Applying for grants

Youth activity grants and information on application deadlines are available on the City's grant service website. Information about them is also communicated in partner letters and announcements.

The grant application and its attachments are submitted through the City's grant service website using a specific form for each grant type. For each type of grant, the required attachments for the application are listed.

The deadlines for grant applications are specified for each type.

Grants are only awarded based on applications.

When applying for an advance on the operating or hiring grant, the association agrees to repay any advance already paid if the association does not apply for or receive the actual grant for that year.

By submitting the application form, the association agrees to repay the City of Helsinki any grant paid to the association if the grant decision is revoked or the association violates the grant conditions.

8.2 Decisions on grants

In accordance with the City of Helsinki's administrative regulations, the Youth Sub-committee of the Culture and Leisure Committee decides on the distribution of the grant funds available to the Sub-committee, approves the criteria and limits according to which the office holder decides on the allocation of grant funds and monitors the use of the grants.

8.3 Notification regarding the grant decision

Applicants are notified of the grant decision with an excerpt from the minutes, including instructions for an appeal. If the decision is negative, the reason for rejection will be stated in the decision.

8.4 Payment of grants

The grant decision maker determines the payment schedule and instalments for the awarded grants. Unless otherwise stated in the decision, grants are paid in accordance with the City of Helsinki's general guidelines.

If a grant recipient owes money to the City, the City's collectible receivables must be withheld from the grant awarded to the recipient. This withholding may be omitted for a specific reason. Withholdings must comply with the City of Helsinki's guidelines for the invoicing and recovery of monetary receivables valid at the time.

8.5 Monitoring the use of grants

The use of grants is monitored in accordance with the City of Helsinki's general guidelines.

Associations receiving grants must keep records in accordance with the Accounting Act and the provisions pursuant to the Act. Financial records must be kept in a way that allows for the use of the grant to be tracked. If the accounts of an association receiving a grant are included in the accounts of another organisation, the accounts must show the assets used and grants received for early adolescent/youth activities. The financial statements must always show grants received from the government, municipalities, parishes, the EU or other similar public bodies as separate items.

The grant provider has the right to review the accounting and administrative documents of associations receiving grants. Checks are carried out as spot checks.

If an association does not provide an acceptable report on the use of the grant or has not used all of the grant, a decision will be made regarding its return or recovery.

The grant guidelines were approved at the meeting of the City of Helsinki's Youth Committee on 1 December 1993. The grant guidelines were updated on 30 March 1995, 2 November 1995, 14 May 1998, 9 November 2000, 16 January 2002, 23 January 2003, 20 November 2008, 28 October 2010, 30 October 2012, 28 April 2016, 12 May 2016, 12 September 2017, 18 October 2018 and by the Youth Sub-committee of the Culture and Leisure Committee on 8 December 2020 and 27 May 2025.