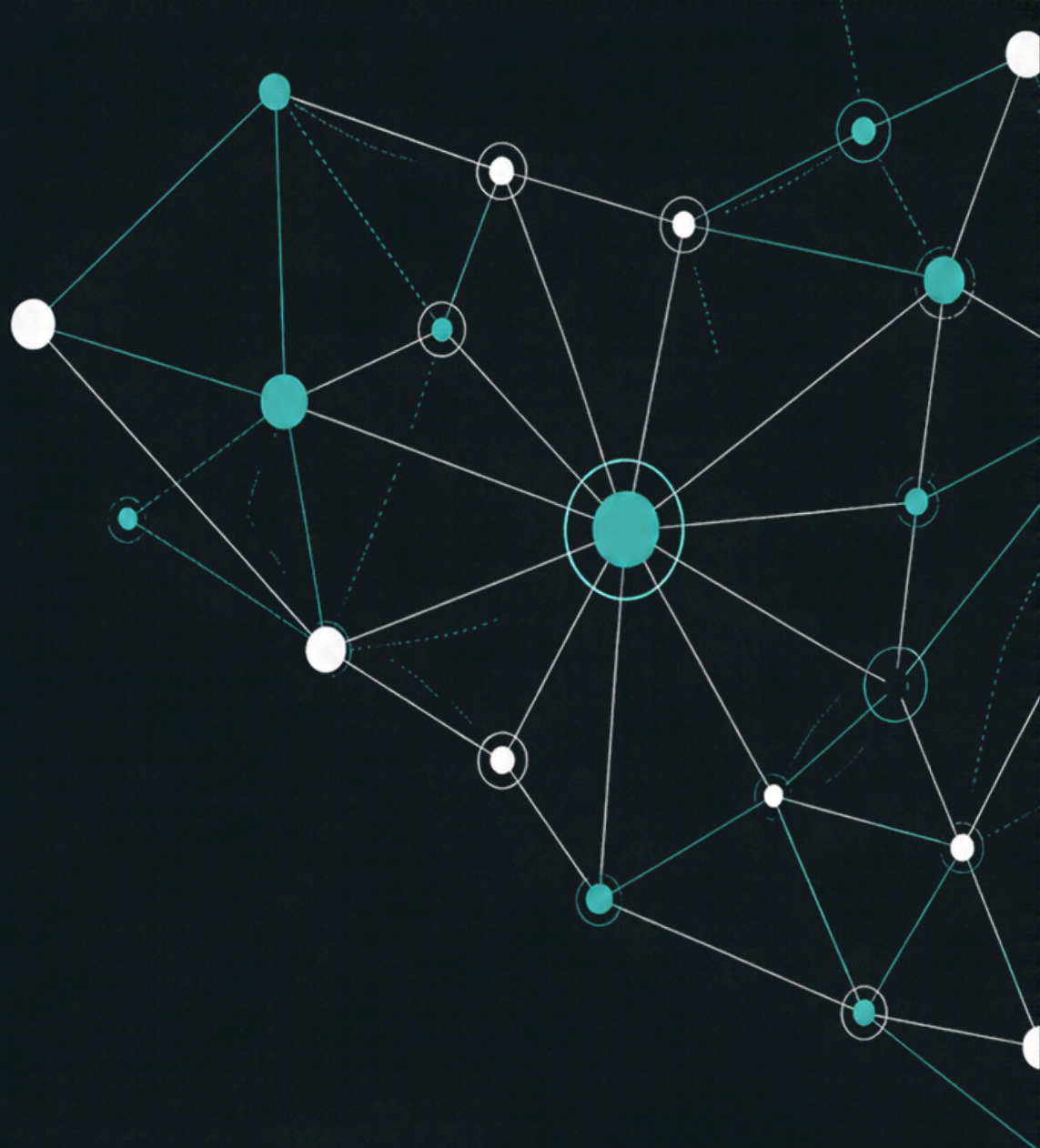




Self assessment

Amplify Impact: Patient Organisation Sustainability
& Health Equity

10

Community-First Funding Self-Assessment Tool

A Best-Practice Assessment for Government Agencies, Program Administrators and Independent Funders

Purpose

This tool provides a rapid self-assessment of funding programs against international best practice in community-centred funding. It is designed for:

- Government departments
- Funding agencies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Health departments
- Grant program managers
- Commissioning bodies
- Statutory authorities
- Foundations
- Philanthropic organisations
- Peak bodies
- Independent funding organisations

It can be completed for an individual funding program, a portfolio of programs or an entire organisation.

Estimated completion time: 20–30 minutes

How to score

For each statement, score:

Score	Description
0	No evidence or not in place
1	Limited evidence / applied inconsistently
2	Mostly in place
3	Fully embedded and routinely demonstrated

Domain 1. Community Leadership (Maximum = 18)

Statement	Score (0–3)
Communities are involved before funding priorities are determined.	
People with lived experience help design funding programs.	
Communities participate in funding allocation or assessment.	
Community members are represented in governance structures.	
Community feedback demonstrably changes funding decisions.	
Communities help evaluate funded programs.	

Subtotal: ____ /18

Domain 2. Equity (Maximum = 21)

Statement	Score (0–3)
Funding is allocated according to need rather than equal distribution.	
Small organisations have realistic opportunities to obtain funding.	
Grassroots organisations are actively supported.	
Rare diseases or small patient populations are recognised.	
Rural and remote communities are considered.	
Indigenous or First Nations organisations are appropriately supported.	
Culturally diverse communities are appropriately supported.	

Subtotal: ____ /21**Domain 3. Funding Quality (Maximum = 24)**

Statement	Score (0–3)
Multi-year funding is available.	
Core operational funding is available where appropriate.	
Funding covers full costs of delivery.	
Reasonable indirect costs are funded.	
Organisations can adapt activities if community needs change.	
Funding supports innovation and service improvement.	
Funding agreements provide financial certainty.	
Payments occur on time.	

Subtotal: ____ /24

Domain 4. Organisational Sustainability (Maximum = 21)

Statement	Score (0–3)
Funding supports leadership development.	
Governance capability is supported.	
Workforce development is funded.	
Digital capability is supported.	
Evaluation capability is supported.	
Collaboration and partnerships are encouraged.	
Organisational resilience is recognised as an outcome.	

Subtotal: ____ /21**Domain 5. Accessibility (Maximum = 21)**

Statement	Score
Application processes are easy to understand.	
Application requirements are proportionate to grant size.	
Technical support is available to applicants.	
Small grants have simplified application processes.	
Reporting requirements are proportionate.	
Existing information is reused rather than repeatedly requested.	
Decisions are communicated within published timeframes.	

Subtotal: ____ /21

Domain 6. Transparency & Accountability (Maximum = 21)

Statement	Score
Funding criteria are publicly available.	
Funding decisions are transparent.	
Reasons for decisions are provided where appropriate.	
Payment and decision timeframes are published.	
Outcomes are publicly reported.	
Community members can provide feedback or appeal decisions.	
The organisation evaluates its own funding processes.	

Subtotal: ____ /21**Domain 7. Community Impact (Maximum = 24)**

Statement	Score
Funding addresses community-defined priorities.	
Community wellbeing is measured.	
Equity outcomes are measured.	
Organisational sustainability is measured.	
Community participation is measured.	
Partnerships are strengthened through funding.	
Funding reduces service gaps.	
Communities report that funding has improved outcomes.	

Subtotal: ____ /24

Total Score

Domain	Maximum	Score
Community Leadership	18	
Equity	21	
Funding Quality	24	
Organisational Sustainability	21	
Accessibility	21	
Transparency & Accountability	21	
Community Impact	24	

Overall Total: ____ /150

Interpretation

Score	Interpretation
135–150 (90–100%)	International leading practice. Community-centred funding is embedded across the program.
120–134 (80–89%)	Strong alignment with best practice, with relatively minor opportunities for improvement.
105–119 (70–79%)	Good program, although several areas would benefit from strengthening.
90–104 (60–69%)	Moderate alignment. Important reforms are likely to improve effectiveness and equity.
75–89 (50–59%)	Significant improvement required to better support community organisations.
Below 75 (<50%)	Major redesign recommended. The program is unlikely to meet contemporary best-practice standards for community-centred funding.

Quick Equity Check

Answer **Yes**, **Partly** or **No**.

Question	Response
Would a volunteer-run organisation have a realistic chance of obtaining funding?	
Could a newly established organisation compete successfully?	
Would an organisation supporting fewer than 500 people be competitive?	
Would a rare disease organisation be disadvantaged because of population size?	
Would an Indigenous community organisation have culturally appropriate access?	
Could an organisation without a professional grant writer apply successfully?	
Can organisations survive if grant payments are delayed?	
Does funding cover the real cost of delivering services?	
Are communities involved in deciding what gets funded?	
Does the program strengthen organisations rather than simply purchase services?	

If three or more answers are "No", the program should undertake a detailed equity review

Reflection Questions

1. If this funding disappeared tomorrow, would the community infrastructure remain?
2. Are we funding projects, or are we investing in organisations that communities rely on?
3. Which organisations are least likely to receive funding under the current model?
4. Which communities are least likely to have their needs recognised?
5. Does our definition of "value for money" unintentionally disadvantage smaller or rare-condition organisations?
6. Are we measuring what matters to communities, or only what is easiest to count?

Priority Improvement Planner

After completing the assessment, identify the three highest-priority actions.

Priority	Action	Lead	Timeframe
1			
2			
3			

Guiding Principle

A community-first funding program does more than distribute money. It builds and sustains the organisations, relationships and capabilities that enable communities to identify their own priorities, participate in decisions and improve health and wellbeing over the long term. Programs should therefore be judged not only by the services they purchase, but also by whether they strengthen the community infrastructure on which equitable and effective health systems depend.