

8 June 2026

Owen Smigelski
Chair, Registrar Stakeholder Group

Jonathan Zuck
Chair, At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

Michael Palage

Subject: Community Input on Additional Funding for the 2026 Round Applicant Support Program

Dear Michael Palage, Owen Smigelski, and Jonathan Zuck,

The ICANN Board thanks the [At-Large Advisory Committee \(ALAC\)](#), [Registrar Stakeholder Group \(RrSG\)](#), and [Michael Palage](#) for providing input on the 6 April 2026 blog [proposing additional funding](#) for the New Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Program: 2026 Round Applicant Support Program (ASP).

The ICANN Board appreciates the community's continued engagement and input on this important topic and recognizes the shared commitment to ensuring that the ASP effectively supports participation in the 2026 Round.

With respect to funding for the ASP, as a reminder, the [New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Final Report](#) recommended that "ICANN org must develop a plan for funding the Applicant Support Program," including identifying appropriate funding sources to support implementation of the program and its expanded scope of support.

In July 2024, the Board sought community input on the potential use of 2012 Round auction proceeds for the ASP. Feedback from the [ALAC](#), [Public Interest Registry \(PIR\)](#), [Business Constituency \(BC\)](#), and the [Generic Names Supporting Organization \(GNSO\) Council](#) indicated support for using up to US\$5 million to fund up to half of the direct costs for supported applicants. In September 2024, the Board [resolved](#) to allocate up to US\$5 million from auction proceeds for this purpose and committed to use best efforts to identify additional funding should the number of qualified applicants exceed 45. The resulting [ASP Funding Plan](#) was shared with the [Subsequent Procedures Implementation Review Team \(IRT\)](#) and published on the [ASP Resources webpage](#).

After receiving 75 ASP applications in December 2025, the Board [sought community input](#) on, and later [approved](#), a proposal to use up to an additional US\$4.8 million of 2012 Round auction proceeds to support up to 75 ASP applicants at a 75-percent fee reduction.

Following requests from the [Governmental Advisory Committee \(GAC\)](#) and [ALAC](#), the Board [sought additional input](#) on a proposal to increase support for up to 75 applicants to an 85-

percent fee reduction. After reviewing the range of community feedback during its [May 2026 workshop](#), the Board decided not to take further action at this time.

With respect to feedback regarding the consultation process associated with the use of auction proceeds for the ASP, the Board notes that community consultation has taken place on several occasions as outlined above and through multiple forms of engagement. The [approach](#) ultimately approved for ASP funding built upon earlier consultation in which the use of auction proceeds to support ASP applicants did not generate significant community objection.

The Board also notes that some concern was expressed regarding the proposed additional allocation of auction proceeds to fund the ASP. The Board is of the view that this approach is consistent with the [established framework governing the use of auction proceeds](#). The [2012 gTLD Applicant Guidebook](#) required that any auction proceeds be “reserved and earmarked until the uses of funds are determined” and “used in a manner that supports directly ICANN’s Mission and Core Values and also allows ICANN to maintain its not for profit status.”

As a reminder, the Board retains ultimate authority over disbursement decisions, consistent with its fiduciary duties and obligation to act in furtherance of ICANN’s mission. In considering the appropriate source of funding for activities directly supporting ASP applicants, the Board determined that auction proceeds would be the most logical option, due to alignment between the intended use of those funds and the objectives of the ASP. With funding now set at 75-percent reduction for all ASP applicants that qualify, the Board believes that a balance has been found between those seeking guarantees to support more than 40 qualified applicants and those who believe that this should not exceed the 75-percent reduction and that further conversations are needed on the funding sources should the support exceed the current levels.

The ICANN Board appreciates the community’s contributions to the ongoing dialogue on how best to support the ASP and the New gTLD Program. While the Board recognizes that not all community members support the outcome of not allocating additional funds from the 2012 Auction Proceeds to increase the level of support, it encourages continued community consideration of whether the current level and structure of support are effectively advancing the program’s objectives. These considerations may be something the community would like to take into account as we look ahead to future iterations of the program.

Sincerely,



Tripti Sinha
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors