

2026 Thunderbird Council Budget

Expense categories		2024	2025	2026 proposal	Seconded (Nothing formal, just to figure out what to focus on)	Tentative positions (optionally add your name, a YES/NO, and if necessary an alternative amount)
Team Building Activities		\$7,000	-	\$0 (folded with Travel budget)	Philipp Kewisch	Teal: YES Philipp: NO (fold into travel expenses) Mic: NO Magnus: NO, fold into in-person-meeting. Team-building remote isn't useful IMHO.
Training		-	-	\$3,500	Philipp Kewisch	Teal: YES Philipp: YES \$3500 (lifelabs is \$500 per learner for the small package, Udemy \$380) Mic: NO Magnus: NO
Workshops		\$3,000	-	-		-
In-Person Meetings		\$3,000	\$2,000	\$0 (folded with Travel budget)		Teal: YES Philipp: NO (fold with travel budget) Magnus: NO. Or possibly yes, maybe travel expenses should instead be folded into this one?
Community Building		\$9,000	-	-		-
	Survey Preparation/Analysis	\$5,000	-	\$5,000		Teal: YES Philipp: ABSTAIN (I'm ok with it though) Mic: NO Magnus: NO, fine to do survey, but if we want one we should also prepare what we want and analyze
	Other Focus Areas for the Council	\$2,000	-	-		-
	Swag	\$2,000	-	\$1,000	Philipp Kewisch	Teal: YES Philipp: YES \$1000 Magnus: YES
Travel Expenses		\$25,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	Philipp Kewisch	Teal: YES \$47,500 Philipp: YES \$50,000 (and ask Lisa to adjust. Planned meetups: 1x FOSDEM, 1x

					Toronto, 1x optional later year meetup) Mic: YES
Elections	-	\$2,000	\$5,000	Philipp Kewisch	Magnus:NO Patrick:We need enough money for OpaVote, but not much beyond that. Philipp:YES \$2000 Teal:YES Mic: NO
Community Grants	-	-	\$20,000		Magnus:NO Philipp: NO Teal:YES Mic: NO
Catering and Meals	\$2,000	-	-		-
Chair Discretion	-	-	\$2,500		Teal:YES Philipp: NO (see contingency) Mic: NO
Miscellaneous and Contingency	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,900	Philipp Kewisch	Teal:YES Philipp YES \$3,000, if we end up putting chair discretion into our bylaws we can use this pot. I'd be ok with \$2000 as well. Mic: NO
Remote Work Stipend for Expenses	-	-	\$14,100		Magnus:NO Patrick:NO Philipp: NO Teal:YES Mic: NO
Council Project Manager	-	-	\$20,000		Magnus:NO Patrick:NO Philipp:NO Teal:YES Mic: NO
Independent Auditor	-	-	\$25,000		Magnus:NO Patrick:NO Philipp:NO Teal:YES Mic: NO
Total	\$50,000	\$56,000	\$144,000		

MZLA's estimated 2025 income (waiting on 2026 numbers): \$12,676,929

Council's proposed percentage: 1%

Total Council Budget: **\$126,769**

Most of this proposed budget directly supports our formal responsibilities under the Term Sheet. Any unspent money the Council budget shall hereby automatically roll over into subsequent years.

Source for 2024 and 2025 Council budget:  Thunderbird Council - 2025 Budget

Team Building and Training

(Team building is included in the Travel expenses below.)

One or more team building activities and structured development/training sessions during the year on topics like the Mozilla Community Participation Guidelines (CPG), Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) and community leadership. Mozilla/MZLA may already have such training sessions for employees that could be given to the Council as well.

In-Person Meetings

(Included in the Travel expenses below.)

Meeting room renting, catering and any conference registration fees (e.g. for FOSDEM or MozFest).

Community Survey

The Community Council WG will work with MZLA and a professional research firm to conduct a yearly survey of the Community, to help with the roadmaps, budget and staff goals, and determine which areas the Council should focus on.

Travel expenses

(based on MZLA's travel policy)

- Hotel \$125 USD, maximum \$250 - \$400/night USD
- Flight \$1,350 USD, maximum \$700 - \$2,000 USD
- Food maximum \$75/day USD
- Costs covered outside the standard MZLA policy
 - Passport/Visa fees
 - Travel power adapters
 - Mobile data when traveling internationally

The per diem (for food, travel to/from the airport or train station and emergencies) shall be loaded onto a prepaid debit card for each member in advance of the travel.

Source: <https://mozilla-hub.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/MZLA/pages/1601306652/Travel+Policy>

$(7 \text{ days} \times \$125/\text{day hotel}) + (9 \text{ days} \times \$75/\text{day food}) + \$1,350 \text{ flight} = \$2,900 \text{ per member on average}$
 $\$2,900/\text{member} \times (7 \text{ Council members} - 2 \text{ MZLA employees}) = \$14,500 \text{ per meeting}$
 $\$14,500/\text{meeting} \times 3 \text{ meetings} = \$43,500$

\$43,500 (Travel) + \$1,000 (Team Building Activities) + \$3,000 (In-Person Meetings) = **\$47,500** total

The amount covers one in-person meeting (e.g. FOSDEM or MozFest), MozWeek (or the MZLA meeting in Toronto) and one Council only meeting (assuming 100% attendance and all three are one full week plus two travel days). If only one in-person gathering happens, or attendance is lower, the unused portion reverts to other Council budget initiatives.

Remote Work Stipend for Expenses

(based on MZLA's Remote Work Stipend)

Summary: Provide parity with MZLA's remote work stipend for employees and as reimbursement for expenses, in line with our Bylaws. This is expense reimbursement in stipend form, only for costs directly related to Council work (internet, hardware, ergonomic setup, etc.). Providing a stipend lowers the financial barriers so more diverse candidates can serve on the Council. This is anchored in Thunderbird's values around user/community empowerment. Councilors may opt-out or donate it back.

Provide MZLA's remote work stipend to Council members who are not MZLA employees (and thus already receive the stipend) to cover any remote work or other direct costs needed to perform or resulting from our official duties. This replaces all reimbursements, except those for travel (see above). This is the same the remote work stipend already provided to MZLA employees (see link below) and is inline with our bylaws (see quote and link below):

- \$235 USD / \$330 CAD / £180 GBP / €210 EUR / 200 CHF / \$400 NZD

Councilors should be able to participate regardless of financial background, and not be required to front substantial funds or subsidize the project personally. This stipend operationalizes the bylaws' commitment to reimbursing expenses incurred in the exercise of Council functions, while ensuring participation is accessible to volunteers across geographies and income levels.

Providing this stipend would eliminate the burden and administrative overhead of having to request reimbursement for each individual remote work expense, as well as having to front the money for months in advance, which some members are unable to afford. Council members would of course be free to refuse the stipend or donate a portion of the money back to Thunderbird.

While MZLA pays for all required expenses for employees through their generous remote work stipend, they largely expect Council members to pay for their own expenses, which is just plain wrong and prevents many otherwise eligible community members from being able to self-nominate. The goal is to get more qualified candidates to self-nominate for the Council election, including more diverse candidates, regardless of their socioeconomic status. No one should have to risk financial insolvency to contribute to this critical role for the Thunderbird project.

$\$235/\text{month} \times (7 \text{ Council members} - 2 \text{ MZLA employees}) = \$1,175 \text{ per month}$
 $\$1,175/\text{month} \times 12 \text{ months per year} = \mathbf{\$14,100 \text{ total}}$

These amounts should be increased annually based on inflation and adjusted for each Council member based on the buying power in their country relative to the USD. (Assuming 100% of members accept the stipend)

Providing a stipend instead of requiring members to request reimbursement for incurred expenses provides many advantages, including:

- Does not require fronting the money for MZLA — some members are unable to do this
- Fairness — MZLA employees and Council members are treated the same
- No more receipts — payments are automatic
- Less admin overhead — no tracking or approvals required
- Members are in control — they spend it on what is needed most
- More privacy — MZLA will not see how members use it

Previously, MZLA's Remote Work Budget provided \$750/year, plus \$100/month for internet, but this is scheduled to be replaced by the Remote Work Stipend in 2026.

Source: <https://mozilla-hub.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/MZLA/pages/1177485746/Remote+Work+Program>

Our bylaws:

“Councilors will not be paid for their services. However, the Thunderbird Council may, at any time, resolve to *reimburse the Councilors for the expenses incurred in the exercise of their functions.*”

Source: <https://council.thunderbird.net/charter/bylaws/#compensation>

Election

This includes costs for a campaign, the voting platform (we use opavote), a facilitator and providing accessible materials for the election. A portion of the money will be saved until the 2027 budget, when the next election occurs, to double our impact.

Hire a consultant to help run a large campaign before the 2027 Council election to increase both the number and diversity of nominations, as well as eligible individuals joining the election roll. Set a goal to double the number of community members on the election roll and get at least 2-3 times the previous number of self-nominations for the Council.

Investing in election facilitation and outreach is essential to sustaining a legitimate, diverse, contributor-elected Council, which in turn is central to Thunderbird's commitment that the community has a real voice in the project's strategic direction.

Council Project Manager

Pay Kelly (or another existing MZLA employee) to work part time for the Council, prioritizing their work for the Council. They would help us:

- Keep the community better informed
 - create a professional website and social media accounts for the Council
 - write needed blog and social media posts
- Take meeting notes
- Publish public summaries for the community
- Draft and track motions
- Collect data (from internal MZLA sources)
- Do research on behalf of Council members
- Prepare for quarterly business reviews

The Term Sheet says the Council is responsible for core governance of the Thunderbird project, including product strategy, yearly goals, oversight of funds, and approval of the project budget, which the project

manager would help support us with. Use of this person is on a first come first serve basis, with priority given to the elected Chair and Secretary.

\$40/hour × 10 hours per week = \$400 per week
\$400/week × 52 weeks per year = **\$20,800** total

(Due to holidays, the MZLA end of year shutdown, PTO, etc., they would not actually work 52 weeks per year.)

A part-time Council operations support role enables the Council to effectively fulfill its Term Sheet responsibilities—reviewing budgets, tracking quarterly business reviews, and communicating decisions to the community—without relying solely on already-busy volunteers.

Independent Auditor

Select one high-impact area of concern for the community to independently audit/review per year, to ensure that donation money is used the most efficiently. Have MZLA hire a part time auditor (or consultant) who works for and reports directly to the Council. The resulting audit should include a report for the Community that provides specific and concrete recommendations for changes that MZLA and the Council should make to improve the targeted area. This is focused/targeted audits, not a full financial audit (which MZLA should already handle).

Per the Term Sheet, the Council is responsible for:

“Stewardship of the funds collected through Thunderbird donations”
as well as oversight of the budget. This also directly supports the Mozilla Manifesto principle about transparency and public benefit.

Source: https://council.thunderbird.net/charter/term_sheet/

To responsibly exercise our stewardship of donated funds, the Council will commission a focused independent review each year of a high-impact area of spending. This complements MZLA's financial reporting by providing a community-facing, actionable assessment that can improve efficiency and trust.

If a dispute arises under the Term Sheet's conflict-resolution process, part of this budget would pay for any needed independent mediator or legal advice.

Community Grants

(This was adapted from former Council member Bogo's idea.)

Provide community grants for up to two areas per year. These will be administered by the upcoming Community and Add-ons Council WGs, who will decide the specific topic and criteria, put out a request for proposals, select which of those proposals to award grants to and the exact amount of those grants. The money would be split evenly between the WGs, with a small portion set aside for individuals who want to represent Thunderbird in their Community, such as at conferences.

There must be an open application process and a public report for the Community at the end detailing which individuals/groups and projects the grants were awarded to. Grant money should typically be awarded after project completion, with a special case for large projects where up to 50% may be awarded in advance or after the completion of specific milestones. Any written code must be open source and use a MPLv2 compatible license.

Priority should be given to small grants, but a few large grants may also be required for bigger projects, such as when creating entire add-ons. It is expected that this budget will cover at least 20-100 grants total in the range of \$200-\$1,000, with a maximum grant amount of \$5,000.

This aligns with the Council goals #2, #5, #6, #7 (invest in open standards, start bug bounty, invest in chat, investigate new forms of communication).

Possible grant topics:

- Improve translation/localization
- Add missing documentation on DTN or for a MailExtension API
- Create add-ons to support additional communication (chat, microblogging, social media) protocols/services
- Add new features or fix longstanding bugs/papercuts
- Uplift a Betterbird or Tor patch
- Integrate a popular add-on
- Improve hardening, such as by setting up a fuzzer to support Thunderbird
- Adapting any of Mozilla's tools to support Thunderbird
- Rewrite a piece of C/C++ or JS code in Rust
- Add automated tests to improve code coverage
- Add additional metrics to the Thunderbird Community Metrics
- Represent Thunderbird in one's Community, such as at a conference

For example, in 2026, the Community WG could decide to provide small grants to community members to improve the translation of the locales that are currently poorly localized. Prioritize underserved communities or those where this money could provide the most benefit. Set a goal for Thunderbird (both Desktop and Android) to support all 130+ locales that Firefox supports.

Similarly, the Add-ons WG could decide to set up a competitive grant process to fund third party add-on developers that want to add support for new popular communication (chat, microblogging, social media) protocols/services, as proposed in the Council's Goal #6. They could also set up a competitive grant process to fund third party add-on developers that want to add support for new popular FileLink providers that are missing from Thunderbird.

These grants directly advance our unanimously adopted goals around open standards, security, and modern communication support by empowering community members and add-on developers to tackle high-impact gaps (localization, new protocols, FileLink integrations) that MZLA staff alone cannot cover.

Chair Discretion

(Included in Miscellaneous and Contingency below.)

The Council Chair could use this as needed for expenses, without requiring a vote of the entire Council. This money should be used to reimburse members for any required expenses that were incurred per our Bylaws and are not otherwise covered by this Council budget, at the Chair's discretion.

Miscellaneous and Contingency

Provide official Thunderbird Council swag to all Council and select Community members. Donate to all open source projects that the Council depends on (MkDocs, CryptPad, etc.).