



Families and Communities Program 2025–26 Volunteer Grants Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date:	19 February 2026
Closing date and time:	5:00 pm AEST on Friday April 3 2026
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Social Services
Administering entity:	Community Grants Hub
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact: Community Grants Hub ¹ Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5:00pm AEST on 22 May 2026
Date guidelines released:	19 February 2026
Type of grant opportunity:	Closed non-competitive
Version:	February 2026

¹ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/contact-us>

Contents

1. Families and Communities Program: Volunteer Grants processes	4
1.1 Introduction.....	5
2. About the grant program	5
2.1 Community consultation and the role of Federal MPs.....	6
3. Grant amount	7
4. Eligibility criteria	7
4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?	7
4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?.....	9
4.2.1 Unincorporated Associations	9
5. What the grant money can be used for	10
5.1 Eligible grant activities	10
5.2 Eligible locations.....	12
5.3 Eligible expenditure	12
5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for.....	12
6. The assessment criteria	13
7. How to apply	13
7.1 Attachments to the application.....	15
7.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes.....	15
7.3 Questions during the application process	16
8. The grant selection process	17
8.1 Assessment of grant applications	17
8.2 Who will assess and select applications?	17
8.3 Who will approve grants?.....	17
9. Notification of application outcomes	18
10. Successful grant applications	18
10.1 The grant agreement	18
10.2 Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012.....	19
10.3 Commonwealth Child Safe Framework	20
10.4 National Agreement on Closing the Gap	20
10.5 Indigenous organisation type classifications	21
10.6 Multicultural access and equity	22
10.7 How we pay the grant	22
10.8 Grants payments and GST.....	22
11. Announcement of grants	23
12. How we monitor your grant activity	23
12.1 Keeping us informed.....	23
12.2 Reporting	23

OFFICIAL

12.3	Acquitting your grant.....	23
12.4	Grant agreement variations	24
12.5	Compliance visits	24
12.6	Record keeping.....	24
12.7	Evaluation.....	24
12.8	Acknowledgement	24
13.	Probity	25
13.1	Enquiries and feedback.....	25
13.2	Conflicts of interest.....	26
13.3	Privacy	26
13.4	Confidential information.....	27
13.5	Freedom of information.....	28
14.	Consultation	28
15.	Glossary	29
	Appendix A: 2025–26 Volunteer Grants – expenditure	33

OFFICIAL

1. Families and Communities Program: Volunteer Grants processes

The Families and Communities Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to the Department of Social Services' (the Department) Outcome 2. The Department works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#)² (CGRPs).



Expressions of Interest

Federal Members of Parliament (MPs) will consult their local community and seek Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from community organisations that rely on volunteers.



The nomination period opens

Federal MPs will establish a Community Committee or consult with an existing committee to identify potential projects and organisations that strengthen community functioning by increasing participation in volunteering. Federal MPs will then nominate organisations including proposed funding amounts, in line with the Committee's recommendations.



The grant opportunity opens

The Community Grants Hub will invite nominated organisations to submit an online application. The grant opportunity guidelines will be published on [GrantConnect](#)³.



Invited applicants complete and submit a grant application

You complete the application form and address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant.



We review all grant applications

We review the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. If you are eligible, we then assess your eligible application against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value for money.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the Department decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker (the Department) makes decisions about awarding grant funding.



² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/versions>

³ <https://www.grants.gov.au>

We notify you of the outcome

Your Federal MP will advise you if your application is successful, followed by written confirmation from the Department. We will advise you of the outcome if your application is unsuccessful.

**We enter into a grant agreement**

We may enter into a grant agreement with you if your application is successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature or complexity of the grant and is proportional to the risks involved.

**Delivery of grant**

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement.

**Evaluation of the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants**

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants as a whole. We base this on information you provide us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department.

2. About the grant program

The Volunteer Grants Program (the Program) supports the work of community organisations that rely on volunteers by removing barriers to volunteering and promoting awareness of volunteering opportunities. The Program aligns with the objectives of the [National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033](#)⁴ in particular the objectives to focus on the volunteer experience (1.1); make volunteering inclusive and accessible (1.2); and recognise the inherent value of volunteering (2.3).

Annual funding of \$10 million for the Program is held within Program 2.1.6: Volunteering and Community Connectedness in Outcome 2. The funding for this opportunity will be available in the 2026–27 financial year.

⁴ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/>

The objectives of the program are to:

- help not-for-profit community organisations to support the efforts of Australia's volunteers
- encourage, support and increase participation in volunteering.

The intended outcome of the program is to:

- strengthen community functioning by supporting and increasing participation in volunteering.

The Community Grants Hub administers the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles](#).⁵

2.1 Community consultation and the role of Federal MPs

Volunteer Grants support the work of community organisations that rely on volunteers by reducing barriers and raising awareness of opportunities to increase participation in volunteering.

Federal MPs contribute their local knowledge to the process ensuring equitable distribution of funding across the country.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) will open with your Federal MP in February 2026.

Each Federal MP will call for EOIs and must consult with a new or existing Community Committee with a minimum of three members who reflect the diversity of the local community. This committee will assist the MP in reviewing the EOIs for nomination.

There is no mandated composition of the committee beyond the minimum of three members.

Federal MPs may choose to be part of the committee or not, and existing committees with appropriate local knowledge may be used. Committee members may include:

- individuals from diverse backgrounds (CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disability, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual plus (LGBTQIA+))
- individuals from different sectors
- other community leaders
- representatives from different towns
- Local Council members.

The committee will assess each EOI and develop a list of applications that address local volunteer needs.

Federal MPs will then nominate eligible organisations from this list and endorse proposed funding amounts, based on the recommendations of the committee.

The Department supports the nomination process by providing guidance materials outlining the Federal MPs' role in the selection process, relevant eligibility criteria and obligations under the CGRPs. These Grant Opportunity Guidelines (guidelines) also provide further information to assist Federal MPs, including that eligible organisations must:

- be not-for-profit
- have a minimum of 40% of volunteers in their workforce.

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/versions>

Federal MP information sessions will be held before the EOI period begins with a dedicated helpdesk available to support Federal MPs throughout the grant round.

Nominations must be submitted to the Department by Federal MPs by 17 April 2026, with a cap of \$66,665 (GST exclusive) per electorate.

Only organisations nominated by their Federal MP will be invited to submit a grant application.

Applications will not be funded for more than the amount endorsed by the Federal MP.

Part funding of an EOI may occur to ensure the funding cap for the electorate is fully utilised.

Community organisations that do not participate in the EOI process will not be eligible to apply for a Volunteer Grant. Federal MPs are required to communicate the EOI outcomes to all applicants prior to the opening of the grant round.

The nomination period may be extended in exceptional circumstances (for example, natural disasters). All other extension requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Nomination and endorsement by your Federal MP and Community Committee – and subsequent invitation to apply for a 2025–26 Volunteer Grant – does not guarantee your application will be successful.

3. Grant amount

For this grant opportunity, up to \$10 million (GST exclusive) is available through grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 for eligible not-for-profit community organisations, subject to legislative authority under the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997*.⁶ Grants are not subject to indexation.

4. Eligibility criteria

This grant opportunity is a closed non-competitive grant selection process. The Department considers this is an appropriate type of selection process considering the nature of the grants are specifically dependent on Federal MPs nominating community organisations to be invited to apply. Applications are assessed on their own merits against the selection criteria and not compared to other applicants.

The decision maker can choose to waive certain eligibility criteria (except those listed in section 4.1 below) but must be satisfied the risks are understood. A waiver may be used to ensure applicants are not excluded solely based on their entity type, particularly if they are otherwise considered suitable. Clear evidence must be provided to support the waiver to help the decision maker determine whether it should be granted. We cannot provide a grant if your organisation receives funding from another government source for the same purpose.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible to receive a grant, you must be a community organisation that has been nominated by your Federal MP via the EOI process, received an invitation to apply through GrantConnect, and:

- be a legal and eligible entity, **or**
- be an unincorporated association that agrees to the primary contact on your application entering into an agreement on behalf of unincorporated association. This means that if your

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A05251/latest/text>

OFFICIAL

grant application is approved, an authorised officer (over the age of 18) of the community organisation will assume all legal liability and become personally liable for the delivery of the funded activity, expenditure of funds and any other associated obligations arising from the grant agreement validity executed

and

- have a minimum of 40% of volunteers working for your organisations
- be a not-for-profit community organisation
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or be willing to complete a Statement by a Supplier Form (reason for not quoting an ABN) within the application form. Please refer to the [Australian Tax Office](#)⁷ website for further information
- have a bank account with an Australian financial institution in the name of the organisation applying, unless you are applying as an unincorporated association in which case the bank account can be in the name of the individual assuming legal liability
- be willing and legally able to enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth (refer section 10.1)

and

You must be one of the following entity types:

- Company
- Cooperative
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association
- Indigenous Corporation
- Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
- Statutory Entity
- A not-for-profit community organisation associated with, but not legally part of, a Local Council
- Unincorporated association.

NOTE: If you apply as a legal entity and are found, through eligibility checks, to be an unincorporated association, you will be contacted. You will be required to provide three separate contacts for your organisation in total, including the primary and secondary contact listed on the application form. You must confirm that one of these three contacts is legally authorised and willing to accept personal legal responsibility for the grant. This person will become personally liable for delivering the funded activity, managing the expenditure of the funds, and fulfilling all obligation under the grant agreement. If no contact is available to become personally liable your application will not proceed further.

If you are applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust, the Trustee must be an eligible entity as listed above. You may be required to provide evidence of your entity type.

An organisation can only apply for one Volunteer Grant. Where an organisation works across more than one electorate, and has been nominated by more than one Federal MP, it can only apply for a Volunteer Grant in one electorate.

Local branches of larger umbrella organisations (for example, Scouts Australia, St John Ambulance Australia) are considered to be organisations in their own right for the purposes of one application per organisation. For example, two different St Johns Ambulance branches located and operating

⁷ <https://www.ato.gov.au/forms/statement-by-a-supplier-not-quoting-an-abn/>

in different areas and operating as entities in their own right, are considered organisations in their own right. Both organisations can be approved for a Volunteer Grant if invited by their Federal MP and the other eligibility criteria is satisfied.

Further information on entity types is available on the [Community Grants Hub webpage](#).⁸

4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you have not been nominated by your Federal MP **or** are:

- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, that is included on the [National Redress Scheme's website](#)⁹ on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'
- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, that is included on the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency website](#)¹⁰ on the non-compliant list
- subject to a banning order that is in force under section 73ZN of the [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#)¹¹ (NDIS Act), and any of your organisation's key personnel are subject to a banning order that is in force under section 73ZN of the NDIS Act
- a for-profit organisation
- a non-corporate Commonwealth Entity
- a non-corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- a local government
- an International Entity
- an individual (except where the agreement is being entered into on behalf of an unincorporated organisation)
- a political party
- a partnership
- a sole trader
- a community organisation with less than 40% of your workforce made up of volunteers.

You are not eligible to apply for this grant opportunity if you have not received an invitation to apply through GrantConnect and are not an eligible entity type as listed under section 4.1.

4.2.1 Unincorporated Associations

Non-legal entities such as an unincorporated association may be able to receive funding where an individual associated with the organisation is willing to enter into the agreement and personally assume the legal liability on behalf of the unincorporated association.

As the legally authorised person acting on behalf of the unincorporated association, you will assume all legal responsibility and become personally liable for the delivery of the funded activity,

⁸ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grant-support/applying-grant/legal-entity-status>

⁹ <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>

¹⁰ <https://www.wgea.gov.au/>

¹¹ https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r4946

expenditure of funds and any other associated obligations arising from the executed grant agreement.

In this instance, the organisation will be required to provide three contacts including the primary and secondary contact listed on the application form. You must confirm that one of these three contacts is legally authorised and willing to accept personal legal responsibility for the grant. The grant agreement will be entered into with the individual on behalf of the unincorporated association.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

Grant funds can be used by community organisations under one or more of the following categories:

Category 1

- Purchase communication or insurance items that will benefit any of a community organisation's volunteers as listed below:
 - Mobile phones, phone bills and radio communication devices.
 - Computers, laptops and tablets, where those items are primarily used for online communication and activity.
 - Software packages, where the software is primarily used to facilitate online communications and activity (for example email or videoconferencing software).
 - Electronic audio and visual equipment, where the equipment is primarily used for or to facilitate online communications and activity (for example video-communication equipment).
 - Electronic payment devices where the device is primarily used for or to facilitate online communication and activity.
 - Internet service fees incurred by the community organisation.
 - Insurance premiums incurred by the community organisation.

Category 2

- (A) Purchase items for the main purpose of supporting a community organisation's volunteers from the following cohorts:
 - Adults whose volunteering activities support children's development and wellbeing.
 - Children (under 18) as a means of supporting their development.
 - First Nations People.
 - Newly arrived migrants (within the last 5 years) who are not citizens.
 - People with disability (within the meaning of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)¹².

¹² Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

OFFICIAL

- Unemployed people who are volunteering to increase their capacity to engage in employment.
- Veterans and Australian Defence Force members.
- Women experiencing or at risk of experiencing gender-based violence or isolation to assist them to overcome that gender-based violence or isolation.
- **(B)** Fund volunteer-run activities within the community organisation for the main purpose of supporting:
 - Children's (under 18) development and wellbeing and/or parents/carers to develop the skills necessary to ensure a child's development.
 - First Nations People.
 - Newly arrived migrants (within the last 5 years) who are not citizens.
 - People with disability (within the meaning of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) to participate in any aspect of life.
 - People who are unemployed to increase their capacity to engage in employment (for example, through training or access to existing employment services).
 - Veterans or Australian Defence Force members.
 - Women experiencing or at risk of experiencing gender-based violence or isolation.
 - Women experiencing gender-based discrimination or disadvantage by addressing:
 - gender-based disadvantage in sport
 - gender-based discrimination in emergency services roles
 - gender-based disadvantage in rural and remote areas
 - gender-based disadvantage and discrimination in trades
 - gender-based disadvantage in the form of food insecurity.
 - Eliminating racial discrimination and promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship amongst racial or ethnic groups through the following:
 - activities that provide anti racism training and promote cultural safety
 - multicultural art events and other cultural events such as traditional dance and theatre
 - language classes designed to encourage social cohesion and promote interracial harmony
 - programs that connect international students with local volunteering opportunities
 - multicultural sporting events that promote the participation of teams and players from diverse backgrounds
 - community events that celebrate Harmony Week and/or International Day for the Elimination of Racial discrimination.

The program recognises the valuable contribution of LGBTQIA+ community organisations in fostering inclusion, belonging, and community connection. Activities that support LGBTQIA+ people are eligible for funding where they align with one or more of the cohorts outlined in section 5.1. For example, volunteer-run activities that support LGBTQIA+ people with a disability or LGBTQIA+ veterans are eligible for funding.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Funding is not to be spent on usual running costs for the organisation in which the volunteers are working, except where stated in category 1 above – see section 5.4 for further information.

You must spend the grant funding within the activity period, which will be stated on your Letter of Agreement and concludes on 31 October 2027.

5.2 Eligible locations

Funding totalling \$66,665 (GST exclusive) will be available in each of the 150 Federal electorates. All grant funds are to be used for activities which take place in Australia.

5.3 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible items that:

- are category 1 items that directly benefit volunteers
- are purchased for supporting category 2 volunteers (any benefit obtained by any other volunteer must only be incidental) or
- facilitate activities, run by volunteers, which are supporting category 2 cohorts.

You may purchase item/s in any or all of the above categories. Grant funds must be used efficiently, effectively, economically and ethically.

Where the grant money is used to purchase equipment that may require installation, the cost of installation is eligible expenditure.

Items that are eligible are shown in Appendix A.

Items that are not eligible are shown in section 5.4.

We may update the guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your grant activity.

5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following activities/costs:

- items that are not covered by category 1 or 2 (as outlined above)
- items that are for the organisation's paid staff
- purchase of land
- purchase of motor vehicles
- wages
- capital expenditure
- retrospective costs
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, and rent
- construction/capital works
- alcohol
- business class domestic and overseas travel

OFFICIAL

- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

6. The assessment criteria

The Department will complete a compliance check and assess your application on its own merits and consider the following criteria:

- the extent to which the project meets the objectives of the program
- whether the project demonstrates value for money.

Value with relevant money is the principle under which grants are considered to be a proper use of public resources, as per section 2.2 of the CGRPs. Under the CGRPs, value for money is determined by considering the relative value of the grant sought, as well as the effectiveness of the proposed grant activities in supporting the objectives of the Volunteer Grants program. Assessing value for money in providing grant funding involves consideration by the Department as to whether the expended funds will be used efficiently, effectively, economically and ethically as described under the CGRPs and the Volunteer Grants – Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

You must indicate in your application whether you are seeking funding to support volunteers by purchasing communication or insurance items to support volunteers (category 1) and/or purchase items or run activities to support eligible cohorts (category 2) or both.

Your response must also include details on the percentage of volunteers to other staff that work at your organisation, the type of services your organisation provides to the community and the entity type of your organisation.

You must indicate in your application which Federal electorate you are operating in.

Your response must also include details on the type of services your organisation provides to the community, and how the eligible items will directly benefit your volunteer workers and the community more broadly. The Department may seek and consider additional information about you or your application. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, including through contacting Federal MPs. This may also include obtaining information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

Information collected by the Department may be used in assessment and compliance checking of your application.

The Department will also examine whether an applicant has an outstanding acquittal from a previous grant round when assessing a new application.

7. How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the Questions and Answers document. These documents are found on the [GrantConnect](#)¹³ website. Any changes to grant documentation are published as addenda¹⁴ on GrantConnect.

Only Grant Opportunity Guidelines are published publicly on GrantConnect. All other grant opportunity documentation (including the online application form) will only be available to invited

¹³ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

¹⁴ Addenda can include changes to existing grant opportunity documentation and/or publishing additional documents. Changes include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications and system outage notices.

OFFICIAL

applicants via GrantConnect. By registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

An example of Commonwealth grant agreement terms and conditions are available on the [Department of Finance](#)¹⁵ website.

Where an organisation applies across multiple electorates, the application for the highest grant amount will be considered for a Volunteer Grant.

Where an organisation submits an application more than once in the same electorate, creating a duplicate application, only the last application received will be considered for a Volunteer Grant.

EOIs will open with your Federal MP in February 2026. The EOI process may vary across electorates. Please contact your local MP for more details about how they will conduct their EOI process.

To apply, your organisation must be nominated by your Federal MP, who will also indicate the level of funding your organisation has been endorsed for. Once your organisation is nominated you must:

- complete the online application form on [GrantConnect](#)¹⁶ via the invitation link
- be an authorised signatory for the nominated organisation (for example, president, chairperson, treasurer, secretary)
- ensure that the application is filled out and submitted by the authorised signatory
- provide contact details of an individual associated with your organisation who has agreed to enter in an agreement on your behalf and assume legal liability if you are applying as in unincorporated association
- provide a current bank statement issued within the last 6 months, showing BSB, account name and number of the applying organisation
- provide all the information requested
- address all questions in the application form
- include all necessary attachments
- submit your application to the Community Grants Hub by 5:00 pm AEST on 29 May 2026.

Only applicants invited to apply can submit an application, you must not forward the invitation link to anyone else.

We will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

To assist you, there is help information within the application form. You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#)¹⁷ and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

Staff of third-party service providers, such as grant recipients delivering services under a Commonwealth contract, may be considered 'staff' or 'public officials' for the purposes of the National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022. You will be asked to acknowledge, as part of your

¹⁵ <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/grants-toolkit>

¹⁶ <https://www.grants.gov.au>

¹⁷ http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol_act/cca1995115/sch1.html

OFFICIAL

application, that you may be subject to the jurisdiction of the National-Anti Corruption Commission (NACC) and that you understand your obligation to report suspected corrupt conduct.

If you need more help about the application process, submitting an application online, have any technical difficulties or find an error in your application after submission, but before the closing date and time, you should contact the Community Grants Hub immediately by email support@communitygrants.gov.au or by visiting the Community Grants Hub's [Contact Us](#)¹⁸ page.

The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

If we find an error or something missing, we may ask you for clarification or additional information. This will not change your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your application after the closing time.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents submitted.

You will receive an automated notification acknowledging the receipt of your application.

7.1 Attachments to the application

Your application will be considered non-compliant and will not proceed to assessment if the mandatory attachments are not provided, including:

- Trust deed and any subsequent variations, if applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust
- Current bank statement showing the account name, BSB and account number.

You must attach supporting documentation according to the instructions provided within the application form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments we have not asked for.

Please note: There is a 2 MB limit for each attachment.

7.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must apply between the published opening and closing dates.

Late applications

We will not accept late applications unless an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevent the submission of their application on time. Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- reasonably unforeseeable
- beyond the applicant's control
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered based on their merits and in accordance with probity principles.

How to lodge a late application

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to email their request to the Community Grants Hub via support@communitygrants.gov.au.

¹⁸ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/contact-us>

OFFICIAL

Upon receipt of a late application email request, the Community Grants Hub will send applicants a link to the late application form, this will include details of the due date and time for submission. Late applications must be submitted within **5 business days** after the grant opportunity has closed. The late application form will prompt applicants to provide their exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances will be reviewed for consideration by the Department. In accordance with probity principles the Department will:

- consider the exceptional circumstances provided by applicants based on its merits
- make a final decision on whether a late application is accepted.

The decision of the Department will be final and not subject to a review or appeals process.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your grant activity around October 2026.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Federal MPs earliest EOI open date	19 February 2026
Completed Federal MP Nomination Workbook due to the Department of Social Services	17 April 2026
Organisations invited to apply for a Volunteer Grant	18 May 2026
Applications close	29 May 2026
Assessment of applications	June-July 2026
Approval of outcomes of assessment process	August-September 2026
Notification to applicants and award of grant agreements	October 2026
Earliest start date of grant activity	October 2026
End date of grant activity	31 October 2027

7.3 Questions during the application process

Only invited applicants' questions will be answered during the application submission period. Please contact the Community Grants Hub via support@communitygrants.gov.au or by visiting the Community Grants Hub's [Contact Us¹⁹](#) Page.

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within 5 business days. When responding to new questions from applicants, a new version of the Questions and Answers document will be uploaded as an addenda document on the [GrantConnect²⁰](#) website.

The question period will close at 5:00 pm AEST on 22 May 2026. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

¹⁹ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/contact-us>

²⁰ <https://www.grants.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

8. The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

The Department's assessment team will review your application against the eligibility criteria and compliance requirements and determine if an application is ineligible and/or non-compliant.

Each application will be assessed and considered through a closed non-competitive selection process based on:

- how well the application meets the assessment criteria (see section 6)
- how the application demonstrates value with relevant money²¹.

Final funding recommendations regarding all applications will be provided to the delegate for a decision.

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, the Department will have regard to:

- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives of the 2025–26 Volunteer grant opportunity
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals
- the risks, financial, fraud and other, that the applicant or project poses for the Department
- the risks that the applicant or project poses for the Commonwealth.

8.2 Who will assess and select applications?

The Department will assess each eligible and compliant application on its own merit and against the selection criteria. Individual assessments of applications identified as eligible for the grant are conducted by Departmental personnel, who will undertake training to ensure the consistent assessment of all applications.

The Department uses this information to develop recommendations on applications to be awarded a grant.

Conflicts of interest

A strategy for any potential conflict of interest that could be identified between the Department or external officials and applicants will be in place. If any actual or perceived conflict of interest is identified, the staff member is required to immediately disclose the conflict to the Department and agree to abstain from any decisions. All staff involved in the assessment process will be required to complete a Conflict-of-Interest form.

The Department may seek additional information from the applicant to assist in making its final recommendations.

8.3 Who will approve grants?

The delegate (a Departmental executive) for this grant opportunity is the Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities Stream, Department of Social Services. The delegate decides which

²¹ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

grants to approve based on the assessment outcomes and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program with relevant knowledge and experience on funding relating to volunteering.

The delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of applications for funding
- the amount of grant funding awarded
- the terms and conditions of funding.

The delegate will not approve funding if:

- the application is ineligible according to these guidelines
- the application does not achieve value for money
- an organisation, or project partner is an organisation, included on the [National Redress Scheme's website](#)²² on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'
- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#)²³ website on the non-compliant organisations list
- the application is not considered an appropriate use of Commonwealth resources.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

9. Notification of application outcomes

We will write to you about the outcome of your application. If you are successful, you will receive an email notification and a Letter of Agreement from the Department via email. If you are unsuccessful, you will be notified in writing via email.

A Feedback Summary will be published on the [Community Grants Hub website](#)²⁴ to provide all organisations with easy access to information about the grant selection process and the main strengths and areas for improving applications.

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

Legislative authority is required for the Commonwealth to enter into grant agreements and to spend money. Legislative authority to approve a commitment of relevant money for this program is currently not in place. Grant agreements will only be entered into once there is legislative authority in place.

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth represented by the Community Grants Hub. We will offer successful applicants a Letter of Agreement for this grant opportunity.

²² <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>

²³ <https://www.wgea.gov.au/what-we-do/compliance-reporting/non-compliant-list>

²⁴ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/application-feedback>

OFFICIAL

Each agreement has general/standard grant conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on [GrantConnect²⁵](#) as part of the grant documentation. We will use a schedule to outline the specific grant requirements.

The Department must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have entered into the grant agreement. The Department is not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. You must not spend your grant until the Activity Start Date specified in your agreement. You must not spend any grant funds beyond the Activity End Date (the date the grant agreement ends) unless you have sought and received approval for an extension to the grant activity period.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Letter of Agreement

The Commonwealth Letter of Agreement comprises the Schedule and the corresponding grant conditions if applicable. Successful applicants are generally not required to sign the Letter of Agreement. When submitting their application, applicants are required to agree to the terms and conditions of the letter of agreement should the application be successful by clicking 'I agree'. Should a successful applicant use a third party to submit their grant application they may be required to sign a grant agreement and return it to the department.

You will be advised of the date of commencement for your grant agreement when you are sent the Letter of Agreement. You must advise the Department in writing prior to the specified date if you no longer wish to receive the grant.

10.2 Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

The [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012²⁶](#) (WGE Act):

- provides a regulatory framework for the Australian Government to assist employers in improving gender equality outcomes within their workplaces
- requires applicants with 100 or more employees (relevant employers²⁷) to submit an annual compliance report to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

You are not eligible to apply for this grant opportunity if you are a relevant employer and you, or your project partner, are:

- an organisation identified by WGEA as non-compliant with your obligations under the WGE Act, and
- listed on the WGEA website's non-compliant list.

If listed as non-compliant, to be eligible to apply you must:

- take the steps needed to attain compliance, and
- be able to provide a copy of a compliance letter from WGEA upon request.

²⁵ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

²⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03332/latest/text>

²⁷ A relevant employer is a higher education institution, a natural person, or a body or association (whether incorporated or not) that employs 100 or more employees across all subsidiaries within an organisation structure.

OFFICIAL

Detailed information regarding WGE Act reporting requirements and the list of employers named as non-compliant is available on the [WGEA](#)²⁸ website.

If you are an employer with less than 100 employees across your entire structure, to be eligible to apply you must be able to provide a copy of a tender letter from WGEA upon request. Information on how to obtain a tender letter is available on the [WGEA](#)²⁹ website.

10.3 Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for organisations to adopt child safe practices including appropriate screening of staff, mandatory reporting and adoption of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Australian Government committed to a new Commonwealth-wide framework to protect children and young people it is responsible for – the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (CCSF).

The Australian Government has put in place ways to apply certain child safety requirements of the CCSF to grantees. A child safety clause will be included in a grant agreement where the Commonwealth considers the grant is for:

- services directly to children
- activities that involve contact with children that is a usual part of, and more than incidental to, the grant activity
- activities that involve possible contact with children that is irregular or unplanned.

The successful applicant will be required to comply with all child safety obligations included in the grant agreement prior to execution of the grant agreement. Irrespective of the child safety obligations in the grant agreement, you must always comply with state and territory legislative requirements for working with children and mandatory reporting.

The child safe supplementary clause CB9 lists the obligations the successful applicant must comply with to be child safe compliant. To view the child safe supplementary clause visit the [Child Safety for DSS grants](#)³⁰ web page.

You must notify the Department of any failure to comply with their Child Safe requirements and cooperate with the Department in any review that is conducted into their compliance with their requirement.

10.4 National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)³¹ (National Agreement) objective is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. The National Agreement is underpinned by the belief that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved.

²⁸ <https://www.wgea.gov.au/reporting-guide>

²⁹ https://www.wgea.gov.au/reporting-guide/ge/eligibility-compliance#_3-tendering-for-government-contracts

³⁰ <https://www.dss.gov.au/doing-business-with-dss/child-safety-for-dss-grants>

³¹ <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement>

The National Agreement has been built around 4 [Priority Reforms](#)³², these reforms recognise the voices and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are central to the National Agreement. The aim of the Priority Reforms is to change the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve the socio-economic targets outlined in the National Agreement.

The Priority Reforms are:

- Formal partnerships and shared decision-making.
- Building the community-controlled sector.
- Transforming government organisations.
- Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

The Department encourages grantees to work towards having a deep understanding of the Priority Reforms and how embedding them into the way services are designed and delivered will actively contribute to the [Closing the Gap targets](#)³³. This includes considering how to engage in genuine partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Grantees are required to ensure their services are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

10.5 Indigenous organisation type classifications

All Australian governments are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their communities, organisations and businesses to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) at the national, state and territory, and local levels. The National Agreement identifies 4 priority areas for reform within government. One of these is Priority Reform 2, building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To assist government with improving and reporting on the level of community grant funding going to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, changes have been made to the way organisation data is collected. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations will now be classified into 3 groups and asked to self-identify which group they fall under. The 3 groups and their definitions are:

³² <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/priority-reforms>

³³ <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>

Group 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled organisation	These are organisations that are incorporated, not for profit, at least 51% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and at least 51% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled (Board members or equivalent).
Group 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Operated and Controlled organisation	These are organisations that are at least 51% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and at least 51% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled (Board members or equivalent).
Group 3: Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation	These are organisations that are at least 50% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned OR at least 50% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled (Board members or equivalent).

10.6 Multicultural access and equity

The Australian Government's *Multicultural Access and Equity Policy* obliges Australian Government agencies to ensure their policies, programs and services – including those provided by contractors and service delivery partners – are accessible to, and deliver equitable outcomes for, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Grant applicants should consider how they will ensure their services will be accessible to people from CALD backgrounds. For example, service delivery partners may require cultural competency skills. In addition, services, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with clients who have limited English proficiency.

Based on an assessment of the client target group, costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into grant applications (to assist with identifying these costs see the [Translating and Interpreting Services costing tool](#)³⁴).

10.7 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the maximum grant amount to be paid. The Department will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

The Department will pay 100% of the grant on execution of the grant agreement.

10.8 Grants payments and GST

Goods and Services Tax (GST) is out of scope for 2025–26 Volunteer Grants.

If you receive a grant, you should consider speaking to a tax advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement. You can also visit the [Australian Taxation Office website](#)³⁵ for more information. The Department does not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

³⁴ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2024-01/7631-translating-and.pdf>

³⁵ <http://www.ato.gov.au/>

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](https://www.ato.gov.au/)³⁶. We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website no later than 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by section 5.4 of the [CGRPs](#)³⁷.

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your organisation's ability to spend.

We need to know of any changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due because of these changes.

You must also inform the Department of any changes to your organisation's:

- organisation name
- ABN
- addresses
- contact person/s details
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

To inform us of any changes please contact the Department at volunteergrants@dss.gov.au.

If you become aware of a breach of the terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

12.2 Reporting

You are required to keep appropriate records for up to 5 years to ensure that if your organisation is asked to report on the grant, it is able to do so.

12.3 Acquitting your grant

The Department may ask you to provide a financial declaration. The financial declaration will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If you are asked to report, the Department will require you to provide proof of purchase. This can be done in the form of receipts. If receipts have been misplaced, you may complete a statutory declaration with details of specific items purchased including the date and amount of purchase.

³⁶ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

³⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/versions>

OFFICIAL

Spending must be within the grant period

All funding must be spent by the grant agreement completion date, which is stated in the Letter of Agreement. You cannot use grant funding for purchases made before the commencement of the grant period or after the expiry of the grant period.

Unspent funding must be returned to the Department of Social Services. You can contact vgacquittals@dss.gov.au to return unspent funding.

12.4 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation in writing to the Department at volunteergrants@dss.gov.au.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

12.5 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6 Record keeping

You are required to keep appropriate financial accounts and other records for up to 5 years and provide them to the Department if requested.

Records must:

- identify receipt and expenditure of the Grant separately within your accounts
- enable all receipts and payments related to the activity to be identified and reported.

12.7 Evaluation

We will evaluate the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants opportunity to see how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to 3 years after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.8 Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a grant funded under the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants Activity, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This [name of grant activity or project/services] received grant funding from the Australian Government.’

OFFICIAL

13. Probit

The Australian Government will make sure the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the [CGRPs](#)³⁸.

These guidelines may be changed by the Department of Social Services. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on the [GrantConnect](#)³⁹ website.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Feedback and complaints about this grant opportunity

Making a complaint, giving a compliment or offering a suggestion can help the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Community Grants Hub improve their services.

You can provide feedback or make a complaint about the [Community Grants Hub's role](#)⁴⁰ in administering this grant opportunity on behalf of DSS using the [online feedback form](#)⁴¹, or by contacting the DSS complaints line:

Phone: 1800 634 035

Email: complaints@dss.gov.au

Mail: Complaints
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Further information is available on the [DSS Feedback and Complaints](#)⁴² webpage and in the [DSS complaints procedure](#)⁴³.

Feedback and complaints about the grant program, selection process and grant decisions should be addressed to the Department of Social Services by email at complaints@dss.gov.au.

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Community Grants Hub or the Department has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)⁴⁴. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Community Grants Hub or the Department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au/

³⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/versions>

³⁹ <https://www.grants.gov.au/Go>List>

⁴⁰ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/about>

⁴¹ <https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/feedback-form>

⁴² <https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries>

⁴³ <https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/complaints-page>

⁴⁴ <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later think there is an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department and the Community Grants Hub in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct \(section 13\(7\)\)⁴⁵](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999⁴⁶](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy on the [Community Grants Hub⁴⁷](#) website.

13.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988⁴⁸](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles⁴⁹](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

In submitting a grant application under this opportunity, you agree to the Australian Government collecting your personal information, including your name, contact details and role in your organisation, in order to assess your application and for the purpose of grants administration. If you do not provide this information we cannot assess your grant application.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information collected about you under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

⁴⁵ http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol_act/psa1999152/s13.html

⁴⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538>

⁴⁷ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/conflict-interest-policy>

⁴⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text>

⁴⁹ <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles>

OFFICIAL

We may share the information you give us in your application, including personal information, with other Commonwealth entities, the responsible Minister, Assistant Ministers and their staff, and with Members of Parliament, for other purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, or as otherwise authorised or required by Australian law.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the Australian Government would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Privacy Act.

13.4 Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to give out to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, the Australian Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the 3 conditions below:

1. You clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential.
2. The information is commercially sensitive.
3. Revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our Department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

OFFICIAL

13.5 Freedom of information

All documents that the Australian Government has, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*⁵⁰ (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give people the ability to get information held by the Australian Government and its organisations. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Team
 Government and Executive Services Branch
 Department of Social Services
 GPO Box 9820
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

14. Consultation

The Department consulted with the Department of Finance, the Australian Government Solicitor, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Community Grants Hub in the development of these guidelines.

⁵⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A02562>

15. Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act) ⁵¹ .
Activity Start Date	the date you are expected to start delivering the activity according to your grant agreement.
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
Child-Related Personnel	officers, employees, contractors (including subcontractors), agents and volunteers of the grantee involved with the activity who as part of that involvement may interact with children.
closed, non-competitive	a closed non-competitive process involves inviting identified applicants to apply and assessing applications against the selection criteria and not against other applications.
Commonwealth entity	a department of state, or a parliamentary department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the <i>PGPA Act</i> . ⁵²
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024</i> ⁵³ (CGRPs)	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.

⁵¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2013A00123/latest/text>

⁵² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00269>

⁵³ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/versions>

OFFICIAL

Term	Definition
community organisation	any organisation engaged in charitable or other community-based activity operating under Australian law and not established for the purpose of making a profit ⁵⁴
co-sponsoring entity	when 2 or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it.
date of effect	can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker	the person who makes a decision to award a grant.
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
end date of grant activity	the date by which we expect you to have completed the grant activity and spent the grant funding.
Funding Arrangement Manager	the officer responsible for the ongoing management of the grantee and their compliance with the grant agreement.
grant	for the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: a. under which relevant money ⁵⁵ or other <u>Consolidated Revenue Fund</u> ⁵⁶ (CRF) money ⁵⁷ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake.
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant.
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.

⁵⁴ <https://oia.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/australian-government-guide-to-regulatory-impact-analysis.pdf>

⁵⁵ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁵⁶ <https://www.finance.gov.au/about-us/glossary/pgpa/term-consolidated-revenue-fund-crf>

⁵⁷ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Term	Definition
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Australian Government entity Portfolio Budget Statement program.
GrantConnect ⁵⁸	the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
National Redress legislation	means the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 ⁵⁹ .
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) program	described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement ⁶⁰ , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be grant programs. A PBS program may have more than one grant program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
relevant employer	a relevant employer for the purposes of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 ⁶¹ (WGE Act) is a higher education institution, a natural person, or a body or association (whether incorporated or not) that employs 100 or more employees across all subsidiaries within an organisation structure.
selection criteria	comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.

⁵⁸ <https://www.grants.gov.au>

⁵⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2018A00045/latest/text>

⁶⁰ <https://budget.gov.au/content/pbs/index.htm>

⁶¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03332/latest/text>

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Term	Definition
value with money	<p>refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the quality of the project proposal and activities▪ the fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives▪ if the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved▪ the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.

OFFICIAL

Appendix A: 2025–26 Volunteer Grants – expenditure

There are 2 different categories to apply for funding under. Below are high level descriptions of the types of items that are eligible under each category.

Category 1 – Communication or insurance items that will benefit any of a community organisation's volunteers

Eligible items
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Mobile phones, phone bills and radio communication devices✓ Computers, laptops, tablets and iPads, where those items are primarily used for communications and activity✓ Software where the software is primarily used for or to facilitate online communications and activity✓ Electronic audio and visual equipment used for or to facilitate online communications and activity✓ Electronic payment devices✓ Internet service plans✓ Insurance premiums

Category 2 – Items to support eligible cohorts and volunteer-run activities

Eligible items
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Accessibility equipment✓ Background screening checks of volunteers✓ Computers, laptops, tablets, and relevant software✓ Educational equipment✓ Electronic audio and visual✓ Event costs including promotion of volunteering opportunities✓ First aid, safety and hygiene✓ Food preparation equipment and appliances✓ Furniture✓ Grounds maintenance✓ Heat/cooling (portable)✓ Office equipment✓ Promotion of volunteering opportunities✓ Sport and recreation equipment✓ Storage✓ Tools✓ Training✓ Travel/fuel costs✓ Whitegoods and appliances