

# Families and Communities Program 2024–25 Volunteer Grants Grant Opportunity Guidelines

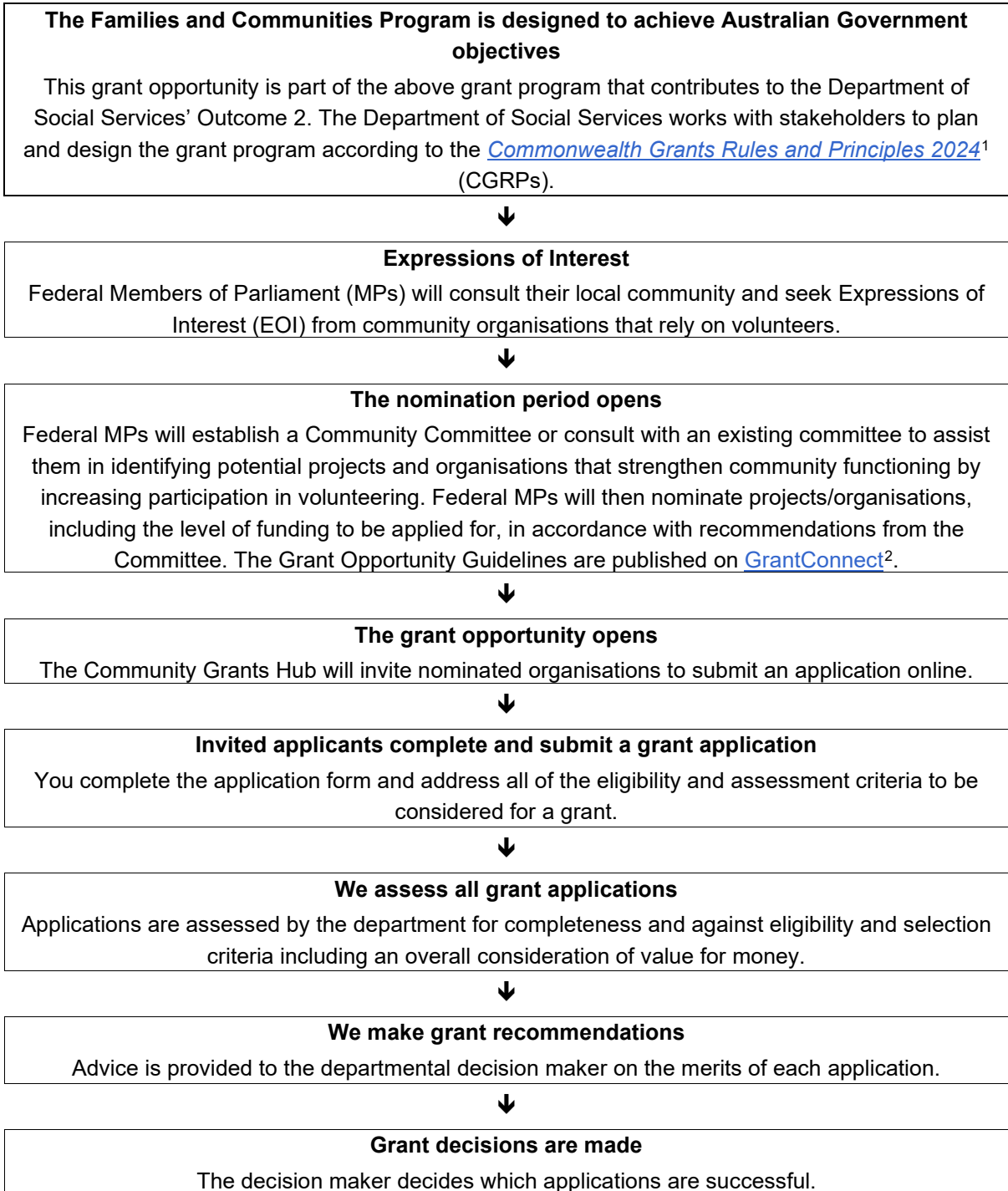
<b>Opening date:</b>	<b>26 February 2025</b>
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	5:00 pm AEDT on 12 March 2025
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	Department of Social Services
<b>Administering entities:</b>	Community Grants Hub
<b>Enquiries:</b>	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: <a href="mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au">support@communitygrants.gov.au</a> Questions should be sent no later than 5.00 pm AEDT on 4 March 2025
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	25 November 2024
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Closed non-competitive

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# 1. Families and Communities Program – Volunteer Grants processes



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

<sup>2</sup> <https://grants.gov.au/>



### **We notify you of the outcome**

Your Federal MP will advise you if your application is successful and the department will then provide written confirmation. We will notify you if your application was not successful.



### **We enter into a grant agreement**

We enter into a grant agreement with you if 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 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round**

We will evaluate your specific grant activity and the 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round 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 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round.

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 of Social Services (the department).

## **2. About the grant program**

The Volunteer Grants Activity is an element of the Families and Communities Program, which aims to strengthen relationships, support families, improve the wellbeing of children and young people, reduce the cost of family breakdown and strengthen family and community functioning. Annual funding of \$10 million for this activity is held within Program 2.1.6: Volunteering and Community Connectedness in Outcome 2. The funding for this opportunity will be available in the 2025–26 financial year.

The objectives of Volunteer Grants are to:

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

The intended outcome of the activity is to strengthen community functioning by supporting and increasing participation in volunteering.

The Department of Social Services and Community Grants Hub administers the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#)<sup>3</sup> (CGRPs)

## **2.1 Community consultation and the role of the Members of Parliament**

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

Federal MPs contribute their knowledge of local needs to the process while providing a mechanism for distributing funds evenly across the country.

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) will open with your Federal MP in November 2024.

Each Federal MP will call for EOIs and must consult with a new or existing community committee to identify local volunteer needs and consider potential applicants in their electorate.

MPs are responsible for convening a community committee consisting of a minimum of 3 individuals representative of the local community, to assist them in the consideration of EOIs in their electorate

There is no specific composition that is needed for the committee other than a minimum of 3 people. The MP may choose to be on the committee or not, and an existing committee that understands local needs can be used. Members of the committee may include:

- Individuals from diverse backgrounds (CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, disability, LGBTIQ+)
- Individuals from different sectors
- Other community leaders
- Different towns representatives
- Local council members

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

Federal MPs will then nominate eligible organisations from the list and endorse the level of funding to be applied for, in accordance with the recommendations of the committee.

The department supports the Federal MP nomination process by providing guidance documentation to Federal MPs outlining their role in the selection process, eligibility requirements and their obligations under the CGRPs. The grant eligibility criteria set out in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines also provides further information to guide Federal MP nomination considerations. For example, the eligibility criteria state that community organisations must be not-for-profit and have a minimum of 40% of volunteers in their workplace to be eligible for nomination.

Federal MP information sessions are conducted prior to the opening of the EOIs. A dedicated helpdesk is available to support Federal MPs through the nomination process.

Federal MPs must submit nominations by 31 January 2025 up to a total of \$66,225 (GST exclusive) per electorate.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

Only organisations nominated by their Federal MP will be invited to submit an application by the closing date.

Applicants will not be funded for more than the amount that has been endorsed by their Federal MP.

Part funding of an application may occur in order to fully exhaust the funding cap available in each electorate.

Community organisations that do not participate in this EOI process will not be able to apply for a Volunteer Grant. Federal MPs will notify applicants of the outcomes of the EOI process.

The nomination period may be extended due to exceptional circumstances such as pandemics and 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 Volunteer Grant does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

### 3. Grant amount and grant period

For this grant opportunity, up to \$10 million (GST exclusive) is available through grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to eligible not-for-profit community organisations, subject to legislative authority for the Volunteer Grants program being provided under the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997*. Grant agreements will not be entered into until the legislative authority is finalised. This grant is not subject to indexation.

### 4. Eligibility criteria

The decision maker can choose to waive the eligibility criteria (other than the criteria set out in section 5.1 below); however, they must be made aware of the risks. The waiver may be used to ensure that applicants are not excluded solely on the basis of entity type, particularly if they are applicants that may otherwise be considered suitable. Clear evidence will be provided to the delegate to enable a decision on whether eligibility criteria should be waived.

We cannot provide a grant if you receive funding from another government source for the same purpose.

This is an electorate-based, closed, non-competitive grant process. The process involves inviting nominated applicants to apply and assessing applications against the selection criteria on their own merits and not against other applications.

#### 4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible to apply you must be an organisation that has been nominated by your Federal MP, 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 the unincorporated association. This means that if your grant application is approved, an authorised officer of the 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 validly executed
- **and**
- have a minimum of 40% of volunteers working for your organisation

- be a not-for-profit organisation
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or be willing to provide a [Statement by Supplier Form](#) (reason for not quoting an ABN). Please refer to the [Australian Tax Office](#) 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 to 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 asked to confirm that either the first or second contact on the application form, or an alternative person connected to your organisation, is legally authorised and willing to assume legal liability. This authorised officer will become personally liable for the delivery of the funded activity, expenditure of funds and any other associated obligations arising from the grant agreement validly executed on behalf of the organisation. If no contact is available to become personally liable your application will not be able to proceed further.

If you are applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust<sup>4</sup>, 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 in different areas and operating as entities in their own right are considered organisations in their

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<sup>4</sup> Trusts are not legal entities in their own right – to be eligible, only the Trustee for the Trust can apply by providing the signed Trust Deed and any subsequent variations with the application form. Trustees must be an eligible entity type as stated in section 4.1. Both the Trust's and Trustee's details will be collected in the application form.



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](#).

## **4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?**

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

- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the [National Redress Scheme](#)'s website 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](#) website on the non-compliant organisations list
- a for-profit organisation
- a non-corporate Commonwealth Entity
- a non-corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- a local government
- an International Entity
- a person (except in the case of entering the agreement 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 listed as an eligible invited organisation at 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, expenditure of funds and any other associated obligations arising from the executed grant agreement.

In this instance, the organisation will be required to provide the contact details of two members who can provide verbal assurance if required, that the individual applying will be the responsible person for the legal liability. The grant agreement will be entered into with the individual on behalf of an unincorporated association.

## 5. What the grant money can be used for

### 5.1 Eligible grant cohorts, items and activities

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

#### **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 communications and activity
  - Software packages, where the software is primarily used for or to facilitate online communications and activity (e.g. email or videoconferencing software)
  - Electronic audio and visual equipment, where the equipment is primarily used for or to facilitate online communications and activity (e.g. 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 or services for the main purpose of supporting a community organisation's volunteers from the following cohorts:
  - Children (under 18) as a means of supporting their development, or
  - Adults whose volunteering activities support children's development and wellbeing
- **(B)** Fund volunteer-run activities within the community organisation for the main purpose of supporting:
  - Children's (under 18) development and wellbeing, or
  - Parents/carers to develop the skills necessary to ensure a child's development

Funding is not to be spent on usual running costs for the organisation in which the volunteers are working, except where stated 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 30 September 2026.

#### **Grant extensions**

If it is likely that your organisation will not be able to spend the grant monies within the activity period, you must seek an extension before the expiry of the activity period on 30 September 2026. This may occur, for example, when an item has been ordered and there has been an unavoidable delivery delay.

Extension requests must be submitted in writing to the Community Grants Hub at [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au).

## 5.2 Eligible locations

Funding totalling \$66,225 (GST exclusive) will be available in each Federal electorate.

## 5.3 Eligible expenditure

Grant funding can only be used for eligible items that

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

You may purchase item/s in any or all of the above categories. Grant recipients should ensure that the funding is used to pay for items that are cost-effective and reasonably priced.

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

Examples of items that are eligible are shown in **Appendix A** on page 28.

Examples of items that are not eligible are shown in section 5.4.

The department 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 and grant agreement.

All grant funds are to be used for activities which take place in Australia.

### **Record keeping requirements**

If your application is successful, you must keep the receipts for items that you have purchased for 5 years. This will be the proof of purchase needed if you are requested to acquit your grant, as detailed in section 12.2.

You must incur the expenditure on your grant between the start date and the end date of the activity period, outlined in your grant agreement, for the expenditure to be eligible.

## 5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for

**You cannot use the grant for:**

- items that are not covered by category 1 or 2 (as outlined above)
- items that are already paid for by other sources for example, state/territory governments, community groups
- items that are for the organisation's paid staff
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation, including the services of a grant writer
- administration costs such as leasing, labour, utilities, and ongoing organisational costs (except for items covered by category 1)
- alcohol or overseas travel costs
- capital works such as buildings, renovations and permanent fixtures – plumbing, kitchens, hot water systems, permanent fencing.

## 6. The assessment criteria

The department will 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 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 products or services 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 how much funding you are seeking between \$1,000 (GST exclusive) and \$5,000 (GST exclusive), which Federal electorate you are operating in and whether you are applying for a category 1 and/or category 2 grant or both.

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 should read and understand these Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the sample grant agreement published on [GrantConnect](#)<sup>5</sup>. Any changes to the grant documentation will be published as an addendum on GrantConnect. To be automatically notified of any changes you can register on GrantConnect.

An example of Commonwealth grant agreement terms and conditions are available on the [Department of Finance](#)<sup>6</sup> website.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/tools-and-templates#types-of-agreements-and-their-templates>

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

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) will open with your Federal MP in November 2024. 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 once you receive the invitation via GrantConnect.
- 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 into an agreement on your behalf and assume legal liability if you are applying as an unincorporated association
- provide all the information requested
- address all questions in the application form
- submit your application to the Community Grants Hub by 5:00 pm AEDT on 12 March 2025.

**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.

A nomination to submit an application by your Federal MP does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

The application period may be extended due to exceptional circumstances such as pandemics and natural disasters. All other extension requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The application form includes help information. 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<sup>7</sup>](#) and the department will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

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 on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au). The Department of Social Services do 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.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/cca1995115/sch1.html](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol_act/cca1995115/sch1.html)

If we find an error or something missing, we may ask you for clarification or additional information. This will not change the nature of 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. You will receive an automated notification acknowledging the receipt of your application.

## 7.1 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

### Late applications

We will not accept late applications unless an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevented the submission of the application. 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 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 submit an email request to the Community Grants Hub via [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au).

The Community Grants Hub will send a link to the grant application form which must be submitted by 19 March 2025 being 5 business days after the grant opportunity has closed.

The late application should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented the application being submitted prior to the closing time.

All late applications will be considered; however, the decision maker or their appointed representative will determine whether a late application will be accepted. The decision of the decision maker will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process.

Once the outcome is determined, the Community Grants Hub will advise the applicant whether their application is successful.

No late applications will be accepted or considered after 19 March 2025.

### Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your grant activity around July 2025.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe (cumulative)
Opening date for Expressions of Interest through Federal MP	25 November 2024
Completed Federal MP Nomination Workbook due to the Department of Social Services	31 January 2025
Organisations invited to apply for a Volunteer Grant	26 February 2025
Applications close	12 March 2025

Activity	Timeframe (cumulative)
Assessment of applications	March to May 2025
Approval of outcomes of assessment process	June 2025
Notification to applicants	July 2025
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	July 2025
Earliest start date of project	July 2025
End date of grant commitment	30 September 2026

## 7.2 Questions during the application process

If you need further guidance about the application process, or if you have issues submitting an application online, contact [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au) or call 1800 020 283 (option 1). Please note that only invited applicants' questions will be responded to during the application submission period.

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within 5 working days. Answers to questions are posted on the [GrantConnect<sup>8</sup>](#) website.

The question-and-answer period will close at 5:00 pm AEDT on 4 March 2025. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

## 8. The grant selection process

### 8.1 Assessment of grant applications

The department will undertake a close non-competitive assessment process which will assess your application against the eligibility criteria and determine if it provides value for money.

When assessing the extent to which the proposal/application represents value with relevant money, we 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 demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives.
- How the grant activities will target groups or individuals

The department may seek and consider additional information about you or your application. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, including through Federal MPs. This may also include 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 consider whether an applicant has an outstanding acquittal from a previous grant round when assessing a new application.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

The department will assess your application on its own merits and for completeness against all the eligibility criteria detailed in the guidelines.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, you may be contacted to correct or clarify the information.

To be recommended for funding, your project must meet the selection criteria, the objectives of the program, and demonstrate it will achieve value for money.

## **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 help them develop recommendations on applications to be awarded a grant.

## **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 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](#)<sup>9</sup> 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](#)<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wgea.gov.au/what-we-do/compliance-reporting/non-compliant-list>



## 9. Notification of application outcomes

If you are successful, you will receive an email notification from your Federal MP and a Letter of Agreement from the department via email. If you are unsuccessful, you will be notified in writing via email.

### 9.1 Feedback on your application

A Feedback Summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website 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.

Each agreement has general/standard grant conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on [GrantConnect<sup>11</sup>](#) 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.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

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

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

The child safe supplementary clause [CB9 or G8A] lists the obligations the successful applicant must comply with to be child safe compliant. To view the child safe supplementary clause, visit Child Safety for DSS grants web page.

## 10.3 National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The [National Agreement on Closing the Gap<sup>12</sup>](#) (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.

The National Agreement has been built around four [Priority Reforms<sup>13</sup>](#), 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.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/priority-reforms>

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](#)<sup>14</sup>. 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.

#### 10.4 First Nations 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:

Organisation	Definition
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).

#### 10.5 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 multicultural communities.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>

Grant applicants should consider how they will ensure their services will be accessible to people from multicultural communities. 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).

## 10.6 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 per cent of the grant on execution of the grant agreement.

## 10.7 Grant payments and GST

Goods and Services Tax (GST) is out of scope for 2024–25 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](http://www.ato.gov.au)<sup>15</sup> for more information. The department does 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.

# 12. How we monitor your grant activity

## 12.1 Keeping us informed

You must let the department know if anything is likely to affect your organisation's ability to spend the grant.

The department needs to know of any changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if it affects your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due.

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

- name
- ABN
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

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

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.ato.gov.au/>

## **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 Financial declaration**

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.

### **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.

## **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 Community Grants Hub at [volunteergrants@dss.gov.au](mailto: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 Record keeping**

The department may request to inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

## **12.6 Evaluation**

The department will evaluate the 2024–25 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.

## 12.7 Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a grant funded under the 2024–25 Volunteer Grants Activity, the department requires you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

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

## 13. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that 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

These guidelines may be changed by the Department of Social Services. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on [GrantConnect](#)<sup>16</sup>.

### 13.1 Enquiries and feedback

#### Complaints about this grant opportunity

Complaints about this grant opportunity or the Community Grants Hub’s service/s must be made in writing using the [online complaints form](#)<sup>17</sup> on the [Department of Social Services](#)<sup>18</sup> website, or by contacting the Department of Social Services complaints line.

Phone: 1800 634 035  
Email: [complaints@dss.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dss.gov.au)  
Mail: Complaints  
GPO Box 9820  
Canberra ACT 2601

#### Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Community Grants Hub or DSS has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)<sup>19</sup>. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Community Grants Hub or Department of Social Services.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (toll free): 1300 362 072  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.grants.gov.au/?event=public.GO.list>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/feedback-form>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/complaints-page>

<sup>19</sup> <http://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 Community Grants Hub in writing immediately at [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au)

The MP, their electorate staff and members of the community committee must also declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interest and that they have been mitigated, or that, to the best of their knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)<sup>20</sup>](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999<sup>21</sup>](#). 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 Hub<sup>22</sup>](#) website.

## 13.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988<sup>23</sup>](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles<sup>24</sup>](#). 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.

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/psa1999152/s13.html](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol_act/psa1999152/s13.html)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/conflict-intrest-policy>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy-law/privacy-act/australian-privacy-principles>

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.

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 also 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, 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.



### 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<sup>25</sup>](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act gives people the ability to get information held by the Australian Government and its organisations. Under the FOI Act, people can ask for documents the Australian Government has. People may not be able to get these documents if these documents need to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons who the information relates to.

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 (DSS)  
GPO Box 9820  
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: [foi@dss.gov.au](mailto:foi@dss.gov.au)

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A02562>

## 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.

## 15. Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the <a href="#">Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</a> (PGPA Act).
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.
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.
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity.
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed, and the grant spent by.
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 PGPA Act.
<a href="#">Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024</a> <sup>26</sup> (CGRPs)	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework that articulates 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.
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 <sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

<sup>27</sup> [australian-government-guide-to-regulatory-impact-analysis.pdf](#)

Term	Definition
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.
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>28</sup> or other <a href="#">Consolidated Revenue Fund</a><sup>29</sup> (CRF) money<sup>30</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ul>
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.
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 [entity] Portfolio Budget Statement program.
<a href="#">GrantConnect</a> <sup>31</sup>	Is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.

<sup>28</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/about-us/glossary/pgpa/term-consolidated-revenue-fund-crf>

<sup>30</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.grants.gov.au/>

Term	Definition
grantee	the organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
<a href="#">Portfolio Budget Statement</a> <sup>32</sup> (PBS) Program	described within the entity's <a href="#">Portfolio Budget Statement</a> <sup>33</sup> , 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 levels, 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.
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.
value for 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 the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ quality of the project proposal and activities</li> <li>▪ fit for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives</li> <li>▪ absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved</li> <li>▪ potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>
volunteering	Is <i>'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain'</i> (Volunteering Australia, July 2015).

<sup>32</sup> <https://archive.budget.gov.au/2022-23/index.htm>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.dss.gov.au/publications-articles-corporate-publications-budget-and-additional-estimates-statements/budget-2022-23>

## Appendix A: 2024–25 Volunteer Grants – expenditure

There are 2 different categories to apply for funding under. Below are examples of the types of items and services that are eligible under each category.

### **Category 1 – Examples of communication or insurance items that will benefit any of a community organisation’s volunteers:**

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

### **Category 2 – Examples of items or services to support the development and wellbeing of children (under 18):**

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