



Investing in Our Communities Program frequently asked questions

January 2024

Why do I need to apply?

Even though you received an election commitment for your project you will still need to submit an application.

Funding provided under this program is public monies and relevant legislation applies. As such, we have an obligation to assess the project for merit, ensure it represents value for money and is suitable for funding under this particular program.

This is in line with the Australian Government's commitment to accountability, transparency and greater integrity in grants administration.

What do I need to do to apply?

You will need to submit the application form for your project within six months of your invitation.

Your application will need to provide appropriate evidence to ensure your project meets the requirements as outlined in the guidelines, including:

- grant eligibility
- consistency with the original announced commitment
- eligible activities and expenditure
- evidence to support claims against the assessment criteria including:
 - benefits of your project to the community
 - project viability and sustainability, and
 - grantee capacity, capability and resources to carry out the project.

When will I get my grant funding and how?

Grant funding is generally paid in arrears. We will negotiate a grant agreement which will include agreed milestones with you. As you achieve these milestones you will be required to submit progress reports. Once your report has been assessed and accepted payments will be processed.

What can I use my grant funding for?

The guidelines provide information on eligible expenditure.

Eligible expenses include constructing new infrastructure, upgrading or extending current infrastructure, fit outs and alterations as described in your funding agreement.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be incurred by you within the project period
- be a direct cost of the project or
- be incurred by you to undertake required project audit or signage activities and
- meet the eligible expenditure guidelines.

In-kind contributions are not eligible expenditure.

What if I have an ineligible expenditure or activity?

The guidelines provide detailed information on ineligible expenditure.

You may be able to apply for an exemption to an ineligible item. If you want to apply for an exemption, you must discuss your circumstances with us prior to submitting an exemption request. Your exemption request will be reviewed and the Program Delegate will make the final decision.

You must ensure you have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure.

What if I have already started my project and spent money on its progress?

The expenditure on your grant should be incurred between the start date and completion date of your project for it to be eligible. Any activity paid for prior to a funding agreement being in place may not be paid for under the grant.

Expenditure incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement may be approved at the discretion of the Program Owner. You should contact us as soon possible if this applies to you.

Can I purchase land with the grant funding?

No, you can only spend the grant and cash contributions on the eligible activities directly related to the project. The purchase of land is an ineligible activity under the program. No exemptions will be considered for the purchasing of land.

Can land be considered as part of my contribution?

The contribution of land can be included in your application and it can be considered as an 'in-kind' contribution, but it cannot be included as part of the cash contribution.

All 'in-kind' land contribution values must be supported by evidence such as a rate notice or independent valuation.

Does my organisation need to own the land or infrastructure we are upgrading or extending using this grant?

No, you do not need to own the land or infrastructure associated with your project. However, you must be able to demonstrate you have the appropriate authority to access the land and/or infrastructure from the owner of the land and/or infrastructure. (Infrastructure also includes capital equipment, technology and the intellectual property required to undertake the project).

You will need to demonstrate that you have, or are in the process of obtaining, all regulatory and development approvals required to undertake your project.

Do I need to have insurance?

Yes, you will need to have insurance policies in place during the completion and Operational Period that are:

- the correct type of policy for your project
- to the appropriate ensured value for your project
- considered normal and adequate for your project

We may request proof of the insurance policy for your project.

What type of information do I include in the Latest Financial Year Figures section of the application form?

Not-for-profit organisations may be required to submit an Accountant Declaration to confirm they can fund their share of project costs.

There is no requirement for local councils to provide Audited Financial Statements or an Accountant Declaration.

If your financial position has been adversely affected by COVID-19, an alternative may be to provide current quarterly or half-yearly financial details. Please contact us if you would like to discuss your situation.

What type of information do I include for questions on project management, risk management and maintaining project benefits?

You must demonstrate that you have completed the planning required to deliver the project on time, on budget and to an appropriate standard.

Project Management – you will need to outline how project activities will be carried out, including timeframes and who will be responsible.

The following information should be included:

- confirmation of required approvals, are they in place or being sought?
- how will goods and services be procured?
- how will you ensure the project is delivered on time, on budget and to the required standards (for example, who will manage the project and what governance arrangements are in place?)

Project Risk – you will need to outline the key risks to your project and how these will be mitigated or managed.

Maintaining Project Benefits – you will need commit to maintaining your project for the duration of the Operational Period. This will be a minimum of one year and up to five years, depending on the level of grant funding, and will be confirmed during negotiation of your Grant Funding Agreement.

How will my application be assessed?

We will review your application against the eligibility criteria to ensure you are eligible for this grant.

If you are eligible, we will assess your application against the assessment criteria.

We will consider your application on how well it meets the criteria, and whether it provides value with relevant money in line with the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#).

The guidelines detail the assessment process.

How long will it take until I hear about the outcome of my application?

Notification of the outcome of your application will be made after we receive all supporting information. We will update application processing times every two weeks on our [website](#).

What type of agreement will I need to sign?

The guidelines outline the types of agreements we must use for Australian Government grants.

The type of agreement we will use will be determined by the grant amount and risk as outlined below:

	Grant value	Type of agreement
Threshold One	≤\$100,000 AND >\$100,000 and ≤\$200,000 (grant assessed as low risk)	Letter of Agreement
Threshold Two	>\$100,000 - ≤\$2,000,000	Simple Grant Agreement
Threshold Three	>\$2,000,000 AND High risk Threshold One and Two projects	Standard Grant Agreement

You will be asked to provide feedback on your draft agreement so that we can ensure project and payment milestones meet your needs. Once the funding agreement is signed by both you and us, the non-sensitive details of your grant will be published on the GrantConnect website within 21 days.

How long do I have to sign my funding agreement?

As soon as we complete the assessment and you are successful, we will enter into negotiations with you for a funding agreement. We would expect your project will be ready to be contracted by 31 December 2023.