



ACT
Government

ACT Youth Scholarship Program

Guidelines

Version: July 2026

Note that applications close in December and January

Accessibility Information

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- If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an **alternative format** – such as large print or audio – please telephone **13 34 27**.
- If English is not your first language and you require the **translating and interpreting services** – please telephone **13 14 50**.
- If you are d/Deaf or find it hard to hear or speak to hearing people on the phone, visit the **National Relay Service (NRS)** at www.accesshub.gov.au

Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Aim	4
3	Government objectives.....	5
4	Eligibility requirements.....	5
5	Funding	6
7	Assessment of applications	7
8	Accepting your Scholarship.....	8
9	Acquittal and reporting requirements.....	10
10	Application submission	10

ACT Youth Scholarship Program

1 Introduction

The ACT Youth Scholarship Program (Scholarships) provide financial assistance to support individual young people aged 12 to 25 to overcome financial barriers to their personal and professional development.

The program responds directly to feedback from young people through engagement activities such as the ACT Youth Assembly and other youth consultations, which consistently highlight challenges associated with accessing:

- wellbeing and mental health supports
- transport, driving lessons and life skills
- training, vocational pathways and employment readiness support.

2 Aim

The Scholarships support individual young people to access services, supports and development opportunities that strengthen their wellbeing, independence and pathways to education, training or employment.

This may include (but is not limited to):

- wellbeing and mental health programs
- self-improvement programs and life-skills development
- skills-based learning courses and vocational training
- employment and pre-employment support
- participation in activities, events or programs that support personal development, including sporting, cultural, community or civic engagement activities
- equipment and materials to stay engaged in learning and personal development course or training.

Funding is provided for the benefit of an identified individual young person. While payment may be made to a service provider, school, training organisation or support organisation on behalf of the applicant, the funding must directly support that individual's participation, development or wellbeing and must not be used to subsidise broader organisational, program or event costs.

3 Government objectives

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are encouraged to apply.

Consistent with the objectives of the grant program, funding for projects, activities or initiatives that contribute towards Closing the Gap priorities will be considered.

This is part of the ACT Government's commitment to Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As outlined in the [ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement](#), the ACT Government and community partners are committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services.

ACT Wellbeing Framework

Projects and initiatives are encouraged to demonstrate how they address any of the ACT Health and Wellbeing Framework outcomes.

For more information, visit the [ACT Wellbeing Framework website](#).

4 Eligibility requirements

Who can apply?

Eligible individual young people may apply for a Scholarship.

Organisations, profit making groups, government entities and educational institutions and registered political parties are not eligible to apply for a Scholarship.

The Scholarship does not fund organisations, clubs, school projects or delivery and coordination of group activities.

Individual eligibility requirements

Individuals can apply if they:

- Are an Australian citizen, a permanent resident of Australia or hold an ACT Services Access Card
- Are aged between 12 and 25 years at the time the application is submitted
- Reside in the ACT or attend a school or higher education institution in the ACT, and can provide proof of this, such as:

- a copy of an ACT Driver Licence or ACT Proof of Identity Card
- proof of residency showing a current ACT address
- a current ACT school ID or school report card
- current higher education student ID or enrolment confirmation
- Have not received an ACT Youth Scholarship funding in the last 12 months, and
- Apply at least 6 weeks before the proposed event or project start date.

Applications received with an event or project start date that is less than 6 weeks from the date of submission will be deemed ineligible for a Scholarship.

Parent/Guardian permission

Applicants aged 12 to 17 years of age must have permission from their parents, guardian or carer before submitting their application.

Your parent, guardian or carer will be required to upload their photo ID and proof of ACT residency.

5 Funding

Available funding

The maximum Scholarship an individual can apply for is \$500.

Successful recipients must spend the funding within 12 months of receiving the Scholarship and complete a completion survey.

What can an ACT Youth Scholarship fund?

Funding may be used for costs associated with:

- mental health programs and services (for example, counselling, psychology appointments or mental health support programs)
- wellbeing or fitness programs that are short-term and time-limited (for example, a short-term yoga or pilates program, supervised youth fitness sessions, or a structured wellbeing course)
- self-improvement programs and life-skills development (for example, confidence-building programs, leadership courses, driving lessons or life-skills workshops)
- skills-based learning courses and vocational training (for example, accredited short courses or vocational skill development)
- employment and pre-employment support (for example, interview skills workshops, job-readiness programs or work preparation support)

- equipment, materials or resources required to support participation in learning, personal development, sporting or educational activities (for example, IT equipment, tools, training equipment or materials required for a course, program or training activity)
- participation in activities, events or programs, including sporting, cultural activities, whether in the ACT or interstate (for example, registration fees, travel or accommodation to compete or participate)
- resources or equipment to enhance employment opportunities (for example, work clothing for a school-based apprenticeship).

NOTE: All funded items must demonstrate direct benefit to the individual applicant. Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be assessed for funding.

What can an ACT Youth Scholarship not fund?

ACT Youth Scholarships cannot be used for the following:

- applications from individuals who have received an ACT Youth Scholarship within the last 12 months
- applications where the event or project start date is **less than 6 weeks** from the date the application is submitted, including activities or events that took place before the application is submitted (retrospective costs)
- any costs that have been paid before submitting the application, including deposits or partial payments (reimbursement is not available)
- personal spending money, including food and/or beverages (for example, meals, snacks, takeaway food or drinks purchased while attending an activity or event)
- financial assistance for travel companions (for example, costs for parents, carers, coaches or support persons)
- ongoing or open-ended gym memberships, fitness subscriptions or recreational fees that require continuing or recurring funding (for example, monthly gym memberships or subscription-based fitness apps)
- internships or student exchange programs.

ACT Youth Scholarships do not provide reimbursement. Funding cannot be requested for costs that have already been paid for, including reimbursement to parents, carers or guardians.

7 Assessment of applications

Assessment process

Following an eligibility check, the Scholarship Assessment Team will review and assess your application.

All funding decisions are at the sole discretion of the Health and Community Services Directorate and are subject to available funding.

Assessment criteria for applications

All eligible applications will be assessed by the Scholarship Assessment Team against the following criteria:

- **Individual benefit:** The application demonstrates that the requested support will provide a clear and direct benefit to the individual young person and helps the young person's wellbeing, development or future pathways.
- **Demonstrated need:** The application clearly explains the barrier or challenge the young person is facing and why financial assistance is needed to access the opportunity.
- **Appropriate use of funds:** The application clearly explains what the money will be spent on and includes a simple budget showing the costs are reasonable.

Applications are considered through a monthly assessment round:

- applications are open year-round (except the months of December and January)
- eligible applications for the calendar month are assessed in the first week of the following calendar month

Notification of outcome

The Health and Community Services Directorate will aim to notify all applicants of the outcome of their applications in writing by email within the first 2 weeks of the following month.

Example: If you submit your application on 2 May, the Scholarship Assessment Team will assess your application in early June. You are likely to hear the outcome by mid-June.

8 Accepting your Scholarship

Agreement

Successful applicants will be sent a Scholarship Letter of Offer and an Acceptance Form to complete and return.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into an Agreement with the ACT Government, through the Health and Community Services Directorate. This will be via a Scholarship Letter of Offer. The Letter of Offer will include:

- how to accept the offer
- the amount to be funded
- what you may use the Scholarship funding for
- how long you have to fully expend the Scholarship funding

- the need to undertake a completion survey 12 months after receiving the Scholarship.

To accept the Scholarship, successful applicants:

- over the age of 18 must sign and return the Acceptance Form, including nominated bank account details.
- aged 12 to 17 years must arrange for their parent, guardian or carer to sign the Acceptance Form and provide bank account details.

The ACT Government does not carry any responsibility for the activities undertaken by recipients. Funds must be spent only on items and activities listed in your application. The Letter of Offer may include conditions for what the funding can and cannot be spent on.

Payment of Scholarships

Scholarship funding may be paid to:

- the service provider or event organiser directly on behalf of the applicant (preferred)
- the applicant in some cases, for example where the applicant is required to purchase items such as uniforms or equipment from a retail store
- a parent, guardian or carer in some cases, if the applicant is aged 12 to 17 years, for example where the applicant is required to purchase items.

Please note once a completed Acceptance Form has been received, the ACT Government finance team requires a minimum of 2 weeks to process Scholarship payments.

All payments are made for the benefit of the individual applicant only. Payments to an organisation on behalf of an individual do not constitute funding to an organisation.

Changes to project

Your Scholarship is funded based on the details of your application only. If your circumstances change and you would like to change how you spend the funding, you must first obtain written approval from the Health and Community Services Directorate.

Your request to change the approved activity, program or use of Scholarship funding will be reviewed by the Health and Community Services Directorate Delegate and you will be advised in writing if the request is approved or declined.

Failure to seek approval to change how you spend the funding can result in non-conformance and may result in you having to return the full Scholarship funding to Health and Community Services Directorate.

Scholarship and project promotion

The ACT Government reports the number of Scholarships awarded and the total Scholarship amount funded in the Health and Community Services Directorate Annual Report. No personal information about Scholarship recipients is published.

By accepting a Scholarship, you understand that an ACT Government Media team representative may contact you to seek permission to share your story about how the Scholarship helped you. You do not have to provide this permission.

If you do not wish to be contacted by an ACT Government Media team representative, please let the Office for Youth Engagement know when you accept your Scholarship or at any point during the Scholarship funding period.

9 Reporting requirements

All successful applicants must use the Scholarship funds within 12 months of being awarded Scholarship funding.

At the end of the 12-month period, you will be asked to complete a short online completion survey to inform funding administration and future improvements. The completion survey will seek your feedback that:

- the Scholarship was used for its approved purpose
- the activity or support has been completed
- how the Scholarship funding helped you.

Reporting process

The Scholarship completion survey must be submitted at the end of the 12-month period after receiving funding, or once you have completed your activity, through SmartyGrants at:

<http://dhcs.SmartyGrants.com.au/applicant>

Instructions relating to the completion survey will be provided to successful applicants in their Letter of Offer. You will need to login to SmartyGrants using the same details you used to submit the application. Please keep these in a safe place.

Unspent funds

Any unspent funds from your Scholarship may be returned to the Health and Community Services Directorate. Please email the Office for Youth Engagement at Youth.Engagement@act.gov.au to advise of any unspent funds.

10 Application submission

This section explains how to submit your application on SmartyGrants. All Scholarship applications must be submitted online at:

<https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2627YS>

Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted.

If you require assistance to complete your application, please contact the Office for Youth Engagement at: Youth.Engagement@act.gov.au

Creating a log in

You will need to create a SmartyGrants log in to begin your application and you may begin anywhere in the application form.

Navigating the form

On the right-hand side of every screen, there is a box which links directly to every page of the application. Click on any page to jump directly to that page. You can also click NEXT PAGE or PREVIOUS PAGE on the top or bottom of each page to move forward or backward through the application.

Saving your draft

You can press SAVE at any point and log out of SmartyGrants. When you log back in, your draft application will be saved, and you can re-start where you left off.

Please make sure you save as you go.

Submitting your application

The SUBMIT button is on the final page. You will not be able to submit your application until all the questions are completed. Once your application has been submitted, you cannot make further changes to it.

Supporting documentation

All applicants must provide supporting documentation at the time of submission.

If your application does not include all the required documentation, it may be deemed ineligible.

SmartyGrants provides an online help guide for applicants. This guide will explain the essential steps you need to take to complete and submit your form. The help guide is accessible at:

<http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>

Ensuring correct contact details

Please make sure that the contact details listed in your application form are correct. The Health and Community Services Directorate will use this information for all correspondence relating to your application.

Keeping a copy for your records

It is recommended that you keep a copy of your application for your records as well as your application ID number (e.g., 2627YSxx).

You can print a copy of your completed online application or save it as a PDF.