



ACT
Government

2025-26 Multicultural Inclusion Grant Program

Grant Guidelines

Applications open: 12 noon Tuesday 9 December 2025
Applications close: 3 pm Tuesday 24 February 2026

Accessibility Information

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2025-26 Multicultural Inclusion Grant Program

1 Introduction

The Health and Community Services Directorate is pleased to announce the opening of the 2025-26 Multicultural Inclusion Grants Program (the Grants or the Grant Program).

In February 2023, following extensive community consultation, the ACT Government enacted the *Multiculturalism Act 2023*, to support the Territory's continuous growth and improvement as an inclusive city, and celebrating our multiculturalism and diversity. The Charter for Multiculturalism was also established under the *Multiculturalism Act 2023* and reinforces the ACT Government's dedication and commitment to supporting and fostering an inclusive Canberra where everyone feels a sense of belonging, and where cultural diversity is not only accepted but also embraced and celebrated.

2 Aim

This program aims to fund projects that celebrate cultural diversity and enhance social cohesion in the ACT. The grants highlight and promote community participation, cultural diversity, and inclusion in the ACT in line with the Charter for Multiculturalism and the *Multiculturalism Act 2023*.

3 Government objectives

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations are encouraged to apply.

Consistent with the objectives of the grant program, funding for projects, activities or initiatives that contribute towards Closing the Gap 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 must demonstrate how they address any of the ACT Wellbeing Framework outcomes.

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

4 Eligibility requirements

Who can apply?

- Organisations

Individuals, profit making groups, government entities and registered political parties are not eligible to apply.

Eligible organisations, partnerships or collaborations can apply once in the 2025-26 round but can apply in both categories.

Organisation eligibility requirements

Organisations can apply if they:

- Operate in the ACT
- Are a non-government, legally incorporated entity or supported by an incorporated auspicing association
- Are a registered not-for-profit or a charitable organisation
- Have no overdue acquittal obligations for any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grant. **All overdue acquittals must be completed prior to submitting an application.**
- Have the qualifications, skills, experience, and reputational standing to manage the proposed initiative or event
- Have not received funding from another source to deliver or provide the same or similar project/program
- Have an appropriate insurance cover held by the organisation implementing a funded project. This may include Public Liability of no less than \$10 million, Personal Accident, Volunteer Cover and or Directors Professional Indemnity. Evidence of insurance may be required as a condition of the grant.

Unincorporated community groups may be eligible to apply through an auspicing entity. For more information refer to 'Community groups to be auspiced' section.

Auspicing arrangements

If you are a community group or organisation that is not legally incorporated (unincorporated) then you may ask an incorporated association to auspice an application on your behalf.

An auspicing body is an organisation that accepts the legal responsibility including financial accountability for a project. If your organisation is not a legal entity, you will need to arrange for an organisation that has legal status to act as an auspicing body.

The auspicing organisation must provide a letter of support with the application stating they will:

- Be the applicant for this grant funding and if successful contract directly with the Health

and Community Services Directorate for the receipt of grant funding, and comply with all grant funding contractual obligations, including the provision of financial acquittal documentation

- Be the entity that will accept the grant funding for the project and administer the funding in accordance with the Grant Guidelines and Letter of Offer
- Disburse grant funding to the auspiced party in accordance with the Grant Guidelines and Letter of Offer and not unreasonably withhold funding from the auspiced party for the implementation of the project.

Funding cannot be used for

Participants are not allowed to spend grant funding on:

- Projects that do not contribute to or meet the aims and priorities of this program
- Projects that are not delivered primarily within the ACT or benefits the ACT community
- Projects or activities already funded by the ACT Government or Australian Government, or where alternative more appropriate funding is available.
- Projects that are a duplication of, or in parallel with an existing service, program, project, or event
- Commercial and fundraising projects and events
- General administration and operational costs such as salaries, memberships, subscription fees, telecommunication and IT, stationery, rent, leasing, utilities, machinery, vehicles or large capital equipment of any kind
- Items not declared in the grant application and therefore unapproved
- Costs of projects or activities that have already taken place, or items already purchased
- Any performance or activity at the National Multicultural Festival
- Operational insurance costs specific to the project
- Activities for or by a political party
- Any travel or accommodation costs
- Prize money or gifts
- Activities that contain content that may offend or bring into disrepute the applicant organisation, the Health and Community Services Directorate and/or the ACT Government
- Activities that do not comply with public safety requirements or meet relevant Australian Government legislative requirements.
- Projects which are deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.

5 Funding categories

The 2025-26 Multicultural Inclusion Grant has 2 specific funding categories.

The total funding available under this Program is \$197,000.

As there are no goods or services being exchanged, and the grant is intended as a contribution, GST is not applicable to grant payments.

Successful recipients must spend the funds within 12 months of receiving the grant.

- Cultural Celebrations <https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2526MCC>
- Community Programs <https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2526MCP>

Eligible applicants may apply once in each category.

Funding availability for each of the specific funding categories is outlined here:

Cultural Celebrations

The maximum grant that can be applied for in this category is \$3,000.

Cultural Celebrations grants are available to help celebrate and mark significant cultural days, celebrations, and observances in the form of community events.

Cultural Celebration applications may include proposals for events or celebrations which

- Enable Canberra's multicultural communities to celebrate and mark significant cultural days, celebrations, and observances
- Promote community inclusion through cross-cultural and inter-faith engagement celebrations, including Harmony Week

Funding in this category can be used for things like

- Venue hire
- Decorations
- Catering
- MC, facilitator or hosting costs
- Flyers and advertising

Community Programs

The maximum grant that can be applied for in this category is \$6,000.

Community Program applications may include proposals for programs, projects, or forums which

- Strengthen community inclusion, social connection and social cohesion through collaborative programs, projects, and activities involving the wider Canberra community
- Support community inclusion and social connection by providing access to programs and services in a culturally appropriate way (e.g. swimming lessons, literacy classes, safety messages, driving lessons, skills development, social groups)
- Raise community awareness of, and respond to racism and discrimination
- Provide accessible services and programs for people from multicultural communities
- Strengthen and promote Canberra as a Welcoming City
- Support an equitable, harmonious, progressive and unified community across the ACT
- Support and build community connection and resilience

Funding in this category can be used for things like

- Facilitator or instructor fees
- Materials and equipment to run educational programs
- Venue hire
- Promotional materials for your program

Project eligibility

Eligible projects must:

- Provide a service/program or event which will be located primarily in the ACT and primarily for the benefit of ACT residents
- Explain how the program will primarily benefit ACT residents

Late applications will not be accepted.

6 Assessment of applications

When your application is received it will be checked against these Grant Guidelines to ensure eligibility for funding.

Assessment process

Following the eligibility check, the Grant Assessment Team will assess your application. The Grant Assessment Team will be made up of a chairperson and 2 other assessors which may include a member of the community. Grant Assessment Team members will be appointed on their knowledge of the priority areas.

Successful applications may not receive the full amount applied for. The Grant Assessment Team will review and adjust the level of allocated funding as necessary.

Grant Assessment Team members will use the information provided in your application and information from any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grant rounds to assess the applications submitted. If you have been successful in other recent grants rounds, the Grant

Assessment Team may take this into consideration during their assessment where there a high number of applications received to ensure fairness across all applicants.

The Health and Community Services Directorate is committed to preserving and promoting multicultural traditions and celebrations, ensuring they remain relevant and a vital part of our society, embracing both traditional and emerging cultures. The program respects the right to self-determination in cultural affairs and expression. It also recognises that applicants need to consider customs and cultural protocols when applying for the grant and delivering projects.

All decisions on whether to award a grant, or on the amount of any grant, are at the sole discretion of the Health and Community Services Directorate.

Assessment criteria for applications

Due to the competitive process, all eligible applications will be assessed and prioritised by the Grant Assessment Team against the following assessment criteria:

Cultural Celebrations

- **Benefit:** The application describes the Cultural Celebration and what it means to your community.

Tell us about your event and why it's important to your culture and community.

- **Capacity:** The application describes the people and experience to successfully run the Cultural Celebration.

Tell us about the people who will plan and run the celebration. You can mention if you've held a similar event before.

- **Budget:** The budget is reasonable for the planned celebration based on estimates.

Clearly detail how you plan to spend the requested grant funding and include what each cost is for.

Community Program

- **Need:** The application shows why the Community needs this Program.

Tell us who in your community needs this program and why. Explain why the grant funding is needed to run it.

- **Benefit:** The Community Program will help build inclusion, social connection and social cohesion in the Canberra community.

How will your program build social connection and inclusion for your cultural group and the wider multicultural community in the ACT? What is the benefit for people participating in this program?

- Capacity: The application describes the people and experience to successfully run the Community Program.

Tell us about the people who will plan and run the program. You can mention if you've run a similar program before.

- Budget: The budget is reasonable for the planned Community Program based on estimates.

Clearly detail how you plan to spend the requested grant funding and include what each cost is for.

In some cases, due to the high demand for grants only partial funding can be offered. Therefore, you will need to consider if you can proceed with your project if only partial funding is available.

If you have applied for another grant for this same project, please ensure this is explained in your application.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Notification of outcome

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications in writing via email.

The Health and Community Services Directorate expects to notify applicants of the outcome of their applications in early June 2026. Please ensure that this timeframe is taken into consideration when planning your projects. Between the grant round closing and receiving an outcome letter, applicants may not hear anything from the CSD Grants team.

Unfortunately, not all applications can be funded as there are usually more applications received than funds available. This does not necessarily mean that the project or application is not worthy. It is more likely that other project applications were ranked higher in the assessment process.

If you would like feedback on your application, please see the 'Application Feedback' section.

7 Accepting a grant

Grant Agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into an Agreement. This will be via a Letter of Offer with the Health and Community Service Directorate for which Grant funding will be provided. The Letter of Offer will include:

- How to accept an offer
- Detail on the grant amount to be funded
- Detail the purpose or activity for which the grant is given
- The term of the funded activity for which the grant amount must be fully expended; and
- How to acquit the grant funds when the project has been completed.

Funds must be spent only on items and activities listed in your application. The Letter of Offer may have conditions of what the funding can and cannot be spent on.

Changes to project

A grant is funded based on the details of your application only. If something changes due to unexpected circumstances, you must first obtain written approval from the Health and Community Services Directorate. Your request to change the project will be reviewed by the Delegate and you will be advised in writing if the request is approved or declined. Failure to seek approval to change the purpose can result in non-conformance and may result in you having to return the full grant amount that was paid by the Health and Community Services Directorate.

Acknowledging support

Grant Recipients must ensure the assistance provided by the ACT Government is appropriately acknowledged in any promotional or other materials. The ACT Government's Branding Guidelines and "Supported By" logo are accessible at:

[Design and Brand Guidelines - ACT Government](#)

Grant and project promotion

The names, project descriptions and funding amounts of all successful applications will be posted on the ACT Government Grants website following completion of the grant process. By accepting a grant, you agree to this and to the ACT Government Media team contacting you to discuss publishing a story on how the grant was used.

If you do not want your name published, or to be contacted by the ACT Government Media Team please let the CSD Grants Team know when you accept your grant.

8 Acquittal and reporting requirements

All successful applicants must expend the funds within the timeframes nominated in the Letter of Offer.

An acquittal is a signed declaration, submitted at the end of the activity, stating that funding was used for the agreed purpose. This includes providing copies of receipts as proof of expenditure.

Acquittal process

The acquittal of the grant must be submitted through SmartyGrants at:

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

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

The funds must be expended in accordance with the activity/project outlined in the grant application and in the Letter of Offer, and all receipts must be retained and submitted with the acquittal.

Unspent funds

Any unspent funds from your grant must be returned to Health and Community Services Directorate. Please email the CSD Grants team at HCSDGrants@act.gov.au to advise of any unspent funds.

Please note: To be eligible for funding in any future Health and Community Services Directorate grants rounds, applicants must meet all acquittal requirements.

9 Application submission

Online Application Form

Now that you have read the Grant Guidelines, this section explains how to submit your application on SmartyGrants. All applications must be submitted via the online application form at:

Cultural Celebrations – <https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2526MCC>

Community Programs – <https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2526MCP>

All applications must be submitted online. Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted.

If you require assistance to complete your application, please contact Multicultural ACT at: ma@act.gov.au

Start early – the process of preparing a grant application depends on how well you have planned the activity for which you are applying. You can start this process long before you start and submit an application.

If you have never prepared a proposal or written a grant application, we suggest you take some time to understand the process and reach out for assistance if you need it. You will find lots of tips on the SmartyGrants website – <http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>

Start gathering your support materials. These might be quotes, or website details. You can never have enough evidence to support an application, so long as it is relevant to the activity to be funded.

Create login

You will need to create a log in to begin your application and you may begin anywhere in the application form. Please make sure you save as you go.

Navigating 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 draft

You can press 'save' at any point and log out. When you log back in, your draft application will be saved, and you can start where you left off.

Submitting 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>

Correct contact details

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

Completing application as a group/team

Several people can work on an application using the same login details provided that only 1 person is working on the application at any given time. Please ensure you save as you go.

Save application

It is recommended that you keep a copy of your application for your records as well as your application ID number (e.g., 2526MIGxx). You can print a copy of your completed online application or save it as a PDF.

10 Application feedback

Providing feedback

Applicants are encouraged to complete the feedback questions at the end of the application form. This feedback assists to improve grant programs, processes, and service delivery. You can also email feedback to the CSD Grants team at HCSDGrants@act.gov.au.

Requesting feedback

Health and Community Services Directorate supports your right to ask questions about the grant application process. If your application has not been successful, email the CSD Grants team at HCSDGrants@act.gov.au, quoting your application ID number and outlining your specific concerns. The Health and Community Services Directorate will provide a response as soon as possible.

This information also assists to improve grant programs, processes, and service delivery.