



ACT
Government

2026-27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant Program

Social Participation Grant Guidelines

Applications open: 12 noon Wednesday 7 October 2026
Applications close: 3pm Thursday 5 November 2026

Accessibility Information

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2026-27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant Program

1 Introduction

The Health and Community Services Directorate is pleased to announce the opening of the 2026-27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant Program (the Grants or the Grant Program) for social participation grants which seeks to address priority areas of the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* (the ACT Agreement). These guidelines provide information on the objectives of the Grant Program, and how individuals and organisations can apply.

Successful applications will contribute to the objectives of the ACT Agreement, specifically, the priority areas under the remit of the ACT Government's Health and Community Services Directorate, i.e.: *Cultural Integrity, Connecting Community, Community Leadership, and Lifelong Learning*. The ACT Agreement is the key framework that guides the delivery of equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT and surrounding region. For more information, please see the ACT Agreement at: [ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement](#)

2 Aim

The aim of this Grant Program is to increase initiatives in the ACT and surrounding region that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and Community and as a result:

1. **Connected Communities**

- where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are connected to strong families and social support networks, and
- where social inclusion is enhanced, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are experiencing positive generational experiences.

By funding the community directly to undertake initiatives important to them, the Grant Program delivers on the ACT Government's commitment to provide "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the ability and resources to exercise self-determination over their own solutions".

3 Eligibility requirements

Who can apply?

- Individuals

Eligible applicants can only apply once in the 2026-27 round.

Applicants must have no overdue acquittal obligations for any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grants. **All overdue acquittals must be completed prior to applying.**

Individual eligibility requirements

Individuals can apply if they:

- Are an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.
- Are over the age of 18 years old (Parents and carers may apply on behalf of dependents under the age of 18.)
- Reside in the ACT or connecting region. For the purpose of these Grants, the ACT and connecting region includes the following the Australian Capital Territory and the New South Wales Member Councils:
 - ACT
 - Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
 - Yass Valley Council
 - Snowy Monaro Regional Council
 - Upper Lachlan Shire Council
- Have not received funding from another source to deliver or provide the same or similar project/program.
- Have no overdue acquittal obligations for any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grant. **All overdue acquittals must be completed prior to applying.**

Documentation Required:

Proof of Age: *ACT Drivers Licence or Proof of Age Card.*

Proof of Residency: *ACT or NSW Drivers Licence, utility bill, showing an address in the ACT or eligible region.*

Proof of dependents (if applying on behalf of a child): *Medicare card or other evidence showing the relationship of a dependent and the applicant.*

Proof of Aboriginality:

Applicants will be asked to provide confirmation of their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity as a requirement of grant eligibility criteria.

Determination of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural identity is confirmed by a person meeting the following criteria:

- Being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- Identifying as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person; and
- Are accepted as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent in the community where they currently or have previously lived.

Applicants may submit one or more of the below methods of confirmation:

- Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA) – This is a document issued by a registered Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) in accordance with the legal definition.
- Letter of recognition from a registered ACCO identifying that the person is known and accepted as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

- Letter from a recognised Elder who has relevant cultural authority, that identifies that the person is known and accepted by the community as an Aboriginal person.
 - Communal recognition as an Elder, generally through a registered ACCO, will be considered in determining the relevance of the claims in line with the grant requirements.

(Note that an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander officer within the ACT Government must also meet this criterion to make an informed and culturally appropriate determination).

Did you know?

Students aged between 3 and 18 can apply for the Future of Education Equity Fund. More information about how to apply for this fund can be found here -

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/support-for-our-students/financial-and-resource-assistance-for-families>

Funding cannot be used for

The following will not be funded:

- Activities that do not contribute to or meet the priority areas of this program.
- Activities that are not delivered primarily within the ACT.
- Costs of projects or activities that have already taken place, or item already purchased.
- Debt repayments of any kind, including personal loans, or HECS-HELP debt.
- Projects or activities already funded by the ACT Government or Australian Government or are better suited to other available funding opportunities or incentives.
- Travel or accommodation costs not specifically associated with the project.
- IT equipment including laptops, tablets and phones.
- 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 or activities which are deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.

4 Funding categories

The total funding available under the Social Participation Grants is \$20,000.

If the full amount of \$20,000 is not expended on Social Participation Grants, it may be allocated to applications under the Cultural, Leadership and Lifelong Learning grants.

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

Social Participation Grants – <https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2627ASG>

The maximum grant that any 1 person in the application can apply for is \$500.

Organisations cannot apply in this category.

The intention of the Social Participation Grants is to increase community participation, engagement and inclusion, and to reduce social isolation.

Grants can be used to cover costs associated with undertaking activities that connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and promote social inclusion.

Activities must align with outcomes of the ACT Health and Wellbeing Framework.

The grant funding can cover fees and items you may need to purchase for these social activities. For example:

- Painting classes and relevant materials
- Sports registration, equipment and uniforms
- Music classes and instruments
- Sewing courses and relevant materials
- Dance classes and uniforms
- Cooking classes and relevant equipment
- Community theatre memberships fee (or online version), or
- Gym or pool memberships and relevant materials.

The ACT Government does not carry any responsibility for the activity undertaken by the grantee.

5 Assessment of applications

As this is non-competitive grants process, your application will be checked against these grant guidelines to ensure eligibility for funding.

Information provided in your application and information from any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grant rounds will be used to assess the applications submitted. If you have been successful in other recent grant rounds, this may be taken into consideration when balancing the high number of applications received to ensure fairness across applicants.

If the grant round is oversubscribed with more applications received than the funding available, priority will be given to the following groups –

- Those who didn't receive funding in the 2025-26 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Participation Grants
- Applicants aged over 65.

Grants will be awarded using these priority areas until the available funding is exhausted. If more funding becomes available in the 2026-27 financial year, applicants who were deemed eligible but were not successful due to the available funding being exhausted, may be offered a grant.

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.

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 February 2027. Between the grant round closing, and receiving your outcome letters, applicants may not hear anything from the Grants Hub.

6 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 your funded activity for which the grant amount must be fully expended

The ACT Government does not carry any responsibility for the activity undertaken by grant recipients.

7 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:

Social Participation Grants – link to application form (<https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2627ASG>)

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

If you require assistance to complete your application, please contact the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs team via email to OATSIA.Grants@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 apply.

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 login 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. The Health and Community Services Directorate will use this information for all correspondence relating to your application.

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. 2627ASGxx). You can print a copy of your completed online application or save it as a PDF.

8 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 Grants Hub at HCSDGrants@act.gov.au.

Requesting feedback

The 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 Grants Hub 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.