

NSW Social Cohesion Grants for Local Government – empowering local governments to design and embed sustainable social cohesion initiatives

Guidelines

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1. About the program

The purpose of this program

The **NSW Social Cohesion Grants for Local Government** encourages applications from all local councils across NSW.

Local government knows and understands their communities which helps to deliver economic, environmental, and social outcomes across a range of areas that impact social cohesion.

Analysis of social cohesion best practice highlights the significant role that local government plays in promoting and strengthening social cohesion.

Local councils are well placed to design and implement initiatives that build stronger, more resilient, and cohesive communities. Councils can embed principles of social cohesion across various areas – from strategy and planning to civic engagement, tracking and monitoring.

The NSW COVID-19 pandemic has added to factors affecting social cohesion at the local level, highlighting even further the importance of locally led responses to disruptions caused by the pandemic. For this reason, the NSW Government is administering a local government social cohesion grants program that seeks to identify social cohesion opportunities and challenges in local communities and support local councils and their community partners to deliver innovative solutions.

We are looking to understand **what social cohesion opportunities and challenges exist in** your communities and are inviting you to **propose initiatives that respond to** these problems.

The **NSW Social Cohesion Grants for Local Government** program aims to:

- Build resilience of local community leaders and groups
- Track and measure social cohesion within the local area
- Encourage civic engagement and participation
- Enhance community cohesion and cultural inclusion
- Enhance places and spaces that reflect diverse local character, stories and needs
- Build partnerships and networks to strengthen social cohesion within the community

Successful submissions will:

- be local government led, in partnership with one or more community organisations or local councils and
- provide innovative solutions to social cohesion opportunities and challenges.

For more detailed information please see the below section titled 3. Criteria – What We are Looking For.

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice are seeking submissions that respond to the Expression of Interest. These submissions will be shortlisted, and successful candidates

will be invited to participate in the grants process by lodging their detailed application by 2 May 2022. Successful grant recipients will be notified by 13 May 2022.

Successful recipients must agree to attend a series of four separate capability building webinars. All successful applicants will enter into funding agreements which include a 'grant deliverables' reporting component and acquittal requirements.

Grant amounts

Councils are invited to apply for funds between \$50,000 and \$100,000 (excl. GST) each.

The available funding will be awarded to successful applicants through a competitive assessment process where applications for funding will be assessed against a set of criteria.

Only one application per local NSW council can be submitted for consideration.

Eligibility criteria

Local councils are eligible to apply for this grant program.

Community organisations can be a project partner as part of the application. However, the application must be submitted by a NSW Local Council that will auspice the project, be responsible for the project and enter into the funding agreement if successful.

Auspicings councils must have an active role in the implementation of the project if this partnership approach is established in an application.

The auspicings council will be responsible for:

- submitting the application
- if successful, signing the funding agreement
- if successful, all legal and financial responsibilities on the partner organisation's behalf
- if successful, ensuring all project activities are completed
- if successful, submitting progress and completion reports as well as all financial statements.

The following organisations are not eligible to apply for funding under this program:

- Any entity that is not a NSW local council.

Release of funds

Grant funds will be released after the establishment of a funding agreement with successful applicants in 2022. Successful applications may receive part or the entire amount of the funding requested.

Funds will be released via a one-off payment via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) at the beginning of the contract, and all funds must be expended on or before 31 December 2022, unless otherwise agreed to by DCJ.

Use of funds

Staffing Costs

Applicants can allocate funds requested for staff related costs. These costs must be directly related to the proposed project.

Project Activities

All funded activities must contribute to the achievement of the program's aims.

What will not be funded

Applications seeking ongoing or recurrent funding for programs will not be supported.

Applications directly from individuals seeking individual personal payments will not be supported.

NSW Department of Communities and Justice may seek confirmation or clarification regarding a project's activities and funds sought as part of this program before funds are released.

Funding is **not** available for:

- Supplementing, increasing, or continuing ongoing service delivery that is the core business of the organisation unless it is directly related to enhancing capacity to support localised social cohesion initiatives
- projects and/or activities that are not related to social cohesion
- reimbursement of expenses already incurred
- covering existing debts or budget deficits of the organisation
- party political activities
- purchase of alcohol, tobacco products, gaming services, entertainment streaming
- commercial or fundraising activities
- cash prizes or gifts.

2. How to apply

Eligible organisations are invited to apply for a portion of the total available funding.

Submissions to the Expression of Interest open at 9am (AEST) on 9 February 2022 and close at 5pm (AEST) on 17 March 2022.

Short listed candidates will be invited to submit a grant application with their detailed application at 9am (AEST) on 28 March. Applications will close at 5pm (AEST) on 2 May 2022.

The closing date and time is a strict deadline. No extensions to the deadline will be permitted.

Phase	Date	Activity
Expression of Interest	9 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Expression of Interest is published on the DCJ website Interested parties submit 1-page response and evidence of eligibility
	17 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expression of Interest responses close
	21 March - 26 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment panel reviews submissions and shortlists candidates
Grant application	28 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortlisted candidates are invited to submit an application
	2 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant application submissions close
	2 May - 9 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment panel considers applications responses and successful recipients
	13 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful recipients notified
Co-design	June (TBC) 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful recipients to attend a series of four separate capability building webinars

The Department of Communities and Justice uses the online program Smarty Grants for all grant submissions, accessible through a portal on the Grants page on the department's website and via this link: <https://dcj.smartygrants.com.au/SocialCohesionEOI>

Through the portal, applicants are required to log in via Smarty Grants to access the online application form. If the applicant organisation has previously used Smarty Grants to apply for a grant, then they will already be registered and can use existing usernames and log in details, and do not need to set up a new registration/account.

All required attachments will be uploaded through the online application form in Smarty Grants. Please do not upload documents that have not been requested. Letters of support are NOT required.

The online application form includes an application checklist to help ensure all the required information is provided. All required fields marked with an * must be completed.

NSW Department of Communities and Justice will not accept applications unless they are submitted online through the Smarty Grants portal. Incomplete and/or non-compliant applications will not be progressed for assessment.

All grant queries must be submitted in writing, via email to james.fry@justice.nsw.gov.au

3. Criteria – What are we looking for?

The assessment process is competitive. Applications from ineligible organisations will not be considered. All eligible applications will be assessed based against assessment criteria as part of the competitive assessment process.

Your submissions must clearly address the following criteria.

Application form is complete and submitted on time

Applications that are not submitted online through the approved Smarty Grants portal before the closing date with all required aspects of the application form completed will not be considered.

Application demonstrates how it will meet the following:

Expression of Interest

- Applicant can demonstrate eligibility to participate in grant program.
- Expression of interest demonstrates how the proposed project will address at least one of the program objectives.
- Expression of interest outlines the social cohesion opportunity or challenge within their local area.
- Expression of interest outlines proposed solution or initiative that will address this challenge, including:
 - An outline of the project approach and estimated resources to deliver this innovation¹.
 - An outline of a proposed partnership with a community organisation or another NSW local council to increase connectedness across the community.

Shortlisted candidates – detailed grant application

- Proposed project addresses one of more of the program objectives.
- Application clearly describes the social cohesion problem in the community.
- Application provides a project plan that outlines activities and tasks, milestones and associated risks with implementing the proposed initiative.
- Application demonstrates value for money and provides detailed project budget.
- Application demonstrates benefits to the community and how the project will achieve

¹ A detailed budget is not required at this stage.

- program objectives.
- Application outlines proposed partnership arrangement and demonstrates how it will build connectedness and strengthen social cohesion.
- Application demonstrates willingness to participate in an evaluation of the initiative.
- Application demonstrates that the organisation has the appropriate skills and expertise to deliver the project, including prior experience delivering similar project activities and outcomes.

NSW Department of Communities and Justice always receives more funding applications than the available amount of funding for our Grant Programs. The limited funding available and the competitive assessment process means that sometimes, even strong applications will be unsuccessful.

4. Assessment Process

Grants are awarded on merit following a competitive assessment process.

All applications for grants are initially reviewed by to ensure mandatory compliance with eligibility criteria and required documentation. Compliant applications are then assessed by an assessment panel convened by DCJ. Shortlisted applications are invited to submit a detailed application for consideration by the grant assessment panel.

Project Budget

Your proposed project budget will be assessed. All applications must submit a clear and complete project budget outlining project expenditure.

The final approved budget will be in line with eligible expenditure and subject to funding availability. In some cases, partial funding may be awarded or not all expenditure items supported for funding.

The project budget will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Reasonability and accuracy of the proposed cost.
- Amount and proportion of expenditure going towards staff related costs (noting that ongoing or recurrent operational and/or administration costs will not be funded).
- Scope and reach of activities proposed.
- Capacity of organisation to acquit the funds.

The Assessment Panel will make recommendations for grant funding to the Delegated Approver who will approve successful applications.

Both successful and unsuccessful grant applications will be notified in writing.

DCJ does not provide feedback regarding unsuccessful/successful applications.

5. Funding agreements

Representatives from each grant partnership will be required to:

- attend four short social cohesion capability building webinars in June 2022
- contribute to program evaluation
- Deliver their designed project by 31 December 2022 or a date by agreement with DCJ
- acquit funds by 31 December 2022 or a date by agreement with DCJ
- participate in forums and materials DCJ may produce to share social cohesion updates, insights, and learnings.

If funding is awarded, the DCJ Program Terms and Conditions will apply to the grant funding agreement.

Applicants will be required to:

- review the Terms and Conditions and declare in their application that they have read and understood them
- acknowledge that an agreement based on the Terms and Conditions will apply to the grant
- if awarded a grant, agree to comply with the Terms and Conditions in acquitting the grant.

Successful applications for funding must be delivered on time and on budget. No extensions to the completion deadline will be provided.

Reporting expectations

The NSW Government requires consistent and accurate reporting of funding expenditure to ensure accountability. The provision of progress and completion reports are a condition of funding.

Throughout the process and at completion, grant recipients will be required to provide:

- regular progress reports
- data against a range of program measures
- acquittal letter, signed by the CEO and Chair (or equivalent suitable position holders), detailing expenditure
- a completion report providing data against a range of program measures.

6. Terms and Conditions

Disclaimer

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

Department of Communities and Justice accepts no responsibility for your project, irrespective of the funding provided by the agency to support the project, and irrespective of its listing on the DCJ website or other NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice publications.

Organisations are responsible for meeting their duty of care and all other obligations to project participants and other stakeholders.

Public Liability Insurance

All grant-funded events and activities must be covered by Insurance.

Your organisation is required to provide a valid Certificate of Currency for Public Liability Insurance with a minimum cover of \$5 million in the name of the applicant before funding can be released.

Your organisation is responsible for ensuring that it has appropriate insurance coverage in place for the project, equipment or activities, and its day-to-day operations. Organisations that employ staff must comply with relevant industrial relations, and workplace health and safety requirements.