

Connecting Seniors Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions 'FAQs'

September 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Communities and Justice acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this document.

We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

Connecting Seniors Grant Program

Published by Department of Communities and Justice

dcj.nsw.gov.au

First published: September 2024

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Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

For more detailed information about compliance with grants administration requirements please refer to the [NSW Government Grants Administration Guidelines](#).

For additional support about grant administration processes, contact Grant Design and Support email grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

Eligibility Criteria

Q: What kind of organisations are eligible to apply?

- **A:** Incorporated not-for-profit community organisations
- Other organisations or government agencies that are formally partnering with a not-for-profit organisation
- Other, as determined by the policy / program area, e.g., NSW local council operating under the Local Government Act 1991 NSW.
- NSW local council operating under the Local Government Act 1993
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)

Note: for the purposes of this grant program, organisations deemed to be ‘**incorporated not-for-profit community organisations**’ include:

- incorporated organisations that are registered and approved as not-for-profit bodies by NSW Fair Trading
- not-for profit companies limited by guarantee, registered in NSW (must have ACNC registration and/or DGR status)
- Indigenous Corporations (must be registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations)
- associations (registered under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 with NSW Fair Trading)
- NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- religious organisations operating in NSW
- NSW non-government organisations established under an Act of Parliament.
- Incorporated not-for-profit bodies are organisations that are registered and approved as not-for-profit bodies by NSW Fair Trading.

The following are mandatory eligibility criteria. Further information is provided below:

- all applicants must have appropriate insurance of \$10 million.
- all applicants must address the NSW National Redress Scheme sanctions
- applicants must adhere to NSW Government public health orders and advice in regard to COVID-19. Up-to-date information is available on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#)

Q: How do I qualify as an Aboriginal and Community Controlled Organisation?

A: For the purposes of this grant program, 'Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations' are defined in accordance with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap:

Clause 44 of the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) states that:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control is an act of self-determination. Under this Agreement, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation delivers services, including land and resource management that builds the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people and is:

- incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit.
- controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
- connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services.
- governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.

Note: If you are submitting your application as an ACCO, you may need to provide evidence of your ACCO status.

Q: Does my organisation require an ABN to be eligible?

A: Yes. Your organisation should have an ABN to apply for this grant.

If your organisation does not have an ABN, you will need to partner with an organisation and complete a subcontracting agreement with an incorporated organisation with an ABN. That organisation may apply for funding on your behalf. For more information on subcontracting arrangements please refer to the Not-for-profit Law website provided by Justice Connect at www.nfplaw.org.au/free-resources/working-with-others/sub-contract. Please also refer to Connecting Seniors FAQs Completing the Application.

Q: Our organisation is not incorporated. Is there any way we can apply for funding?

A: All applicant organisations must be incorporated and/or fit into the one of the types of organisations listed in the Grant Guidelines. For more information about becoming incorporated, call the registry of co-operatives and associations at NSW Fair Trading on 1800 502 042.

If you have an ABN, you can check your incorporation status at abr.business.gov.au.

Q: Can not-for-profit groups make a joint application?

A: DCJ will only provide a grant to a single organisation. Organisations can work together however there must be one lead organisation using subcontracting arrangements. Please refer to the Connecting Seniors FAQ's and the DCJ subcontracting policy.

Q: Can I apply for more than one category?

A: Yes. You will need to complete and submit a separate application for each category.

Refer to the table below to see what categories you are eligible for.

Organisation Type	Aboriginal Grant	Multicultural Grant	Creation Grant	Enhancement / Expansion Grant	Local Council Grant
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation	✓		✓	✓	
Multicultural Not-For-Profit Organisation		✓	✓	✓	
Not-For-Profit Community Organisation			✓	✓	
Local Council					✓

Note: Please note, while organisations can apply for multiple categories, a maximum of one grant will be awarded per organisation in each funding round (that is, for 2025). This is to maximise the number of grant recipients.

Q: Can I apply for a grant if I was awarded a grant in the Connecting Seniors Grant Program 2024?

A: Yes. For new projects, refer to the table to check your eligible categories.

If you would like to enhance or expand on your current project, you will need to apply for Category 4: Enhancement and/or Expansion grant.

Please note, you will be ineligible if your organisation has an outstanding acquittal with DCJ.

Q: How do I demonstrate eligibility for a Category 1: Aboriginal grant project?

A: Aboriginal grants can only be awarded to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Your project must demonstrate how you can improve opportunities for older Aboriginal people to engage and connect with their communities, through cultural projects.

Examples of Aboriginal projects that may be eligible for a grant but not limited to:

- an ACCO that aims to build connections among Elders and older Aboriginal people. The program will also provide an opportunity to undertake cultural activities.
- a program that empowers older Aboriginal people. This program focuses on enhancing Elders independence and strengthening Aboriginal communities.
- a program that focuses on community participation for older Aboriginal people to connect and supports older Aboriginal people to engage in culturally defined activities.

Note: We encourage applicants to use these examples as a guide and to bring their own innovative ideas and unique perspectives to their proposals.

Q: How do I demonstrate eligibility for a Category 2: Multicultural Grant?

A: Multicultural grants can only be awarded to multicultural organisations whose primary focus is working with people who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Your project should demonstrate how you can improve opportunities for older people from a CALD background to engage and connect with the community, through cultural projects led by multicultural organisations.

Examples of Multicultural projects that may be eligible for a grant:

- a South American Latin seniors club that provides a diverse range of activities including excursions, dance classes, cooking and computer classes.
- an intergenerational art project that is designed to bring together seniors and young adults from our multicultural community through weekly art classes.
- a project that facilitates group weekly sessions for older men from a CALD background that includes activities such as trivia, movie night and bingo in their own language.

Note: We encourage applicants to use these examples as a guide and to bring their own innovative ideas and unique perspectives to their proposals.

Q: How do I eligibility for a Category 3: Creation grant for a new project?

A: Applications for Creation grants should demonstrate that the grant will be used to fund an innovative project that give seniors different opportunities to become engaged in the community via various activities.

You may also wish to design the program so seniors are able use their strengths to give back to the community or promote engagement via a mentoring program. Activities should bring people together in a constructive way to build social connections, reduce the isolation of seniors and enhance community engagement.

Examples of projects that may be eligible for a Creation grant but not limited to:

- an Aboriginal organisation facilitating a new exercise and movement class for older Aboriginal people where participants undertake weekly seated non-strenuous exercise, followed by a brain stimulation activity and social interaction at the local cafe.
- a community based social engagement project, designed to build social connections and opportunities for volunteering where participant are matched to programs aligned with their skill set or interest.
- a series of activities to connect seniors through the arts in a regional area. The program will include theatre performance, music, writing and poetry and seniors will be given the opportunity to perform their chosen art to showcase at a community event.

Note: We encourage applicants to use these examples as a guide and to bring their own innovative ideas and unique perspectives to their proposals.

Q: How do I demonstrate eligibility for a Category 4: Enhancement and Expansion grant for a current project?

A: Building upon the existing framework and design of program, an application for an Expansion and enhancement grant should demonstrate that an existing project will be expanded by, for example:

- targeting a different cohort group
- targeting a different geographical area
- adding additional events and/or activities to the current program
- increasing more seniors in the community or linking with other groups
- building on skills and the self-confidence of the seniors via mentoring and/or volunteering.

Examples of projects that may be eligible for an Enhancement and Expansion grant but not limited to:

- a community group that runs a regular movie appreciation night for seniors seeks funding to set up a Bollywood movie club, in partnership with an organisation that works with people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.
- to increase the number of participants/sessions of an intergenerational playgroup that brings together groups of children aged 0 – 5 and older people in local community spaces to foster social connections, improve outcomes for both adults and children.
- a community readership project that delivers a combination of Book Clubs and Author Events for seniors at additional aged care centres, libraries and community venues, cultivating a love of reading that improves mental health of older people.

Note: We encourage applicants to use these examples as a guide and to bring their own innovative ideas and unique perspectives to their proposals.

Q: How do I demonstrate eligibility for a Category 5: Local Council grants project?

A: Applications for a Local Council grant must demonstrate positive outcomes for older people by delivering projects tailored to the needs of the local community.

Examples of projects that may be eligible for a Local Council grant:

- a local council partners with a digital literacy mentoring program for isolated seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The council delivers digital literacy workshops through community centres in multiple priority locations.
- a local council hosts a series of monthly events; with an emphasis on recreation, education, and wellbeing, in different locations across the local government areas. The events encourage people to get to know other seniors, their neighbours and their community by trying something new.
- a local council facilitates workshops that bring together seniors in aged care facilities with young people. These workshops focus on improving well-being and social literacy, offering mutual benefits to both age groups and promote connections between schools, senior facilities, and community services.

Note: We encourage applicants to use these examples as a guide and to bring their own innovative ideas and unique perspectives to their proposals.

Q: Are projects under the Local Council category expected to maintain sustainability after the 12-month program concludes?

A: Yes. It is expected that as a local council you consider the sustainability of the project beyond the 12-month program and demonstrate this in your application. You may need to consider staffing, resources and creating partnerships with other organisations.

Q: Under Category 5: Locals Council Grants, can I subcontract the work to other smaller providers?

A: As a Local Council, it is preferred that you manage your own projects. If you still choose to subcontract the work to smaller providers, you will need to:

- notify Department of Communities and Justice about your subcontractor arrangements
- work with subcontractors to execute the agreed project
- be solely responsible for that project and are required to manage it.

Q: Does having more participants mean that I have a better chance of getting a grant?

A: No. The objective of the program is to reach and engage seniors, based on the identified needs of the community. However, you will need to engage the minimum number of participants for each project depending on the funding category and the amount awarded.

As a guide, we recommend a minimum of 60 participants per category. This calculation is based on a cost of \$500 per person, resulting in a total grant value of \$30,000.

DCJ understands that certain projects may not be able to reach this participant count due to their regional, rural, or remote location, as well projects targeting unique cohort groups. Your full application will be considered, and applicants will not be penalised if their estimated number falls below this figure.

What grant funds can be used for

Q: What can we use the grant funds for?

A: Funds can only be used for expenses/activities directly associated to the project. The application must clearly outline your proposed expenditure in the budget you submit with your application. Refer to the Connecting Seniors Grant Program 2025 guidelines for the list of expenses that are excluded.

Q: can we receive funding if we've already received an insurance payment, government grant or government funding for the same project?

A: No

Q: Can we apply for a project that has already started?

A: Grant funds are not available for projects already in progress at the application stage.

Q: Can we use funding for wages and salaries?

A: No, except in three cases that include:

- You intend to hire or contract one or more new staff members to work on the project.
- You intend for an existing staff member to work additional hours/days to work on the project.
- An existing staff member will be assigned to the project and working the same hours as before; however, their prior duties have been significantly reduced to match the time now devoted to the project. In this case, DCJ may require written evidence that these duties have changed (in the form of copies of old and new position descriptions).

Q: What is subcontracting?

A: In simple terms, for the purposes of these grants “subcontracting” refers to an arrangement between your organisation and one or more other organisations/individuals (referred to as “subcontractors”) to assist your organisation to provide services funded through your grant. A subcontracting arrangement requires the eligible organisation to enter into an agreement with the subcontractor to conduct the work, but the applicant (lead) organisation will retain the contractual obligations to DCJ under the Grant Funding Agreement for delivery and accountability. For this reason, it's important you carry out due diligence before entering an agreement.

Q: Is subcontracting the same as auspicing?

A: Yes, please note the term “subcontracting” is used for the purposes of this grant program.

Q: What are the responsibilities of a subcontractor?

A: Responsibilities of the applicant organisation include:

- Completing and submitting the application form and providing its own bank account details and authorised signatories (rather than those of any subcontractor/s)
- Accepting grant funding on behalf of the subcontractor/s
- Providing grant monies to the subcontracted organisation in accordance with the details provided in the application
- Providing project management assistance to the subcontractor/s
- Providing any required reporting and financial acquittals.

Q: What if I am successful, and I am entered in a subcontracting agreement?

A: If your application for grant funding is approved, you will need to seek formal permission in writing from DCJ to enter subcontracting arrangements. Please refer to this link for more information on how to obtain written consent. For more information about subcontracting, please refer to the DCJ [subcontracting](#) policy.

Completing the application

Q: Do I have to use SmartyGrants to apply?

A: Yes, applications for this program will only be accepted that are submitted via the SmartyGrants portal,

Q: Can I review the application form before starting my application?

A: Yes, when you log on to SmartyGrants and view the application you can also choose to download as a PDF to review whenever you like. You can also preview the form online. Please note that PDF copies of application forms do not show which questions are conditional, so you may see questions that do or do not apply to your organisation.

Q: Can I provide letters of support or references to support my application?

A: No, only your application form and any documents requested and submitted through the form on SmartyGrants will be considered.

Q: Is there support available to help me apply or answer questions?

A: The DCJ Grants team can assist organisations with any queries regarding the application process. Organisations can contact Grant Design and Support at grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au Please quote your Application ID in all correspondence. If you are not familiar with the SmartyGrants management system, please refer to the SmartyGrants Help Guide for Applicants or their general help page. You can also contact SmartyGrants directly if you are having technical difficulties with the application form or your SmartyGrants account/password, for contact details visit their help page.

Q. What is the difference between an ACCO and other organisations that serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

A: Please refer to our page on [Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations](#) (ACCOs), which also provides information on our commitment to building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.

Q. Should we include GST in our application?

A: No. your funding request should exclude any GST that you will be charged by contractors or suppliers as part of the cost/delivery. If your application is successful and your organisation's ABN is registered for GST, you will be paid GST on top of the approved grant amount. If your organisation ABN is not registered for GST or you do not have an ABN, you will only be paid the approved grant amount.

Q: Who needs to sign off on our application?

A: The Applicant Declaration must be made by two of your organisation's authorised signatories, who will also be responsible for signing the Grant Funding Agreement via DocuSign should your application be successful. More information on DCJ authorised signatories is available on the DCJ website. Please note, you must provide the contact details (email address, phone number, name and position) of the relevant authorised signatories, or their delegates, in your application form. Please contact grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au immediately if these details change.

Q: Why would we want to provide the details of a third (optional) person in our application form to view the Grant Funding Agreement?

A: DCJ administers Grant Funding Agreements to successful organisations via DocuSign, which only allows those who receive an individualised link to access the document for viewing. Therefore, all of those who wish to either sign or view the Grant Funding Agreement must provide their contact details. You may wish to include any relevant legal or administrative staff to review a copy of the Grant Funding Agreement before it is signed.

Q: Can value-in-kind be considered as funding contributed by a not-for-profit organisation?

A: Yes. Donated materials and contributions by paid staff and volunteers of the organisation are allowed as part of the not-for-profit organisation's contribution to the cost of a project. The estimated value of these contributions should be provided in the project budget.

Q: Can I submit my application after the due date?

A: Applications that are late or incorrectly filled out or incomplete will not be accepted.

Other requirements

Q: What insurance is my organisation required to maintain?

A: Your organisation:

- is required to provide a valid Certificate of Currency for Public Liability Insurance with a minimum cover of \$10 million in your organisation's name, which you will upload as part of your application

- must retain any other insurance required under Commonwealth and NSW law for the performance of its activities funded by this grant, if successful
- is responsible for ensuring it has appropriate and current insurance coverage in place to cover any liability of the grant recipient that might arise in connection with the performance of its obligations under its Grant Funding Agreement, which includes activities carried out by any other individual or organisation that you may subcontract.

Q: What is the NSW National Redress Scheme?

A: The National Redress Scheme is part of the Commonwealth Government’s response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The Scheme:

- Acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions;
- Holds institutions accountable for this abuse; and
- Helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a Redress payment.

The Scheme started on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years. The NSW Government will not award a grant to a non-government organisation with Redress Obligation (or to any of its Related Entities) if that non-government organisation:

- Has declined to join the Scheme, or
- At the expiry of six months after the time it is notified to join the Scheme, has failed to do so.

For further information please visit the NSW National Redress Scheme Sanctions Policy webpage.

Q: Do I need to provide banking details?

A: Yes. It is your responsibility to provide the correct banking details, including the authorised signature to verify your bank details, in your application form. Funds transferred to an incorrect bank account may not be recoverable. This applies even if you have provided your banking details to DCJ in the past or are currently receiving other payments from DCJ.

Q: Why should I keep my contact details up to date?

A: Your application, Funding Agreement and acquittal for the grants will be managed using the SmartyGrants online grants administration system and DocuSign. We will contact you and your organisation’s authorised signatories using the details provided in your application on SmartyGrants.

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to keep DCJ up to date with any change in contact information, including the contact details of authorised signatories. DCJ is not responsible for any consequences should your grant offer be withdrawn due to out-of-date contact details in SmartyGrants. Please email grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au to update contact details.

Completing the application - one stage process

In grant programs where only the one application form is used, the following process is typical:

- You can log in to SmartyGrants on the link provided.
- You are not required to complete your application in one sitting and can save and return at a later date to complete and submit.

- Once your application has been submitted you will receive an automated response from SmartyGrants. If you have not received this email, your application has not been successfully submitted, or the confirmation email has ended up in your junk mailbox.
- You can also log in to the online system and click 'My Submissions' to view all submitted and unsubmitted applications. Submitted applications are identified by a green tick. Carefully check your application prior to submitting. If you realise that you have made an error once you have submitted your application please contact GrantDesignandSupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au for assistance before the closing date.
- Applications that are late or incorrectly filled out or incomplete will not be accepted'.

Assessment process

Q: What is the assessment process?

A: The assessment process for a one stage application:

1. DCJ eligibility team conducts a review to ensure eligibility the eligibility criteria listed above and general compliance with guidelines
2. DCJ assessment team will assess each eligible application against the assessment criteria listed above and make recommendations for the final decision maker.

After applications close

Q: What happens when DCJ receives my application?

A: Applicants will be formally notified by December 2024 if their application has been successful or unsuccessful. Applicants must ensure their contact details on SmartyGrants remain up to date.

Q: Will the information in my application be kept confidential?

A: Information received in applications and in respect of applications is treated as confidential, and all assessors will sign a confidentiality agreement before reviewing your application. However, documents in the possession of the government are subject to the provisions of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*. If you are successful, the NSW Government may share or publicise information on your program. An agreement that this may occur will form part of your Grants Funding Agreement].

Q: When will I know if my application was successful?

A: You will be notified via email by December 2024. Applicants must ensure their contact details on SmartyGrants remain up to date.

Q: If I'm successful, what happens then?

A: You will be notified via email by December 2024 and shortly after a Grants Funding Agreement will be sent via DocuSign to the authorised signatories, and any additional reviewers, as provided in your application form. Successful applicants are required to return the signed Funding Agreement within seven days of receipt.

Grant Funding Agreements can only be signed by authorised officers of your organisation. This may be a member of the executive/committee as deemed under the Articles of Association or Constitution if you are a not-for-profit organisation. Please refer to the following for further details

on authorised signatories and delegation. Please note, you must provide the contact details (email address, phone number, name and position) of the relevant authorised signatories, or their delegates, in your application form. Please contact grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au immediately if these details change. It is your responsibility to ensure staff availability to complete and sign documents, to carefully read the terms and conditions of the Grant Funding Agreement, and to sign the Grant Funding Agreement using the correct authorised signatories. Once we receive your signed Funding Agreement via DocuSign, your Grant Funding Agreement will be countersigned and sent to you by email.

Q: What happens if situations change and we wish to change the details of our program after we receive funding?

A: Any variations to the approved purposes outlined in your original application form on SmartyGrants must be formally requested and approved in writing before any related work takes place, as your application form will form part of your legally binding Grant Funding Agreement with DCJ. Failure to do so may result in you being required to return the grant monies in full. To discuss a variation, please contact the Seniors team by email Seniors@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

Q: What reporting will be required?

A: Successful applicants will need to submit mid-term report in June 2025 and a final completion report by 28 February 2026.

Q: What are the acquittals requirements?

A: Successful applicants will be required to submit a simple financial acquittal by 28 February 2026. The acquittal will include an expenditure breakdown on:

- Staffing costs
- Reimbursement
- Minor equipment and assets
- Operational costs
- Minor expenses for individuals.

An officeholder in your organisation will be required to certify that the grant funds have been expended as per your financial acquittal.

Q: Why was my application not successful?

A: If your application is not successful, it does not mean your application is without merit. Funding is limited and not all applications are successful. Due to the high volume, DCJ is unable to provide individual feedback on each unsuccessful application.

Communities and Justice

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