



## **Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants Guidelines**

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Connected Neighbourhoods grants provide funding for projects that support diverse communities of a **particular neighbourhood** through increased community connection, access and participation – building on principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. They also help local community develop and deliver their own solutions to local priorities.

## **Purpose of Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants**

The City of Melbourne is committed to creating connected and inclusive communities **especially at a neighbourhood or suburb level**. We provide small grants for community organisations and individuals to support community connection, social inclusion, access and participation for City of Melbourne community members, and to implement community-led initiatives to address neighbourhood priorities.

## **Objectives of Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants**

Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants allow the City of Melbourne to progress community development outcomes in the communities and neighbourhoods that make up our municipality. The objectives are to:

- increase community participation, connection, equity, diversity and inclusion
- empower community to identify and respond to local issues and priorities

## **Eligibility criteria**

To be eligible to apply for funding through Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants, applications must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant organisations must be:
  - a not-for-profit constituted body;
  - a school;
  - a community leader;
  - an individual community member supported by their community; or
  - a Body Corporate/Owners Corporation, the person submitting the application must be a member of the Body Corporate/Owners Corporation committee and they must provide evidence of that they are a member of the committee.
- Auspiced applications are permitted in this program.
- Applicants must be located within or be delivering a project within the City of Melbourne municipality.
- Applications must have a focus on providing outcomes for City of Melbourne's local communities.
- Funded activities must create opportunities for community members to experience greater connection to their community through opportunities that improve access and participation.
- One application per year, per applicant will be accepted.

Funding will not be considered for:

- core operational funding
- applications where more than 25 percent of the funding request is allocated to paying staff. This does not include contractors who are engaged to provide a specific service for the project.
- applications where funding will be used to pay the applicant for good or services they provide as part of their own business or other for-profit entity
- activities with a religious focus. For example activities that include religious service, education, preaching or proselytizing, or those that exclude community members of different faiths from participating
- party political activities. This includes 'Meet the candidate' debate style events.
- activities that denigrate or exclude parts of the community or that breach Commonwealth and State anti-vilification laws
- activities based on the consumption of alcohol or gambling
- capital works/purchases
- commercial activities and/or organisations
- fundraising activities, competitions, prizes or award events
- interstate and international travel costs including travel costs for facilitators/consultants
- activities that have already commenced or occurred
- activities that are being, or have already been, funded through other City of Melbourne grant or sponsorship programs
- activities run by the City of Melbourne
- organisations with outstanding acquittals or debts owing to the City of Melbourne
- incomplete applications
- late submissions.

## **Funding level**

Applications for Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants funding can be made for any value up to \$2000.

## Key dates

Applications must be received a minimum of six weeks prior to the start of the activity.

Applications will be open until 8 May 2026 or when the budget for the program is fully allocated.

Applications will be assessed monthly and the cutoff dates for each month are below. If your application is received by the cutoff date you will receive an email with the outcome for your application by the end of the following month.

<b>Application cutoff dates 2025-26</b>
13 June
18 July
15 August
12 September
10 October
14 November
Applications received from 14 November to 16 January will be assessed in February
16 January
13 February
13 March
17 April
8 May

Funding must be spent within 12 months of receiving the grant.

## Assessment process

Once we have received your application:

- You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application.
- Your application will be assessed against the eligibility and assessment criteria. Ineligible applicants will be notified that their application is ineligible.
- Funding recommendations will be advised to Council.
- All applicants will receive a notification via email with the result of their application within 8 weeks of application.
- Information about grant decisions will not be given over the phone.
- The list of successful applicants will be published on the City of Melbourne's website approximately a month after all applicants have been notified of the outcome of their application.

## Assessment criteria

Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grant applications are assessed against the assessment criteria below. Only applications that adequately respond to the assessment criteria will be considered.

### 1. Alignment to the purpose and objectives of Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants (35%)

- Does the activity/organisation support and increase community connection and community participation building on access, equity and diversity to progress inclusion for City of Melbourne community members in a particular neighbourhood?
- How many City of Melbourne **community members** are likely to participate and benefit?

### 2. Community need (35%)

- Is this activity linked to neighbourhood priorities (as outlined in the Neighbourhood Portal or per advice from the Neighbourhood Partner).
- Has the applicant appropriately engaged with target participants prior to submitting the application?

### 3. Budget (30%)

- Does the budget accurately reflect the scope and scale of the activity/organisation?
- Does the total revenue, including the amount requested through the Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants, match the total expenses?
- Have quotes been provided to support capital purchases (if applicable)?

## Additional assessment notes

City of Melbourne reserves the right to:

- not consider applications that do not meet the eligibility or assessment criteria
- request further information to inform our assessment
- require normal permits for all projects. If relevant, these should be outlined in the application (refer to the [City of Melbourne website](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/pages/permits.aspx)<sup>1</sup> for permits required within the City of Melbourne)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/pages/permits.aspx>

- request a declaration in the application if quotes and/or other proposed services are provided by family, friends or committee members.

### **Essential attachments for all applications**

- If you are applying with an auspice you must provide written agreement from the auspice organisation acknowledging that they agree to act as auspice and understand that they will take responsibility for the management of the funding, public liability insurance and acquittal of the funds at the end of the project.
- If your project will have an impact on property owned by another organisation or person you must provide a signed letter of agreement from that property owner. For example if you propose to paint a mural on the wall of a building you must provide written approval from the property owner and it must include their contact details so that we can confirm permission with them.
- Public Liability Insurance / Risk Assessment document - applicants must provide a certificate of currency for public liability or other relevant insurance. If applicants do not hold public liability insurance they must provide a risk assessment document identifying risks associated with their application and explaining how these risks will be managed. Council may determine that the risk assessment document is inadequate and require appropriate insurance coverage prior to releasing funding. You can find a link to a copy of a risk assessment template within the Smartygrants application form.

### **Lobbying**

Canvassing or lobbying in relation to an application is strictly prohibited during the application process.

No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant that canvasses or lobbies the Lord Mayor, City of Melbourne councillors or employees of the City of Melbourne.

### **Grant terms and conditions**

If your application is successful, you will be required to:

- sign a funding agreement with the City of Melbourne that provides details about the terms and conditions of funding. The funding agreement will outline reporting and acquittal requirements specific to your application.
- supply all requested information prior to any funding being released.
- submit paperwork within the allocated timeframes. Funding is allocated from specific financial year budgets and if paperwork is not submitted within the allocated timeframe, then funding is forfeited by the funded organisation.
- use the funding allocated for the purposes specified in the application. Grants may not be used for any purpose other than for which it is granted, without the written permission of the City of Melbourne. Unspent funds must be returned to City of Melbourne.
- deliver the activity within the allocated budget. City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in budgets if the applicant is unable to meet costs.
- if the funded project includes contact with children aged 0-18, ensure that all relevant staff, contractors, volunteers and committee members hold a valid working with children check and provide copies of these if requested by Council.
- acknowledge the City of Melbourne in all promotional materials relating to the successful application, including use of the logo.
- complete the activity within 12 months of receiving the grant. No extensions will be provided.

- invite the Lord Mayor and Councillors to attend any significant launches or events associated with the activity.
- acquit the grant and provide receipts for any purchases over \$200.

## Completing your application

Applications will be submitted and managed online via SmartyGrants. Application forms can be accessed from the City of Melbourne website.

This program is open for applications all year until the funding is fully allocated. Application cut off times can be found on page four of this document.

When your application is fully submitted you will receive an automated email containing a PDF copy of your application and confirmation that it has been received.

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system, please contact SmartyGrants directly (contact information below).

## Contacts

For general enquiries, please contact your relevant Neighbourhood Partner (details below). Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant Neighbourhood Partner to discuss project ideas before applying:

- Carlton and Parkville: Nas Mohamud, [nas.mohamud@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:nas.mohamud@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or 0422 181 872
- CBD: Sam Cremean, [sam.cremean@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:sam.cremean@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or 0481 396 346
- Docklands and Fishermans Bend: Fadi Qunqar, [fadi.qunqar@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:fadi.qunqar@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or 0481 484 891
- CBD, East Melbourne and South Yarra: Kimberley Pierzchalski, [kimberley.pierzchalski@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:kimberley.pierzchalski@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or 0438 242 205
- Kensington: Melanie Del Monaco, [melanie.delmonaco@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:melanie.delmonaco@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or 0409 629 785
- North and West Melbourne: Tallia Gilarry, [tallia.gilarry@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:tallia.gilarry@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or 0466 801 126
- Southbank: Ash Lee, [ash.lee@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:ash.lee@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or 0481 452 245

### SmartyGrants technical assistance:

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system please contact them directly on [email](mailto:email)<sup>2</sup> or by phone: (03) 9320 6888.

## Got questions or need help?

### Application assistance

If you are unable to complete the application form online due to access issues or you have difficulty using technology please contact us at [commstrength@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:commstrength@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or on 9658 9901 and we will discuss how we can assist you to complete the forms.

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<sup>2</sup> [service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:service@smartygrants.com.au)

## Frequently asked questions

### **Q: Can my organisation submit more than one application?**

**A:** No, we will only accept one application per organisation per funding round, which runs annually on a financial year basis.

### **Q: If we already have some funding allocated to this project, can we still apply for additional funding?**

**A:** Yes. In fact we encourage multiple funding sources for a project as this can strengthen the application and create greater sustainability for the project. The application form will ask you to declare additional funding sources for your project.

### **Q: My organisation is located outside the City of Melbourne, can I apply?**

**A:** To be eligible, organisations must be located within, or offer a project within, the City of Melbourne municipality. In addition, the program has a focus on local and / or vulnerable communities. City of Melbourne suburbs include: Carlton, Central Business District (Melbourne), Docklands, East Melbourne, Fisherman's Bend, Kensington, North Melbourne, Parkville, part of Port Melbourne, Southbank, parts of South Yarra and West Melbourne. You can view a map of the boundaries at the [City of Melbourne website](#)<sup>3</sup>.

### **Q: My group is not incorporated; can I apply?**

**A:** Yes. To be eligible for this program you can be either a registered not-for-profit, a body corporate/owners corporation or a community leader or an individual with community support. You can use an auspice to apply if you want to.

### **Q What is an auspice?**

**A:** An auspice is an organisation that agrees to take legal and financial responsibility for administering the grant on behalf of the applicant. To find out more about an auspice arrangement visit <http://www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing><sup>4</sup>

### **Q: I am registered as a sole trader or my organisation is a for-profit – can I apply using an auspice?**

**A:** No, organisations that are registered as for-profit are not eligible to apply either directly or using an auspice.

### **Q: Can I ask for funding for operational costs?**

**A:** No, any costs that are considered operational will not be considered for funding.

### **Q What are 'capital works / purchases'?**

**A:** Capital works projects include community gardens, renovating existing buildings, constructing new buildings and purchase of items over \$1000 that are not part of a larger project.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/cityofmelbourne\\_boundarymap.pdf](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/cityofmelbourne_boundarymap.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing>