



Community Community Events Grants Guidelines

Contents

Purpose and objectives of Community Events Grants	3
Eligibility criteria	3
Funding level	4
Key dates	4
Assessment process	4
Assessment criteria	4
Additional assessment notes:.....	5
Event Permits	6
Lobbying	7
Grant terms and conditions	7
Completing your application	8
Contacts.....	8
General enquiries	8
SmartyGrants technical assistance	8
Further application assistance.....	8
Frequently asked questions.....	8

Purpose and objectives of Community Events Grants

The City of Melbourne is committed to working in partnership to enable an inclusive community. Community Events grants provide funding for events that support diverse communities through increased community connection, access and participation – building on principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Council Plan 2025-29 outlines the strategic priorities for the City of Melbourne to build on its strong foundations to be a city that thrives as a place that benefits all.

Applications to this program must align to the following [Council Plan](#)¹ Strategic Priorities and Outcomes:

- Healthy, safe, clean and connected communities
 - Our diverse communities can actively participate, connect and experience a sense of belonging in Melbourne.
- Building a city for people
 - Melbourne's streets, squares and community spaces welcome people of all ages, identities and abilities, to meet and connect.
- Vibrant and creative Melbourne
 - Uniquely Melbourne experiences are accessible to everyone through city and local events and creative offerings

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for funding through Community Events Grants, applications must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be a not-for-profit constituted body. Auspiced applications are not permitted in this program.
- Events must be held within the City of Melbourne municipality.
- Events must have a focus on City of Melbourne's local communities and must be designed primarily to engage residents of the [City of Melbourne](#)².
- Events must be open to the general public to attend.
- Maximum number of attendees is 5000 people.

Funding will **not** be considered for:

- religious events that include religious service, preaching or proselytizing, or those that exclude community members of different faiths from participating. This does not include community celebrations of cultural festivals
- political lobbying or advocacy activities
- events that denigrate or exclude parts of the community or that breach Commonwealth and State anti-vilification laws
- activities that have an adverse effect on public health, safety, the environment or heritage
- ticketed events. Applications will be accepted for events that request a voluntary gold coin donation to cover costs of the event only
- commercial activities and/or organisations

¹ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/council-plan-vision#councilplan>

² <https://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/>

- Commonwealth or State Government Departments
- fundraising activities, competitions or award events
- prize money or prizes
- interstate and international travel costs including travel costs for facilitators/consultants
- activities that have already commenced or occurred
- projects 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
- an applicant that conducts, or has conducted, themselves in a way that the CoM considers to be injurious or prejudicial to the character or interests of the City of Melbourne
- incomplete applications
- late submissions

Funding level

Applications for Community Events Grants funding can be made for up to \$10,000.

Key dates

- Applications open 3pm on Thursday 11 December 2025.
- Applications close 11.59pm on Monday 26 January 2025.
- Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application in May 2026.
- First instalment of grant payments will be paid in mid-July 2026.
- Events must take place after 1 July 2026.
- Events must be completed by 30 June 2027.

Assessment process

After the application period has closed and 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 by a panel of external assessors.
- Funding recommendations will be submitted for a decision by Council.
- All applicants will receive a notification via email with the result of their application in May 2026. 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 one week after Council approval.

Assessment criteria

Community Events Grant applications are assessed against the assessment criteria below. Only applications that adequately respond to the assessment criteria will be considered. Preference will be given to events that are led by smaller, locally based community organisations that primarily engage City of Melbourne residents and foster intercultural connection, celebrating the diversity of our communities.

1. Alignment to the Council Plan 2025-29 Strategic Priorities

- Does the event address Council Plan Strategic Priorities and Outcomes?

2. Meeting Community Events Grant objectives and community need at the local level

- Does the event respond to a need, or aspiration identified by the local community? What is the evidence of this need?
- How will the event be successful in addressing this need? What are the positive outcomes?
- Does the event demonstrate community empowerment and capacity building in conception, development, delivery and outcomes?
- How many City of Melbourne residents will participate?

3. Organisational capacity

- Is the scope of the event appropriate to the organisation's resources and expertise?
- Is the application well planned with clear deliverables and a realistic timeframe?
- Does the application identify appropriate partners that will work with them in a collaborative way?
- Does the organisation have a track record of delivering similar types of events successfully?
- Does the application outline an evaluation plan?

4. Budget

- Does the budget accurately reflect the scope and scale of the event?
- Have other funding sources been identified?
- Have the resources that are required to deliver the event been clearly identified?
- Does the total revenue match the total expenses?
- Have quotes been provided to support budget items over \$2000?

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
- recommend partial funding
- require normal permits for all projects. If relevant, these should be outlined in the application (refer to the [City of Melbourne website](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/event-permits-and-planning)³ for permits required within the City of Melbourne)
- request a declaration if quotes and/or other proposed services are provided by family, friends or committee members.

³ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/event-permits-and-planning>

Essential attachments for all applications

- Applicants must provide a certificate of currency for public liability insurance for no less than \$10,000,000.
- If the event targets children or young people aged 0-18 you must provide a copy of the organisation's Child Safe Plan.
- If your budget includes single expenditure items over \$2000 you must include at least one quote for each item over \$2000.

Event Permits

Permits may be required for your event. There are a number of permits that may be required depending on the size of your event and the activities that will take place as part of your event. To find out more information about what permits may be required and to find out how to apply and the costs associated see the links below.

- [Event Permit](#)⁴ – If you intend on using any outdoor public open space managed by City of Melbourne, you need to submit an event permit application online. A minimum of six (6) weeks' notice will be required to process an application. Fees may be applicable for an event permit regardless of the outcome of this application. For information about an outdoor space, view the City of Melbourne [interactive map](#)⁵, contact the Event Operations Team on (03) 9658 9658, or via [email](#)⁶
- [POPE permit](#) – If you want to hold an event over an area of more than 500 m², or erect temporary structures such as inflatable jumping castles or large stages or marquees, you may need a special permit. This is an occupancy permit for a place of public entertainment. A minimum of 15 business days will be required to process an application. The Event Operations Team will let you know if you require this permit when you apply for your Event Permit. Fees may be applicable for a POPE permit. For further information, contact the Building and Planning Team on 9658 9658 or via [email](#)⁷ building@melbourne.vic.gov.au

If you do require an Event Permit it is recommended that you apply now. To apply for an initial event permit you only require;

- Event name
- Date
- Venue
- Number of attendees
- Will there be trading (i.e. food, beverages, merchandise etc)

For further information about event permits contact the Event Operations Team on (03) 9658 9658, or via [email](#)⁸.

Please note that successful grant allocations do not guarantee availability of space or that relevant permit approvals will be received and vice versa.

⁴ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/organising-events/event-permits/Pages/event-permits.aspx>

⁵ http://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/?themeid=lyr_venueevent&splash=false&_ga=2.94693212.1588632695.1647818910-925195060.1609798179

⁶ events@melbourne.vic.gov.au

⁷ building@melbourne.vic.gov.au

⁸ events@melbourne.vic.gov.au

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.
- in some instances, meet or discuss your project with the grant manager and provide revised information.
- if the funded project includes contact with children aged 0-18, the organisation must have in place a Child Safe Plan. The organisation must also 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.
- 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.
- deliver the project within the allocated budget. City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the applicant is unable to meet project costs.
- ensure that all relevant permits are applied for within relevant timeframes. All approved permits must be provided to your Grant Manager at least 30 days before your event.
- acknowledge the City of Melbourne in all promotional materials relating to the successful application, including use of the logo.
- complete the project by the date stated in the funding agreement. Requests for extensions will need to be considered and agreed to by City of Melbourne.
- invite the Lord Mayor and Councillors to attend any significant launches or Community Events associated with the project.
- acquit the grant and provide receipts to demonstrate the expenditure of a minimum 75 per cent of the grant.

How the grants will be paid

- Grants for one-off events funded over \$2000
 - Instalment one (80 per cent) will be paid on submission of the Funding Agreement and any additional documentation that is requested.
 - Instalment two (20 per cent) will be paid on submission of the final acquittal and a valid tax invoice.
- Grants for events funded under \$2000
 - Will be paid in one payment on submission of a Letter of Agreement and any additional documentation that is requested.
- Grants for multiple events

- Instalment one (70 per cent) will be paid on submission of the Funding Agreement and any additional documentation that is requested.
- Instalment two (30 per cent) will be paid on submission of a mid-term report and provision of any additional documentation that is requested.

Completing your application

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

Applications will automatically be closed by the SmartyGrants system at 11.59pm on Monday 26 January 2026.

Please avoid submitting your application at the last minute. If there is heavy use of the system with others submitting last-minute applications, there may be delays which will affect your ability to lodge your application before the deadline and it will be deemed ineligible.

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 on page 10).

Contacts

General enquiries

Please contact the City of Melbourne Community Grants Officer by [email](#)⁹ or phone 03 9658 9901

SmartyGrants technical assistance

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system please contact them directly on [email](#)¹⁰ or by phone: 03 9320 6888.

Further 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 via [email](#)¹¹ or phone 03 9658 9901 and we will discuss how we can assist you to complete the forms.

Frequently asked questions

Q: Can my organisation submit more than one application?

A: No only one application per organisation will be accepted.

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

A: To be eligible, applications must come from a not-for-profit community organisation that is a legal entity.

Auspiced applications are not allowed in this program.**Q: My organisation is located outside of the City of Melbourne; can I apply?**

⁹ commstrength@melbourne.vic.gov.au

¹⁰ service@smartygrants.com.au

¹¹ commstrength@melbourne.vic.gov.au

A: Yes, applicants can be from outside of the City of Melbourne however the event must take place within the City of Melbourne municipality and it must focus on the communities of the City of Melbourne. You can view a map of the boundaries at the [City of Melbourne website](#)¹².

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

A: Yes. We encourage multiple funding sources for an event as this can strengthen the application and create greater sustainability for the event. The application form will ask you to declare additional funding sources for your event.

Q: Do I need an Event Permit for my event?

A: Events that are held in public space will need to apply for an Events Permit and potentially a Place of Public Entertainment permit (POPE). The Events Permit team will advise if you are required to apply for the POPE.

If you do require an Event Permit you must allow at least six weeks for the permit to be processed, and depending on the complexity and size of the event it can take up to three (3) months for permits to be reviewed and approved.

¹² <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/city-maps>