ACT Government

2024-25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant Program

Grant Guidelines

Applications open: 12 noon Tuesday 19 November 2024
Applications close: 3 pm Tuesday 7 January 2025

Community Services Directorate

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2024-25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant Program

1 Introduction

The Community Services Directorate is pleased to announce the opening of the 2024-25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant Program (the Grants *or* the Grant Program).

The Grant Program aligns with the Focus Areas under the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* (The ACT Agreement). The ACT Agreement is a framework supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT to exercise self-determination (s.27(2) of the ACT Human Rights Act). The ACT Agreement enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have the ability and resources to provide their own solutions, acknowledging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership is central to the process of ensuring the long-term emotional and physical wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. More information about the ACT Agreement can be found at – www.strongfamilies.act.gov.au

2 Aim

This program aims to support three of the Core Focus Areas from the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028. The first is *Cultural Integrity*, where a society supports the aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and contributes to the building of respectful, fair, and sustainable communities. The second is *Community Leadership,* where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a strong voice, are decision makers on issues that impact them and lead in the achievement of positive life outcomes. Finally, *Lifelong Learning*, where respect is given to preserving the world's oldest living cultures which enhances social inclusion and empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to fully engage in lifelong learning and positive generational experiences.

3 Government objectives

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations are encouraged to apply.

Consistent with the objectives of the grant program, funding for projects, activities or initiatives that contribute towards closing the gap on disadvantage between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Canberrans will be considered.

This is part of the ACT Government's commitment to Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As outlined in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement, the ACT Government and community partners are committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services.

ACT Health and Wellbeing

Projects and initiatives must demonstrate how they address any of the ACT Health and Wellbeing Framework outcomes.

For more information, visit the ACT Wellbeing Framework website.

4 Eligibility requirements

Who can apply?

- Individuals
- Organisations
- Partnerships or collaborations.

Profit making groups, education institutions, government entities and registered political parties are not eligible to apply.

Eligible applicants can only apply once in the 2024-25 round but can apply across the 3 categories.

Applicants must have no overdue acquittal obligations for any previous Community Services Directorate grants. **All overdue acquittals must be completed prior to submitting an application**.

Individual eligibility requirements

Individuals can apply if they:

- Are over the age of 18 years old,
- Reside in the ACT or surrounding regions or are connected to the ACT through education or work. A copy of an ACT or NSW Driver's License or Proof of Identity Card, or proof of residency stating your current address must be provided. The Canberra Region is defined in the Canberra Region Local Industry Participation Policy as the area comprising the Australian Capital Territory and the New South Wales Member Councils including:
    - Bega Valley
    - Eurobodalla
    - Goulburn-Mulwaree
    - Hilltops
    - Queanbeyan-Palerang
    - Snowy Monaro
    - Upper Lachlan
    - Yass Valley
- Are an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

(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.
- 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 Community Services Directorate grant. **All overdue acquittals must be completed prior to submitting an application.**
- Have appropriate insurance (public liability, professional indemnity or other appropriate insurance) to undertake the activity or event. Evidence will be required prior to receiving the grant funding.

Organisation eligibility requirements

Organisations can apply if they:

- Are a non-government, legally incorporated entity, or support by an incorporated auspicing organisation
- Are a registered not-for-profit or a charitable organisation
- Demonstrate that the program, project, or activity will be of benefit to ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and must demonstrate a strong connection the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community
- Have no overdue acquittal obligations for any previous Community Services Directorate grant. **All overdue acquittals must be completed prior to submitting an application**
- Have not received funding from another source to deliver or provide the same or similar project/program

- Have an appropriate insurance cover held by the organisation implementing a funded project. This may include Public Liability of no less than $10 million, Personal Accident, Volunteer Cover and or Directors Professional Indemnity. Evidence of insurance may be required as a condition of the grant.

Unincorporated community groups may be eligible to apply through an auspicing entity. For more information refer to 'Auspicing arrangements' section.

Partnerships and consortiums

Have you considered undertaking the project in collaboration with another organisation?

Projects that involve more than one group or organisation may apply as a partnership or consortium. In such instances the following is required:

- List the roles and responsibilities of each group or organisation
- Clarify who will take the lead, lodge the application, and submit the final acquittal
- Identify the financial contribution each is making to the project.

Auspicing arrangements

If you are a community group or organisation that is not legally incorporated (unincorporated) then you may ask an incorporated association to auspice an application on your behalf.

An auspicing body is an organisation that accepts the legal responsibility including financial accountability for a project. If your organisation is not a legal entity, you will need to arrange for an organisation that has legal status to act as an auspicing body.

The auspicing organisation must provide a letter of support with the application stating they will:

- Be the applicant for this grant funding and if successful contract directly with the Community Services Directorate for the receipt of grant funding, and comply with all grant funding contractual obligations, including the provision of financial acquittal documentation.
- Be the entity that will accept the grant funding for the project and administer the funding in accordance with the Grant Guidelines and Letter of Offer.
- Disburse grant funding to the auspiced party in accordance with the Grant Guidelines and Letter of Offer and not unreasonably withhold funding from the auspiced party for the implementation of the project.

Funding cannot be used for

The following will not be funded:

- Projects that do not contribute to or meet the priority areas of this program
- Projects that are not delivered primarily within the ACT or benefits the ACT community
- Projects requiring ongoing funding to sustain the project or activity

- General administration and operational costs such as salaries, memberships, subscription fees, communication and IT, stationery, rent, leasing, or utilities, machinery, vehicles, or large capital equipment of any kind
- Costs of projects or activities that have already taken place, or item already purchased.
- Operational insurance costs specific to the project.
- 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.
- Travel or accommodation costs not specifically associated with the project.
- Projects which have a high component of administration costs (other than research).
- Prize money or gifts
- Activities that contain content that may offend or bring into disrepute the applicant organisation, The 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.

5 Funding categories

The 2024-25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program has 3 specific funding categories.

The total funding available under this Program is $220,000.

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.

Cultural Grants – https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2425ACG

Leadership Grants – https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2425ALG

Scholarship Grants – https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2425ASG

Eligible applicants may apply once under each category.

Funding availability for each of the specific funding categories is outlined here:

Cultural Grants

The maximum grant an individual can apply for is $5,000.

The maximum grant an organisation can apply for is $10,000.

Projects, activities or initiatives in this category can be aimed at any of the following:

Community Awareness

These are activities or projects within the ACT that promote wider community awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Collaboration

These are activities, programs, or projects within the ACT and for the benefit of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Cultural Milestones

These are activities, programs or projects that mark significant cultural milestones or celebrations within the ACT such as but not limited to – National Sorry Day, Mabo Day, or NAIDOC Week.

Performances

These are cultural performances activities, programs, or projects within the ACT.

Leadership Grants

The maximum grant that an individual can apply for is $5,000.

The maximum grant an organisation can apply for is $10,000.

Leadership Grants aim to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or Community Organisations to undertake learning activities that will enhance their leadership skills and abilities to better equip themselves to lead and engage within the ACT on behalf of their communities and/or organisations.

Applications in this category can be for projects or initiatives that build leadership capability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, strengthen the governance of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisation.

Applications can also be for programs to participate in the local and national parliamentary processes linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT such as, the development and promotion of initiatives for projects supporting training programs that will empower participants to aspire to be a leader in government to the benefit of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Scholarship Grants

The maximum grant that an individual can apply for is $5,000.

Organisations are not able to apply in this category.

The intention of the Scholarship Grants is to attend recognised training courses so that you can either gain employment, achieve a career change or a promotion in your current career. Grants in this category can be used to cover enrolment or course fees for adult education.

Funding in this category can be used to fund IT equipment to support adult learning up to a threshold of $1,000. Applications for IT equipment will not be considered if the applicant has received IT funding in grant rounds in the previous two years (2023 and 2024).

Funds will not be granted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enrolled in primary, high school or college.

Existing Enrolment:

Acceptable forms of evidence include any document from the training organisation that clearly identifies you and confirms that you are enrolled and studying such as official correspondence from the organisation; receipt of fees; or evidence of assessment and grade.

Intent to Enrol:

Acceptable forms of evidence include a letter from the training organisation confirming your intent to enrol.

Acceptance of enrolment in a qualification or bridging program:

Acceptable forms of evidence include a letter from the training organisation confirming your enrolment. Receipt of fees if you are already enrolled clearly identified along with the course you are enrolled in.

Childcare:

Acceptable forms of evidence include a letter from the Childcare Organisation that clearly identifies you and confirms that your child is enrolled in care at the times you are studying or receipt of fees (with you clearly identified as the account holder and the times your child is in care). Please note, the cost of full-time Childcare is excluded from these grants.

IT Equipment (if applicable):

Acceptable forms of evidence include quotes, catalogues or website printouts from IT suppliers. Funding for IT equipment to support access to training will not exceed $1,000.

6 Assessment of applications

When your application is received it will be checked against these grant guidelines to ensure eligibility for funding.

Assessment process

Following the eligibility check, a Grant Assessment Team will assess all eligible applications. The Grant Assessment Team will be made up of a chairperson and 2 other assessors. Grant Assessment Team members will be appointed based on their knowledge of the issues faced by Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people and will consist of at least 2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Grant Assessment Team members will use the information provided in your application to assess the applications submitted against the grant's selection criteria. If you have been successful in other recent grant rounds, the assessors may also take this into consideration during their assessment considering the high number of applications received to ensure fairness across all applicants.

All decisions on whether to award a grant, or on the amount of any grant, are at the sole discretion of the Community Services Directorate.

Assessment criteria for applications

Due to the competitive process, all eligible applications will be assessed and prioritised by the Grant Assessment Team against the following criteria:

- **Capacity:** The proposal demonstrates that the individual or organisation has the capacity to manage the funding and deliver or complete the initiative, project, or activity.

For Individuals applying, you may want to describe any skills, knowledge, experience, or connections that will help you to share your culture with the community. For Organisations, you may want to describe if you have dedicated staff with the skills, experience, and time to manage the activity, any existing connections with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and plans for continued engagement with the community to delivery culturally- appropriate services.

- **Outcomes**: The proposal demonstrates a clear outcome for the initiative, project, or activity.

You may want to describe the benefits that this initiative, project, or activity will have on your life, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and how that contributes to the Agreement Core Focus Area of Cultural Integrity.

- **Need:** The proposal demonstrates the current need in the community for this initiative, project, or activity.

You may like to describe why you need this grant. Also consider what would happen if you didn't receive a grant now, or in the future. Also, what are the expected long-term benefits of this activity on your life, the lives of your family or those you provide services to and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.

- **Budget:** The proposal has a realistic budget which demonstrates value for money.

Your budget should be broken down to shown what the grant funding will be spent on and supported by things like quotes, links to websites etc to demonstrate the costs.

A budget is an estimate of income and expenditure required to complete your chosen activity. You will need to provide a budget with your application. This needs to show the funding breakdown for different items.

In some cases, due to the high demand for grants only partial funding can be offered. Therefore, you will need to consider if you can proceed with your project if only part-funding is available.

If you have applied for another grant for this same project, please ensure this is explained in your application.

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 Community Services Directorate expects to notify applicants of the outcome of their applications in May 2025. Please ensure that this timeframe is taken into consideration when planning your projects. Between the grant round closing, and receiving your outcome letters, applicants may not hear anything from the Community Services Directorate Grants team.

Unfortunately, not all applications can be funded as there are usually more applications received than funds available. This does not necessarily mean that the application is not worthy. It is more likely that other applications were ranked higher in the assessment process.

If you would like feedback on your application, please see the 'Application Feedback' section.

7 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 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
- How to acquit your grant funds when the project has been completed.

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

Funds must be spent only on items and activities listed in your application. The Letter of Offer may have conditions of what the funding can and cannot be spent on.

Changes to project

A grant is funded based on the details of your application only. If something changes due to unexpected circumstances, you must first obtain written approval from the Community Services Directorate. Your request to change the activity will be reviewed by the Delegate and you will be advised in writing if the request is approved or declined. Failure to seek approval to change the purpose can result in non-conformance and may result in you having to return the full grant amount that was paid by the Community Services Directorate.

Acknowledging support

Grant Recipients must ensure the assistance provided by the ACT Government is appropriately acknowledged in any promotional or other materials. The ACT Government's Branding Guidelines and "Supported By" logo are accessible at:

https://www.act.gov.au/act-government/communications/design-and-brand-guidelines

Grant and project promotion

The names, project descriptions and funding amounts of all successful applicants will be posted on the ACT Government Grants website following completion of the grants process. By accepting a grant, you agree to this and to the ACT Government Media team contacting you to discuss publishing a story on how the grant was used.

If you do not want your name published, or to be contacted by the ACT Government Media Team, please let the Community Services Directorate Grants Team know when you accept your grant.

8 Acquittal and reporting requirements

All successful applicants must expend the funds within the timeframes nominated in the Letter of Offer.

An acquittal is a signed declaration, submitted at the end of the activity, stating that funding was used for the agreed purpose. This includes providing copies of receipts as proof of expenditure.

Acquittal process

The acquittal of the grant must be submitted through SmartyGrants at: http://dhcs.SmartyGrants.com.au/applicant

Instructions will be provided to successful applicants in their Letter of Offer. You will need to log in using the same identification details you used to submit the application. Please keep this in a safe place.

The funds must be expended in accordance with the activity/project outlined in the grant application and in the Letter of Offer. All receipts must be kept and submitted with the acquittal.

As part of your acquittal, you will be asked to briefly outline who was supported by your program and highlight any key successes or outcomes.

Unspent funds

Any unspent funds from your grant must be returned to Community Services Directorate. Please email the Community Services Directorate Grants team at CSDgrants@act.gov.au to advise of any unspent funds.

Please note: *To be eligible for funding in any future Community Services Directorate grants rounds, applicants must meet all acquittal requirements.*

9 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:

Cultural Grants – link to application form (https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2425ACG)

Leadership Grants – link to application form (https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2425ALG)

Scholarship Grants – link to application form (https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2425ASG)

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

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 submit an application.

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. Community Services Directorate will use this information for all correspondence relating to your application.

Completing application as a group/team

Several people can work on an application using the same login details provided that only 1 person is working on the application at any given time. Please ensure you save as you go.

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., 2425ACGxx, 2425ALGxx or 2425ASGxx). You can print a copy of your completed online application or save it as a PDF.

10 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 Community Services Directorate Grants team at CSDGrants@act.gov.au.

Requesting feedback

Community Services Directorate supports your right to ask questions about the grant application process. If your application has not been successful, email the Community Services Directorate Grants team at CSDGrants@act.gov.au, quoting your application ID number and outlining your specific concerns. The Community Services Directorate will provide a response as soon as possible.

This information also assists to improve grant programs, processes, and service delivery.