



**ACT**  
Government

# 2025-26 Disability Inclusion Grant Program

## Grant Guidelines

Applications open: 12 noon Wednesday 3 December 2025

Applications close: 3 pm Wednesday 18 February 2026

## Accessibility Information

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events, and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

- If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an **alternative format** – such as large print or audio – please get in touch with us via email – [OfficeForDisability@act.gov.au](mailto:OfficeForDisability@act.gov.au) or telephone **(02) 6207 1086**.
- If English is not your first language and you require the **translating and interpreting services** – please telephone **13 14 50**.
- If you are d/Deaf or find it hard to hear or speak to hearing people on the phone, visit the **National Relay Service (NRS)** at [www.accesshub.gov.au](http://www.accesshub.gov.au)

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# 2025-26 Disability Inclusion Grant Program

## 1 Introduction

The Health and Community Services Directorate is pleased to announce the opening of the 2025-26 Disability Inclusion Grant Program (the Grant or Grant Program).

The ACT Government is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible community for all Canberrans. While the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides individualised support to people with disability to undertake the usual activities of daily life, the inclusion of people with disability in the community goes well beyond specialised disability support.

The ACT Government is committed to supporting the social inclusion of the more than 80,000 Canberrans with disability, their families, and carers.

## 2 Aim

This program aims to provide financial support to organisations and small businesses for increased opportunities for people with disability to participate in mainstream community or social groups. This program aims to fund projects that have a broad and deep impact on directly improving the inclusion and participation of people with disability in the ACT community.

## 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?

- Organisations
- Partnerships, or collaborations
- Small businesses

Individuals, Government entities and registered political parties are not eligible to apply.

Eligible applicants can only apply once in the 2025-26 round.

### Organisation eligibility requirements

Organisations can apply if they:

- Operate in the ACT
- Are a non-government, legally incorporated entity or supported by an incorporated auspicing organisation
- Are a registered not-for-profit or a charitable organisation
- Have no overdue acquittal obligations for any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grant. **All outstanding 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 below.

### Auspicing arrangements

If you are a community group or organisation that is not legally incorporated (unincorporated) then you may ask an incorporated organisation 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 Health and 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; and
- 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.

### Small business eligibility requirements

Small businesses can apply if they:

- Operate in the ACT
- Are a small business as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics – small business operators are those operators who employ fewer than 20 persons (including non-employing businesses)
- Have no overdue acquittal obligations for any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grant. **All outstanding 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.

### Project eligibility

Eligible projects must:

- Provide an activity, project, or initiative that will be located in the ACT
- Identify how the program will benefit ACT residents with disability
- Have not received funding from another source to deliver the same or similar project
- Include all supporting documentation needed for the application.

Reasonable Adjustment –

- The *Discrimination Act 1991* makes it unlawful to treat someone unfavourably because they have a disability. Businesses, organisations and services must make *reasonable adjustments* for people with a disability to have the same opportunities as others.
- In April 2024, the *ACT Discrimination Act 1991* introduced a *positive duty to make reasonable adjustments*, which requires entities to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of a person related to their protected attributes, including

disability. This means being flexible and adaptable in providing equal opportunities. This may include implementing adjustments to:

- Ensure compliance with building codes and access standards;
- Equipment or facilities (for example, height adjustability features, hearing loop facilities, or other equipment);
- Digital and print communications, to make them universally accessible;
- Practices and processes, such as implementing support decision-making processes;
- Programs and events, to ensure inclusion and participation is facilitated for everyone.

These grants will not replace an organisation or business' legal obligations to fair treatment and equal opportunities. However, these grants may provide financial assistance to organisations and businesses to implement projects and support and/or alleviate unjustifiable hardship barriers to enable organisations and businesses to be more inclusive for people with disability.

### **Funding cannot be used for**

The following will not be funded:

- Projects that do not contribute to or meet the aims and priority areas of this program
- Projects that are not delivered primarily within the ACT or do not benefit the ACT community
- Projects requiring ongoing funding to sustain the project or activity
- Projects or activities already funded by the ACT Government or Australian Government, or where alternative funding is available. This includes funding for projects, programs or services that can be funded through National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Plans
- Projects that are a duplication of, or in parallel with an existing service, program, project, or event, including projects that separate people with disability from the wider community
- Commercial and fundraising projects and events
- Activities that applicants or organisations are obliged to undertake as part of their legal or operational obligations
- Infrastructure projects on properties owned by ACT Government
- General administration and operational costs such as salaries, memberships, subscription fees, communication and IT, stationery, rent, leasing, utilities, machinery, vehicles or large capital equipment of any kind
- Items not declared in the grant application and therefore unapproved
- Costs of projects or activities that have already taken place, or items already been purchased

- Operational insurance costs specific to the project
- Activities for or by a political party
- Debt repayments of any kind
- Any travel or accommodation costs
- Prize money or gifts
- Activities that contain content that may offend or bring into disrepute the applicant organisation, the Health and 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 which are deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.

## 5 Funding

### Available funding

The total funding available under this Program in 2025-26 is \$212,000.

The maximum grant that can be applied for is \$20,000.

As there is no good or service being exchanged, and the funding is intended as a contribution toward meeting the costs of the project, GST is not applicable to grant payments.

The value is for one project or initiative only and is non-recurring.

Successful recipients will have 12 months from the date of the Letter of Offer to expend the funding.

## 6 Priority areas for funding

The 2025-26 Disability Inclusion Grant Program will prioritise funding projects that:

**Reduce or remove physical, attitudinal, and/or communication barriers to access and inclusion**

**Enable greater participation in community life for people with disability**

**Include people with disability in the planning and implementation**

**Result in meaningful improvements with a broad reach benefiting many people with disability in the ACT community**

The Health and Community Services Directorate would like to see innovative, creative, and sustainable approaches to increasing the inclusion of people with disability. Of particular interest

are activities that reflect engagement with people with disability and their supporters that impact upon as many people as possible.

## 7 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 your application. 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 and experience of living with disability in the ACT.

Grant Assessment Team members will use the information provided in your application and information from any previous Health and Community Services Directorate grant rounds to assess the applications submitted. If you have been successful in other recent grant rounds, the Grant Assessment Team may take this into consideration during their assessment where there are a 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 Health and 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:

- **Consultation:** The proposal demonstrates how people with disability have been included in the scoping and development and will be included in the delivery of the project.
- **Inclusion:** The proposal demonstrates how the project, activity or initiative will remove barriers to participation for people with disability and have a broad and deep impact on creating enhanced inclusion of people with disability in the ACT community.
- **Capacity:** The proposal demonstrates that the organisation has the capacity to deliver the project including the appropriate qualifications, or dedicated staff with the skills experience and time to deliver the project and ability to manage the funding.
- **Budget:** The budget is realistic and clearly details all expenditure for the project including demonstrating value for money.

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. Quotes will be highly regarded.

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 Health and Community Services Directorate expects to notify applicants of the outcome of their applications in May 2026. Please ensure that this timeframe is taken into consideration when planning your projects. Between the grant round closing, and receiving an outcome letter, applicants may not hear anything from the CSD 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 project or application is not worthy. It is more likely that other project applications were ranked higher in the assessment process.

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

## **8 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 Health and Community Services Directorate for which grant funding will be provided. The Letter of Offer will include:

- How to accept an offer
- Detail the grant amount to be funded
- Detail the purpose or activity for which the grant is given
- The term of the funded activity for which the grant amount must be fully expended
- How to acquit the grant funds when the project has been completed.

The ACT Government does not carry any responsibility for the activities 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 activity**

Your 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 Health and 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 Health and 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:

[Design and Brand Guidelines - ACT Government](#)

### **Grant and project promotion**

The names, project descriptions and funding amounts of all successful applications will be posted on the ACT Government Grants website following the completion of the grant 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 CSD Grants Team know when you accept your grant.

## **9 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 login 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, and all receipts must be retained and submitted with the acquittal.

### **Unspent funds**

Any unspent funds from your grant must be returned to Health and Community Services Directorate. Please email the CSD Grants team at [CSDgrants@act.gov.au](mailto:CSDgrants@act.gov.au) to advise of any unspent funds.

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

## 10 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:

<https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/2526DIG>

All applications must be submitted online. Hardcopy or email applications cannot 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, request for class dates, or website details for digital courses. 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 log in 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. The Health and Community Services Directorate will use this information for all correspondence relating to your application.

### **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., 2526DIGxx). You can print a copy of your completed online application or save it as a PDF.

## **11 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 CSD Grants team at [CSDGrants@act.gov.au](mailto:CSDGrants@act.gov.au).

### **Requesting feedback**

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

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