Frequently Asked Questions

Stronger Communities Programme – Round 5

Overview

1. What is the Stronger Communities Programme?

The Stronger Communities Programme is a grant program that supports the Australian Government's commitment to help deliver social benefits in communities across Australia.

Round 5 of the program will provide $22.65 million in 2019-20, i.e. up to $150,000 to each federal electorate for eligible small capital projects that improve local community participation and contribute to vibrant and viable communities.

A maximum of 20 projects will be funded in each federal electorate.

2. How does the Stronger Communities Programme differ from the Communities Environment Program (CEP)?

For both of these programs, you must be invited to apply by your Member of Parliament.

These are distinct programs with different objectives, outcomes and eligibility criteria.

The Communities Environment Program supports small scale, community-led environment projects to recover and strengthen the local environment and build and strengthen local communities. The Stronger Communities Programme supports community led small capital projects that improve local community participation and contribute to vibrant and viable communities.

For more detailed information on the Communities Environment Program refer to the CEP grant opportunity guidelines.

3. What grants are available?

For each project, the grant amount will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs.

- The minimum grant amount is $2,500
- The maximum grant amount is $20,000.

The matching funds for the remaining 50 per cent of project can be either cash, in-kind or from other state and local government sources.

All activities and expenditure in the project must be eligible. You cannot use grant funds for eligible costs and matching funds for ineligible costs.

4. Who is responsible for administering the Stronger Communities Programme?

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (the department/we) is responsible for administering the program on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development, according to the requirements of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines[1] (CGRGs).

5. What is the department's role in the assessment of applications?

We will assess all applications against the Stronger Communities Programme - Round 5 grant opportunity guidelines. We will assess your application for completeness and against all the eligibility criteria. To be recommended for funding, your project must meet all eligibility criteria, provide value for money and be considered a proper use of public resources.

The Program Delegate decides which grants to approve taking into account the eligibility assessment by the department, any

[1] http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants/

reputational risk to the Australian Government, information you provide, and the availability of grant funds.

6. Will the department contact me with questions relating to my application?

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submitted application after the application closing time.

7. What are the community consultation arrangements within my electorate?

Community consultation is a critical element of the program. Members of Parliament (MPs) must establish a community consultation committee, or engage an existing community consultation committee to identify potential applicants and projects within their electorate. The identified projects must be consistent with the program's intended outcomes and eligibility criteria.

Eligibility

8. How is a not-for-profit organisation defined?

A not-for-profit organisation is an organisation that is not operating for the profit or gain of its individual members.

For the purposes of this program, not-for-profit organisations must also be an incorporated legal entity with a current Australian Business Number (ABN).

9. What types of not-for-profit organisations are eligible to apply?

If your organisation is not an incorporated not-for-profit entity you are not eligible to apply. However, you may have a parent organisation or project sponsor that is an incorporated not-for-profit entity that could apply on your behalf provided they also meet the program's eligibility criteria.

Any incorporated not-for-profit organisation that is not owned by a Commonwealth, state or territory government, is eligible to apply.

Examples of not-for-profit organisations include:

- local rural fire service
- local state emergency service
- Police and Citizen Youth clubs
- child care centres
- surf clubs
- local aged care bodies.
- non-distributing co-operatives
- companies limited by a guarantee
- indigenous not-for-profit corporations

10. Are unincorporated not-for-profit organisations eligible to apply for a grant?

Not-for-profit applicant organisations that are unincorporated are not legal entities and therefore not eligible to apply. However, these organisations may be able to nominate an eligible project sponsor that is a legal entity that could apply on their behalf.

If an unincorporated organisation identifies such a project sponsor, this organisation would apply on your behalf. The project sponsor must be an incorporated not-for-profit entity that meets all of the eligibility criteria. The project sponsor would also need to be nominated by the MP's office, submit the grant application and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

11. Are Parent and Citizens Associations (P&Cs) eligible to apply for a grant?

P&Cs and equivalent bodies are eligible to apply, however, projects that only benefit schools are not eligible.

Projects sponsored by P&Cs may be eligible for a grant if the project benefits the broader community beyond the school community including students, teachers, parents and school volunteers. Some examples might include:

- upgrade of a hall or sporting facility used by the local community that is on school grounds
- purchase of assets that will be used by the broader community, such as a bus or BBQ.

12. Can funding be used to refurbish a leased building?

Yes. Funding can be used to refurbish a leased building with the support of the owner, provided the project does not involve the

development of a private or commercial venture (see section 5.3 of the Stronger Communities Programme Round 5 grant opportunity guidelines).

13. Can I apply for a project that has already started or is scheduled to start?

We will not fund projects that you have already started or where contracts are already in place at the time of application.

However, you are able to apply for a grant to undertake a new project that may be part of a broader project that has already started, provided the new project will be completed by the 30 June 2020.

For example, construction of a public library may be already under contract but we may accept a project to fit-out a proposed public computer lab within the library.

14. When can I start my project?

You may start your project from the date you submit your application online and receive an automated confirmation from the department.

However, if you choose to start your project before you enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth, any costs incurred are at your own risk.

You will not receive any funding if your application is unsuccessful.

15. How do I determine my project period?

When calculating the duration of the project, you should factor in additional time for obtaining approvals, scheduling volunteers, contracting tradespeople, possible weather and seasonal delays and any other unforeseen circumstances that may prevent you from completing your project on time.

When determining the length of your project you should be aware that your project expenditure must be incurred between the project start and end dates to be eligible.

You must also complete your project within six months of your project start date and no later than 30 June 2020.

How to apply

16. How do I submit an application?

The program is only open to applicants that have been invited to apply by their local federal MP.

MPs will invite selected applicants to apply and provide a link to the online application form in their invitation. You must not forward this link to anyone else.

17. Can I submit my application as soon as I get an email from my MP?

You must wait until the program is open for applications at 9:00am Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 5 August 2019.

18. Can I submit separate projects from the same organisation in multiple electorates?

Yes. However, each project must be nominated by the local MP in each electorate as a result of the community consultation process. Projects must be located in the same electorate as the MP nomination.

19. What happens if there are technical difficulties when I try to submit my application?

If you experience technical difficulties when trying to submit your application you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by web chat or through our online enquiry form on business.gov.au.

20. When do applications close?

All applications for Stronger Communities Programme Round 5 must be submitted by 5:00pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on 10 October 2019.

21. What types of projects are suitable for funding?

The program funds small capital works and capital expenditure projects. The following projects are a guide to the types of suitable projects. If you have such a project it does not necessarily mean it will be supported.

- upgrades, construction and fit-out of community spaces, e.g. men's sheds, halls, parks
- fit-out of community centres, health centres, e.g. kitchen upgrades and

equipment purchases such as computers, TVs and furniture, fixtures and fittings

▪ acquisition and installation of equipment, including ICT hardware and associated operating software and user licences

▪ bike paths

▪ sporting facilities upgrades including new scoreboards, spectator seating, goalposts, new turf, fit-out of changes rooms, new canteen, new lights, medical equipment, upgrade drainage and water systems, gymnasiums

▪ streetscapes

▪ skate parks

▪ purchase of equipment for local State Emergency Service and rural fire brigades

▪ upgrade of facilities to provide disabled access

▪ purchase of vehicles and trailers for community transport/services, surf lifesaving, medical transport

▪ park furniture upgrade or installation including shade/shelters, BBQs, toilet facilities, drinking fountains.

Other projects that align with the program's intended outcomes may be eligible.

22. How do I withdraw my application?

If you want to withdraw your application, contact your MP and notify the department by calling 13 28 46 or via the program's mailbox: SCP5@industry.gov.au

If you have been nominated but do not want to proceed with an application you must inform your MP immediately.

23. Are there any mandatory documents that I need to provide?

Section 6.1 of the grant opportunity guidelines lists the attachments we may require. The application form will include instructions on the required supporting documentation. These may include:

▪ evidence of your not-for-profit status

▪ trust documents if applicable

You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

24. Do I need to provide quotes?

You are not required to provide quotes for each expenditure item, however we require you

to keep evidence of all expenditure for two years after the completion of the project and provide this evidence if we request it.

We will carry out project audits through a representative sample. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, request further information or an independent audit of claims and payments.

25. If I have a project involving construction, do I need to provide evidence of relevant approvals or licences?

You do not need to provide evidence of approvals or licences. However, you must be aware of and ensure you obtain, any necessary statutory approvals. Where statutory or other approvals are required for your project you must maintain records of the approvals.

26. How do I account for GST in my project costs?

The application will ask you to provide your eligible project cost over the life of the project. When calculating the total project cost:

• if you are registered for GST, you should remove the GST components of the project costs and provide the GST exclusive amount, and

If you are registered for GST, where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice

• if you are not registered for GST you should provide the cost of your project including the GST components. (GST inclusive).

GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities. If you are a government related entity, you should provide a GST exclusive amount.

27. Can I provide extra information to the department once my application has been submitted?

No. However, during our assessment of your application, we may contact you if we require additional information or clarification.

28. Do I need to have insurance?

You must have insurance coverage as appropriate for the type of project you undertake. This may include:

▪ Public Liability (usually a minimum value of $10 million)

- Workers' Compensation (minimum value as required by State/Territory legislation)
- Comprehensive Motor Vehicle Insurance
- Personal Accident Insurance
- Professional Indemnity Insurance (usually a minimum value of $2 million).

We do not require evidence, but you will be required to have adequate insurance as part of your grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

29. Can the project involve children?

You must comply with all relevant legislation relating to the employment or engagement of anyone working on the project that may interact with children, including all necessary working with children checks.

You must implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations endorsed by the Commonwealth and available at: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles-child-safe-organisations

You must complete a risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for children. You must also establish a training and compliance regime to ensure personnel are aware of the requirements.

30. What in-kind contributions can be included as part of my project funding?

In-kind refers to goods, services and volunteer labour provided to deliver your project that have a monetary value, but do not involve a payment.

For example, if you are applying for a grant to build a bike path in your community, your in-kind contribution could be volunteer labour for constructing the bike path.

Other examples of in-kind contributions for your project can include the following activities that are provided free of charge:

- any person undertaking work on the capital project
- professional services specifically related to your project, including legal, architectural, engineering and accounting services
- other project and related services, including site preparation, fabricating and sub-contractors
- items including new or used furnishings, landscape or construction materials (such as appliances, furniture, trees, plants, wood, plumbing, hardware etc.)

- the use of machinery and heavy equipment.

Expenditure items that are ineligible under section 5.3 of the grant opportunity guidelines cannot be included as in-kind contributions.

31. How can I calculate the value of in-kind contributions to the project?

When calculating the dollar in-kind value of donated goods or materials:
Goods or materials description x $Value of goods / materials x Number of goods / materials = $Total in-kind goods or materials.

To determine the value of volunteer labour:

Number of hours x $Hourly rate x Number of people = $Total in-kind labour.

You may use an average hourly rate of $39 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 6302.0 - Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, Nov 2017). Where you choose an alternative method of valuing volunteer labour we may ask you to explain the basis of your calculations in your final report.

Assessment

32. How will my application be assessed?

The department assesses all applications. We will assess whether:

- you are eligible to apply
- you are an eligible entity
- your project is a small capital works or capital expenditure project and contributes to an improvement in local community participation and the vibrancy and viability of the community
- you have a minimum of $5,000 in eligible expenditure;
- your cash or in-kind contribution matches the program grant on at least a dollar for dollar basis; and
- all partner funding is confirmed.

Funding decision

33. When will I be advised about the outcome of my application?

We will assess applications progressively. Funding decisions will be provided on a continuous basis throughout the duration of the program.

All assessments are expected to be completed and grants awarded by the end of January 2020. However the timeframe for finalisation of the assessment process will depend on the quality and quantity of the applications.

We will provide advice on the outcome of each application to your MP who will then notify successful and unsuccessful applicants.

34. What happens next if I am successful?

If you are successful, you must enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We may use an approval letter grant agreement which along with your application, forms a grant agreement.

We consider the agreement to be executed (take effect) from the date of our approval letter.

We will tell you in this letter of any particular conditions that may apply to your grant funding.

We may use an exchange of letters grant agreement when we need to clarify or amend any details in your application form.

Details of your project will be listed on GrantConnect[2].

This information may include:

- name of your organisation
- title of the project
- description and aims of your project.
- amount of grant funding awarded
- Australian Business Number
- organisation location
- your organisation's industry sector.

We publish this information to ensure open access to non-sensitive data within Australian Government agencies to enable greater innovation and productivity across all sectors of the Australian economy.

Payment and reporting

35. Am I required to report on the progress of my project to the department?

You will not be required to provide progress reports but you must provide an end of project report on completion of your project. We will provide a template for this with instructions on how to complete the form and the information required. When you submit your end of project report you will need to provide photographs of your completed project activities; be able to identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project; include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and report any underspends of the grant money.

You are also required to keep records of your project for two years. You may be required to provide them to us for evaluation upon request (see section 11 of the grant opportunity guidelines).

36. What will I need to provide to the department in order to receive my grant funding?

Grant funding will be made in a single up-front payment.

Before we can pay you, you must provide your bank details and where applicable, evidence that any other conditions of funding requested by us have been met. You will be sent your grant agreement via email with a link to an electronic form (Vendor Reqest Form) to complete and submit with your bank details.

Once you submit this form the grant will be paid into your nominated bank account.

Further information

37. Need more information?

For more information, visit business.gov.au or call 13 28 46.

We may update this document from time to time to add further information, where required.

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[2] https://www.grants.gov.au/