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| Multicultural Seniors Support (MSS) 2021-25 Grants Program |
| Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) |
| OFFICIAL |

***How should I use these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)?***

These FAQs are intended to provide you with additional information and responses to commonly asked questions about the Multicultural Seniors Support (MSS) 2021-25 grants program. They complement the MSS 2021-25 Program Guidelines. Before applying, you should read the Program Guidelines carefully, which are available at [www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-seniors-support-2021-25](http://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-seniors-support-2021-25)[.](http://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program)

# Multicultural Seniors Support (MSS) 2021-25

### *What* *is the MSS 2021-25 grants program?*

Multicultural seniors’ groups can receive funding through the MSS 2021-25 grants program to support their members to build stronger connections with their communities. The program has two funding pathways:

1. Direct Funding Offers (DFOs) for existing multicultural seniors’ groups, who have been recent recipients of Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) funding (previously the Department of Premier and Cabinet); and
2. Online applications for new applicants.

Multicultural seniors’ groups can access up to $2,000 per year over a four-year period (up to a maximum of $8,000) to support their members.

### *What are the program objectives**?*

Victorian multicultural seniors’ groups are supported through the MSS 2021-25 grants program to:

* celebrate and honour multicultural senior citizens and their unique contribution to Victoria
* reduce social isolation and foster social connections among multicultural senior citizens
* develop their leadership and organisational capacity, skills and sustainability to continue supporting multicultural seniors
* provide multicultural senior citizens with information, skills, and assistance to support their health and wellbeing
* preserve and pass on a community’s cultural heritage for future generations
* promote intergenerational connections and activities
* encourage cross-cultural interaction and understanding
* engage and communicate with their communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *What funding is available?*

Eligible multicultural seniors’ groups can receive up to $2,000 per year to support their members over a four-year period. A payment will be made each financial year and is only available in the financial year in which it is offered in the Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA). Funding will not be carried forward or made available by DFFH in following financial years.

| Financial Year grant is approved | Grant duration | Maximum grant value  (plus GST if registered for GST) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2021-22 | 4-year grant | $8,000 |
| 2022-23 | 3-year grant | $6,000 |
| 2023-24 | 2-year grant | $4,000 |
| 2024-25 | 1-year grant | $2,000 |

### *Is Public Liability Insurance provided with this grant?*

Successful online applicants under the program will receive insurance cover from the date specified on the insurance certificate, to be provided by the Insurance Broker appointed by DFFH

Organisations must provide member and volunteer numbers in their applications to receive Public Liability Insurance (PLI) and Group Personal Accident (GPA) insurance cover. Please provide us with accurate member and volunteer numbers, as incorrect information could impact your ability to make a claim under these insurance policies.

### *Will we get more funding if we have more members?*

No, your group will receive a maximum of $2,000 per year regardless of membership numbers.

### *Why are there two funding types?*

The MSS 2021-25 grants program includes two funding pathways:

* Direct Funding Offers (DFOs) for existing multicultural seniors’ groups; and
* Online applications for new applicants.

This is so we can deliver funding as quickly as possible to multicultural seniors’ groups so that they can continue their activities.

*Online Applications*

Recently formed multicultural seniors’ groups or groups that have not engaged with DFFH before, are able to apply for this funding.

### *What is the funding for?*

You can use MSS 2021-25 funding for the following purposes, subject to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions:

* **engagement activities** to enhance social cohesion of seniors’ groups and cultural appreciation of their members, subject to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions:
  + cultural activities (e.g. dancing, singing, arts and crafts, cooking) in person and/or online
  + outings to places of cultural significance
  + luncheons and regular gatherings of members
  + engagement of new members to grow and build sustainable seniors’ groups
* **running costs** of the seniors’ group (e.g. utilities, venue hire, refreshments, administration costs, other costs incurred while supporting their members)
* **distribution of accurate information** regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, health advice and available supports for multicultural seniors
* purchase of **resources or equipment** to benefit groups and members:
  + Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for members (e.g. masks, hand sanitiser, etc)
  + minor office equipment (e.g. laptop, printers, mobile phones)
* delivery of **practical supports to multicultural seniors** (either directly or working with partner organisations), for example:
  + home deliveries of essential items to members unable to leave home (e.g. care packages, medicines, PPE, etc)
  + social matching initiatives to decrease isolation (e.g. pairing of members to engage regularly via phone or online)
  + culturally appropriate and regular ‘check-ins’ for those who are isolated
  + transport costs for multicultural seniors to attend medical appointments and pharmacies during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, including for coronavirus (COVID-19) testing and vaccinations
* advancing **seniors’ internet accessibility, digital literacy**, and access to computers (including partnerships with peak bodies to deliver this service)
* **establishment of digital or remote support networks** and online communities to keep members connected:
  + software to support group members connect (e.g. video conferencing platform membership to meet ‘face-to-face’ online)
  + necessary IT and digital support, technical skills and training sessions (e.g. how to use video conferencing and engage in online spaces)
  + IT literacy and safety on the internet

### *What cannot be funded?*

* activities that contradict current advice from the Department of Health regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions or health directions
* setting up new senior citizens clubs or senior citizens groups run by local councils (councils may act as auspice organisations)
* senior citizens activity groups that receive service funding through State or Federal Government
* staff wages
* set-up or running costs of a business
* activities involving gambling
* political or fundraising activities
* seniors’ groups activities or travel outside of Victoria; or for individuals or groups from outside of Victoria to visit or attend activities within Victoria; or senior citizens group activities that are supported through another grant from Multicultural Affairs
* activities to support individuals.
* activities outside of the funded period.

# Organisational eligibility

### *Is my seniors’ group eligible?*

To qualify for support a group must meet the following eligibility criteria.

* be a Victorian multicultural seniors’ group or provide support to seniors from multicultural backgrounds
* be a not-for-profit organisation
* have a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
* be an incorporated legal entity, such as an Incorporated Association under the Associations *Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)*, a Company Limited by Guarantee under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth)* or similar type of organisation
* have at least 50 per cent of members over 60 years old
  + have at least 20 members (metropolitan); or 15 members (rural and regional, new and emerging communities\*)[[1]](https://auc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en%2DUS&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fdhhsvicgovau.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FDFFH-FV-SeniorsGrantTeam-GRP%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Fd05c8b0d7bb747dcaab18555a39e59c8&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=E39DDB9F-E081-C000-3EB1-723030D7E61D&wdorigin=ItemsView&wdhostclicktime=1626311057350&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=d1fccfc3-b9ac-cb3a-4239-8bb1afae5253&usid=d1fccfc3-b9ac-cb3a-4239-8bb1afae5253&sftc=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&preseededsessionkey=f8f5e3d8-f891-de38-0ba9-ad367cfd201e&preseededwacsessionid=d1fccfc3-b9ac-cb3a-4239-8bb1afae5253&rct=Medium&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftn1)
* provide at least two active email contacts for communication throughout the duration of the grant period
* have met the terms and condition of any previous grants and not have any outstanding reports from DFFH.

[[1]](https://auc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en%2DUS&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fdhhsvicgovau.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FDFFH-FV-SeniorsGrantTeam-GRP%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Fd05c8b0d7bb747dcaab18555a39e59c8&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=E39DDB9F-E081-C000-3EB1-723030D7E61D&wdorigin=ItemsView&wdhostclicktime=1626311057350&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=d1fccfc3-b9ac-cb3a-4239-8bb1afae5253&usid=d1fccfc3-b9ac-cb3a-4239-8bb1afae5253&sftc=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&preseededsessionkey=f8f5e3d8-f891-de38-0ba9-ad367cfd201e&preseededwacsessionid=d1fccfc3-b9ac-cb3a-4239-8bb1afae5253&rct=Medium&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftnref1) \**The Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) identifies ‘new and emerging communities’ as migrants and refugees that have recently arrived in Australia and may need additional support in the settlement process.*

### *Who is not eligible?*

The following entities are not eligible for MSS 2021-25 funding:

* State and Federal government departments and agencies
* Local Government Authorities (LGAs) but can act as an auspice for a seniors’ group with no ABN
* Senior citizens ‘activity groups’ that receive service funding from State or Federal Government (e.g. Planned Activity Groups)
* Individuals and sole traders
* Commercial enterprises, for-profit entities and fixed trusts
* Political parties and organisations.

### *How do I know if my organisation is a ‘legal entity’?*

If you are unsure about your ‘entity status’, you can check your organisation’s details online. Your organisation’s official status can be checked at:

* Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) – for Incorporated associations, co-operatives or organisations incorporated through other means (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/)
* Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) – for companies (https://asic.gov.au/)
* Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) – for registered charities (https://www.acnc.gov.au/)
* Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) – for Aboriginal corporations (<https://www.oric.gov.au/>)
* To check your Australian Business Number (ABN) go to: abr.business.gov.au/

### *We do not have an ABN and/or* *are not* *incorporated, can we still apply?*

Applicants that are not incorporated or do not have an ABN may still apply if they are supported by an eligible auspice organisation that has agreed to manage the grant for them.

Please read the Program Guidelines to make sure you are eligible for an MSS 2021-25 grant.

## Auspicing arrangements

### *Where do we find an auspice?*

If you are unsure where to seek an auspice, you can consider approaching:

* community organisations that you have an existing partnership or good working relationship with
* more established community organisations within your community
* larger umbrella organisations that support and represent many groups in your community
* neighbourhood houses or community centres; or
* your Local Council.

You can also visit our page on ‘Auspice arrangements’ at <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-grants-auspice-arrangements> for more information about applying for a grant with an auspice arrangement.

The auspice organisation must be a not-for-profit and incorporated legal entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN).

### *As an auspice organisation, is there a cap to the number of projects we can auspice?*

No, one organisation may act as an auspice for multiple MSS 2021-25 applications for multiple organisations.

However, please consider what you can manage. You are legally responsible for each grant that you auspice – including providing final reports to DFFH.

## The application process

Applications for the MSS 2021-25 grant round must be submitted online. To apply, visit the Victorian Government’s website ([www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-](http://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program)seniors-support-2021-25) and click on the ‘**Apply Now**’ button.

The table below outlines the key dates, information and activities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date / Information | Activity |
| 14 October 2021 | Opening date for applications |
| 28 February 2025 | Closing date for applications (11.59pm AEDT) |
| New application process | * Applications can now be made via the new DFFH Grants Gateway * Applicants will need to create a new username and password using their email address * The Multicultural Affairs Seniors Team will share resources in relation to this Gateway in the information sessions |

Please note:

* multicultural seniors’ groups that did not receive a first round Direct Funding Offer will need to submit an online application
* late or incomplete applications will not be considered
* groups can only be funded once (those with Direct Funding Offers cannot also receive a second grant via an online application)
* previous funding does not guarantee future funding or guarantee the same amount of funding as previously received.

### *What if I miss the deadline for submitting my application – can I get an extension?*

No extensions for applications are allowed. Applications will close on **28 February 2025 at 11:59pm**.

### *We need support to apply online, where can we get help?*

We understand online applications may be challenging for some seniors' groups and additional support may be required. We encourage all groups to contact friends, family, peak multicultural bodies, Local Councils and your State MP’s electoral office or local support services.

Most Local Councils also provide grant writing workshops that you can access for free, contact your Local Council for further information.

*Help with technical issues*

If you are having problems, the form is not loading or submitting, then using a different internet browser can sometimes help. If this does not work, please contact the Seniors Grants Team on 1300 112 755 or [Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au) who will assist where possible. Please allow at least three business days for support and note that the Seniors Grants Team is not available on weekends.

#### *Application Questions and Guidance*

To assist applicants, we have outlined all the details you will need to provide and the questions you will be asked in the Application Questions and Guidance document (<https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-seniors-support-2021-25>). Guidance is included to assist groups to prepare their application.

The [Grants to support multicultural communities](https://www.vic.gov.au/grants-support-multicultural-communities) webpage (<https://www.vic.gov.au/grants-support-multicultural-communities>) also has resources for applicants and grant recipients:

* You can investigate digital and online support in your area that may run programs or help seniors with digital and online engagement. This support may include your local library, Neighbourhood House, Local Council or Migrant Resource Centre.

Be connected is an Australian Government program created to help older Australian understand and use digital technology. Older Australian can learn the basics of how to connect online including how to use a digital device, be safe online, set up and use email. For information on which centres are open near you, or which are offering digital delivery, contact the helpline on **1300 795 897.**

## The assessment process

### *How will applications be assessed?*

DFFH assesses applications based on the eligibility criteria of the applicant, eligibility of proposed activities and their alignment with program objectives.

DFFH will recommend grant recipients to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. The Minister will make all final decisions regarding funding under the MSS 2021-25 grants program. All decisions made about the funding application and assessment process by DFFH or the Minister for Multicultural Affairs are considered final.

## *Will I get feedback on my application?*

Please email the Seniors Grants Team at [Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au) if you require feedback on your application.

## *Can I ask for a reassessment?*

No. All decisions by DFFH or the Minister for Multicultural Affairs are final.

Any unsuccessful organisations are encouraged to contact us at 1300 112 755 or [Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au) to discuss future applications to ensure they meet with program guidelines and eligibility criteria.

## Successful applications

## *When will successful applicants be announced?*

You will be notified of the application outcome by email.

## *When should we receive funds and be able to start our activities?*

Online applicants applying in the first year of the program will receive funding from October 2021. For the remaining three years of the program, payments will be provided from July/August. DFFH will withhold payment until applicants have completed their annual progress report for MSS 2021-25 and/or any outstanding reports from other grant programs.

Successful online applicants should note that before we can transfer funds, you will need to complete, sign and return the following documents by the date set out in a Letter of Offer, or the offer of funding may be withdrawn:

* Funding Agreement (signed and all pages returned)
* Vendor Form (the group’s bank details)

Once we have received your documents (and, if applicable, any outstanding overdue reports), your grant payments will be made in one instalment. This can take up to 30 days (but is usually much faster).

Once you receive your funds, you can start your activities.

## *Who signs the funding agreement?*

The funding agreement is between the successful multicultural seniors’ group (or auspice organisation on their behalf) and the Victorian Government. The Funding Agreement will include the terms and conditions of the grant including the use of funds and reporting requirements.

The funding agreement needs to be signed by an ‘authorised representative’. This is someone in the organisation with the authority to enter into a legal agreement for the seniors’ group (e.g. President, CEO, Chair etc.).

If you are supported by an auspice, the funding agreement is between the Victorian Government and the auspice, so it will need to be signed by an authorised representative from the auspice organisation (not by someone from the seniors’ group).

## *What if I* *cannot* *get my funding agreement and other documents back by the due date?*

We advise you contact the Seniors Grants Team as soon as possible to discuss your options and indicate your intention to accept the offer of funding. Call 1300 112 755 or email [Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au)

If we do not hear from you within the 30 days, the funding offer will lapse.

## *We do not have or use email - can we have communications and funding documents sent to us in the mail?*

During coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, we are unable to send or receive mail in a regular or reliable timeframe.

If you are unable to return documents by email or fax, you can return documents by mail to the address below.

**If you are sending documents by hard copy mail, please** **call or email the Seniors Grants Team to verbally accept the offer of funding** **and let us know that documents are in the mail**.

Your documents need to be *received* within 30 days of the letter of offer, or you risk the offer of funding being withdrawn.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Post:** | Multicultural Affairs (DFFH) Seniors Grants Team  GPO Box 1774, Melbourne VIC 3000   * *email the Seniors Grants Team at M*[*ulticultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au*](mailto:multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au) *or call on 1300 112 755 to* ***verbally accept the offer*** *of funding and let them know documents are in the mail* * *hard copy post will take longer than usual - all mail received is scanned and emailed to the Seniors Grants Team* |

You must provide at least two current email addresses for communicating with DFFH when you apply. Our preference is for all communication with successful grant recipients under the MSS 2021-25 grants program to be by email. We will only communicate by post in limited circumstances.

You can also nominate a trusted person (e.g. local council contact, family member) to receive all day-to- day correspondence and documents related to the grant funding (e.g. Funding Agreements, Report reminders). They will be responsible for passing them on to you.

## *Do we need to acknowledge the Victorian Government for the funding?*

You should acknowledge the Victorian Government in speeches and presentations, and mentioned in any media releases, flyers, programs, or other documents relating to your funded program.

Suggested acknowledgements include:

* Made possible by the Victorian Government through the Multicultural Seniors Support Program
* With thanks to the Victorian Government and the Multicultural Seniors Support Program
* Funding provided by the Victorian Government through the Multicultural Seniors Support Program

## Activities and reporting

## *What do we need to do about changing COVID-19 restrictions?*

It is a condition of funding that grant recipients comply with all current Department of Health (DH) advice regarding health directions while delivering activities under the MSS 2021-25 grant program.

It is the responsibility of grant recipients to stay up to date with the most recent health advice and you must follow the health directions that are in place.

For the most up-to-date information and advice, please regularly check the Victorian Government’s coronavirus (COVID-19) web page: <https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

You can also contact the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398. If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450.

The Victorian Government also has information in a range of community languages: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources-coronavirus-disease-covid-19.

## *Can we use grant funds for events or our usual in-person activities if restrictions allow?*

One of the program objectives for MSS 2021-25 is to ‘reduce social isolation, foster social connections among multicultural senior citizens and build stronger connections with community’.

Under normal circumstances most multicultural seniors’ groups achieve this by regularly meeting in person but may have been unable to do so due to health regulations. However, changes in health regulations may mean groups can meet in person again.

If your group can safely hold an in-person event or activity, then you may use grant funds towards this activity. This activity must still be linked to the program objectives and an eligible activity under MSS 2021-25 grant funding.

Events with 500 or more persons must be discussed with the Department in advance, to ensure adequate insurance coverage.

## *When will grant activities need to be completed and the Final Report submitted?*

You must complete your activities and submit Progress and Final Reports, which are accepted to the satisfaction of DFFH.

Progress reports must be completed for each financial year to the satisfaction of DFFH before further funding can be released. At the end of the funding period, you will be required to submit a final report outlining the use of funding and the activities achieved by your group.

You need to spend all funds and complete your activities before you submit your report.

If you have completed your activities before the end date, you can submit your report early and close your grant.

## *What happens if we* *cannot* *complete our activities or spend all the money?*

Please contact the Seniors Grants Team as soon as possible if you are not able to finish your activities or spend all the money. It is best to contact us early if you have issues, to discuss your options.

* if the Funding Agreement has not been signed, then the offer of funding can be withdrawn with no further action required.
* if the agreement has been signed and funds paid, the funds must be returned. The Seniors Grants Team will assist you to cancel your funding agreement so you can apply for other funding in future.
* if you have partially spent the grant funds, you can return the unspent funds, but you will still need to submit a Final Report for the money you did spend.

There is no negative outcome if you cancel or return grant funds as it shows good financial responsibility, so you will still be eligible to apply for other grants in the future.

Please contact the Seniors Grants Team for further information on 1300 112 755 or [Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au). We can help you to ensure you do not end up with overdue reports that will impact your future funding.

# How do we contact the Seniors Grants Team?

If you have any questions about the MSS 2021-25 grant program or the application process, you can contact us using one of the methods below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Email:** | [Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au) |
| **Phone:** | 1300 112 755  *Ask to speak with the* ‘*Multicultural Affairs Seniors Grants Team’* |
| **Fax:** | 03 8686 1112  *Please write ‘Attn: Multicultural Affairs Seniors Grants Team’ (DFFH) on first page* |

**Interpreters**

If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 then ask for 1300 112 755.

**Hearing impairments**

If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired please call the Department via the National Relay Service:

* Teletypewriter (TTY) users call 133 677 then ask for 1300 112 755
* Voice Relay - speak and listen users call 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 112 755