

2024-25 Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants

Guidelines

To receive this document in another format, email the Food Relief Policy team at [foodrelief.team@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:foodrelief.team@dffh.vic.gov.au)

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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# Message from the Minister for Carers and Volunteers Ros Spence

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting Victorians who are facing food insecurity to access healthy and culturally appropriate food.

Since 2020, we’ve invested more than $56 million into food relief and security initiatives, including continuing to support the operations of the state’s six regional foodshare hubs and the Regional Food Security Alliance.

We know some families are still doing it tough with cost-of-living pressures, and that more people need help to put food on the table.

That’s why we’re delivering the new **$4.5 million Community Food Relief Program** in 2024-25, to provide food relief where it’s needed most across metropolitan Melbourne, regional and rural Victoria.

The local grants stream of this program will support community and volunteer-led organisations, including neighbourhood houses, to respond to the individual needs of their communities.

Neighbourhood Houses, community organisations and volunteer groups across the state are critical to ensuring more people access food when they need it.

This new investment will help to support these important efforts and foster and strengthen local food relief partnerships.

I look forward to seeing the fantastic projects that will be funded through the Community Food Relief Program.

# About the program

## Overview

The Victorian Government’s **Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants** supports food relief activities and food security initiatives delivered by neighbourhood houses, community and volunteer-led organisations across Victoria.

The program aims to help meet increased demand for food relief, strengthen and expand food security initiatives in local communities and begin to address the related drivers of food insecurity.

Applications are sought from organisations with established community food programs or similar. Applications will require a well-developed project proposal aligned with existing services, demonstrating proven capability, capacity and community partnerships to deliver effective food support to respond to identified need in the local area.

## Context

Food relief services are experiencing unprecedented demand, which continues to rise with increased cost-of-living pressures experienced by many Victorians. According to the 2023 Taking the Pulse of the Nation survey rates of reported food insecurity among adults exceed 20 per cent in Victoria.

The Community Food Relief Program is designed to help respond to this need by supporting local, regional and statewide approaches. Two grant streams will both strengthen local food relief activities in neighbourhood houses, community and volunteer-led organisations across Victoria, and enhance coordination across the sector to improve food relief supply and distribution approaches.

The program recognises that some areas, including regional and rural Victoria, are experiencing greater food insecurity, alongside pockets of significant disadvantage in metropolitan Melbourne.

Food insecurity also particularly affects those Victorians who already face disadvantage and vulnerability in the community, including people on lower incomes, experiencing unemployment and/or underemployment or family violence. Some communities may face additional barriers to accessing appropriate food relief when they need it, including young people, older people, single parent households, migrants, refugees or people seeking asylum, people with chronic illness, disability or mental health conditions.

Victoria’s First Nations communities in particular may experience barriers to accessing food relief, and the Government is committed to supporting initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aligned with the principles of self-determination and cultural safety.

## Funding objectives

The objectives of the **Local Grants** program are to:

* Support more individuals and families facing food insecurity to access healthy and culturally appropriate food, in accessible and dignified ways
* Develop or enhance effective community food models, enabling community and volunteer-led organisations to expand and strengthen current efforts and increase their sustainability
* Support people accessing food relief to make connections to other related community supports and services, including financial wellbeing and food literacy, where relevant
* Develop or strengthen enduring partnerships and networks to enhance community food access, reduce duplication and improve effectiveness.

Grant applications must respond to **at least one** of the funding objectives above.

Organisations will be required to identify the relevant objective/s that their proposal responds to and provide a rationale for how their proposed activities will meet the objective, based on community need.

Applications that do not specifically respond to at least one program objective **will not** be eligible.

## Available funding

The minimum grant amount that can be applied for is $10,000.

The maximum is $50,000 for individual organisations and up to $75,000 for partnership applications.

Grant funding is once-off.

# Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the **Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants**, your application must:

* Respond to at least one of the [program objectives](#_Funding_objectives)
* Be submitted by an [eligible organisation](#_Eligible_organisations_1)
* Seek funding for [eligible activities](#_Eligible_activities_1)
* Include the [mandatory attachments](#_Mandatory_attachments_1) in an acceptable format.

**Each organisation may only submit one application.**

* If more than one application is submitted, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) will only progress the application that, in the department’s view, best fits the funding objectives. All other submitted applications will not progress to assessment.
* Where multiple organisations will work in partnership, only one application from that partnership is required, submitted by the lead organisation.

## Eligible organisations

Funding is available to organisations based in Victoria or servicing Victoria’s cross-border communities.

Applicants must have a **current Australian Business Number (ABN) and be either**:

* **a not-for-profit entity** – that is:
  + registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission; or
  + registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria (or equivalent body in a neighbouring state) as an incorporated association; or
  + registered under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) or the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic); or
  + demonstrated through your organisation’s constitution or governance documents.
* **an Aboriginal entity** that is incorporated, including Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), Traditional Owner groups and land trusts.
* **a social enterprise** that is an incorporated entity with a clearly stated purpose or mission related specifically to supporting food relief or food security.

*Definition: social enterprises are led by an economic, social, cultural, or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit; derive a substantial portion of their income from trade; and reinvest the majority of their profit/surplus in the fulfilment of their mission.*

* **a Victorian local government entity**.

If your organisation or group does not have an ABN, you may be eligible if your application identifies an auspice who has agreed to support you and enter into a funding agreement on your behalf.   
Your auspice must meet the criteria outlined above.

In addition, organisations must have **no overdue reports** from previous or current Department of Families, Fairness and Housing grant programs or service agreements.

### Local government entities:

* May only apply:
  + individually if the project will be delivered by their neighbourhood house service
  + as the lead applicant in a partnership with community organisations.
* May be the auspice organisation for a community group.

### Entities that are not eligible:

* Private (for profit) companies
* Sole traders and individuals
* Charitable trusts.

## Eligible activities

Projects funded through the **Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants** must benefit Victorian communities and/or people accessing services within Victoria.

Eligible activities may include:

* Sourcing program supplies, such as nutritious or culturally appropriate foods, packaging materials and storage
* Servicing, purchase and/or installation of equipment and appliances, or enhancing facilities to increase the availability of community food programs in local communities
* Strategic planning, partnership development and similar activities to enhance the capacity or sustainability of current or future community food programs
* Training and development activities to enhance skills, knowledge and safety of staff and volunteers
* Program delivery including volunteer recruitment, community education and awareness, promotional activities and direct food support
* Reimbursement of volunteer expenses, where directly related to the food program and proportionate to the overall project cost.

Where appropriate, up to 10 per cent of funding sought may be allocated to project management (including additional staff costs) to directly support delivery of the project.

### Funds cannot be used for

* Retrospective costs for activities that were delivered or commenced prior to funding approval.
* Activities and programs extending beyond December 2025.
* Core operational expenses such as rent, insurance, current wages, overheads and consumables.
* Staff catering (food or alcohol), gifts and other benefits.
* Activities that are already funded through other Local, State, or Commonwealth Government programs.

## Mandatory attachments

Eligible applications must include:

* Project plan in the supplied template
* Insurance certificates of currency
* For partnerships, letters of intent or similar
* For auspice arrangements, letter of intent (or similar) from the auspice organisation.

# How to apply

Applications must be submitted via the [DFFH Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/) https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au by 4:00pm Tuesday 10 September 2024.Applications must be submitted via the [DFFH Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/) https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au by 4:00pm Tuesday 10 September 2024.

Key information for completing a grant application

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key dates | Tasks |
| Applications open  30 July 2024 | * Make sure your organisation and proposed activity meets the [eligibility criteria](#_Eligibility_criteria_2).   + Read the program guidelines (this document).   + Download templates and review the factsheet at: [Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants](https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-local-grants) https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-local-grants |
| Prepare and submit application | * Register or log in to the [DFFH Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/) https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au. * Complete the online application form via the DFFH Grants Gateway.   + Draft forms will be saved and can be returned to through-out the application period.   + Answer all questions and attach mandatory documents. * Submit the application by the due date and time. |
| Applications close  4:00pm 10 September 2024 | * Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. |

## Application types

Organisations may apply individually or in a formal partnership.

| Available funding | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Individual applications  $10,000 - $50,000 | * Project delivered by a single organisation. * May have networks across community, but the project is solely managed and delivered by the applicant. * May be supported by an auspice organisation. |
| Partnerships  $10,000 - $75,000 | * Project delivered by two or more organisations working together to maximise impact, with one organisation (applicant) nominated as the lead. Only one application should be submitted by the lead organisation. * The application must include a joint project plan with clear roles and responsibilities, funding breakdown for each partner and letters of intent demonstrating the formal partnership. * An auspice arrangement on its own is not considered a partnership for the purposes of this program, although a partnership may include groups that are not incorporated/do not have an ABN. |

# Assessment process

All applications to the **Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants** will undergo the following review and assessment process:

| Process | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Eligibility check | * All applications will be reviewed against the [eligibility criteria](#_Eligibility_criteria_2).   + The eligibility check determines whether the application will proceed to further assessment. |
| Ratings against selection criteria | * Eligible applications will be assessed against the [selection criteria](#_Selection_criteria_1) based on responses provided in the application form and content of mandatory attachments.   + Partnership applications should outline the relevant capability and experience of each partner.   + Additional supporting documents (other than mandatory attachments) will not be read by the assessment panel. |
| Funding recommendations | * The final selection of highly rated applications will consider:   + Geographic spread and targeting to areas/communities in need.   + Supporting a broad variety of food relief activities and initiatives.   + Demonstrated effectiveness, efficiency and/or innovation. |
| Application outcome | * The Minister for Carers and Volunteers makes the final decision based on recommendations from the department’s assessment. * All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email. |

The department may withdraw from the application process described in this document for any reason, prior to signing any agreement with any organisation.

Organisations are reminded that they should not attempt to exert influence on the outcome of the assessment process by lobbying, directly or indirectly, departmental staff or members of parliament.

## Application outcomes

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email once the assessment process is complete. If your application is successful, the department will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant and next steps for establishing a grant agreement.

Unsuccessful applicants may ask for feedback within one month of being advised of the outcome. The department aims to provide written feedback within 20 business days following any request.

All decisions in relation to the program are final and no discussion or review will be entered into. This includes any aspect of the application, eligibility and assessment process and any decision in relation to offering a grant.

## Selection criteria

All aspects of your application will inform the assessment, this includes the project details, responses to the selection criteria and content of mandatory attachments.

Where relevant, the inclusion of additional documents will be noted, but they will not be read.

Eligible applications will be assessed against the criteria listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria | Weighting |
| **Identified community need**   * Application clearly describes the community need that the project is seeking to address, including outlining target locations and/or cohorts, the key issues responded to and/or identified gaps in services * Application demonstrates how the proposed project is an appropriate response to the community need (including accessibility and cultural appropriateness where relevant) * In alignment with the Victorian Government’s commitment to self-determination, First Nations-led organisations with be prioritised for projects designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria | 25% |
| **Demonstrated effectiveness and efficiency**   * Application provides a clear plan for delivery of the proposed project, including reasonable cost estimates that show value for money * Project plan includes realistic goals and measures of success; a clear approach for collecting and reporting data and outcomes; and opportunities to identify lessons and good practice that can be shared with others * The organisation/s has a clear approach to monitoring and evaluation and is committed to continuous improvement | 25% |
| **Demonstrated experience and capability**   * Application relates to expansion or continuation of an established community food program and/or the organisation can show capability to deliver food security initiatives that complement existing services * Organisation/s has demonstrated successful delivery of outcomes through community food programs and/or other relevant projects | 20% |
| **Organisational capacity and readiness**   * Project plan provides a detailed and specific plan for delivery including: realistic timeframe for deliverables, consideration of risks and mitigation strategies, and clear roles and responsibilities * The organisation/s has good governance, program management and risk management processes to oversee delivery and respond to challenges * The organisation/s has existing community partnerships and networks to support delivery of the project | 20% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sustainability**   * Application demonstrates how the project will strengthen partnerships to improve local food relief and/or how the project will provide longer-term benefits for the community. * The organisation explains how they will limit any negative environmental impact of the proposed activities | 10% |

# Conditions of funding

Organisations must be able to commence project establishment immediately following written confirmation from the department.

The project activities must be delivered by 31 December 2025.

If successful, project details including project name, description and grant amount will be published online at [Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants](https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-local-grants) https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-local-grants.

## Data collection requirements

Successful applicants will need to provide evidence of project outcomes in their final reports, to demonstrate how they have met the objectives outlined in their project plan.

## Funding agreements

If successful, you must enter a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with the department within two weeks of notification. If a funding offer is not accepted during this period, it may be withdrawn.

The VCFA outlines:

* the grant’s terms and conditions, including use of funds
* key deliverables and due dates
* reporting requirements.

### Payment of grant funds and reporting requirements

Funded organisations will:

* be paid on completion of agreed project milestones and deliverables outlined in the VCFA,
* complete quarterly progress reports, and
* submit a project acquittal and evaluation report at the completion of the activities.

Milestone payments are made via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) once deliverables are met, in line with the VCFA.

### Goods and Services Tax (GST)

* GST will be paid if the grant is funding a good or service and if the recipient organisation is registered for GST.
* GST will not be paid if the recipient organisation is not registered for GST, a government entity (e.g., school, local council) or if the grant is *not* funding a good and/or service.

## Funding acknowledgement

Successful applicants must acknowledge funding from the Victorian Government. Guidelines will be provided to all successful grant recipients and form part of the VCFA.

Activities to acknowledge Victorian Government support include logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material and inviting the minister to open any funded activities.

## Legal responsibilities

You must ensure the project activity follows relevant legislation, regulations, by-laws and codes. It must also meet the requirements of any Commonwealth, state, territory or local authority. It is your responsibility to be aware of laws and protocols that regulate the way you conduct your work.

## Insurance requirements

You must have public liability insurance and any other insurance that is relevant to the activities of your project. The department will ask for proof of insurance that covers the project period.

# Further information

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions and How to apply factsheet available on the [Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants](https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-local-grants) https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-local-grants website.

You may contact the Food Relief Policy team in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing at [foodrelief.team@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:foodrelief.team@dffh.vic.gov.au) if you have any other questions.