# 2025-26 Multicultural Festival and Events (MFE) Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**How should I use these FAQs?**

These FAQs will give you more information and answers to some common questions about the MFE Program.

1. Before applying, please read the [2025-26 MFE Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines/) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>.
2. If you have further questions about this round of the 2025-26 MFE program, join an online information session. Please register via our [website](http://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program) <www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>.

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# 2025-26 MFE Program

## What is the 2025-26 MFE Program?

The 2025-26 MFE Program is an open and competitive grants program for the Victorian community to celebrate our diversity and embrace multiculturalism through an annual program of festivals and events. The Multicultural Affairs Division in the Department of Premier and Cabinet (the department) administers the program.

The 2025-26 MFE Program gives grants to multicultural community organisations to deliver an event or festival. The events must be held between 1 July 2025 - 31 December 2025 (Round 1) or 1 January 2026 – 30 June 2026 (Round 2). All events funded under the MFE Program must be free to attend and accessible for all Victorians.

The Regional Multicultural Festivals and Events Fund (RMFEF) supports multicultural festivals and events for regional organisations or metro organisations with events held in regional or rural locations (in partnerships with regional organisations). The RMFEF runs concurrently with the MFE Program.

##### What are the program objectives for the 2025-26 MFE Program?

The program promotes and fosters social cohesion by funding festivals and events that meet the program objectives below:

* program objective 1: ensure Victorians can celebrate and preserve cultures and share traditions
* program objective 2: encourage the broader Victorian community to participate in events that further learning, understanding and respect for different cultures and traditions.

##### What are the funding priorities for the 2025-26 MFE Program?

The 2025-26 MFE Program will prioritise funding to rural and regional organisations and events, and new and emerging community organisations. These groups will have less application requirements. This includes reduced matched funding and attendance requirements and auspicing opportunities.

There is a criterion in the medium and large stream with a weighting of 15 per cent. This focuses on engagement with priority groups. Applications which target the following priority groups will score against this criterion:

* new and emerging communities
* regional communities
* women
* young people
* LGBTIQA+ communities.

##### What funding is available in the 2025-26 MFE Program?

The 2025-26 MFE Program offers three funding streams:

* small stream - up to $5,000 (or a lesser amount if requested)
* medium stream – between $5,001 and $15,000
* large stream – between $15,001 and $50,000.

##### What are the key dates of the 2025-26 MFE Program?

The key dates for **Round 1:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Activity |
| 18 March 2025 | Opening date for applications |
| 16 April 2025 | Closing date for applications (3pm AEST) |
| June 2025\* | Outcomes announced for July to September 2025 events |
| September 2025\* | Outcomes announced for October to December 2025 events |
| 1 July 2025 – 31 December 2025 | Successful events and activities to be held between these dates |

The key dates for **Round 2:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Activity |
| September 2025 | Opening for applications (set dates will be provided when the round opens) |
| October 2025 | Closing for applications (3pm AEST) (set dates will be provided when the round opens) |
| December 2025 | Outcomes announced for January to March 2026 events |
| February 2026 | Outcomes announced for April to June 2026 events |
| 1 January 2026 – 30 June 2026 | Successful events and activities to be held between these dates |

\*Please note these dates are approximate and may be subject to change.

##### How is the 2025-26 MFE Program different from prior program?

The table below outlines the changes made to this round.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | 2025-26 MFE Program |
| New and Emerging community priority list | The department has added the following ethnicities to the prioritised list of new and emerging communities in consultation with the [Victorian Multicultural Commission](https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/) (VMC): Hazara, Pashtuns, Tajiks and Uzbeks.  You can find the priority list at [Multicultural Festivals and Events program](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>. The listed communities are part of Australia’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program, which will be prioritised for the 2025-26 program. |
| Capacity building costs under the RMFEF | The RMFEF program will no longer support capacity building expenses. Supported events can be found in the [Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines/what-costs-are-supported) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>. |
| Unsupported event types | The following event types are not supported under the MFE grant program:   * Exhibition-only events. |
| Minimum attendance requirements for medium stream | Changes to the minimum attendance requirements for the medium stream include:   * Metropolitan organisations under the medium stream require at least 250 attendees (instead of 500) * Regional or new and emerging organisations under the medium stream require at least 100 attendees (instead of 200). |
| New and emerging community events | Established organisations delivering an event primarily benefitting a new and emerging community or communities with recent humanitarian needs will no longer qualify for the reduced requirements.  Organisations delivering events that benefit these communities can still apply but must meet either metropolitan or regional organisation requirements. |
| Partnership criterion | The partnerships criterion is no longer part of the assessment criteria for the medium and large stream. Partnerships will now be considered an eligibility criteria under the large stream. Large stream applications will be required to partner with another community organisation and submit a letter of support to be eligible. |

## The application process

##### Is there anything we should consider before applying?

Your organisation should consider the following questions before applying for this program:

* What can your organisation manage?
  + Applying for a grant, organising an event and completing final reports can be time-consuming. Your organisation should consider whether you can manage these responsibilities, including if you have the staff and/or volunteers to help deliver on the requirements and hold a successful event.
* Does your organisation have the technical expertise to deliver the festival or event?
  + If your organisation has limited time to give or a small number of people (staff and/or volunteers) to help with delivering the event, be realistic about the scale of event you can manage.
* Does your organisation have a clear understanding of why you want to hold this event?

Before starting your application, it is important to have a clear understanding of the event. This will help in preparing a strong application. It will also help in understanding if the event strongly aligns with the 2025-26 MFE Program objectives, detailed at the [Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines/medium-stream-5001-15000) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>

##### Is a partnership with another community organisation required?

Partnering with a community organisation is an eligibility criterion under the large stream. Large stream applications will be required to partner with another community organisation and submit a letter of support to be eligible. Further information is outlined in the [Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines/medium-stream-5001-15000) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>.

##### How do we apply for funding under Round 1?

Applications open on 18 March 2025 and close at 3pm on Thursday 17 April 2025 for Round 1.

To apply, visit the [Victorian Government’s website](http://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program) <www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program> and click on the ‘Apply Now’ button to be directed to the Grants Gateway. See the [Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines/medium-stream-5001-15000) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program> for more information.

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

If you wish to discuss your application, email the [Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team](mailto:multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) <multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au> prior to the closing date.

##### What if our organisation has a technical problem when submitting our application online?

If the form isn’t loading or able to be submitted, we recommend trying a different internet browser. We recommend using Google Chrome. If this does not work, email the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team <multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au> who will assist where possible.

Allow at least three business days for support and note that the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team are not available on weekends or before 9am and after 5pm on weekdays.

Provide evidence, such as a screenshot, when there is a technical error.

##### Our organisation has submitted our application but need to make changes or add attachments – can we do this?

Please use the checklist table for the stream you are applying under, found in the Program Guidelines <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>, to ensure you have completed your application.

If the round is still open for applications and you have submitted your application, email the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team <multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au> who can assist with the process to make the required changes.

No additions or changes can be made to the application once the round is closed for applications.

Late or unsubmitted applications will not be considered.

##### What if we miss the deadline for submitting our application – can we get an extension?

No extensions for applications are allowed. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

##### Our organisation wants to organise multiple events across the 2025-26 financial year activity period (July 2025 – June 2026). Can we apply for all of them?

No. Organisations are limited to receiving funding for only one event, either in Round 1 or Round 2 in the 25-26 financial year. Please consider which activity period best suits your organisation’s needs when applying for funding.

You can only apply for an event between July to December 2025. If your organisation is approved for an event between July – December 2025 (Round 1), you will not be eligible to apply for an event between January – June 2026 (Round 2). This will ensure fair distribution and wider access of MFE funding to support more groups.

If your organisation submits more than one application in a Round, the department will only consider the application that was submitted first. All other submitted applications will not be accepted. If your organisation has accidentally submitted more than one application, you must email the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team <multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au> before the closing date.

##### Our organisation wants to seek funding for three separate events across a few months, will this be supported?

No. The program can fund either standalone events lasting one day, or a series of events up to 30 days but only if there's a clear cultural link and explanation in the application. Multiple events without a clear link or running over 30 days will not be supported.

## Organisational eligibility

##### How do we know if our organisation is eligible to apply?

Refer to [Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines/medium-stream-5001-15000) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program> for further information on organisation eligibility.

##### How do we know if our 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:

* for an [Incorporated Association](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/) – <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/>
* for a [Company](https://connectonline.asic.gov.au/) – <https://connectonline.asic.gov.au/>
* to check your [ABN](https://abr.business.gov.au/) – <https://abr.business.gov.au/>.

##### How do we know if our organisation is ‘not-for-profit’?

If you are an incorporated association, this entity type is considered not-for-profit and no further documentation is required.

If you are not an incorporated association, you can check that your organisation is not-for-profit by showing that your organisation is either:

* registered with the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission](https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities) - <https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities>
* eligible through your organisation’s constitution, rules or governance documents. These documents must be attached with your application.

##### Our organisation is a social enterprise, but we are an unincorporated entity, can we still apply?

No. All organisations supported through the MFE program must be legal entities. Even if you are an eligible social enterprise, with a purpose that relates to multiculturalism, the department cannot enter into a funding agreement with an unincorporated entity.

##### Our organisation or group is not eligible, are there any exceptions?

Applicants that are not incorporated or do not have an ABN may apply if supported by an eligible auspice organisation that has agreed to manage the grant for them (see Auspicing arrangements).

## Auspicing arrangements

Auspicing arrangements are available to all organisations in the small and medium streams. They are allowed in the large stream for new and emerging community organisations and rural and regional organisations.

##### How do we find an auspice organisation to support us?

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
* your local council.

##### Is there a maximum number of applications an auspice organisation can support in this round?

No. An organisation may act as an auspice for several organisations seeking funding through this round of MFE. The auspice organisation should consider how many grants (including applications and grant acquittal requirements) they can manage. The auspice organisation is legally responsible for each project auspiced. This includes providing final reports to the department.

Auspice organisations should be up to date with their reporting to make sure they can best support an organisation they are auspicing and promptly distribute funds to them.

Refer to Program Guidelines <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program> for further information about the responsibilities of an auspice organisation.

##### Are there any mandatory documents for auspicing arrangements?

Yes. The following documents are mandatory for auspicing arrangements:

1. A letter of support from the auspice
2. The auspice’s constitutional documents if it is a social enterprise.

## Activities and costs supported by the round

##### There is no line item in the budget template to apply for our staff salaries – can this form part of my funding request?

No. Staff wages and salaries for ongoing employees are not able to be funded under this grant program.

You may apply for any reasonable costs associated with the organising and staging of your event, provided this is not an ongoing administrative or staffing cost. Staff and volunteer time spent organising the event should be included in your budget as an in-kind contribution towards the running of the event.

The following applies:

* costs for staffing must only be for staff contracted temporarily for the delivery of the event (such as an event coordinator), and evidence of this arrangement must be provided as part of the acquittal process
* salary subsidy is only permitted where it (for example, from a project partner) provides administrative or project management support. Evidence of this arrangement must be provided as part of the acquittal process.

Any short-term services or in-kind contributions of staff or volunteer time should be described in your application in the budget section.

## The assessment process

##### How will applications be assessed?

The assessment process is detailed on the [Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines/medium-stream-5001-15000) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program>.

##### When will successful applicants be announced?

* Outcomes for July to September 2025 events are expected in June 2025.
* Outcomes for October to December 2025 events are expected in September 2025.

Successful applications will be contacted by the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team to proceed with the execution of a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA). This will need to be signed within 30 days of receiving it.

##### If my application is unsuccessful, will I receive feedback to help with future applications?

If your application is unsuccessful, your organisation can request for feedback from the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team. Please note it may take up to 4 weeks to provide feedback given the volume of grants received under this program. Details of how to request feedback will be outlined in your outcome letter.

##### If my application is unsuccessful, can I request it be reviewed or re-assessed?

Applications cannot be reassessed. The MFE Program is a merit-based grant program, and all applications undergo a rigorous, multi-stage assessment process. All decisions in relation to funding are considered final.

##### Our organisation applied for $30,000 but were only successful for $10,000 - can we request more funding?

Please note a request for more funding is not available as the approved amount is final once the grant outcome has been announced. However, there are two options available to your organisation:

* Accept the funding offer: if the approved amount is less than what you applied for and you are unable to hold the event as planned, please notify us. Provide details of a scaled down event or changes to your planned event activities and budget to adjust for the successful funding amount.
* Decline the funding offer - if you no longer wish to proceed with your event.

## Successful applications

##### When will we receive funding and be able to start our activities?

Successful organisations will enter into a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with the Victorian Government. The VCFA will be between the successful organisation or auspice organisation and the Victorian Government.

Organisations must provide the details of two authorised representatives who will sign the agreement. The two representatives must each provide a different email address to the department to receive the VCFA. The VCFA is signed through an online portal. No hard copies will be accepted.

The VCFA will include the terms and conditions of the grant including the payment schedule, use of funds, term of the agreement and reporting requirements. Grant payments may be made in one or multiple instalments.

The VCFA must be signed and returned within 30 days of notification, or the offer of funding may be withdrawn.

##### When will grant activities need to be completed?

Successful Round 1 grant recipients must deliver all grant activities between 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025 and the final report must be submitted by January 2026.

Successful Round 2 grant recipients must deliver all grant activities between 1 January 2026 to 30 June 2026 and the final report must be submitted by July 2026.

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

The Victorian Government must be acknowledged in speeches and presentations, and mentioned in any media releases, flyers, programs, or other documents relating to your funded event.

Suggested acknowledgements include:

* Made possible by the Victorian Government through the Multicultural Festivals and Events Program
* With thanks to the Victorian Government and the Multicultural Festivals and Events Program
* Funding provided by the Victorian Government through the Multicultural Festivals and Events Program.

##### How do we invite a representative of the department to attend my event?

You can email the [Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team](mailto:multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) <multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au> to discuss the opportunity further.

##### What happens if we are successful, but our event will not be going ahead?

If for any reason your organisation is unable to complete your planned event, you must inform the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team immediately.

If the VCFA has not been signed, then the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

If the agreement has been signed and funds paid, the funds must be returned, and the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team will assist you to cancel your VCFA so you can apply for other funding in future. Email the [Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team](mailto:multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) <multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au> for further assistance.

##### Are changes to the date, type of event, venue or budget of our event allowed?

All changes to events must be approved by the department.

Once your organisation has signed the VCFA, you enter a legally binding contract with the department. If the event will not take place as outlines in your application form you are legally bound to first notify the department of this change before any activities take place. This is outlined in the VCFA. For example, this can include a change in the date of the event or the nature of the event activity.

The department must review and approve this change prior to your organisation proceeding with any changes or spending grant funds on purposes that differ from the original application and funding agreement. This is to make sure the event sill aligns with the program guidelines. Organisations can report changes by contacting the [Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team](mailto:multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) via email multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 112 755.

##### What happens if we have used funds on costs which are not supported by the MFE Program?

MFE grant funds can only be used on supported costs. If your organisation uses these funds on items which are listed in the guidelines as costs which cannot be supported by the MFE Program (e.g., gift packages, travel outside Victoria, Public Liability Insurance) or for costs which do not relate to the activities outlined in the application form and funding agreement (a face-to-face or hybrid event), your organisation will be financially obligated to cover these costs and return funds to the department.

See the [Program Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program-guidelines) <https://www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-festivals-and-events-program> for a list of costs which cannot be supported, and for a list of the types of events and activities which cannot be supported. If you are still unsure about if a cost is supported, you can email the [Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team](mailto:multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) <multicultural-festivals.events@dpc.vic.gov.au>.

##### What reports will need to be provided throughout the project?

For all small stream recipients, as this is an eligibility only stream, recipients will only need to provide confirmation that funding has been spent and the details regarding the final event, such as attendee numbers and event location.

For all medium and large stream recipients a final report is required at the end of your project. These reports are a declaration of how organisations have spent allocated funds to deliver their supported events and that expenditure was in alignment with the MFE Program. The Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team are available to support you through this process if required.

Larger grants have lengthier final report obligations. Organisations will be required to provide a more detailed financial acquittal to ensure the proper use of public funds.

All reports need to be completed online via the [Grants Gateway portal](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/). To access your online final report:

1. Login to the [Grants Gateway portal](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/)
2. Click ‘my Open Grants’ to view your organisation’s current grants
3. Click on the relevant ‘Opportunity Name’
4. Click on ‘Milestone reference number’ relating to the Final Report milestone
5. Click ‘Start Report’

##### What happens if we have unspent funds?

All funds must be used during the activity period as outlined in the funding agreement. There is a section in your final report template where you can declare if all MFE funds have been spent. If your organisation has been unable to spend all or some of the grant funds towards your event, the Multicultural Affairs Programs and Grants Team will provide you with a step-by-step process to return any remaining funds to the department.

##### Why did we receive less than the amount we requested?

Due to the competitive nature of the program, we may allocate less than the requested amount to successful applicants. You should plan for contingencies and consider other funding sources and options in case your application is unsuccessful or only partially funded. Avoid assuming you are successful or entering financial or other commitments until you are formally notified of the outcome of your application.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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