

Multicultural Seniors Support (MSS) 2021-25 Grants Program Program Guidelines



To support multicultural seniors groups during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Funding from 14 October 2021 to 30 June 2025
Applications close 28 February 2025

Submit your application online at:
www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-seniors-support-2021-25

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) on 1300 112 755. www.vic.gov.au

The Department can assist you with your application, but please note you are required to apply in English. Language and interpreter services are available, please mention the language support.

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Message from the Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Victoria's vibrant communities are the cornerstone of our state's identity. As Australia's most multicultural state, we are fortunate to be home to more than 1,000 multicultural seniors groups that are dedicated to supporting their members and communities.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I am proud to announce a new funding round to support our state's multicultural seniors groups. The Multicultural Seniors Support (MSS) 2021-25 grants program will offer multi-year funding to multicultural seniors groups to provide financial assistance towards organisational support and to support the needs of our culturally diverse senior community members.

The Victorian Government strongly believes that connecting people – from all backgrounds – is an important part of a fulfilling and healthy community. Victoria's multicultural seniors groups play an especially important role in preserving cultural heritage for future generations, and their contributions and wisdom will be needed to help our communities adapt to, and recover from, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

While coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to be an ongoing challenge, the need to maintain social connections with our cultural identity and heritage remains. The Victorian Government believes that our diversity is one of our state's greatest strengths and we will continue to work with our proud multicultural communities to make Victoria safer and fairer for everyone.

I encourage multicultural seniors groups to continue supporting senior Victorians from all cultural backgrounds to build stronger connections with their communities throughout the state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ros Spence'.

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

What is the Multicultural Seniors Support (MSS) Program?

Overview

The Multicultural Seniors Support (MSS) 2021-25 grants program will provide funding to multicultural seniors groups to support their members to build stronger connections with their communities.

To qualify for this grant applicants must be a multicultural seniors group with a focus on supporting seniors from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds. They must have at least 20 members (15 in regional Victoria, and in new and emerging communities) with at least 50 per cent of their membership over the age of 60.

The MSS 2021-25 grants program will provide funding to multicultural seniors groups to support their members for up to four years.

Grants of \$2,000 per year will be provided, up to four years.

Type One: Direct Funding Offers to existing seniors groups

Type Two: New applicants may apply online at any time.

Submit your application at:

www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-seniors-support-2021-25

Program Objectives

The MSS 2021-25 grants program will support Victorian multicultural seniors groups to:

- celebrate and honour multicultural seniors and seniors groups' unique contribution to Victoria
- reduce social isolation and foster social connections among multicultural senior citizens
- develop 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.



The MSS 2021-25 grants program will provide funding in two ways

- via direct funding offers for organisations that are recent recipients of Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) funding
- via an open funding round for newly formed organisations and those that have not recently received DFFH funding.

Direct Funding Offers

Direct funding offers will be sent to multicultural seniors groups in Victoria that have been recent recipients of DFFH funding (previously grants provided through the Department of Premier and Cabinet) e.g. the Coronavirus Support for Multicultural Seniors (CSMS) 2020-21 grants program. These organisations will not need to apply separately for the MSS program. They need to respond to the direct funding offer by confirming they meet the eligibility criteria under the MSS grants program, provide up-to-date details of their organisation and confirm their acceptance of the offer.

Open funding round (online applications) for new applicants

Funding is also available for multicultural seniors groups that are newly formed, are first-time applicants for DFFH funding, or have not recently received funding from DFFH. These organisations are eligible to apply under the open funding round and will need to submit an online application. Online applications will be assessed and approved on a quarterly basis.

An organisation that receives a direct funding offer is not eligible to apply through the open funding round.

All funding offers – whether direct funding offers or via the open round – are subject to the organisation returning all documents within 30 days. If the organisation is concerned that they cannot meet this timeframe, they are asked to contact the Multicultural Seniors Grants team at DFFH.

Funding will be paid up to four years, with a payment each financial year. Funding for each year is only available in the financial year in which it is offered. It will not be carried forward or made available by the department in following financial years. Funding in future years will only be made available once organisations have acquitted the previous year's funding and have reconfirmed their eligibility under the MSS guidelines. A direct funding offer will be withdrawn by DFFH if the group is no longer eligible.

For further details regarding direct funding offers or online applications, please contact DFFH at email Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au or call **1300 112 755** and ask to speak to the Multicultural Seniors Team in Multicultural Affairs.



Who can apply?

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, a group must:

- be a multicultural seniors group with a primary focus to support seniors from multicultural backgrounds
- meet at least once per month in person or virtually
- have at least 50% of members over 60 years old
- have at least
 - 20 members (metropolitan); or
 - 15 members (regional Victoria, new and emerging communities)¹

In addition, groups must also:

- be a not-for-profit organisation
- 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* (Cth) or similar type of organisation
- have a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- provide at least two active email addresses have met the terms and condition of any previous grants and not have any overdue accountability reports from DFFH.

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.

To check your Australian Business Register (ABN) go to: **abr.business.gov.au**

To check your incorporation type and/or not-for-profit status, visit:

- Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) – for Incorporated associations, co-operatives or organisations incorporated through other means (**www.consumer.vic.gov.au**)
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) – for companies (**asic.gov.au**)
- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) – for registered charities (**www.acnc.gov.au**)
- Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) – for Aboriginal corporations (**www.oric.gov.au**).

The following groups are not eligible to apply for MSS 2021-25 funding:

- State and Federal government departments and agencies
- Local Government Authorities (LGAs) are themselves ineligible 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.

¹ 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.

Outstanding reports

Applicants that have overdue reports from previous DFFH grants (previously grants provided through the Department of Premier and Cabinet) will not be eligible to receive funding until any outstanding reports have been returned.

Grant recipients need to show funds received from DFFH were spent as agreed and in alignment with the program objectives.

To check if you are up to date with accountability reports, please contact DFFH by email at: **Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au**.

What are the responsibilities of an auspice organisation?

If your organisation is not incorporated or does not have an ABN number, you may still apply to the MSS 2021-25 grant program if you are supported by an eligible auspice organisation that has agreed to manage the grant for you.

An auspice arrangement is when a larger organisation assists a smaller organisation to fund a grant activity or event. The larger organisation is known as the auspice organisation. The smaller group or organisation is known as the grant recipient.

If your grant application is successful, your auspice organisation will be responsible for:

- signing the grant agreement
- communication with DFFH regarding grant management
- all legal and financial responsibility for the grant on your group's behalf
- receiving and distributing grant funds under the grant agreement
- ensuring all grant activities or events are completed
- submitting final and evaluation reports and financial acquittals on your organisation's behalf.

Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and mainstream health providers and can auspice (one or more) smaller groups on an application but cannot themselves apply. Organisations that support multiple multicultural seniors groups (e.g. a peak body) should contact DFFH to discuss whether a single application can be made.



Funding available

Funding of \$2,000 per year is available over a four-year period between 2021-25.

Grant recipients will also receive Public Liability Insurance and Group Personal Accident Insurance in addition to the grant funds.

Public Liability Insurance covers group members and the general public, and Group Personal Accident Insurance covers volunteers (e.g. committee members) for risks such as injury and property damage throughout the funding period.

Insurance cover for organisations will be effective from the date specified on the insurance certificate, to be provided by the Insurance Broker appointed by DFFH.

Groups are required to provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding the number of members and volunteers requiring cover. Failure to provide accurate information could impact a group's ability to make a claim under the insurance policy. Updated information can be provided to DFFH throughout the period of the grant if membership significantly changes.



Eligible applications and activities

What activities can be funded?

MSS funding can be used for the following purposes:

- 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, for example:
 - translation of resources outlining current advice
 - printing and postage for hard copy resources
- purchase of resources or equipment to benefit group and members:
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for members (e.g. masks, hand sanitiser, etc)
 - sewing machines to create reusable masks
 - 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
 - minor office equipment (e.g. laptop, printers, mobile phones)

- organising volunteers to deliver practical support to multicultural seniors (either directly or working with partner organisations to deliver), 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
- 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

Equipment purchases must be for the benefit of the seniors group or multicultural seniors communities and cannot benefit a single individual. For example, a sewing machine or mobile phones purchased with grant funds may be used by individuals but must remain the property of the seniors group.

All activities funded under MSS must follow all current health directions and current advice from the Department of Health. It is the obligation of the group to ensure they stay up to date and compliant with health restrictions as they change.

What activities cannot be funded?

MSS funding cannot be used for:

- activities that contradict current advice from the Department of Health regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions or health directions
- setting up new senior citizens clubs
- 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 group activities or travel outside of Victoria or for individuals or groups from outside of Victoria to visit or attend activities within Victoria, with the exception of Victorian multicultural seniors groups in recognised border areas
- seniors group activities that are supported through another grant from Multicultural Affairs
- activities outside of the funding period.



How to apply

Direct Funding Offers

Multicultural seniors groups that receive direct funding offers under the MSS 2021-25 grants program do not need to submit a separate application. These groups will be sent an offer of funding and a funding agreement and asked to provide updated details to DFFH as well as confirmation of their organisation's eligibility under the guidelines.

Online Applications

First time applicants (e.g. newly formed multicultural seniors groups) or groups that have not recently received DFFH funding can apply for funding online.

Applications Open 14 October 2021	Submit an Application Online	Applications Close 30 April 2025 at 11:59pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the MSS 2021-25 program guidelines carefully. • Make sure you meet the eligibility criteria. • Make sure your activities are eligible. • Make sure you can meet and adjust to changing health directions in place as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). 	<p>All applications must be submitted online at www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-seniors-support-2021-25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants that require additional support to submit an application online may wish to contact your local library or Council, neighbourhood house, volunteer resource service or migrant resource centre to seek assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. • Only one application per seniors group will be accepted. • There is no limit on the number of groups an auspice can support. • The department reserves the right to suspend or close the program early should funding be exhausted before the closing date.

For more information or if you need further assistance contact DFFH at email Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au or call **1300 112 755** and ask to speak to the Multicultural Seniors Team in Multicultural Affairs.

How will applications be assessed?

DFFH will assess all online applicants and will recommend grant recipients to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Applications will be screened to ensure that they meet program eligibility criteria and will be assessed on alignment of the proposed project expenditure and project activities against the program objectives.

Each multicultural seniors group:

- will only be funded once (those who receive direct funding offers cannot also apply online)
- should note, previous funding does not guarantee future funding or guarantee the same amount of funding as previously received.

Funding decisions

The Minister will make all final decisions regarding funding under the MSS 2021-25 grants program.

All decisions by DFFH or the Minister for Multicultural Affairs are considered final. This includes decisions in relation to any aspect of the funding application and assessment process, any decision to offer or award a grant under this program, or to withdraw the offer or cancel the grant funding agreement.

Offers of funding will be withdrawn if the group no longer meets basic eligibility under the MSS 2021-25 grant program.



Funding conditions

Victorian Common Funding Agreement

Successful grant recipients will be required to enter into a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with DFFH, which outlines the terms and conditions of the grant including the use of funds, term of the agreement and reporting requirements.

DFFH will send successful grant recipients a letter of offer, VCFA and other documents which must be returned within 30 days to accept the funding. Groups that miss the deadline risk the offer of funding being withdrawn. The department reserves the right to withdraw the offer or extend the due date.

Funding will be provided for up to four years, with a payment each financial year. Funding for each year is only available in the financial year in which it is offered in the VCFA and will not be carried forward or made available by the department in following financial years.

If you think you are unable to return the VCFA in 30 days or would like further details regarding the VCFA, please contact DFFH as soon as possible at email Multicultural.Seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au or call **1300 112 755** and ask to speak to the Multicultural Seniors Team in Multicultural Affairs.

Grant payments and reporting

Upon signing the VCFA funding will be paid in annual instalments each year up to a four-year period.

Organisations will be paid \$2,000 per year funded, at the commencement of the financial year. Each payment will be dependent on the club providing satisfactory reports for the previous year of MSS funding and reconfirming eligibility. At the end of the funding period organisations will be required to submit a final report outlining how MMS funding supported the group's activities and further the objectives of the MSS program. This will close off the grant obligations when reviewed and accepted to the satisfaction of DFFH.

DFFH will provide the progress and final report templates to groups via email.

Please note all payments are dependent on a group being up to date with reports for existing DFFH grants.

How to Contact DFFH

Contacting the Seniors Grants Team

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

Email:

multicultural.seniors@dffh.vic.gov.au

Phone:

1300 112 755

Ask to speak with the Multicultural Seniors 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

Under current coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, we are unable to send or receive mail in a regular or reliable timeframe. Exceptions will be made in limited circumstances.

Hard copy mail is currently unavailable.

Due to significant delays to postal services during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are unable to offer hard copy mail communication.

Additional Information

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 or local support services such as those below who can help you get ready to apply online.

Please refer to www.vic.gov.au/multicultural-seniors-support-2021-25 for more information on:

- **Be Connected:** an Australian Government program created to help older Australians understand and use digital technology (www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au)
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** The FAQs will provide additional information and answers to common questions
- **Application questions and guidance:** This outlines all the details you will need to provide, the questions you will be asked and includes guidance to assist groups prepare their application.
- **How to access the Grants Portal:** Instructions on how to access the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Grants Portal when applying for a Multicultural Grant Program.
- **How to write a grant application:** Tips to help organisations and community groups write a good grant application.
- **Grant terminology explained:** Definitions of all multicultural grant program terminology.
- **Auspice arrangements:** Information organisations need to know when applying for a multicultural grant under an auspice or partnership arrangement.
- **Branding requirements for multicultural grant recipients:** How to acknowledge multicultural grant program funding received from the Victorian Government.



