2025-26 Multicultural Capacity Building Program

Guidelines

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VICTORIA State Government | Premier and Cabinet

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of Country.

We respectfully acknowledge all First Peoples of Victoria and celebrate their enduring connection to land, skies and waters. We thank First People for their care of Country and contributions to Victorian communities. We honour and pay our respects to First Peoples' Elders past and present.

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To receive this document in an alternative format, phone **1300 113 755**, email **MA.capacitybuilding@dpc.vic.gov.au**, or contact National Relay Service on **1800 555 660** if required. HTML format is available at **vic.gov.au**

For languages other than English, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service National hotline **131 450** then ask for **1300 112 755**.

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Victorian Government Values Statement

The Victorian Government is committed to building community harmony and ensuring every Victorian feels safe and can participate in all aspects of Victorian life. This commitment is reflected in the contractual relationship with funded organisations, which sets out the expectation that organisations will uphold the Victorian Government values and the Commitment to Social Cohesion when delivering their funded projects.

Victorian Values Statement

Whether at home, at work, while volunteering in the community, these are the values that make Victoria a great place to live – and a place we can all be proud of.

1. **One law for all**

All Victorians have the same responsibilities, rights and protections under the law.

2. **Freedom to be yourself**

Everyone is free to be themselves and to feel safe in being true to themselves.

3. **Discrimination is never acceptable**

Everyone has a responsibility to promote inclusion and participation and to reject exclusion, racism and all forms of violence.

4. **A fair go for all**

Every Victorian should be given the support they need to enjoy the Victorian way of life.

5. **It is up to all of us to contribute to a Victoria we can be proud of**

We all want similar things – the opportunity to thrive, for our successes to be recognised, and for our families and loved ones to be safe, secure and happy.

Commitment to Social Cohesion

Victoria is a proudly diverse community.

Our social cohesion is part of what makes our state a great place to live.

It is expected that your organisation will commit to upholding Victoria's social cohesion.

You will do this in your daily conduct as an organisation by:

- Supporting shared understanding and celebration
- Being respectful of different views and perspectives
- Creating an inclusive environment where everyone can belong
- Rejecting racism, vilification and discrimination in all forms.

You will acknowledge that the conduct of your organisation, its employees, its contractors and/or volunteers, adheres to the Victorian Values statement and the Commitment to Social Cohesion.

You are required to read, understand and make your employees, contractors and volunteers aware of the Victorian Values statement and the Commitment to Social Cohesion.

Message from the Minister for Multicultural Affairs

I am pleased to announce the launch of the 2025-26 Multicultural Capacity Building Program.

The Victorian Government is proud of the rich history of multiculturalism and the diversity that makes our state such a vibrant place to live.

Multicultural organisations play a key role in enriching our communities. Their work fosters connection, belonging and opportunities across Victoria.

However, grassroots groups and those representing new and emerging communities can face complex demands and challenges.

Victoria's Multicultural Review, led by George Lekakis AO, highlighted the importance of community-led action. It called for greater support to grassroots organisations so they can become strong and sustainable.

The Victorian Government recognises that strengthening the work of multicultural organisations and their capacity to engage with government and communities is vital.

In response, I am proud to launch the Multicultural Capacity Building Program. This program aims to support the day-to-day operations of organisations, build their capabilities and resilience, and increase their impact.

Supporting organisations to grow with confidence supports Victoria's commitment to a vibrant and inclusive multicultural society. It ensures they can continue their important work and make a lasting difference in the lives of multicultural and multifaith Victorians.

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

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What is the Multicultural Capacity Building Program?

The Multicultural Capacity Building Program (MCBP) supports multicultural community organisations in Victoria to strengthen their capacity and continue to create positive change for communities.

The MCBP aims to help multicultural organisations, to deliver better outcomes for Victorian communities by:

- enabling strength-based capacity building that supports organisational sustainability
- fostering collaboration between multicultural organisations, government and communities.

This **one-year** grant program is:

- **competitive** – meaning not all applications will be successful
- awarded **based on merit** and at the discretion of the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, factoring in assessment recommendations from Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Who does the funding prioritise?

The department will prioritise applications by organisations who engage with:

- new and emerging communities
- rural and regional communities

These organisations often have less access to resources.

Please see the Definitions and abbreviations section at the end of this document for a helpful table.

Timeline

Applications open on 15 January 2026 and close on 19 February 2026 at 3:00pm.

What type of grants are available?

The program has three funding streams to support multicultural organisations of different sizes and capacities. **Organisations can only submit one application.**

Small Stream	Medium Stream	Large Stream
Up to $10,000	**$10,001 to $100,000**	**$100,001 to $400,000**
For emerging and established organisations that: • reach less than 250 people • have an annual revenue of below $100,000	For emerging and established organisations that: • reach more than 250 people	For established organisations that: • reach more than 500 people

Who can apply

An organisation can apply for funding if it:

- is a multicultural organisation based and operating in Victoria **and**
- has a current Australian Business Number (ABN) **and**
- agrees that employees, contractors, and volunteers will uphold and promote the Victorian Government Values Statement (which includes the Commitment to Social Cohesion) while delivering supported activities **and**
- has no overdue reports with Multicultural Affairs funded grants by 19 February 2026 **and**
- is a legal entity **and** a not-for-profit, with evidence that your organisation is either:
  - registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria Associations *Incorporation Reform Act 2012* as an incorporated association. This entity type is considered not-for-profit
  - registered as a company under the *Corporations Act 2001* via the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)
  - incorporated through an Act of Parliament
  - eligible as a not-for-profit through your organisation's constitution, rules or governance documents.

Who cannot apply

- Private (for profit) companies
- Sole traders and individuals
- Charitable trusts
- Local government authorities (LGAs), including LGA-managed, operated, administered and regulated trusts
- Registered public and private primary and secondary schools, preschools, TAFE institutes and universities – excluding community language schools that are eligible
- Political organisations
- Organisations, including those that deliver services to multicultural communities, that are not owned, governed, or primarily led by members of a multicultural community.

How to check your Australian Business Number (ABN)

- To check your ABN, visit the Australian Business Register (ABR): https://abr.business.gov.au/

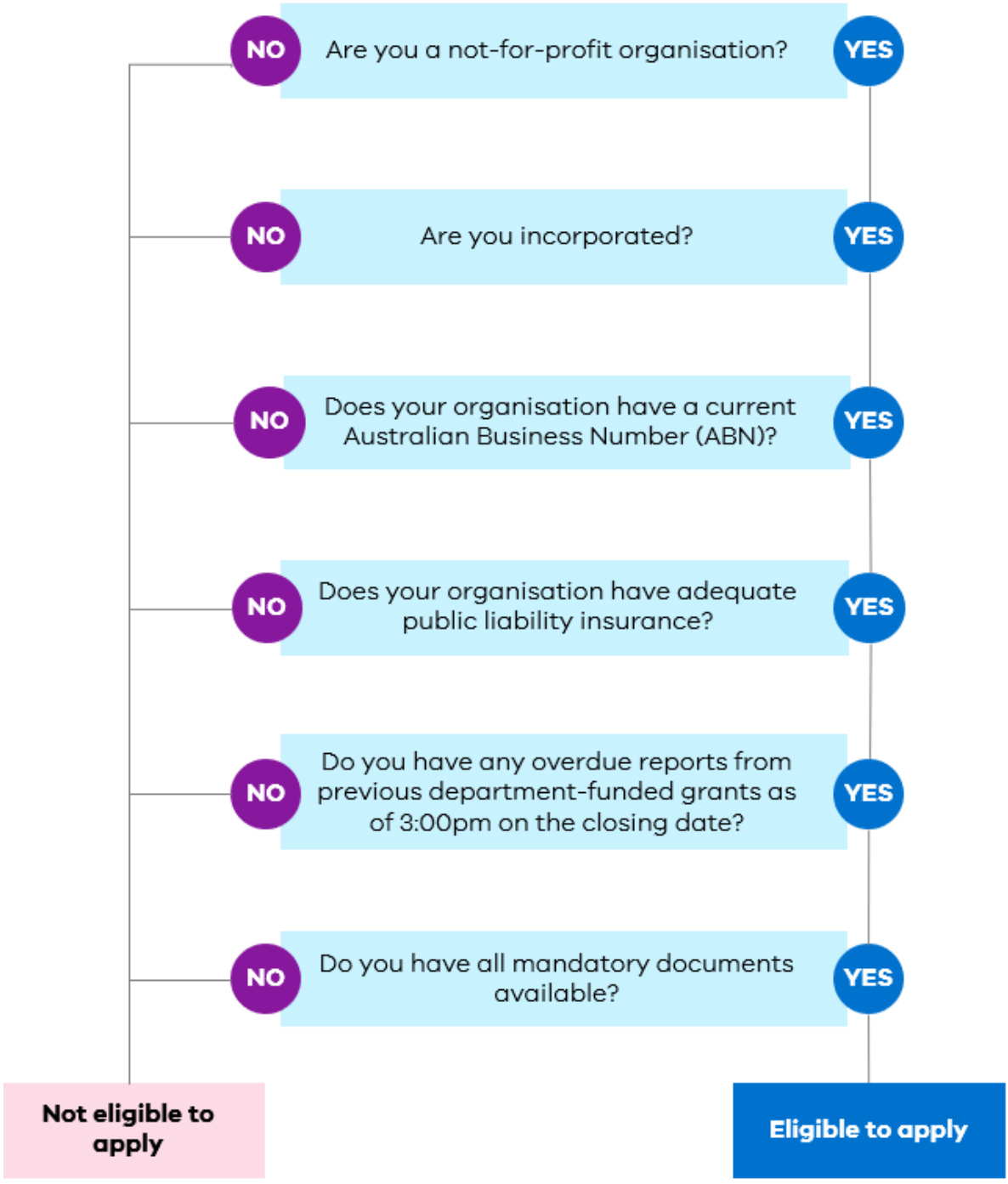
How to check your organisation type

- For incorporated associations, co-operatives or organisations incorporated through other means go to Consumer Affairs Victoria: https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/
- For a Company Limited by Guarantee go to ASIC Connect Online: https://connectonline.asic.gov.au/RegistrySearch/
- For registered charities go to Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC): https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities

How to check if your organisation is up to date on reporting requirements

- You can view your current grants in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Grants Gateway here: https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/
- Any report which is showing as red is overdue. Please completed these reports before submitting your application to this grant program.

Use this tool to check if your organisation is eligible for grant funding under this program



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What activities can be funded?

All project activities must help achieve the program objectives by:

- developing your organisation's internal capacity. For example, building skills, systems, leadership and strategies to improve long-term effectiveness and impact
- supporting your organisation's daily operations to make things easier and more effective.

Below are **examples only** to help you think about what might be possible. If your project and activities align with the program objectives, we encourage you to apply, even if it is not listed here

Examples of activities that build capacity

Leadership, Governance & Strategy

- Leadership training for leaders
- Building inclusive leadership and supporting people to grow as leaders
- Improving how boards work or reviewing rules and structures
- Planning for a sustainable future
- Developing risk management and emergency response plans.

Partnerships and collaboration

- Building partnerships
- Sharing knowledge through networks
- Setting up communities of practice
- Working with others to use resources more effectively.

Workforce development

- Training and mentoring
- Providing professional development tools
- Building skills to respond effectively in unexpected or emergency situations.

Digital capability and communications

- Developing websites
- Communication planning
- Strengthening cyber security.

Performance and impact

- Measuring results and conducting research
- Developing better ways to deliver services.

Examples of activities that support the organisation

Operational costs

- Support for day-to-day expenses that keep the organisation running (e.g. rent, utilities, staffing, project management and administration costs)
- Costs related to implementing safety or wellbeing measures.

Professional services

- Access to expert advice and support to strengthen operations
- Plan for growth, including legal, financial, consultancy and business planning services.

Equipment

- Purchasing tools and equipment to deliver services effectively, including IT systems, office equipment, and other items that enhance core functions.

Note: Equipment must be essential to service delivery or organisational operations, with a maximum funding of $5,000 per item. These items should be fit-for-purpose and reasonably priced.

Volunteer management

- Activities that support and sustain volunteer engagement, including recruiting, training and keeping volunteers
- Recognising volunteer contributions
- Providing resources and wellbeing support for volunteers during unexpected or emergency situations.

What could your project look like?

You can apply for funding for a single activity or a combination of activities – whatever suits your organisation best. The key is that your project should help build your organisation's capacity or support its day-to-day operations.

Below are examples:

Small Stream	Medium Stream	Large Stream
$5,000 application example	**$25,000 application example**	**$150,000 application example**
Great for focused, low-cost improvements. • Run a leadership workshop for staff or volunteers • Receive advice on improving your cybersecurity • Develop a communications plan to improve how you share information • Buy essential equipment (e.g., laptops, printer).	Ideal for strengthening systems or scaling up support. • Review your governance and create a strategic plan • Provide training and mentoring for your team • Upgrade your digital tools • Cover rent and utilities to support your operations. • Implement community-benefit programs (e.g., initiatives that increase referrals to mainstream services).	Best for big-picture projects that build long-term capacity in partnership with smaller organisation/s. • Transform your organisation's structure and leadership • Build partnerships or networks to share knowledge • Develop a workforce capability framework • Create a system to measure your impact and improve services.

What cannot be funded?

Funds **cannot** be used for:

- Public Liability Insurance and other required insurances
- retrospective costs for activities that were started before funding approval
- activities and programs extending beyond the MCBP period
- capital works including permanent structures or anything that increases the value of your facility
- activities that are solely for fundraising activities
- activities taking place outside of Victoria
- international or interstate travel
- gift cards
- purchase of land
- political activities.

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Mandatory documents required

Small Stream: up to $10,000

- You must include these documents with your application.
- Use the checklist table to make sure you have everything ready.

Important:

- You do not need to provide proof of Public Liability Insurance when applying.
- If your application is successful, you will need to show proof of Public Liability Insurance before we can finalise your funding agreement.

Document	Description	Have you provided this document?
Evidence of your organisation's reach in community	• Organisations applying for the small stream must have a reach of less than 250 people. • Any format will be accepted. For example, a letter signed by the organisation's President or equivalent, confirming the total number of memberships or how many people are engaged by the organisation annually. This may also include attendance lists or evidence of previous activities.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Most recent signed financial statements	• Include your organisation's financial statements for 2022-23 and 2023-24. You may have already provided these to Consumer Affairs Victoria [through myCAV] or to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission as part of their required annual reporting.	☐ Yes ☐ No
A complete application	• Answer all questions in the application form clearly and provide details about your proposed activities. • Complete the budget section, with the requested grant amount broken down by specific expenditure items. • Make sure all costs are correct, reasonable, and offer good value for public money. • Do not leave any sections blank. Incomplete applications will be ineligible. **Note:** Costs that are not supported or clearly explained may be removed from the final funding offer.	☐ Yes ☐ No

Medium stream: $10,001 to $100,000

- You must include these documents with your application.
- Use the checklist table to make sure you have everything ready.

Important:

- You do not need to provide proof of Public Liability Insurance when applying.
- If your application is successful, you will need to show proof of Public Liability Insurance before we can finalise your funding agreement.

Document	Description	Have you provided this document?
Project plan	• The project plan must be completed using the MCBP templates, available from the MCBP website.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Evidence of your organisation's reach in community	• Organisations applying for the medium stream must have a reach of more than 250 people. • Any format will be accepted, for example, a letter signed by the organisation's President or equivalent, confirming the total number of memberships or how many people are engaged by the organisation annually.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Most recent signed financial statements	• Include your organisation's financial statements for 2022-23 and 2023-24. You may have already provided these to Consumer Affairs Victoria [through myCAV] or to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission as part of their required annual reporting. • If your organisation's annual revenue is more than $500,000, audited financial statements must be provided.	☐ Yes ☐ No
A complete application	• Answer all questions in the application form clearly and provide details about your proposed activities. • Complete the budget section, with the requested grant amount broken down by specific expenditure items. • Provide quotes for any budgeted items that cost $10,000 or more. • Make sure all costs are correct, reasonable, and offer good value for public money. • Do not leave any sections blank. Incomplete applications will be ineligible. **Note:** Costs that are not supported or clearly explained may be removed from the final funding offer.	☐ Yes ☐ No

Large stream: $100,001 to $400,000

- Applications must show:
  - wide impact
  - strong partnerships with at least one smaller community organisation
  - clear strategic benefit.
- You must include these documents with your application.
- Use the checklist table to make sure you have everything ready.

Important:

- You do not need to provide proof of Public Liability Insurance when applying.
- If your application is successful, you will need to show proof of Public Liability Insurance before we can finalise your funding agreement.

Document	Description	Have you provided this document?
Project plan	• The project plan must be completed using the MCBP templates, available from the MCBP website.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Detailed budget	• The budget template must be completed using the MCBP template, available the MCBP website. • Provide quotes for any budgeted items that cost $10,000 or more. • Ensure all costs are correct, reasonable, and represent good value for public money. • Any unsupported costs will be removed from the eligible grant funding offered **Note:** Any costs that are not supported or clearly explained may be removed from the final funding offer.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Evidence of your organisation's reach in community	• Organisations applying for the large stream must have a reach of more than 500 people. • Any format will be accepted, for example, a letter signed by the organisation's President or equivalent, confirming the total number of memberships or how many people are engaged by the organisation annually.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Most recent signed financial statements	• Include your organisation's financial statements for 2022-23 and 2023-24. (You may have already provided these to Consumer Affairs Victoria [through myCAV] or to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission as part of their required annual reporting.) • If your organisation's annual revenue is more than $500,000, audited financial statements must be provided.	☐ Yes ☐ No

Document	Description	Have you provided this document?
Letter of partnership	• All large stream applications must partner with at least one smaller community organisation in the planning and delivery of proposed activities. • You must attach partnership letter/s in your application. • Your partnership letter must include: — The name of the partner organisation/s, and be signed by an authorised representative/s of that organisation/s — A clear description of the partner's roles or tasks in planning and delivering activities. — General letters of support (e.g. endorsements without a clear role) will not be accepted.	☐ Yes ☐ No
A complete application	• Answer all questions in the application form clearly and provide details about your proposed activities. • Do not leave any sections blank. Incomplete applications will be ineligible.	☐ Yes ☐ No

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How your application will be assessed

Your application should explain how your project will build your organisation's capacity or support its day-to-day operations. It should explain how the project will help your organisation meet the needs of people from multicultural communities.

All applications in the three streams will be checked for eligibility based on:

- how well your proposed activities match the programs objectives
- your budget
- the mandatory documents you provide.

Important:

- **Not all organisations that apply will receive funding.**
- Some organisations **may receive less than the amount requested.**
- **Small stream** applications will only undergo an eligibility assessment. **Note:** final funding recommendations are subject to the overall subscription of the program.
- The **medium and large stream** applications that are eligible, will also be assessed on merit using the criteria listed in the table below.

Assessment criteria	Criteria description	Weighting
Alignment with the program objectives	Explain how your project supports the objectives of the grant program. **Questions to guide you:** • How does your project help build skills or strengthen your workforce? • How will it help provide services that meet the needs of multicultural communities?	30%
Demonstrated need	Describe the challenge or opportunity your organisation is facing and why this project is needed. **Questions to guide you:** • What problem or gap does your project address? • Why is this project important for your organisation or community right now? • Do you have evidence or examples that show this need?	25%
Impact	Show how your project will help your organisation work better and support your community over the long term. **Questions to guide you:** • How will this project make a lasting difference for your organisation? • How will it help multicultural communities? • What outcomes do you expect, and how will you measure success?	25%

Assessment criteria	Criteria description	Weighting
Value for public money	Provide a clear and realistic budget for your project and explain how the funding will be used to deliver strong outcomes and good value for the community. **Questions to guide you:** • Is your budget clear and easy to understand? • How will the funding be spent? • Why is this the best use of public money? • Will the project deliver good results for the amount requested?	20%

For support in developing your application please visit the MCBP website. to access templates and guidance. You can also contact the Multicultural Affairs Partnerships team by email at MA.capacitybuilding@dpc.vic.gov.au or call on 1300 112 755.

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Assessment process overview

Completed applications will go through these steps:

Eligibility assessment

The department reviews all applications against the eligibility requirements.

Merit assessment (medium and large stream only)

The department will assess all eligible applications against the assessment criteria.

Assessment panel

A panel will review the recommendations and finalise the assessments.

Ministerial approval

The Minister for Multicultural Affairs makes the final decision based on the recommendations.

Outcome notification

The department notifies all organisations in writing of the outcome.

Submitting your application

To make sure your application is accepted:

- **Start early** and check the application closing time and date.
- **Allow enough time** to answer all the questions and upload the correct documents.
- **Complete all questions and attach all mandatory documents**. If anything is missing, your application will be ineligible and will not be assessed.
- **Submit your online application form by 3:00pm on 19 February 2026.**

Important:

- We will not accept late or incomplete applications.
- **Only one application per organisation will be accepted**. If you submit more than one, we will only assess the first application.
- The online application will not let you continue if you do not meet the eligibility criteria.

Successful grant recipients

If your application is successful:

- your organisation must sign a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with the department within 30 days of your funding offer.

  If you do not accept the offer within this time, the department may withdraw the grant.
- the funding agreement will include:
  - the grant terms and conditions, including how funds can be used
  - key deliverables and due dates
  - applicable department policies, including the Victorian Government Values Statement
  - reporting requirements.
- grant payments will be made based on the milestones listed in your agreement.
- The VCFA will be sent electronically. Hard copies will not be sent or accepted.
- Your organisation must have Public Liability Insurance of at least $10 million per incident. You will need to provide proof of this when signing the funding agreement.
- You must use all funds during the activity period and follow any funding conditions in your letter of offer or funding agreement. If you do not meet these conditions, you will have to return the funding.
- The department will publish details of successful organisations at the MCBP website, including:
  - organisation name
  - project name
  - grant amount.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) and grants awarded under this program

If your organisation is successful in receiving a grant and is:

- registered for GST, you will be paid GST on top of the amount awarded
- not registered for GST, you will only receive the grant amount awarded – GST will not be added on top.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) considers grants and sponsorships as taxable income. The ATO can help with information on tax, including GST. For more information, call 13 28 66 or visit ATO https://www.ato.gov.au.

Do you need more information or help?

- Visit the Multicultural grant resources website page for other resources, including how to write a grant application and grant terminology: vic.gov.au/applying-and-reporting-multicultural-grants
- For support in developing your application please visit the MCBP website. to access templates and guidance
- To check if your organisation is up to date on reporting requirements, view your current grants in the DFFH Grants Gateway, any report which is showing as red is overdue. Visit the DFFH Grants Gateway: https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/s/login/

For more information

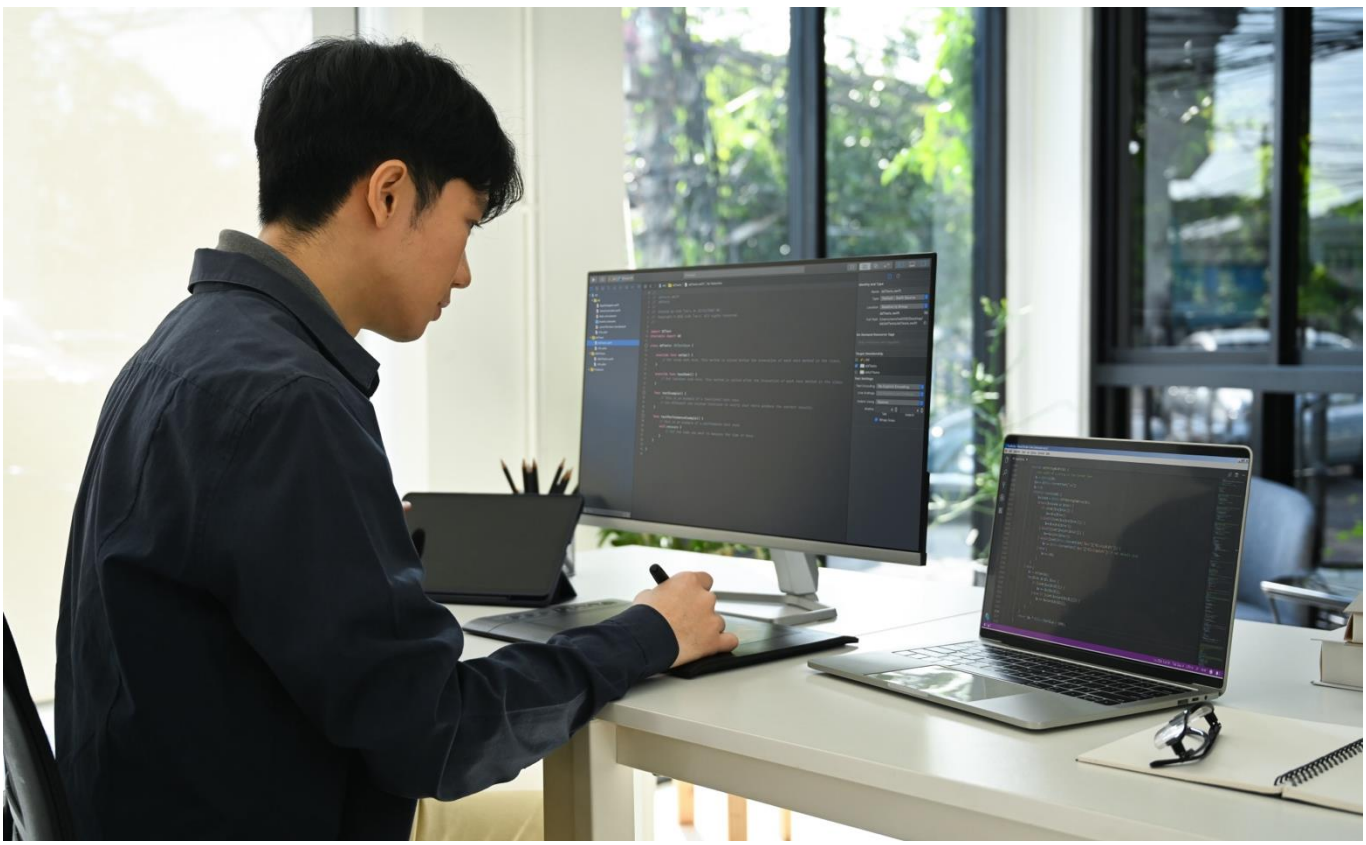
Contact the Multicultural Affairs Partnerships team:

Email

MA.capacitybuilding@dpc.vic.gov.au

Call

1300 112 755



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Program definitions and abbreviations

Capacity Building	Activities that help people, communities, or organisations develop the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to do their work better and achieve their goals and become more self-sufficient over time. Examples include financial training, governance courses, mentoring, providing tools or technology, improving systems and processes.
Collaboration	Organisations or groups work together to plan, deliver, or support a project by sharing skills, resources and responsibilities to achieve strong outcomes for communities.
Demonstrated need	Showing clear evidence that your project is important and necessary. This could include explaining the problem or gap your organisation or community is facing and why your project will help.
Eligible	Your organisation or project meets the rules and requirements to apply for or receive funding.
Emerging organisation	Organisations that are just starting out. They may be new or still growing, with fewer programs, resources, or experience.
Established organisation	Organisations that have been operating for a long period and have regular programs.
Funding agreement	A legal document that explains why the funding is provided, the amount of money, and the conditions attached to the grant. It also defines the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Once signed, your organisation must follow all the terms and conditions in the agreement.
Grants	Money or in-kind support given to applicants for a specific purpose that helps achieve policy goals. These funds support the services or projects proposed by the applicants.

Impact	Clear and lasting improvements that happen because of the funding activity. These improvements show real benefits for communities or systems and can be directly linked to the funding provided.
Incorporated association or similar legal entity	An incorporated association is a type of organisation that is officially registered under state or territory law. It is usually set up as a not-for-profit. These organisations are registered under: • the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* • as a company limited by guarantee under the *Corporations Act 2001* • as a non-distributing co-operative under the *Co-operatives National Law Application Act 2013*.
Ineligible	Your organisation does not meet the rules and requirements, so it cannot apply for or receive funding.
Multicultural communities	Groups of people in Victoria from different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. These communities may include refugees, newly arrived migrants, migrants who have lived in Australia for many years, and members who are second or third generation Australians. Multicultural communities bring unique cultural practices, languages, and traditions that enrich Victoria's social fabric. They may also face challenges such as accessing services, adjusting to life in Australia, and maintaining cultural identity in a new environment.
Multicultural community organisation	An organisation that is owned and managed by an ethnic, language, or cultural community that has common needs, customs, and traditions. The organisation will exist to support people from the ethnic, language or cultural group or several related ethnic groups.
New and emerging communities	Communities who have arrived as refugees or through a humanitarian visa may face unique challenges when resettling in Australia. These groups may need extra support as they settle into life in Australia. The main identifiers are: • having few or no established family networks, support systems, community structures or resources • unfamiliar with mainstream services and find it hard to access these services. The department has worked with the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) to create a priority list of new and emerging communities. Many of these communities have recently been, or are currently, part of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program. The priority list includes both countries of origin and specific ethnicities. You can find the list at the MCBP website.

Not-for-profit organisation	An organisation that does not work to make money for its owners or members whether directly or indirectly. A not-for-profit organisation can still make a profit, but this profit must be used to achieve the purposes of the organisation - not given to owners, members or private individuals.
Partnership applications	Partnership applications are when two or more organisations apply together. Organisations choose to partner because: • they share resources such as physical location, volunteers, skills and knowledge • their grant activity targets the same multicultural or multifaith communities • their grant activity shares a purpose and could reach more Victorians together.
Public liability insurance	Public liability insurance protects your organisation or community group if someone from the public is injured or their property is damaged because of your activities. It helps cover the costs of claims or legal action.
Reach	The expected size, audience or community that takes part in or benefit from your organisation's activities.
Revenue	All the money your organisation receives to run its activities. This can include donations, grants, membership fees, or money from fundraising events – before any costs or expenses are taken out.
Rural and regional communities	Eligibility as a rural or regional organisation is based on your organisation being located outside the metropolitan Melbourne area, as defined by Regional Development Victoria's list of Victoria's regions https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/victorias-regions#region-listing.
Value for money	The project is well planned, affordable, delivers benefits to multicultural communities and uses resources in a responsible and efficient way.
ABN	Australian Business Number
ABR	Australian Business Register
ACNC	Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
GST	Goods and Services Tax
MCBP	Multicultural Capacity Building Program

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