

2019-20 Volunteer Grants

Questions and Answers for Applicants

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1. What is Volunteer Grants?

Volunteer Grants is part of the Australian Government's commitment to assist volunteers and encourage volunteering. Grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 (GST exclusive) are available to help community organisations to support the efforts of Australia's volunteers. The grants can be used to buy small equipment for volunteers or for the reimbursement of volunteer fuel, transport or training costs.

2. How can I apply for the 2019-20 Volunteer Grants grant opportunity?

The 2019-20 grant round will be a two-phase process:

- **Phase one:** From 16 December 2019 to 21 February 2020, Members of Parliament (MPs) will be able to nominate organisations from within their electorate to apply for funding.
- **Phase two:** From 10 March 2020 to 6 April 2020, nominated organisations will be able to apply for funding.

MPs will nominate organisations from within their electorate to apply for funding. Each electorate will have a funding cap of \$66,000 (GST exclusive).

If your organisation is nominated, the Community Grants Hub will send you an application form from 10 March 2020.

A nomination to submit an application by your Member of Parliament does not guarantee that your application will be successful.

Applications will be considered through a closed non-competitive selection process. Grant funding is limited to \$66,000 (GST exclusive) per electorate. Applications will be considered in the order in which they are received. Once this funding cap is reached no further applications will be funded.

The Community Grants Hub will review your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will receive a grant.

The latest possible date you can submit your application is **11.00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 6 April 2020**.

3. Why isn't the application process open to everyone in 2019-20?

Volunteer Grants funding has previously been undertaken through an open competitive selection process. Previous Volunteer Grants rounds have been heavily over-subscribed with around 70 per cent of applicants unsuccessful, despite the vast majority of applicants being eligible and worthy of receiving a grant.

The 2019-20 funding round will be undertaken through an electorate based, closed, non competitive selection process. The change will ensure grant funding addresses local priorities and reduces the cost of grants administration proportionate to grant outcomes.

The change will also ensure that grant funding is distributed evenly, with \$66,000 allocated to each electorate.

4. Where can I find out which electorate our organisation is in?

Electorate information can be found on the Australian Electoral Commission [Find My Electorate](#) website.

5. Why was I not nominated to apply?

For the 2019-20 selection process, MPs have nominated organisations from within their electorate to apply for funding. This change will help ensure the grants are better targeted to meet local need.

The Community Grants Hub is unable to nominate your organisation for this grant. Each electorate will have a funding cap of \$66,000 (GST exclusive).

6. My MP has nominated me to apply for a 2019-20 Volunteer Grant, but our organisation does not want a Volunteer Grant.

If you are nominated by your MP and you do not want a Volunteer Grant you do not have to complete the application form. You do not need to inform anyone of your decision.

7. If I am nominated to apply for a Volunteer Grant, how long do I have to submit my application?

The application period will be open for approximately four weeks from 10 March 2020 to 11pm (AEST) to 6 April 2020.

If you receive an application form, you must submit your application as soon as possible but no later than the closing date, 6 April 2020. Eligible applications are funded in the order they are received. Grant funding of \$66,000 is available per electorate. Once this funding cap is reached, no further applications will be funded.

8. If my organisation has been nominated, why do I need to submit my application as soon as possible after 10 March 2020?

Applications will be assessed in the order that they are received. Funding is capped at \$66,000 per electorate, noting that once the funding cap is reached, no further organisations will be funded. The sooner you submit your application, the more likely it is that your organisation will receive a grant, noting that all organisations must still meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section 4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

9. If I am not able to submit my application by the due time and date, can I be granted an extension?

As eligible applications are funded in the order they are received, late applications will only be considered where the funding cap (\$66,000 per electorate) has not yet been reached.

Applications are due by 11.00 pm (AEST) on 6 April 2020. Applications submitted after 11.00 pm (AEST) that day will be considered as a late application.

In accordance with section 6.1 Timing of grant opportunity processes, Grant Opportunity Guidelines, we will not accept late applications unless an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevent the submission of the application.

Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- reasonably unforeseeable
- beyond the applicant's control
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits and in accordance with probity principles.

How to lodge a late application

Late applications must be submitted via the application form within three days after the close of the grant opportunity. The applicant must have started the application prior to close; no new applications can be commenced after the closing.

Where electorate funding has not already been exhausted, the late application will be referred to the department to determine if the application will be recommended for funding.

The decision of the department will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process. The Community Grants Hub will advise the applicant if their late application has progressed. The outcome will be advised as part of the grant opportunity outcomes notification process.

10. Can I resubmit my application if I find an error?

If you find an error in your application, please contact the Community Grants Hub to withdraw and resubmit your application as soon as possible. Applications will be assessed in the order they are received with no applications being funded once the \$66,000 cap has been reached. The resubmission date will be the date the department uses to determine the order in which the application was received.

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

11. If I am nominated by two MPs, can I apply for two grants?

No. As outlined in Section 6 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, applications are limited to one application per organisation/community group.

12. If nominated by a single MP, can my organisation/community group apply for funding more than once?

No. If more than one application is submitted, only the first application received will be considered.

13. Once I receive my application form, can I send it to other not-for-profit organisations so they can apply?

No. Only organisations who have been nominated by their MP may apply for the 2019-20 Volunteer Grants grant opportunity. Application forms may only be used by organisations who received one directly from the Community Grants Hub.

14. Can MPs nominate local branches of a larger umbrella organisation (eg Scouts Australia, St John Ambulance)?

Branches of a larger umbrella organisation are considered to be an organisation in their own right. If an MP would like to nominate two branches of the St John Ambulance service in his/her electorate, this would count as two separate nominations.

15. If nominated by my MP, am I guaranteed to receive a grant?

If you are nominated by your MP, this does not guarantee that you will receive funding. All organisations must still meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section 4 Eligibility Criteria, of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. In addition, funding is capped at \$66,000 per electorate. Once this funding limit is reached, no further organisations will be funded.

16. My organisation was successful under Volunteer Grants 2018. Can I apply under 2019-2020 Volunteer Grants?

If nominated by your MP, your organisation can apply for the 2019-20 Volunteer Grant. It will not matter if you have received a Volunteer Grant in previous years.

17. Who in my organisation/community group can complete an application for funding?

The application should be completed by a representative of the organisation with authority to commit the organisation/community group or individual to the Terms and Conditions of the 2019-20 Volunteer Grants. The representative is normally the president, chairperson, secretary or treasurer.

18. Is a paper-based application form available?

The online form is the only method for submitting an application form. If you do not have access to a computer you could try your local library, or contact someone you know who has access to a computer that could assist you in submitting an application.

19. What kind of attachments can I add to my application?

Applicants must only attach documents which are specifically requested in the application form. For the 2019-20 selection round the only attachment requested is a statement of supplier form if required (see question 30 below).

20. How much funding can my organisation apply for?

If nominated by their MP, an eligible organisation can apply for one Volunteer Grant for funding of between **\$1,000** and **\$5,000** to assist its volunteers. It is up to applicants to determine the amount of funding they require.

21. Is the funding ongoing?

No. If successful, the funding provided is one-off.

22. Is my organisation eligible to apply?

If your organisation is nominated by your MP and you meet the eligibility criteria at section 4 in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, you are eligible to apply for a grant.

23. Can an organisation/community group apply for a grant if it is not a legal entity?

Yes. If an unincorporated association or a community group is not a legal entity, an eligible individual representing the community group may apply for funding on its behalf.

The community group must operate independently with a formal governing structure that meets regularly and supports local community volunteers within its group.

In applying for a Volunteer Grant the individual must:

- be an Authorised Signatory (i.e. president, chairperson, secretary or treasurer) within the community group;
- have obtained the full knowledge and agreement of the community group they are applying on behalf of;
- provide the funding to the community group for expenditure on the requested items to benefit the volunteers of the community group; and
- keep evidence/receipts for five years to document appropriate expenditure of the funding.

If an authorised signatory applies on behalf of your organisation, when completing the question "Under what type of arrangement is this application being made" in the application form, select "An individual applying for funding on behalf of a volunteer based organisation that is not a legal entity"

Further details can be found in the section 4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

24. Can local governments apply for funding?

No. Local governments are not eligible to apply for funding.

25. Can Commonwealth and State/Territory Government departments apply for funding?

No. Commonwealth and state/territory Government departments are not eligible to apply for funding.

26. Can organisations/community groups from Territories of Australia, such as Norfolk Island, apply for 2019-20 Volunteer Grants?

Yes. Community organisations from Territories of Australia can apply for 2019-20 Volunteer Grants.

27. My organisation is a statutory authority. Is it eligible to apply for a 2019-20 Volunteer Grant?

Non-Corporate State/Territory Statutory Authorities are only eligible to apply for the 2019-20 Volunteer Grants grant opportunity if:

- a. they are nominated to apply by an MP;
- b. it is established under State or Territory Legislation; and
- c. it is a not-for-profit organisation, whose volunteer work supports families and/or communities in Australia.

Statutory authorities that meet these criteria should, when completing the question 'What type of entity is the organisation?' on the 2019-20 Volunteer Grants Application Form, select "Non-corporate State/Territory Statutory Authority".

28. Can the grant be used to support schools?

As they are non-corporate State or Territory entities, public schools are ineligible to receive a grant (see Section 4.4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines). However to support school communities, an MP may choose to direct some funds to schools through their Parents and Citizen's Associations.

29. I am an individual applying on behalf of a community group and have my own ABN. Why can't I use this ABN when completing the application form?

You cannot use your own ABN when completing the application form because the funding is for the community group you are applying on behalf of, and not for yourself.

If the community group does not have an ABN, you will be required to attach a completed [Statement by a supplier not quoting an ABN](#) form.

30. What is a Statement by a Supplier?

A "Statement by a Supplier" form is required to accompany a grant application when a community group does not have an ABN. The form explains to the Government why your organisation is exempt from having an ABN. In order for the Government to pay grant monies, we require an ABN or a completed "Statement by a Supplier" form.

When an Individual representing a Volunteer Based Community Group is applying for a Grant, it is mandatory to provide a "Statement by a Supplier" form.

You can get a "Statement by a Supplier" form from the following [link](#).

31. Do GST exempt organisations claim the purchase price minus the GST component? For example, if the purchase item is \$1,000 do they request \$900 for that item because they will claim the \$100 back?

No. When applying for a Volunteer Grant, all applicants (including those who are GST exempt) must claim the total retail cost of items within each category, including GST.

32. I have received an email from a business that has offered to assist in the development and submission of my grant application. Is this from the Department, or from an external firm associated with the Department?

Due to probity requirements, DSS is not in a position to provide individualised support for the development of applications, except in relation to technical issues with submitting applications. Please refer to the [support for developing and submitting an application page](#) for resources and factsheets to guide the development of applications.

DSS has not solicited the services of any external firms to assist individuals with their applications. Applicants must be aware that if they pursue the services of external firms to develop their application, they do so at their own risk.

Please note that grant correspondence will only come from the Community Grants Hub or DSS.

33. What can my organisation/community group use the grant money for?

Your organisation/community group can use the grant money to:

- purchase portable, tangible, small equipment items that benefit your volunteers;
- contribute to reimbursing fuel costs or pre-paid petrol cards for your volunteers who use their own car for their volunteering work, to transport others to activities, deliver food or help people in need;
- contribute to transport costs for volunteers with disability who are unable to drive;
- contribute to the cost of training courses for volunteers; and/or
- undertake background screening checks of volunteers.

Further information about what the grant money can be used for is outlined under section 5 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

34. What categories of small equipment items are eligible?

All equipment must be tangible, portable and directly benefit the volunteers. **Appendix A** of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines outlines the categories of items and examples of eligible items that are usually bought.

When completing your application, you must choose the category or categories that best fit the item(s) you wish to buy. You do not need to specify the actual items, just select the category of the item. For example, if you wish to buy gardening tools for your volunteers to use, select the category 'Landscaping/Gardening'.

Details about items that are not eligible, are outlined in section 5.3 'What the grant money cannot be used for' in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

35. What if I can't find the equipment item that my organisation/community group would like to buy on the list of examples?

Appendix A of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines lists examples of small equipment items by Category. If the item you wish to buy is not listed, select the category that most closely matches the items.

36. What do I do if I would like to change the item that my organisation/community group has applied for during the application process?

If the item remains in the same category that you have applied for and the amount is unchanged, you do not need to do anything.

If you have submitted your application and the item is from a different category and/or the amount has changed, and the application period is still open, you must re-submit a new application with the changed category and funding.

Please note the resubmission date will be the date the department uses to determine the order in which the application was received and there is a risk that your application will not be considered because the funding cap (\$66,000 per electorate) has been reached.

37. What do I do if I would like to change the item that my organisation/community group has applied for during the Activity Period?

You may change the item that your organisation/community group has applied for during the Activity Period provided it is eligible and on **Appendix A** of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. You do not need to advise the department.

38. What training can my organisation/community group provide to volunteers using this grant?

Your organisation/community group can use the grant money to help your volunteers learn new skills or gain the qualifications needed for their volunteering work. Training courses may include mental health, first aid, leadership, communication skills, governance and/or working with vulnerable people. Recognised training courses that lead to a Statement of Attainment, Certificate or Diploma are preferred.

39. Can a volunteer apply directly for a grant for their fuel or transport costs?

No. Individual volunteers cannot directly apply under 2019-20 Volunteer Grants for fuel or transport costs; the organisation or community group they volunteer for should apply.

40. Can fuel costs apply to the organisation's equipment and machinery?

No. Grant money can only be used to reimburse volunteers who are using their own cars for the fuel they use while undertaking their volunteering activities. Volunteers can be reimbursed for the cost of the petrol or provided with pre-paid petrol cards. Fuel costs that are eligible include all motor vehicle fuels including petrol, diesel and gas.

41. Can I request further funds if I spend all of the grant funds?

No. Additional funds exceeding the maximum grant amount that an organisation has been approved for will not be provided. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

42. Do I need to submit receipts to provide proof of purchase?

No. It is not necessary to send receipts as proof of purchase, unless your organisation/community group or individual is specifically asked to do so. However, your organisation/community group or individual must keep a complete set of records and keep the **original receipts** for **five** years.

DSS may contact your organisation/community group or individual at any time to ask for proof of purchase and/or to allow the Australian Government's auditors to look at your records. You may be asked to provide original receipts or certified copies to acquit the funding.

It is not necessary to acquit the funding or send a report or receipts to DSS unless you are asked to do so. Further acquittal information is included in the section 11 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

43. When and how will my organisation/community group know the outcome of our application?

The announcement of successful organisations/community groups for 2019-20 Volunteer Grants is expected to be in June 2020. The person nominated in the application will be notified of the outcome in writing.

Successful organisations will be listed on the Community Grants Hub website and will receive funding after the Letter of Agreement is signed by the organisation/community group and accepted by DSS.

Successful organisations may also receive a letter about the outcome from their MP.

44. If successful, when can we expect the grant money?

Successful applicants can expect to receive their grant funding in late June 2020. Once the selection process is finalised, successful applicants will be sent a letter of agreement. Successful applicants are not required to sign the letter of agreement. Provided the successful applicant does not advise the department that they no longer require the grant, the grant agreement is considered to be executed on 25 June 2020.

45. Can an organisation charge an administration or service fee?

No. Organisations/community groups are not permitted to charge a fee for administering 2019-20 Volunteer Grants.

46. Can an organisation/community group use the grant money to cover the cost of items/fuel already purchased?

No. Items already purchased or funded from another source are not eligible.

47. Our organisation/community group's volunteers travel to various locations to undertake volunteering activities. How should we answer the question 'What is the primary location of the organisation's / community group's volunteering activity?'

Where volunteers travel to various locations for their activities, applicants should provide the actual physical address where the volunteers are most active and do most of their volunteer work (at the service delivery level). This address may be different from the organisation's business address.

If activities are undertaken in an environmental location, such as a street, community hall, church, showground, park or reserve, the address of that location must be provided.

If volunteers travel to different locations to provide volunteer work, please use the address that the volunteers are coordinated from.

48. What if my organisation has left over grant funds at the end of the grant activity period?

If your organisation does not spend its whole grant amount by the end of the activity period, your organisation is required to return the left over funds. Please email volunteergrants@dss.gov.au with the details and the department will invoice you for the remaining amount.

49. If successful, when can my organisation begin its grant activity?

Funds will be paid as soon as possible after successful applications are announced. The earliest start date of grant activity is 25 June 2020.

50. Can I appeal the decision in relation to the outcome of a selection process?

No. There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a Volunteer Grant.

51. What feedback will be available for this grant opportunity?

A generic feedback summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website following the finalisation of the grant round.

Feedback on individual applications will not be provided for this funding round.

52. Why do I have to provide information about Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People?

An organisation may work with children or vulnerable people. Therefore, you must ensure that all persons working on the grant activity obtain and maintain all relevant licences and approvals (including Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People checks).

We are unable to provide any advice on who in your organisation would require a Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People checks. You will need to refer to the guidelines provided to your organisation with regards to Working with Children or Working with Vulnerable People checks to determine this.

53. Why am I required to provide my date of birth on the application form?

Commonwealth government entities are required to have robust processes in place to protect Commonwealth funds and prevent incidents of fraud. Your date of birth is required to validate your identity.

This validation also helps to protect your organisation from persons who may use your organisations name, ABN and alike to submit a fraudulent application for personal gain.

54. How do I get further information about 2019-20 Volunteer Grants?

If you cannot find an answer to your question about this selection process or the Activity on the Community Grants Hub website, please contact the Community Grants Hub by phone on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or by email at support@communitygrants.gov.au.

Question 55 added 17 January 2020

55. Our community group is interested in applying for a volunteer grants, however our local MP is not supportive of the LGBTIQ community. What are we able to do?

MPs will be able to nominate organisations to support a diverse range of priorities. When nominating organisations, MPs will take account of local need and program objectives:

- to help community organisations to support the efforts of Australia's volunteers
- to help community organisations to support the inclusion of vulnerable people through volunteering
- to encourage, support and increase participation in volunteering

Members of Parliament must keep a record of organisations who have contacted their office regarding Volunteer Grants so that, if required, information can be provided as to why the organisation was not nominated to receive an invitation to apply.

In the first instance we suggest discussing this matter with your MPs Office. If you have further concerns, please feel free to contact DSS complaints on 1800 634 035 or alternatively you may like to consider contacting the Australian Human Rights Commission on 1300 656 419 or (02) 9284 9888 TTY: 1800 620 241 or email complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au.

Questions 56-60 added 4 March 2020

56. Our community group is interested in applying for a volunteer grants, however our local MP is not supportive of us. What are our options?

MPs will be able to nominate organisations to support a diverse range of priorities. When nominating organisations, MPs will take account of local need and program objectives:

- to help community organisations to support the efforts of Australia's volunteers
- to help community organisations to support the inclusion of vulnerable people through volunteering
- to encourage, support and increase participation in volunteering

Members of Parliament must keep a record of organisations who have contacted their office regarding Volunteer Grants so that, if required, information can be provided as to why the organisation was not nominated to receive an invitation to apply.

In the first instance we suggest discussing this matter with your MPs Office. If you have further concerns, please feel free to contact DSS complaints on 1800 634 035.

57. The deadline for submitting nominations by my MP's was 26/02/2020. How do I access a nomination, as my MP did not complete the nomination on my behalf?

The MP nomination period closed on Friday, 21 February 2020. Only volunteer organisations nominated by their MP are able to apply.

58. Some electorates requested additional time to do the nominations. How do I know if my nomination got up in the first batch or the second batch?

The majority of electorates had until 21 February to nominate organisations. Two electorates have been granted additional time to nominate organisations due to their extenuating circumstances. Consequently, the majority of nominated organisations were sent an invitation to apply on 10 and 11 March 2020.

59. Our organisation received an email advising that we would be shortly receiving an invitation to apply for Volunteer Grants, but as we are an umbrella association, we have multiple invitations expected, how do I verify you are doing them all?

If a number of groups in your umbrella association were nominated each organisation will receive an invitation to apply.

60. We have registered multiple EOI's with various MP's. How do we get information on what exactly is proceeding?

On 10 or 11 March 2020, each nominated organisation will receive an invitation to apply.

Question 61 added 10 March 2020

61. I understand that invitations to apply for a Volunteer Grant have been sent to nominated organisations on 10 and 11 March 2020. Our organisation has been nominated but we haven't received an invitation yet?

All primary and secondary contacts of nominated organisations should have received an invitation to apply via email over the course of 10 and 11 March. If you haven't received the invitation to apply, please check your spam or junk mail folder.

Questions and Answers updated on 10 March 2020

Questions 2, 58 and 60 were updated and question 61 was added.

Questions and Answers updated on 12 March 2020

Questions 58 and 61 were updated.