



Australian Government

**Community
Grants Hub**
Improving your grant experience



Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants

Questions and Answers

1. What is the closing time and date for applications?

The application form must be submitted by **9:00 pm AEDT on Monday 15 November 2021**. It is recommended that you submit your application well before the closing time and date.

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

No. Extensions will not be given.

If an application is late or the Community Grants Hub is requested to approve a lodgement after the closing date, the [late application policy](#) available on the Community Grants Hub website will apply.

3. How can I submit the application form?

The form is an online application form that you must submit electronically. The Community Grants Hub will not provide application forms or accept application forms for this grant opportunity by fax, email or through Australia Post unless otherwise stated in the grant opportunity documents.

4. Do character limits apply to my application?

Yes, the application form includes character limits – up to 6000 characters (approximately 900 words) per assessment criterion. Please note, spaces are included in the character limit.

5. How do I know that my application has been received

When you successfully submit your application you will receive an acknowledgement email, so that you know your submission has been received. If you do not receive an acknowledgement email you should contact support@communitygrants.gov.au.

6. When will I know the outcome of my application?

You will be notified of the outcome of your application at the end of the selection process. For probity reasons, to treat all applicants fairly and equally, it is not possible to give you information about the status of individual applications during the assessment process.



7. How much funding is available for this Program?

A total of up to \$63.0 million (GST exclusive) over 5 years is available for the Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants.

This grant opportunity seeks applications for projects to be delivered over 2 years from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024. Grant funding of up to \$180,000 per year (GST exclusive), per project will be available to eligible organisations to deliver one-off time-limited projects in their communities. The maximum grant amount is \$360,000 (GST exclusive).

8. Can organisations submit more than one application?

Yes. Organisations can submit more than one application provided the different applications propose different projects and/or address different needs. Submitting more than one application does not provide an organisation any advantage or greater chance of funding and there is no guarantee that any or all proposals will be granted funding.

9. Can organisations propose projects that operate through partnerships and/or consortia?

Project proposals that operate through various partnership and/or consortia models may be considered for the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants. Where partnership and/or consortia models have been identified, evidence outlining all parties' agreement to the consortia arrangements must be attached to the application.

10. Is the funding on-going?

The SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants will run over 5 years from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2027. An annual submission period will run, with grant applications being considered for 2 years of funding to deliver one-off, time limited projects. This grant opportunity seeks applications for projects to be delivered from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024.

11. Why did the Department of Social Services implement a 'rolling grant round' approach?

The rationale for the rolling grant rounds is to ensure that the funding available is well targeted, maximises impact and can respond to emerging need.

The Department of Social Services (the department) will run annual open competitive grant rounds, which will provide organisations with regular opportunities to bid for funding.

12. How and why has the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants changed since the last grant round?

The SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants have been redesigned to better address emerging community needs and to strengthen alignment with current government policies.

In January 2020, the department contracted the Social Research Centre to undertake an evaluation of the SARC grant activity. The evaluation sought to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and performance of the SARC grant activity. Findings from the evaluation



have been used to improve the design and focus of this and future SARC grant activity opportunities.

Findings from the evaluation were largely positive, however opportunities for improvement were identified to more clearly define program outcomes and focus cohorts. This has resulted in a strengthening of focus towards services that support vulnerable and disadvantaged people, to more equitably participate socially and economically in society. The re-designed program also establishes a new set of four priority cohorts.

The primary objective of the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants continues to be to build strong, resilient, cohesive and harmonious communities to ensure that individuals, families and communities have the opportunity to thrive.

13. Why is the department emphasising the difference between outputs and outcomes for the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants?

Findings from the evaluation of the SARC program identified the opportunity for the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants to improve outcomes-focused data collection to ensure the effectiveness of SARC Activity projects.

The department wants to understand what has changed for individuals because of the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants funding. At a higher level, measuring outcomes identifies how effective the program overall has been.

Measuring outcomes also benefits grant recipients. By recording outcomes data, you can:

- demonstrate the positive changes you are making to people's lives
- prioritise and allocate resources where they are most needed or can make the most difference, and modify your service delivery as needed
- know that you are making a difference to your clients and the community.

14. Which cohorts will be prioritised in this grant round?

The following target cohorts will be prioritised as part of the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants:

- Young people aged 12 to 18 years who are, or are at risk of being, disengaged, marginalised and having limited engagement with education/training
 - People with disabilities and/or mental health issues requiring support to participate in their community, and work towards becoming and/or remaining independent and engaged
 - Vulnerable women who are, or are at risk of, social isolation and exclusion requiring support to participate in their community and increase their sense of self agency and empowerment
 - Unemployed people who face individual barriers to employment to support their increased capacity to engage with existing employment/training services and/or work towards gaining employment.
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15. Can proposals address the issues of combinations of target cohorts? For example, can the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants include interventions for vulnerable women who are also part of the unemployed target cohort?

Yes. Proposals for funding under the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants can address different combinations of the broadly defined SARC target cohorts, as long as the proposal still meets the objectives of the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants.

16. Can a project take a focus on a sub-set of a cohort or does it have to address the entire cohort as defined in the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants cohort descriptions?

Yes. Proposals for funding under the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants can address particular sub-sets of the broadly defined SARC target cohorts, as long as the proposal still meets the objectives of the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants.

17. What kinds of activities can be funded under the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants?

Funding will be available to eligible organisations to deliver one-off, time-limited, projects in their communities. Projects may include a trial, seed or start-up project to establish new activities, short-term interventions, or expand or reframe the delivery of existing activities.

Examples of services may include but are not limited to: education, training and work readiness activities, mentoring, counselling, and/or programs that build resilience, leadership, self-care, social and/or economic engagement skills and/or the ability and confidence to access support and services to support one or more of the identified cohorts.

18. How will the department identify geographical areas of socio-economic disadvantage?

The department will use the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) as an accessible measure regarding disadvantage. The index in SEIFA 2011 that will be utilised is the: [Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage \(IRSD\)](#) and the department will focus on areas of high disadvantage as defined through the IRSD quintile one to three.

In addition to the IRSD, organisations will be required to demonstrate the need for the project, including the extent to which the identified need relates to the identified community, as part of the selection criteria. This will also be considered by the department as part of identifying communities of disadvantage.

19. Are organisations able to draw on other evidence of disadvantage in addition to utilising the SEIFA index?

Yes. In proposals, organisations are encouraged to draw on SEIFA as well as any additional data and evidence to demonstrate need.



20. Are projects expected to service a particular minimum number of participants per year?

The number of anticipated participants will depend on the specific project proposed and will be a matter for negotiation if and when an offer of funding is made.

21. Why is the department mandating participation in the Data Exchange Partnership Approach as part of this grant opportunity?

It is through participation in the DEX Partnership Approach that all grant recipients measure and report client outcomes and, if applicable, community outcomes.

The department refers to this type of reporting as Standard Client/Community Outcome Reporting (SCORE). SCORE measures four types of outcomes: client circumstances, client goals, client satisfaction, and community outcomes.

The intended outcomes of the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants relate to strengthened community connections, economic and social participation and increased levels of self-reliance, wellbeing and mental health.

With the understanding that the emphasis is on short-term 2 year projects under the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants, the department understands that the outcomes achieved over the life of the funding arrangement may be limited to immediate and short term outcomes.

Further information on the collection of the Partnership Approach, including the extended data items required for this Activity, will be documented in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the 'Program Specific Guidance for Commonwealth Agencies in the Data Exchange' prior to the establishment of individual agreements.

22. Will reporting under the Data Exchange allow sufficient insights into benefits for individual level changes or are the results going to be aggregated up to the group cohort level?

The upcoming SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants will mandate the Data Exchange (DEX) Partnership Approach. As part of the Partnership Approach, organisations will gain access to a number of additional reports. The DEX Client Outcomes report allows grantees to apply filters and drill down from an aggregate group level to an individual client level, where paired SCORE changes for an individual can be viewed over time. The 'filter' feature of the DEX reports allows grantees to find insights at the aggregate level based on client demographics, location, outcome domain, and so on.

23. If my organisation is currently receiving funding under SARC will it continue or will this grant opportunity stop that?

SARC has always provided one-off grants for time-limited projects. Grant recipients who are currently funded under SARC will continue to be funded up until the end of their current grant agreement period, which for most is until 30 June 2022.



In order to ensure funding clarity, existing grant recipients will be notified of future funding arrangements. They will also have regular opportunities to bid for grant funding due to the program's new rolling annual grant rounds arrangement.

24. Can organisations apply for funding to support an existing program or project or is it exclusively for brand new projects?

Existing initiatives as well as brand new projects may be considered for the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants. If you are planning to seek funding for an existing initiative, the application for funding under the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants must demonstrate how you propose to build on or expand the existing initiative. Funded projects will be for a 2 year maximum project funding term.

25. Are the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants exclusively for intervention-based proposals or could proposals that involve data collection or research also be considered?

The SARC Activity has been consolidated from 3 streams to one: Inclusive Communities Grants. This means that there will not be a specific national research stream for the upcoming round. Proposals for data collection or research may still be considered as long as they are able to articulate how outcomes will be achieved within the 2 year timeframe and also meet the overall objectives of the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants. Organisations seeking funding for research proposals may also wish to explore opportunities advertised on [GrantConnect](#) by using the search term “research”.

26. Can proposals that seek to address system change be considered or is it exclusively for individual change interventions?

Proposals to achieve systemic change may be considered as long as they are able to articulate how outcomes will be achieved within the two-year timeframe and also meet the overall objectives of the SARC Program. These may be projects that demonstrate proof of concepts within the 2 year project timeframe.

27. Can organisations propose projects that operate through partnerships and/or consortia?

Project proposals that operate through various partnership and/or consortia models may be considered for the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants. Where partnership and/or consortia models have been identified, evidence outlining all parties' agreement to the consortia arrangements must be attached to the application.

28. Can organisations apply for funding to support cohorts of people living overseas or is the grant going to focus solely on Australia-focused programs?

The SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants aim to provide benefits to vulnerable people residing in Australia. Proposals that seek to work with beneficiaries who are residing overseas would not address the policy intent of SARC. Organisations interested in working with participants overseas should explore grant opportunities provided through other avenues.



29. Is a formal graphic version of a Program Logic required as part of the application for SARC funding?

No. The Strong and Resilient Communities Indicative Program Logic template available in the Grant Opportunity documents is a reference tool only, which you may wish to refer to in order to develop your content in response to the criteria. If a graphic version of the program logic is attached it will not be assessed. Applicants need to provide a description of the proposed activity that explains the causal links between activities and measurable outcomes. This can be done through a narrative and included as a series of “if...then...” statements.

An example of this is: If we provide support for vulnerable and disadvantaged women then they will gain the necessary skills and understanding to be able to gain and maintain employment. Through developing new skills women can become more empowered and develop their independence, increasing their options in life and contributing to overall wellbeing.

30. What is the difference between the SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants and the SARC Activities – Cashless Debit Card (CDC) Support Services?

The SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants and the SARC Activities – CDC Support Services are 2 separate grant rounds.

The SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants (this grant round) opened on 5 October 2021 with grant expenditure up to \$63 million (GST exclusive) for the period of 2022–23 to 2026–27. The SARC Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants are for the purpose of building strong, resilient, cohesive and harmonious communities to ensure that individuals, families and communities have the opportunity to thrive and are not focused on supporting CDC participants or confined to any particular geographic locations.

The SARC Activity – CDC Supports grant round opened on 27 September 2021, with grant expenditure of up to \$31.1 million (GST exclusive) for the period of 2021–22 to 2022–23. The SARC Activities – CDC Support Services grants will focus on supporting CDC participants in the regions of Ceduna in South Australia; East Kimberley and the Goldfields in Western Australia; Bundaberg and Hervey Bay in Queensland; and in the Northern Territory.

31. Where should I go for further information?

Please email your enquiries to support@communitygrants.gov.au
