



Strong and Resilient Communities

Seniors Connected Program – Village Hubs National Grants Manager Grant Opportunity Guidelines

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Closing date and time:	11.00PM AEDT on 4 November 2020
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Social Services
Administering entities	Community Grants Hub
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5.00PM AEDT on 28 October 2020
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1. Seniors Connected – Village Hubs National Grants Manager processes

The Seniors Connected Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives.

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program that contributes to the Department of Social Services' Outcome 2, Families and Communities. The Department of Social Services works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the

[Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 \(CGRGs\)](#).



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.



You complete and submit a grant application

You complete the application form and address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant.



We assess all grant applications

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. If you are eligible, we then assess your eligible application against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money and compare it to other applications.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice, through the Selection Advisory Panel to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker decides which applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into a grant agreement

We enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature or complexity of the grant and is proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



Evaluation of the Village Hubs National Grants Manager grant opportunity

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the Seniors Connected Program as a whole. We base this on information you provide us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Seniors Connected – Village Hubs National Grants Manager grant opportunity.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Community Grants Hub within the Department of Social Services (the department).

2. About the grant program

The Seniors Connected Program (the program) was established to implement the Government's 2019 election policy 'More Support for Older Australians'. The intent of the program is to address loneliness and social isolation experienced by older Australians.

The overarching program will run from 2019-20 to 2023-24 (terminating 30 June 2024), with a total budget allocation of \$10 million (GST exclusive) and encompasses two activity streams:

1. The **Phone Support Activity** (*established and awarded under a separate process*)
Nationally expand the existing service delivered by Friends for Good (Friend Line) to provide more older Australians access to phone support.
2. The **Village Hubs Activity** (*this grant opportunity relates to this component only*)
To make funding available to increase the number of Village Hubs across Australia to provide more older Australians opportunities to improve mental health through the benefits of increased social and community connections.

The program is a sub-activity of the Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) activity, which sits under Outcome 2.1, Families and Communities. The objective of Outcome 2.1 is to strengthen relationships, support families, improve wellbeing of children and young people, reduce the cost of family breakdown, and strengthen family and community functioning.

The aim of SARC is to build strong resilient cohesive and harmonious communities to make sure individuals, families and communities have the opportunity to thrive, be free from intolerance and discrimination, and can respond to emerging needs and challenges.

The department and the Community Grants Hub administers the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 \(CGRGs\)](#).

2.1. Seniors Connected – Village Hubs Activity

The aim of the Village Hubs Activity is to alleviate loneliness and social isolation experienced by older Australians to support their mental health, targeting people aged 55 years and over (or Indigenous Australians aged 50 or over) living in their community (support to older Australians living in residential aged care is out of scope for the Village Hubs Activity).

The Village Hubs Activity involves working with communities to fund the establishment of at least ten (10) Village Hubs projects across Australia in 2020-21. The new Village Hubs will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness and sustainability of the community-led model. It is expected that the new Village Hubs will identify additional funding sources to help cover operating costs and ensure the sustainability of each Village Hub after 30 June 2024.

The Village Hubs Activity draws on knowledge from existing Village Hubs in Australia, like the Waverton Hub, an organisation formed by residents of Waverton, Wollstonecraft and neighbouring areas in Sydney. Waverton Hub has developed a manual to help other communities who wish to support their older residents to age well outside retirement villages and residential aged care.

Village Hubs provide members, typically older Australians, an informal peer support network to help them age well in their community for as long as possible.

The Village Hubs Activity model operationalises the World Health Organisation's definition of active ageing by allowing people to realise their potential for physical, social, and mental wellbeing. They provide a diverse range of member-led social activities such as:

- physical: walking groups, excursions and fitness classes (for example, yoga)
- social: trivia, fundraising events, morning teas, lunches and dinner events
- learning: guest speaker programs, digital skills mentoring
- arts and cultural: art classes, book club, choir.

Village Hubs Activities **must** contribute to positive mental health by addressing loneliness and isolation and activities provided must be:

- inclusive and allow members to participate according to their needs, preferences and capacities, including Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) members
- designed to minimise adverse health consequences and not be detrimental to health (that is, the consumption of alcohol) while providing participants, who live in their community, with adequate protection, security and care
- carried out in line with Public Health directives at the time, for example, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. These are available of the Australian Government Department of Health website. In some cases Public Health directives may require activities to be postponed or conducted in some other manner (for example, virtually).

2.2. Village Hubs National Grants Manager grant opportunity

This grant opportunity is for the selection of a single organisation/consortia as the Village Hubs **National Grants Manager** for the selection and administration of grants to the community organisations that will establish the new Village Hubs.

The successful National Grants Manager will be expected to:

1. **Develop a prioritised list of communities** across Australia where a Village Hub might be viable, considering:
 - population of target cohort living in the community (including consideration of Indigenous and CALD populations)
 - research into priority areas of need among the target cohort, such as:
 - mental health, social isolation or living alone
 - social and economic disadvantage
 - distribution across geographic areas and states/territories.

2. **Undertake a survey of organisations in priority communities** approved by the department that could potentially deliver a Village Hub, considering:
 - interest, readiness and capacity to establish/maintain a Village Hub
 - potential for sustainability beyond the grant term.
3. **Develop and implement a direct select or restricted competitive Village Hubs grants selection process** for at least ten (10) new Village Hubs approved by the department. This must include:
 - develop appropriate application documentation and processes for the funding rounds (including the proposed eligibility and selection criteria that comply with the [CGRGs](#) and the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) approved by the department
 - assess all applications in accordance with the published documentation, including the published eligibility and selection criteria, for that funding round
 - approval by the departmental decision maker of the final selection and funding arrangements of individual Village Hubs (see section 8.4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines)
 - execute and manage the legally binding funding agreement with each Village Hubs grant recipient ensuring departmental obligations under the [CGRGs](#) and other legislation/regulations is addressed.
4. **Administer the Village Hubs Grants Fund** effectively and efficiently and meeting Government objectives; conduct due diligence checks of Village Hubs organisations; provide timely grant payment and administration; monitor progress and offer advice; on-going report coordination (consistent with section 12 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines); and liaison between Village Hubs and evaluators.
5. **Establish and manage a national Village Hubs Community of Practice** which will seek and share information, data and good practice across the Village Hubs grant recipients.
6. **Work with other public, private and community organisations** to leverage resources and support provided in the community to assist older Australians alleviate loneliness and isolation, improving mental health outcomes.

The National Grants Manager will interact with six distinct stakeholders:

- governments
- Village Hubs grant recipients
- already established Village Hubs to draw on their expertise
- complementary service providers that might assist Village Hubs operators to provide participation opportunities for clients
- Indigenous, CALD and disability groups
- specialist evaluators, commissioned by the department, who will work with grant recipients to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each Village Hub in contributing to reduced loneliness and isolation, improved social connectedness, mental health and well-being amongst older Australians.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. Grants available

The Australian Government has committed a total of \$10 million (GST exclusive) over five years for the Seniors Connected Program.

A total of \$4.7 million (GST exclusive) is available over four years for the Village Hubs Activity. This funding consists of:

3.1.1. National Grants Manager

The **National Grants Manager** funding of \$800,000 (GST exclusive) over four years from 2020-21 to 2023-24 for the administration of the Village Hubs Grant Fund and management of the new Village Hubs and Community of Practice.

3.1.2. Village Hubs Grants Fund

A **Village Hubs Grants Fund** of \$3.9 million (GST exclusive) to on-fund suitable grantees over four years from 2020-21 to 2023-24. The National Grants Manager will be responsible for on-funding grants to community organisations that will establish the Village Hubs, complying with the [CGRGs](#).

Seniors Connected Program – Village Hubs grant opportunity	Funding (GST exclusive)				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	TOTAL
1. National Grants Manager	\$0.2m	\$0.2m	\$0.2m	\$0.2m	\$0.8m
2. Village Hubs Grants Fund	\$1.0m	\$1.0m	\$1.0m	\$0.9m	\$3.9m
Total	\$1.2m	\$1.2m	\$1.2	\$1.1m	\$4.7m

The amount for each Village Hub will depend on the scope and complexity of the grant.

It is expected that the Village Hubs will also identify additional funding sources such as charging membership or activity fees or securing other sources of funding or in kind support, to help cover operating costs and ensure the sustainability of each Village Hub over time.

The National Grants Manager, as an agent of the Commonwealth, will be bound by the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (PGPA Act). The successful grantee will be required to open a separate bank account, solely dedicated to the Village Hubs Grant Fund to ensure transparency and proper use of grant monies.

3.2. Grant period

The on-funding of the Village Hubs is expected to commence from April 2021 and cease on or before 30 June 2024. The National Grants Manager is expected to commence before that period and will be required to collect final reporting at or after the end of that period.

Funding must be spent within the grant activity period, which commences on execution of the agreement and concludes on 30 June 2024. This is a terminating program.

4. Eligibility criteria

The decision maker can choose to waive the eligibility criteria, however they must be made aware of the risks.

4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must be one of the following entity types:

- Incorporated Association
- Company¹
- Indigenous Corporation
- Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-Corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- Commonwealth Company
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
- Statutory Entity.

Applications from consortia are acceptable, as long as you have a lead applicant who is solely accountable to the Commonwealth for the delivery of grant activities and is an eligible entity as per the list above. Eligible organisations can form a consortia with ineligible organisations.

4.2. Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are a:

- Person²
- Sole trader or unincorporated partnership
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust³; or an
- Unincorporated association.

4.3. Unincorporated Associations

Non-legal entities such as an Unincorporated Association may be able to receive funding where a legal parent organisation, or a legal entity connected to the Unincorporated Association can enter into a legally binding agreement on its behalf.

¹ Company is a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

² A person is a natural person, an individual, a human being.

³ Trusts are not legal entities in their own right – to be eligible, only the Trustee for the Trust can apply by providing the signed Trust Deed and any subsequent variations with the application form.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. National Grants Manager – eligible grant activities

The successful National Grants Manager will be funded to undertake the activities specified in section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

To cover ongoing costs incurred while managing the Village Hubs Grants Fund, the National Grants Manager will receive an amount of funding (specified in section 3.1.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) which must be spent in accordance with sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

5.2. Eligible expenditure

The National Grants Manager can only spend the National Grants Manager component of the grant on eligible expenditure incurred on eligible grant activities. Eligible expenditure items are:

- staff salaries and on-costs which can be directly attributed to the provision of the grant program
- employee training for paid and unpaid staff including Committee and Board members, that is relevant, appropriate and in line with the grant program
- operating and administration expenses directly related to the project as per the grant agreement, such as:
 - telephones
 - rent and outgoings
 - computer/IT/website/software
 - insurance
 - utilities
 - postage
 - stationery and printing
 - accounting and auditing
 - travel/accommodation costs (except overseas travel)
 - assets as defined in the terms and conditions that can be reasonably attributed to meeting agreement deliverables.
- costs related to the process of selecting grant recipients
- promotion of the Village Hubs Grants Fund to potential applicants.

The National Grants Manager must incur the expenditure on Village Hubs selection, funding and oversight between the start date and end or completion date, for its grant activity to be eligible.

5.3. What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- purchase of land
- wages that are not directly attributed to the provision of the grant program
- major capital expenditure
- the covering of retrospective costs

- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- major construction/capital works
- overseas travel
- for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- for other purposes other than as detailed in the grant agreement.

The grant money cannot be used if a grant recipient has received funding from another government source for the same purpose.

5.4. Village Hubs Grants Fund – eligible grant activities

The National Grants Manager must ensure that the Village Hubs grant recipients meet Commonwealth requirements as follows:

- deliver projects with one or more clear and measurable social outcomes, support positive mental health outcomes and are aligned to the activity areas outlined below
- be based in Australia and deliver the supported program solely in Australia.

To be eligible for a grant from the Village Hubs Grants Fund, community organisations **must**:

- have a core commitment to support older Australians in the community experiencing loneliness and social isolation, to contribute to positive mental health outcomes by alleviating loneliness and improving social connections
- target older Australians aged 55 years and over (or Indigenous Australians aged 50 or over)
- have the capacity to measure progress towards the desired outcome of alleviating loneliness and social isolation experienced by older Australians, and improved mental health
- provide activities that contribute to positive mental health by addressing loneliness and isolation (see section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines).

The Village Hubs Grants Fund **must** be managed by the National Grants Manager only and granted to suitable Village Hubs grantees.

The selection criteria for the Village Hubs grant round **must** be designed and provided to the department for approval to ensure adherence to the [CGRGs](#). It will specify what Village Hubs can and can't use their funding on.

The Village Hubs Grants Fund **cannot** be used for any cost related to the administration of the grants.

6. The assessment criteria

You should address all of the following assessment criteria in the application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion detailed below, if applicable.

The application form includes character limits – up to 6,000 characters (approximately 900 words) per criterion. The application form will not accept characters beyond this limit. Please note spaces are included in the character limit.

Criterion 1 (mandatory): Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity to the specified target group

Your response **should** demonstrate an expert knowledge and understanding of all of the following:

- mental health issues associated with loneliness and social isolation in the older Australian population, with a particular focus on older Australians living in the community
- how the Village Hubs model can support older Australians living in the community to achieve positive mental health outcomes by alleviating loneliness and social isolation, and complement other services in the community such as clinical mental health treatment and other aged care services
- delivering services to Indigenous Australians in a culturally safe and appropriate way where relevant.

Criterion 2 (mandatory): Describe how you will achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders

Your response **should** address requirements in section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and demonstrate the following:

- experience in developing, delivering and managing similar/relevant services; working collaboratively with other government and non-government agencies to ensure quality service delivery, including already established relationships with relevant organisations in the community sector
- how your selection and assessment process to establish the new Village Hubs (refer to section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) will be developed in consultation with the department and incorporate good grants administration practice including coverage of the key principles of the [CGRGs](#)
- how you will encourage and support individual Village Hubs towards long-term financial sustainability.

Criterion 3 (mandatory): Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capabilities to deliver the activity objectives

Your response **should** demonstrate all of the following:

- your organisation's capacity to administer the Village Hubs Grants Fund, (undertaking selection, on-funding and oversight of at least ten (10) new Village Hubs), including:
 - appropriate management, financial and administration systems
 - facilitating outcomes measurement and reporting
 - a statement regarding your organisation's financial viability to undertake this activity
 - knowledge and understanding of the PGPA Act and the CGRGs, and capability to meet the reporting and performance requirements necessary to ensure compliance
 - risk mitigation and management associated with fraud and conflict of interest, including relationship management with grant recipients and sector experts.
- how your organisation, as the National Grants Manager, would use existing infrastructure to allow for efficient implementation and oversight of the new Village Hubs
- the relevant experience, qualifications and skills of the members of your organisation to assist in delivering the Village Hubs Activity.

7. How to apply

7.1. Before you apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, the terms and conditions and the department's Standard Grant Agreement.

These documents are found on [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. Any changes to grant documentation are published on both sites and addenda⁴ will be published on [GrantConnect](#). By registering on [GrantConnect](#), you will be automatically notified of any changes. [GrantConnect](#) is the authoritative source for grants information.

7.2. How to apply

You can only submit one application form for this grant opportunity. If more than one application is submitted, the latest accepted application form will progress.

To apply you must:

- complete the online application form on [GrantConnect](#) or [Community Grants Hub](#)
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- complete all required templates
- submit your application(s) to the Community Grants Hub by **11.00PM AEDT** on 4 November 2020.

We will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

The application form includes help information. You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you need more help with the application process, submitting an application online, experience any technical difficulties or find an error in your application after submission, but before the closing date and time, you should contact the Community Grants Hub immediately on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. The department does not have to accept any additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

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

If we find an error or something missing, we may ask you for clarification or additional information. This will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your application after the closing time.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

You will receive an automated notification acknowledging the receipt of your application.

⁴ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications and questions and answers documents.

7.3. Joint (consortia) applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver the Seniors Connected – Village Hubs Activity.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group.

If you are the lead (or member) organisation in a consortia application you may also submit one application in your own right.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the agreement.

7.4. Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

Late applications

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

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit a late application request to the Community Grants Hub.

The request should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented the application being submitted prior to the closing time. Where appropriate, supporting evidence can be provided to verify the claim of exceptional circumstances.

The late application request form and instructions for how to submit it can be found on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

Written requests to lodge a late application will only be accepted within three days after the grant opportunity has closed.

The Selection Advisory Panel Chair or their appointed representative will determine whether a late application will be accepted. The decision of the Selection Advisory Panel Chair will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process.

Once the outcome is determined, the Community Grants Hub will advise the applicant if their request is accepted or declined.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your grant activity in February 2021.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Up to 6 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of grant activity	28 January 2021
End date of grant activity	30 June 2024

7.5. Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five (5) working days. Answers to questions are posted on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

The question period will close at 5.00PM AEDT on **28 October 2020**. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of grant applications

The Community Grants Hub will review your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. Eligible applications will be considered through an open competitive grant process.

If eligible, the department will then assess your application against the assessment criteria (see section 4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines). We will consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the assessment criteria
- how it compares to other applications.

A Selection Advisory Panel will consider:

- whether it provides value with relevant money.⁵

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, the Selection Advisory Panel will have regard to:

- the overall objective(s) to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the geographic location of the application matches identified priorities

⁵ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals
- how it compares to other applications.

8.2. Financial viability

Applicants may be subject to a financial viability assessment. The financial viability assessment forms part of the risk mitigation strategy and can include:

- establishing whether relevant persons have any adverse business history (for example current or past bankruptcy)
- assessment of the financial health of an entity.

8.3. Who will assess and select applications?

Commonwealth officials will assess each eligible and compliant application on its merit and compare it to other eligible applications. Assessments will be undertaken by trained personnel to ensure consistent assessment of all applications.

Any expert/advisor, who is not a Commonwealth Official, will be required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The Selection Advisory Panel may seek additional information about you or your application and this may delay completion of the selection process. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. Assessment personnel may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The Selection Advisory Panel recommends to the decision maker which applications to approve for a grant.

8.4. Who will approve grants?

The Deputy Secretary of Families and Communities within the department (the decision maker) decides which grants to approve based on the recommendations of the Selection Advisory Panel and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program. The Selection Advisory Panel will consist of Department of Social Services and Department of Health representatives.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

9. Notification of application outcomes

We will write to you about the outcome of your application. If you are successful, you are advised of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

You can submit a new application for the same grant (or a similar grant) in any future grant opportunities under the program. You should include new or more information to address any weaknesses that may have prevented your previous application from being successful.

9.1. Feedback on your application

A Feedback Summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website to provide all organisations with easy to access to information about the grant selection process and the main strengths and areas for improving applications.

Individual feedback will be available. The process for requesting individual feedback will be included in the letter advising of the outcome of your application.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1. The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We will offer the successful applicant a Standard Grant Agreement for this grant opportunity.

The agreement has general/standard grant conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites as part of the grant documentation. We will use a schedule to outline the specific grant requirements.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. You must not start any Village Hubs activities until a grant agreement is executed.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the decision maker. These are identified in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement

We will use a Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement.

You will have twenty (20) business days from the date of a written offer to sign and return this grant agreement. The grant agreement is not considered to be executed until both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement. During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

You may request changes to the grant agreement. However, we will review any changes to make sure they do not affect the grant as approved by the decision maker.

10.2. Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

Whilst you are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, you may be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation/policies/industry standards:

- complying with requirements of applicable laws of the Commonwealth, state or territory, in which the activity, or part of the activity, is being conducted in relation to employment or engagement of people in any capacity where they may have contact with vulnerable persons.

10.3. Multicultural access and equity

The Australian Government's *Multicultural Access and Equity Policy* obliges Australian Government agencies to ensure their policies, programs and services - including those provided by contractors and service delivery partners - are accessible to, and deliver equitable outcomes for, people from CALD backgrounds.

Grant applicants should consider how they will ensure their services will be accessible to people from CALD backgrounds. For example, service delivery partners may require cultural competency skills. In addition, services, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with clients who have limited English proficiency. Based on an assessment of the client target group, costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into grant applications (to assist with identifying these costs see the Translating and Interpreting Services costing tool in the grant opportunity documents).

10.4. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- amount/proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- amount/proportion of the grant that must be passed onto Village Hubs organisations.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the grant activity.

10.5. Grant payments and GST

Payments will be GST inclusive. If you are registered for the [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

If a Government Related Entity is deemed successful, GST **will not** apply.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the [GrantConnect](#) website 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by section 5.3 of the [CGRGs](#).

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1. Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activities or organisation.

We need to know of any changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due because of these changes.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of the terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

12.2. Reporting

The National Grants Manager must have systems in place to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their grant agreement.

12.2.1. Data Exchange reporting

The National Grants Manager will be required to collect performance information (for example, client characteristics and service delivery information) for the Village Hubs grantees at the client level and input directly into the department's performance reporting solution, the Data Exchange.

The performance information reported through the Data Exchange includes:

- client identity characteristics (given and family names, date of birth, gender and residential address)
- client demographic characteristics (Indigenous status, CALD populations, and disability status, impairment or condition)
- service delivery information (outlets, cases, sessions)
- client outcomes.

The Data Exchange has two standardised six monthly performance reporting periods each year, which run from 1 July to 31 December and 1 January to 30 June, with a 30-day close-off period after each of these. Once the close-off period is completed, no further changes can be made to the data.

Information must be provided in accordance with the Data Exchange Protocols available on the [Data Exchange website](#).

For this activity, participation in the “partnership approach” is a requirement of funding. By participating, you agree to provide additional information in exchange for the receipt of regular and relevant reports. The main focus of the partnership approach is collecting information about the outcomes achieved by clients as a result of service delivery. The partnership approach may also include extended data items that provide additional information about client demographics, needs and circumstances.

12.2.2. Activity reporting

You **must** submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed grant activity milestones and outcomes, including any risks, barriers or sensitivities in achieving the grant objectives
- contributions of Village Hubs and participants directly related to the grant activity, including good practice
- expenditure of your grant and the Village Hubs Grants Fund.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size and complexity of the grant and the grant amount.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits to your organisation or Village Hubs or request records to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, ask for more information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include evidence of your progress toward completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities).

You must tell us of any reporting delays as soon as you become aware of them.

Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your grant. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the grant activity.

Final report

When you complete the grant activity, you must submit a final report.

Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted by the due date and in the format provided in the grant agreement.

12.3. Audited financial acquittal report

We may ask you to provide an independently audited financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

12.4. Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation by contacting your Funding Arrangement Manager.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

12.5. Compliance visits

We may visit you, and Village Hubs, during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6. Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.7. Evaluation

We will evaluate the grant opportunity to see how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports, including your consolidated report, for this purpose. We may also ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

The department will require each Village Hub that receives funding to participate in an impact evaluation.

We may contact you and each Village Hub up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.8. Acknowledgement

The program logo should be used on all materials related to grants under the program. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the Commonwealth by saying:

‘Seniors Connected – Village Hubs – an Australian Government initiative’.

If you make a public statement about any funded Village Hub funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This/These Village Hub(s) received grant funding from the Australian Government’.

13. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the [CGRGs](#).

These guidelines may be changed by the department. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

13.1. Enquiries and feedback

Complaints about this grant opportunity

The department’s [complaints procedure](#) applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about this grant opportunity, including grant decisions, must be made in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to support@communitygrants.gov.au.

Complaints about the selection process

Applicants can contact the complaints service with complaints about the Community Grants Hub's service(s) or the selection process.

Details of what makes an eligible complaint can be provided by asking the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can use the complaints form on the department's website, by phone or mail.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Mail: Complaints
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Community Grants Hub or the department has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Community Grants Hub or the department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the department and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later think there is an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the department and the Community Grants Hub in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.

13.3. Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

In submitting a grant application under this opportunity, you agree to the Australian Government collecting your personal information, including your name, contact details and role in your organisation, in order to assess your application and for the purpose of grants administration. If you do not provide this information we cannot assess your grant application.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information collected about you under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on [GrantConnect](#) as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us in your application, including personal information, with other Commonwealth entities, the responsible Minister, Assistant Ministers and their staff, and with Members of Parliament, for other purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, or as otherwise authorised or required by Australian law.

As part of your application, you also declare your ability to comply with the [Privacy Act](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#) and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the Australian Government would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Privacy Act.

13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to give out to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you, or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively

- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

13.5. Freedom of information

All documents that the Australian Government has, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act gives people the ability to get information held by the Australian Government and its organisations. Under the FOI Act, people can ask for documents the Australian Government has. People may not be able to get these documents if these documents need to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons who the information relates to.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Team
 Government and Executive Services Branch
 Department of Social Services (DSS)
 GPO Box 9820
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

14. Consultation

The Department of Health was consulted as the department responsible for managing the existing Community Visitors Scheme (CVS). Seniors Connected will complement the existing CVS that has been administered by the Australian Government Department of Health since 1992. CVS provides friendship and companionship through one-on-one volunteer visits to anyone receiving government subsidised residential aged care or Home Care Packages.

Consultations with a range of key government, peak group and community stakeholders, including current proponents of the Village Hubs model, were held to review what works in the model and identify possible conditions and criteria for the Village Hubs Activity. These were conducted virtually in early June 2020 and findings have informed these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

15. Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 .
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity
Commonwealth entity	a department of state, or a parliamentary department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.
co-sponsoring entity	when two or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it.
date of effect	can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker	the person who makes a decision to award a grant.
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Funding Arrangement Manager	is the officer responsible for the ongoing management of the grantee and their compliance with the grant agreement.

Term	Definition
grant	<p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁶ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money⁷ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake.
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant.
GrantConnect	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs .
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Department of Social Services Portfolio Budget Statement program.
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) program	described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be grant programs. A PBS program may have more than one grant program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

⁶ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁷ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
Selection Advisory Panel	provides strategic oversight, advice and recommendations to the decision maker on assessed applications from the program specific, service provider composition and service location perspectives.
selection criteria	comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
value with money	<p>refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality of the project proposal and activities • fit for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives • absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved • potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.