

2021 Volunteer Grants

Questions and Answers for Applicants

Contents

1.	What is Volunteer Grants?	. 5
2.	How can I apply for the 2021 Volunteer Grants grant opportunity?	5
3.	Why isn't the application process open to everyone in 2021?	5
4.	Where can I find out which electorate our organisation is in?	
5.	Why was I not nominated to apply?	6
6.	My MP has nominated me to apply for a 2021 Volunteer Grant, but our	
orga	anisation does not want a Volunteer Grant	6
7.	If I am nominated to apply for a Volunteer Grant, how long do I have to	
subi	mit my application?	
8.	If I am not able to submit my application by the due time and date, can I be)
grar	nted an extension?	
9.	How do I lodge a late application?	
10.	Can I resubmit my application if I find an error?	7
11.	If I am nominated by 2 MPs, can I apply for 2 grants?	7
12.	If nominated by a single MP, can my organisation/community group app	ly
for f	unding more than once?	
13.	My organisation has agreed to auspice a grant for a smaller organisation	٦.
Can	we also apply for a grant?	7
14.	Once I receive my application form, can I send it to other not-for-profit	
orga	anisations so they can apply?	
15.	Can MPs nominate local branches of a larger umbrella organisation (for	
exaı	mple, Scouts Australia, St John Ambulance)?	
16.	If nominated by my MP, am I guaranteed to receive a grant?	8
17.	My organisation was successful under Volunteer Grants 2019–20. Can	1
app	ly under 2021 Volunteer Grants?	8
18.	Who in my organisation/community group can complete an application for	or
func	ding?	
19.	Is a paper-based application form available?	8
20.	What kind of attachments can I add to my application?	8
21.	How much funding can my organisation apply for?	8
22.	Is the funding ongoing?	9
23.	Is my organisation eligible to apply?	
24.	Can an organisation/community group apply for a grant if it is not a legal	ĺ
entit	ty?	9
25.	Can local governments apply for funding?	9



26.	Can Commonwealth and state/territory government departments apply
for fur	nding? 9
27.	Can organisations/community groups from external territories of
Austra	alia, such as Norfolk Island, apply for 2021 Volunteer Grants? 9
28.	My organisation is a statutory authority. Is it eligible to apply for a 2020–
21 Vo	lunteer Grant? 9
29.	Can the grant be used to support schools? 10
30.	I have received an email from a business that has offered to assist in the
devel	opment and submission of my grant application. Is this from the
	tment or from an external firm associated with the department? 10
31.	What can my organisation use the grant money for?10
32.	What categories of small equipment items are eligible? 10
33.	What if I can't find the equipment item that my organisation/community
group	would like to buy on the list of examples? 11
34.	What do I do if I would like to change the item/s that my
organ	isation/community group has applied for during the application process?11
35.	What do I do if I would like to change the item that my
organ	isation/community group has applied for during the Activity Period? 11
36.	What training can my organisation/community group provide to
volunt	eers using this grant?11
37.	Can a volunteer apply directly for a grant for their fuel or transport
costs	?11
38.	Can fuel costs apply to the organisation's equipment and machinery? 11
39.	Can I request further funds if I spend all of the grant funds? 12
40.	Do I need to submit receipts to provide proof of purchase? 12
41.	When and how will my organisation/community group know the outcome
of our	application?
42.	If successful, when can we expect to receive the grant money? 12
43.	Can an organisation charge an administration or service fee? 12
44.	Can an organisation/community group use the grant money to cover the
cost o	f items/fuel already purchased?12
45.	Our organisation/community group's volunteers travel to various locations
	dertake volunteering activities. How should we answer the question 'What
	primary location of the organisations/community group's volunteering
	y?'13
46.	What if my organisation has leftover grant funds at the end of the grant
	y period?13
47.	If successful, when can my organisation begin its grant activity? 13
48.	Can I appeal the decision in relation to the outcome of a selection
•	ss?13
49.	What feedback will be available for this grant opportunity? 13
50.	Why do I have to provide information about working with children and
	ng with vulnerable people?13
51.	If my organisation has not opted into the National Redress Scheme (the
Scher	me), are we eligible to apply for a 2021 Volunteer Grant? 14



52.	Why am I required to provide my date of birth on the application form?. 14
53.	How do I get further information about 2021 Volunteer Grants? 14
54.	Our community group is interested in applying for a volunteer grants,
	ver our local MP is not supportive of our organisation's mission. What are
	ole to do?14
55.	The deadline for submitting nominations by my MP was 29 April 2021.
	do I access a nomination, as my MP did not complete the nomination on
•	ehalf?15
56.	Our organisation received an email advising that we would be shortly
	ring an invitation to apply for Volunteer Grants, but as we are an umbrella
	siation, we have multiple invitations expected. How do I verify we are doing
	all?
57.	We have registered multiple EOIs with various MPs. How do we get
	nation on what exactly is proceeding? 15
58.	I understand that invitations to apply for a Volunteer Grant have been
	o nominated organisations on 20 May 2021. Our organisation has been
	nated but we haven't received an invitation yet15
59.	In light of the coronavirus outbreak, we have had to reconsider the
	se of our grant application. Will we be able to modify our application to
	our new requirements? 15
60.	What is the closing date for late applications, and can I submit a late
• •	ation?
61.	How can I access the link to the late application form?
62.	If I can get my MP to nominate me now, will I be able to submit a late
	eation if I wasn't invited to apply originally?
63.	I have partially completed my application form but I have not submitted it
•	can I still access the original form?
64.	When will I hear if I my organisation has been given a Volunteer
	?
65.	My local MP contacted me to tell me my organisation had been
	essful in getting a Volunteer Grant but I have seen no paperwork. When will
	an actual notification?
66.	I saw the media release from Minister Ruston announcing the outcomes
	Volunteer Grants round but I have not heard anything about whether my
•	isation has been successful. When will I know?
67.	I saw a list on the Community Grants Hub website of organisations who
	successful for a volunteer grant, but can't see my organisation's name.
	this mean that my organisation has not received a grant?
68.	I have been told by my local MP that my organisation has been
	essful in the Volunteer Grants round. When will we get our money? 17
69.	My organisation applied for a grant in the Volunteer Grants round but now
	o not want the grant. What do we need to do?
70.	When does my organisation need to spend our Volunteer Grant round
runair	ng by?17

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Questions and Answers added on 21 May 2021	
own right, however our organisation is not an eligible legal entity. How do we proceed in completing and submitting an application form?	d
submit the application form ourselves?	. 17
Question and Answer added on 8 June 2021	le
Question and Answer added on 9 June 2021	18
74. We have been unable to submit our application before the closing time Can I still submit my application or do I need to submit a request?	



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 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. Funds can also be used to increase participation and promote awareness of volunteering opportunities and adjust policies and procedures to ensure volunteer safety in the coronavirus pandemic.

2. How can I apply for the 2021 Volunteer Grants grant opportunity?

The 2021 grant round is a 2-stage process.

- Stage one: From 16 March 2021 to 29 April 2021, Members of Parliament (MPs) will be able to nominate organisations from within their electorate to apply for funding.
- Stage two: From 20 May 2021 to 9 June 2021, nominated organisations will be able to apply for funding.

If your organisation is nominated, the Community Grants Hub will send you an application form from 20 May 2021.

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.

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

Each electorate has a funding cap of \$132,450 (GST exclusive). Once the funding cap is reached, no further applications will be funded.

The latest possible date you can submit your application is 9:00 PM Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 9 June 2021.

3. Why isn't the application process open to everyone in 2021?

The 2021 funding round will be undertaken through an electorate-based, closed, non-competitive selection process, similar to that undertaken in 2019–20. This ensures grant funding addresses local priorities and reduces the administrative burden on organisations that will not be funded.

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

Electorate information can be found on the <u>Australian Electoral Commission Find My</u> <u>Electorate website</u>.



5. Why was I not nominated to apply?

All MPs, utilising a community committee, ran an Expression of Interest (EOI) process in their electorates for the 2021 Volunteer Grants round. MPs have nominated organisations up to an electorate funding cap of \$132,450 (GST exclusive) from this EOI process to ensure the grants support local needs.

Please contact your local MP for feedback on the EOI process.

6. My MP has nominated me to apply for a 2021 Volunteer Grant, but our organisation does not want a Volunteer Grant.

If your MP has nominated your organisation, there is no obligation to submit an application if you do not wish to receive a Volunteer Grant. However, please advise the department in writing so that funding may be utilised by another organisation.

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 3 weeks from 20 May 2021 to 9:00 PM AEST on 9 June 2021.

If you receive an application form, you must submit your application as soon as possible but no later than the closing date on 9 June 2021.

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

Applications are due by 9:00 PM AEST on 9 June 2021. Applications submitted after 9:00 PM AEST that day will be considered as a late application.

In accordance with section 7.1 of the 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.

9. How do I lodge a late application?

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit a request in writing to the Community Grants Hub at support@communitygrants.gov.au.

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



For a late application to be considered by the department, it must:

- be received in writing
- include a written explanation for late submission
- be submitted within 3 business days of the closing date.

The department's decision will be final and not subject to a review or appeals process. The Community Grants Hub will advise the applicant in writing if their late application has been accepted.

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

If you find an error in your application, after submission, you must complete and resubmit a new application before the closing time, using the application link in your original invitation.

You must send an email to support@communitygrants.gov.au requesting the removal of the incorrect application. Where a duplicate application has been identified, and not reported to the Community Grants Hub, only the last submission will be considered for assessment.

11. If I am nominated by 2 MPs, can I apply for 2 grants?

No. As outlined in section 7 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, applications are limited to one application per organisation unless you have agreed to auspice a grant application for another organisation as detailed in section 4.2.

Where an organisation applies in multiple electorates, only the first application received will be considered for a Volunteer Grant.

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 unless the application has been submitted in error. The exception to this rule is if you have agreed to auspice a grant application for another organisation as detailed in section 4.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

13. My organisation has agreed to auspice a grant for a smaller organisation. Can we also apply for a grant?

Yes. An organisation that has agreed to auspice a small organisation is still eligible to apply for a Volunteer Grant themselves.

14. 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 2021 Volunteer Grants grant opportunity. Application forms may only be used by organisations who received one directly from the Community Grants Hub.



15. Can MPs nominate local branches of a larger umbrella organisation (for example, 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 2 branches of the St John Ambulance service in their electorate, this would count as 2 separate nominations.

16. 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 and the assessment criteria in section 6 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. In addition, funding is capped at \$132,450 per electorate. Once this funding limit is reached, no further organisations will be funded.

17. My organisation was successful under Volunteer Grants 2019–20. Can I apply under 2021 Volunteer Grants?

If nominated by your MP, your organisation can apply for the 2021 Volunteer Grant. Having received a Volunteer Grant in previous years does not exclude your organisation from receiving a 2021 Volunteer Grant.

18. 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 to the terms and conditions of the 2021 Volunteer Grants. The representative is normally the president, chairperson, secretary or treasurer.

19. Is a paper-based application form available?

No, the online form is the only method for submitting an application form. If you do not have access to a computer, you should try contacting your local MP for assistance, or you may be able to access a computer at your local library, or contact someone you know who has access to a computer that could assist you in submitting an application.

20. 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 2021 selection round, the only attachments requested are a Trust Deed, for applicants who are applying as a Trustee of behalf of a Trust, and/or a Certificate of Incorporation, where applicable.

21. How much funding can my organisation apply for?

The amount of funding to be applied for will be pre-determined by the MP and Community Committee and will be between \$1,000 and \$5,000. The endorsed amount will appear on the application form and is not able to be amended.



22. Is the funding ongoing?

No. If successful, the funding provided is for a one-off, time limited grant.

23. Is my organisation eligible to apply?

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

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

Organisations that are not legal entities are not eligible to apply for funding unless they work with an auspicing body. The ineligible organisation must be auspiced by a legal entity as per section 4.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

25. Can local governments apply for funding?

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

26. Can Commonwealth and state/territory government departments apply for funding?

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

27. Can organisations/community groups from external territories of Australia, such as Norfolk Island, apply for 2021 Volunteer Grants?

Yes. Community organisations from external territories of Australia can apply for 2021 Volunteer Grants.

28. My organisation is a statutory authority. Is it eligible to apply for a 2020–21 Volunteer Grant?

Non-corporates/territory statutory authorities are only eligible to apply for the 2021 Volunteer Grants grant opportunity if:

- they are nominated to apply by an MP
- they are established under State or Territory Legislation
- they are 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 2021 Volunteer Grants application form, select 'Non-corporate state/territory statutory authority'.



29. Can the grant be used to support schools?

Schools may be eligible to receive a grant providing they are an eligible entity type (see section 4.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) and have a minimum of 40% of their workforce as volunteers, are a not-for-profit organisation and are nominated to apply by an MP. If the school is not an eligible entity type, MPs may choose to nominate schools' Parents and Citizen's Associations to support school communities.

30. 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, the department 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.

The department 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 the department.

31. What can my organisation use the grant money for?

Your organisation can use the grant money for:

- eligible small equipment
- transport costs of volunteers with disability
- fuel costs incurred by volunteers
- training for volunteers
- background screening checks of volunteers
- promoting awareness of and increasing participation in volunteering opportunities to assist in recovering volunteering numbers following the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic
- adapting practices to support volunteers' safety in the coronavirus pandemic environment

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

32. 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 5.4 in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

33. 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.

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

If the application is successful, you can purchase any of the items as specified in Appendix A of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines provided it is portable, tangible and for the benefit of the volunteers in your organisation. You do not need to advise the department.

35. 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.

36. 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.

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

No. Individual volunteers cannot directly apply under 2021 Volunteer Grants for fuel or transport costs. The organisation or community group they volunteer for should apply.

38. 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 to undertake 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.



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

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

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

You are required to keep a complete set of records and the original receipts pertaining to grant funding for 5 years.

The department may contact your organisation/community group 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. Further acquittal information is included in section 12 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

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

The announcement of successful organisations/community groups for 2021 Volunteer Grants is expected to be in November 2021.

All organisations who apply for funding will receive a letter from the Community Grants Hub advising the outcome of their application.

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 the department.

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

42. If successful, when can we expect to receive the grant money?

Successful applicants can expect to receive their grant funding in December 2021.

Once the selection process is finalised, successful applicants will be sent a letter of agreement. If the applicant decides not to accept, they must notify the department in writing.

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

No. Organisations/Community groups are not permitted to charge a fee for administering 2021 Volunteer Grants.

44. 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.



45. 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 organisations/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.

46. What if my organisation has leftover 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 leftover funds. Please email volunteering@dss.gov.au with the details and the department will invoice you for the remaining amount.

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

Funds will be paid as soon as possible after successful applications are announced and the opt-out period has ended. The earliest start date of the grant activity will be advised in your grant agreement and will not be before the grant is paid.

48. 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.

49. 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.

50. 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 Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People checks. You will need to refer to the Grant



Opportunity Guidelines provided to your organisation with regards to Working with Children or Working with Vulnerable People checks to determine this.

51. If my organisation has not opted into the National Redress Scheme (the Scheme), are we eligible to apply for a 2021 Volunteer Grant?

Non-government institutions named in applications to the Scheme or the Royal Commission that have not joined the Scheme or signified their intent to join, within the required timeframes, will be ineligible to access Australian Government grant funding.

Institutions subject to the Redress Grant Connected Policy are listed on the <u>Scheme's</u> <u>website</u>. This page will be updated over time to reflect non-government institutions that have not joined the scheme.

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

Australian 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 organisation's name, ABN or other information to submit a fraudulent application for personal gain.

53. How do I get further information about 2021 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.

54. Our community group is interested in applying for a volunteer grants, however our local MP is not supportive of our organisation's mission. 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.

MPs 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 department's Complaints Line on 1800 634 035, complaints@dss.gov.au or via post to 'Feedback, GPO Box 9820, Canberra ACT, 2601.



55. The deadline for submitting nominations by my MP was 29 April 2021. How do I access a nomination, as my MP did not complete the nomination on my behalf?

The MP nomination period closed on Thursday 29 April 2021. Only volunteer organisations nominated by their MP are able to apply.

56. 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 we are doing them all?

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

57. We have registered multiple EOIs with various MPs. How do we get information on what exactly is proceeding?

From 20 May 2021, each nominated organisation will receive an invitation to apply.

58. I understand that invitations to apply for a Volunteer Grant have been sent to nominated organisations on 20 May 2021. 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 from 20 May 2021. If you haven't received the invitation to apply, please check your Spam and Junk Email folder or contact the Community Grants Hub by phone on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or by email at support@communitygrants.gov.au.

59. In light of the coronavirus outbreak, we have had to reconsider the purpose of our grant application. Will we be able to modify our application to meet our new requirements?

In light of the current situation, we understand there may be disruptions to plans and events. As such, you may modify your activity without putting in a new application.

If the application is successful, you can purchase any of the items as specified in Appendix A of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines provided it is portable, tangible and for the benefit of the volunteers in your organisation.

60. What is the closing date for late applications, and can I submit a late application?

Applications close on 9 June 2021. The department will not accept late applications unless the applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevent the submission of the application. Please refer to section 7.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for more detailed information on the process for submission of late applications.

Please note, applicants wishing to submit a late application must submit a request in writing to the Community Grants Hub at support@communitygrants.gov.au.



61. How can I access the link to the late application form?

If your written request for a late application is approved, you will be advised by the department on the process for accessing the late application form.

62. If I can get my MP to nominate me now, will I be able to submit a late application if I wasn't invited to apply originally?

No. Unfortunately, we are not be able to accept late nominations. The nomination period closed on 29 April 2021. While we understand the circumstances surrounding late nomination requests, it is now too late to accept the request.

63. I have partially completed my application form but I have not submitted it yet. Can I still access the original form?

Yes. If you started the application form prior to the closing date of 9:00 PM AEST 9 on June 2021, you can still access the original form and submit it to the department.

64. When will I hear if I my organisation has been given a Volunteer Grant?

If you are successful, you will receive an email notification and a Letter of Agreement from the department. You may also be contacted by your MP. If you are unsuccessful, we will notify you in writing via email by late November 2021.

65. My local MP contacted me to tell me my organisation had been successful in getting a Volunteer Grant but I have seen no paperwork. When will I see an actual notification?

The department will formally advise all applicants by email, both successful and unsuccessful, by late November 2021.

66. I saw the media release from Minister Ruston announcing the outcomes of the Volunteer Grants round but I have not heard anything about whether my organisation has been successful. When will I know?

The department will formally advise all applicants by email, both successful and unsuccessful, by late November 2021.

67. I saw a list on the Community Grants Hub website of organisations who were successful for a volunteer grant, but can't see my organisation's name. Does this mean that my organisation has not received a grant?

If your organisation is not on the list of successful organisations on the Community Grants Hub website, then it has not been successful in obtaining a Volunteer Grant in the 2020–21 Volunteer Grants round. The department will formally notify all applicants both successful and unsuccessful, by late November 2021 via email.



68. I have been told by my local MP that my organisation has been successful in the Volunteer Grants round. When will we get our money?

The department will formally email successful organisations by late November 2021. This email will also contain a Letter of Agreement and the grant will be paid by late December 2021.

69. My organisation applied for a grant in the Volunteer Grants round but now we do not want the grant. What do we need to do?

If your organisation has been successful in the Volunteer Grants round, the department will formally email successful organisations by late November 2021. This email will also contain a Letter of Agreement which provides an opt-out process. Organisations opting out of an offer of a grant will need to respond in writing by the date specified in the letter.

70. When does my organisation need to spend our Volunteer Grant round funding by?

You must spend your grant funding by 31 December 2022.

Questions and Answers added on 21 May 2021

71. Our organisation was nominated by an MP to apply as a legal entity in its own right, however our organisation is not an eligible legal entity. How do we proceed in completing and submitting an application form?

You will need to source an organisation that can apply as an auspicing body on your behalf. This organisation must be a legal entity and will be required to enter into an agreement with and receive funding from the Commonwealth, manage any reporting requirements and forward the grant amount to your organisation. If you have received the invitation to apply with the link to the application form, you may forward this to the organisation that will be auspicing you so that they can complete the application form on your behalf. You will also be required to notify your MP and the department at volunteering@dss.gov.au of the name of the auspicing body and provide contact details for 2 contacts in the organisation.

72. An auspicing body was nominated by an MP to apply for funding on behalf of our organisation as we are not a legal entity, however the nominated auspicing body will no longer sponsor our application for funding. Can we submit the application form ourselves?

If you are not an eligible organisation, you will need to source an alternative organisation to apply as an auspicing body on your behalf. This organisation must be a legal entity and will be required to enter into an agreement with and receive funding from the Commonwealth, manage any reporting requirements and forward the grant amount to your organisation. If you have received the invitation to apply with the link to the application form, you may forward this to the organisation that will be auspicing you so that they can complete the application form on your behalf. Please notify your MP and the department at volunteering@dss.gov.au of the change of auspicing body with contact details for 2 contacts in the organisation.



Question and Answer added on 8 June 2021

73. I am in Victoria and due to the recent COVID-19 lockdown, I am not able to submit my application by 9pm on 9 June 2021. What can I do?

Due to the recent COVID-19 lockdown in Victoria, organisations that have been nominated by their MPs in these electorates have been granted an extension.

- For organisations in the Victorian Regional area electorates, an extension has been granted to 9:00 PM AEST on Friday 18 June 2021.
- For organisations in the Melbourne Metro area electorates, an extension has been granted to 9:00 PM AEST on Friday 25 June 2021.

Organisations will be prompted to provide a reason for the late submission. We suggest that you use 'Victorian Regional/Melbourne Metro extension, due to lockdown' when submitting the application.

Question and Answer added on 9 June 2021

74. We have been unable to submit our application before the closing time. Can I still submit my application or do I need to submit a request?

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit a request in writing, as per section 7.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. The application form contains a section for you to provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented the application being submitted prior to the closing date and time. This is sufficient and an email is not required. These requests will be accepted until 9:00 PM AEST on Friday 18 June 2021.