Fostering Integration Grants

General Feedback for applicants

Overview

The objective of the Fostering Integration Grants (FIGs) opportunity is to facilitate the participation, integration and social cohesion of both newly arrived migrants and multicultural communities in Australia by:

- encouraging the social and economic participation of migrants by developing skills and cultural competencies to integrate into Australian social, economic and civic life, and build community resilience;
- promoting and encouraging the uptake of Australian values and liberal democracy and amplifying the value of Australian citizenship;
- promoting a greater understanding and acceptance of racial, religious and cultural diversity; and
- addressing issues within Australian communities that show potential for, or early signs of, low social integration.

Grants will fund services, activities and events that seek to work with newly-arrived migrants and emerging ethnic communities, with a particular focus on women and young people. However, the activities can include all Australian citizens and residents who contribute to maintaining social cohesion and defining our national identity.

In 2019-20, the eligibility criteria for the FIGs program were changed from the previous FIGs opportunity to target small not-for-profit organisations who directly represent a specific culturally diverse community; and/or organisations who are strongly connected to the culturally diverse community and have a physical presence in that community.
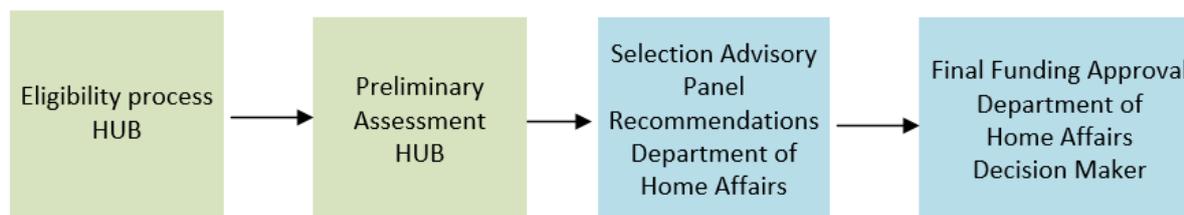
Selection results

The FIGs application period opened on 24 September 2019 and closed at 11pm AEDT on 5 November 2019.

Five hundred and fifty six (556) eligible applications were received, seeking approximately $24 million in grant funding. From these, 42 applications were recommended for funding.

Due to the high volume of quality applications received relative to the funding amount available however, funds were exhausted quickly which resulted in a large number of suitable applicants not being funded. A large number of successful applicants have also received less funding than was requested.

Selection process

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) administered an open competitive selection process on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs. An 'open competitive' process ensures all eligible applicants had an equal opportunity to apply.

A total of 732 applications were received by the Hub. These applications underwent eligibility and compliance checks against the eligibility criteria as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOG). In particular, Section 4.1 of the GOG outlined the types of entities eligible to apply in this round, and Section 4.2 outlined the types of entities not eligible to apply. Applicants are responsible for identifying their entity type and selecting the correct entity type in the Application Form. Applications that did not meet the eligibility requirements did not progress to further assessment.
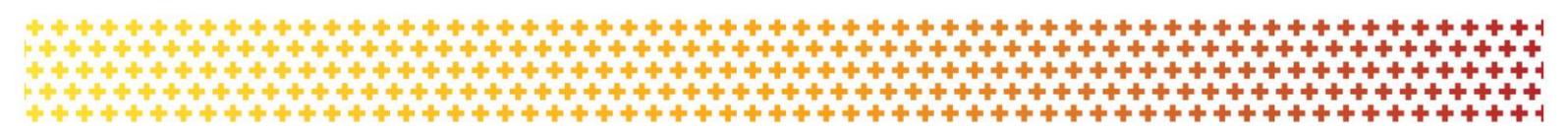
556 applications were identified as eligible to apply. The Hub completed a preliminary assessment of the eligible applications' responses against the assessment criteria.

All eligible applications were then referred to a Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) comprising of Department of Home Affairs Officers from relevant business areas, to undertake a detailed assessment of the merits of each project and how well it aligned with the policy and objectives of the FIGs program.

Members of the SAP considered whether the application provided *value with relevant money*[1], having regard to:

- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant;
- the relative value of the grant sought;
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives;
- whether the project will be delivered by a small culturally diverse community-specific organisation seeking to directly represent its community;
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals;
- the relative merit of each application;

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[1] 'Value with relevant money' 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.

- the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated a capacity to fund the proposal taking into consideration all possible sources of finance, including debt finance; and
- how many people are likely to be influenced.

The SAP also took into consideration a fair and equal distribution of funded activities across types of activities, delivery locations and recipient communities, so as to best support those communities facing the greatest challenges in relation to their integration into the broader Australian society.
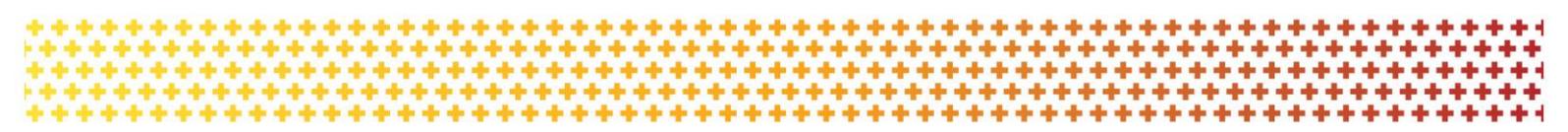
As a result of the emergence of COVID-19, a number of activities are no longer able to be delivered under the Fostering Integration Grants program while the Australian Government's (and State and Territory Governments') measures on COVID-19 remain in place.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia, grant activities have been approved under the Fostering Integration Grants program on the basis of their likelihood in achieving two outcomes listed at section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines:

- support migrants to be resilient in times of crisis; and
- support migrants to actively participate in Australian society.

Additionally, grant activities have been approved on the basis of whether they can be modified and/or delivered consistently with the Government's COVID-19 measures.

Following recommendations from the SAP, the Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs approved those projects and amounts of funding to be awarded to successful grant recipients.

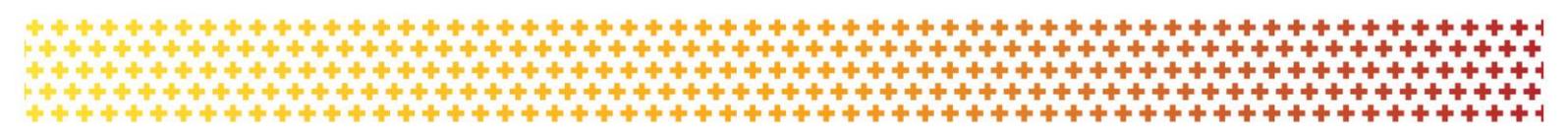# Criteria specific feedback to assist future FIGs applicants

Criterion 1: Demonstrate a strong need for a fostering integration project within your target community/communities.

In demonstrating the need you must answer the following questions:

- Who does your project seek to target? Describe their characteristics, which may include the size of the community, their geographical location, ethnic, cultural or religious background, visa subclass/citizenship status, length of time in Australia, etc.

- Why does your target community require assistance? Describe and provide evidence of the issues facing your target community/communities that you are seeking to address.

Strong responses included:

- evidence specific to the particular target group/community as opposed to general information about migrants or a geographical area.
- a clear indication as to the priority group the target/group community falls within.
- quantitative evidence from relevant and recent data sources such as an Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas or other Government Department reports; and/or strong anecdotal evidence including results of community forums, surveys or interviews conducted with the target community.
- relevant and current evidence to support the need of the community, detailing the issues facing the target group/community (e.g. job readiness or language barriers).
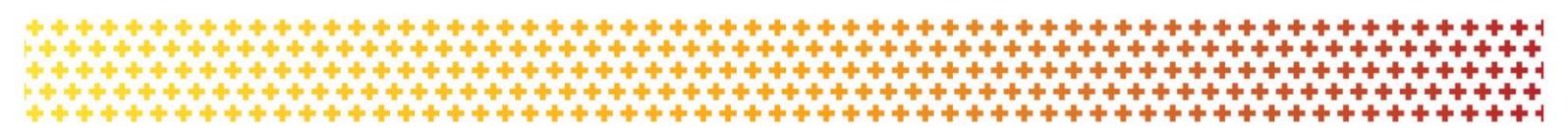

Criterion 2: Describe the project in detail including how it will be delivered and how it will address the grant objectives.

In describing the project you must answer the following questions:

- What activities will you undertake and how many people do you expect will participate in, or benefit from, each activity?

- How will the activities address the particular needs of the target community/communities?

- What outcomes do you expect to achieve from your project and how do these relate to the program objectives and outcomes in Section 2 of the guidelines?

- How will the project and/or outcomes continue beyond the grant period?

Strong responses included:

- a detailed outline of the project and the intended deliverables across the entire period of the project, such as number of participants, services to be delivered, location of services, equipment to be purchased, staff/stakeholders involved.
- the specific outcome(s) the proposed activity would address and how these outcomes closely aligned with the program objectives.
- an indication of how the project will be sustainable beyond the funding period through financial or non-financial support from other sources. Examples include sponsorship, facilities, volunteers, or stakeholders (e.g. local businesses or community groups) or whether the project was self-sustainable.
- outcomes for the project participants beyond the funding period through the skills gained or employment/schooling outcomes achieved.
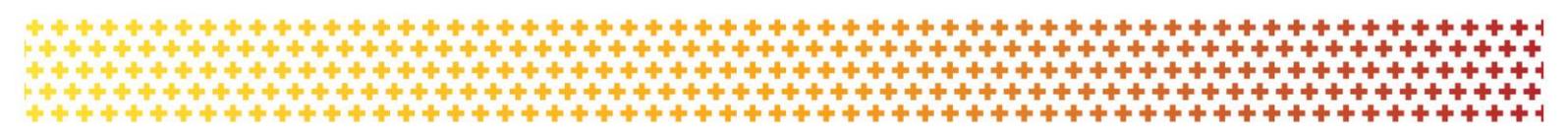

Criterion 3: Describe your organisation's experience working with and delivering projects to your community.

In describing your organisation's experience you must answer the following questions:

- Has the target group been consulted with or involved in the design of this project? Provide information regarding their role in, or support for, the project.

- What is your relationship with the target community? How will you work with the community to ensure the successful implementation of the project?

- What is your organisation's experience with managing a similar project and what policies or procedures do you have in place to manage a grant agreement if successful?

Strong responses included:

- information that demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of the target community.
- evidence to demonstrate they are connected to the target group/community and have the networks and partnerships to assist them, not only in delivering the project but also in achieving outcomes that are high quality, meaningful and sustainable.
- detail of how they would connect with the target group/community where current networks or partnerships are not already established.
- information on recent consultations and/or engagement with other community organisations.
- details of key personnel with specific experience, skills or qualifications in the provision of culturally competent services (e.g. bilingual/bicultural employees and roles and training dedicated to cultural competency).
- examples of the organisation's experience in delivering grant activities or services similar to those proposed and/or delivering culturally competent services to migrants.
- evidence of the organisation's previous achievements.
- information and/or evidence to demonstrate infrastructure, procedures, systems and reporting/governance mechanisms that will assist the organisation in meeting the obligations of the grant agreement.

Guidance for future FIGs grant applications

Read the supporting information before applying

- It is important to read all available information provided about FIGs when applying for funding, especially the Grant Opportunity documentation provided on the Hub's [website](#).

- The Grant Opportunity documentation is specific to each FIGs round and contains important information about the purpose of the program, eligibility and compliance requirements, eligible items, timeframes and how to apply.

- The Application Form includes helpful information and details on questions relating to eligibility, priority for funding, and mandatory information required by the Hub and Department of Home Affairs for the selection process.

Check the application before it is submitted

Applicants are encouraged to check the Application Form for completeness prior to submission.

- Check that all fields in the Application Form have been completed in full.

- Check that all answers to questions have been entered correctly.

- Check that responses to criteria are accurate, clear and easy to read.

- Check that the application provides a level of detail that is in proportion to the amount of funds requested and the complexity of the project.