



Australian Government

Community  
Grants Hub

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# Women's Leadership and Development Program: Women in Public Office

## Feedback for applicants

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The Office for Women in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) has provided the following general feedback for applicants under the Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP): Women in Public Office grant round, to assist with understanding what generally comprised a competitive application and how to strengthen future applications.

### Overview

The Australian Government funds the WLDP to deliver a range of projects specifically for women in Australia. It contributes to the achievement of Program 1.1 within Outcome 1 of PM&C's Portfolio Budget Statement.

The Government is committed to increasing gender equality in Australia, extending leadership and economic participation opportunities for women, increasing representation and inclusion of women in public life, and building a safer more respectful culture in Australian workplaces and across broader society.

The WLDP is a key lever supporting the Government's gender equality plan, with the Women in Public Office grant round targeting projects that equip and encourage more women across the political spectrum to run for public office at local, state and federal levels.

The grant round opened for applications on 8 November 2022 and closed on 19 December 2022, with \$5 million (GST exclusive) available over 2022–23 to 2026–27. Proposed projects were well targeted, with 13 applications received. Following the decision by the Minister for Women, as the decision maker, one application was selected for funding to the value of \$5 million (GST exclusive).

The successful project will contribute to the Government's priorities to achieve gender equality, with a specific focus on increasing the representation of women in public office leadership. This non-partisan project will increase the number and diversity of women running for public office, and will target the participation of women from politically under-represented communities.



## Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. All applications met the eligibility and compliance criteria. The Community Grants Hub undertook the preliminary assessment of all eligible and compliant applications using a targeted competitive selection process.

Following preliminary assessment, all assessed applications were referred to PM&C for consideration by the Selection Advisory Panel (the Panel).

The Panel, established by PM&C, comprised of subject matter experts from Office for Women, PM&C, and a civil society expert. Non-voting subject matter experts from the Department of Home Affairs and Office for Women formed part of the Panel and provided their expert advice on targeted cohorts. The Panel assessed applications and provided advice to inform PM&C the funding recommendations to the decision maker.

Applications suitable for funding were identified based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria and demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Specifically, the Panel took into consideration:

- overall objectives for the grant round (including whether the project, or any of its elements, did not align with the grant opportunity objectives)
- compliance with eligibility criteria
- consortium partnerships
- demonstrated non-partisan nature of the proposed project
- national reach, or ability to scale to have a national impact and/or reach
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals
- how the services and/or project will be delivered
- success of existing programs through evaluation outcomes
- value for money (efficiency and effectiveness, economical and ethical use of public resources)
- capability of the organisation/s to deliver
- risks the applicant or project poses for the Commonwealth
- possible duplication with other Commonwealth/state/territory government programs/service delivery.

Following the decision maker's decision, one application was approved for funding totalling \$5 million (GST exclusive).

Information on what made a strong response to each criteria is provided below.

# Assessment criteria

## Criterion 1

Describe your current experience and that of your consortia partners, if applicable, in delivering programs or initiatives designed to assist women to prepare for public office. How do you/they address current barriers affecting women’s attraction and appointment to public office? – (30% weighting)

Sub criteria	Strengths
<p>Demonstrate your (and your consortia partners, if applicable) experience and expertise delivering programs and/or initiatives designed to increase women’s participation in public office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the programs and initiatives you (and your consortia partners, if applicable) currently administer, including the geographic coverage, funding arrangements and key achievements to date. Include performance data where available, to demonstrate the impact/effectiveness of those programs and initiatives.</li> <li>Outline the expertise and experience of your organisation (and your consortia partners, if applicable) in delivering these programs/initiatives. Describe the operating environment for your program/s and outline key links/partnerships that support current delivery efforts.</li> </ul>	<p>Strong responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly outlined experience and expertise in delivering programs aimed at increasing women’s representation in public office, as well as the components of their current initiatives and what they have achieved</li> <li>provided strong supporting evidence and/or examples of the success of their existing program/s, including through evaluation outcomes</li> <li>demonstrated the strength and capabilities of partners</li> <li>provided details on in-kind support and infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<p>Outline the rationale for your current programs, including the social/cultural issues they address, the outcomes they are designed to achieve and the specific needs or characteristics of your target group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly define the barriers and challenges your current programs or initiatives are designed to address.</li> <li>Describe the target group/s of the programs you run. Include any intersecting forms of cultural experience that may impact or limit the opportunity of the target audience to run for public office, and how your program overcomes them.</li> </ul>	<p>Strong responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly demonstrated how the project involves the target cohort/s</li> <li>demonstrated understanding of the specific needs or characteristics of their target group/s</li> <li>identified cultural expertise and the benefits of the program being community led</li> <li>outlined how their current initiatives address the barriers affecting women’s attraction and appointment to public office.</li> </ul>

## Criterion 2

Demonstrate how your proposed project will complement or build on your existing programs/initiatives to maximise outcomes for women in public office and respond to social and cultural barriers, at all levels of government, nationally – (40% weighting)

Sub criteria	Strengths
<p>Describe your proposed project and demonstrate how it will ensure it is non-partisan and accessible to women across the political spectrum, and respond to individual, social and cultural barriers affecting women entering public office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an overview of the proposed project, demonstrate how this project is non-partisan and outline the key activities/deliverables, including <u>how</u> these will be delivered.</li> <li>• Demonstrate how your existing programs/initiatives will be improved/expanded/leveraged to achieve the project outcomes, and identify how existing program infrastructure and networks will be utilised to deliver the project. Where these are politically affiliated, demonstrate what changes will be made to ensure the project is non-partisan with broad accessibility.</li> <li>• If you are applying as a consortia, describe how these arrangements maximise the strengths of current programs/initiatives to achieve the objectives of the proposed project.</li> </ul>	<p>Strong responses clearly outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposed program of work and key milestones, describing the intended audience, mode of delivery and locations to be targeted</li> <li>• the number of women who would benefit, both directly and indirectly, throughout the project, demonstrating cost benefit and value for money</li> <li>• consortia members' expertise and proven track record of long term partnerships in delivering non-partisan leadership programs</li> <li>• how the proposed resources and necessary tools will be used to deliver a nationwide project which targets social and cultural barriers</li> <li>• demonstrated the non-partisan nature of their proposed project and outlined what changes would be made to the current initiative/s being delivered to meet program objectives.</li> </ul>
<p>Outline the target cohort for the proposed project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe who will benefit from the project. Will the project target specific cultural or high priority groups?</li> <li>• Identify the intended number of direct and indirect participants and/or beneficiaries. What is the total number of women your project anticipates will graduate from the program and progress to running for public office?</li> </ul>	<p>Strong responses clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated the challenges for the target cohort/s</li> <li>• demonstrated the involvement of the target cohort/s in regards to the design, implementation and delivery of the project</li> <li>• identified gaps in current programs or initiatives for the target cohort/s, and described how their project would complement, add value, and fill those gaps in a culturally appropriate way.</li> </ul>



Sub criteria	Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the delivery method and proposed locations for the program? How will these ensure accessibility for intended target group/s? How will delivery consider cultural appropriateness? Does the project plan ensure national delivery, or the ability to scale up to national delivery?</li><li>• How will your project deliver sustainable change for women in public office? Include your methodology for measuring and evaluating success against the desired outcomes of the grant opportunity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• outlined how the project would deliver sustainable change for participants, and how delivery would ensure accessibility for a broad range of women</li><li>• demonstrated a strong national reach or ability to scale the project nationwide during the project period</li><li>• described the short, medium and long-term outcomes which would determine the success and impact of the project.</li></ul>
<p>Outline any risks associated with the implementation of your project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate how risk of political bias (real or perceived) will be managed to ensure implementation of the project remains non-partisan and accessible to women across the political spectrum.</li><li>• Describe how delivery will be maintained safely under pandemic circumstances or natural disasters, and any other project dependencies.</li></ul>	<p>Strong responses identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• potential risks specific to their target cohort/s with an intersectional focus on gender and cultural awareness</li><li>• strong culturally appropriate mitigation strategies for identified risks to continue the delivery of their project</li><li>• how the project would continue and adapt if necessary around unavoidable circumstances, such as COVID-19</li><li>• how any perceived political bias would be managed.</li></ul>

### Criterion 3

Demonstrate your organisation’s capability and capacity, and that of your consortia partners, if applicable, to successfully deliver this project – (30% weighting)

Sub criteria	Strengths
<p>Provide an overview of your organisation and consortia arrangements, if applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline the proposed governance structure for administering the project. Include project responsibility and funding arrangements (including in-kind and financial co-contributions of consortia partners), geographical locations of your organisation (and consortia partners, if applicable), and how your experience of governing projects of similar value or under similar arrangements supports this project.</li> <li>Describe risk management and financial capabilities, financial viability of the organisation/s and outline any perceived risks and mitigation identified in managing consortia arrangements, including how any political affiliation or bias (real or perceived) will be managed.</li> </ul>	<p>Strong responses outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>robust governance structures, including an active Board with diverse and qualified key personnel</li> <li>previous experience delivering projects of a similar size and budget, outlining the outcomes achieved</li> <li>the capability, including systems, internal controls and financial resources to ensure appropriate financial management and governance</li> <li>in-kind support and/or existing infrastructure and networks to deliver the project.</li> </ul>
<p>Describe the relevant qualifications and experience of staff within your organisation to deliver this project, or your ability to engage relevant expertise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide details about the experience of staff within the organisation (and consortia partners, if applicable). Include information pertaining to the role of staff related to the project, whether staff are volunteer or paid, and whether recruitment is required to secure appropriate expertise.</li> <li>If you are applying as a consortia please outline any existing relationships between consortia partners, including evidence of previous joint projects or current working relationships.</li> </ul>	<p>Strong responses identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>diverse key personnel (either already engaged or within scope to be engaged) with relevant gender expertise, qualifications and achievements, including risk and financial capability</li> <li>strong existing partnerships with key stakeholders, or the ability to establish partnerships to deliver the project</li> <li>key personnel or linkages to personnel with demonstrated culturally appropriate gender experience</li> <li>expertise/experience and knowledge of working with the sector and cohort/s in a culturally appropriate manner.</li> </ul>