

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING GRANT PROGRAM Guidelines and Information for Applicants

The Community Strengthening Grants program is designed to promote and increase participation of local residents in community initiatives, to build and strengthen local networks and partnerships and to support community leadership, learning and skill development. Council will provide financial assistance to community groups and organisations to support the provision of programs, activities and services which respond to identified community needs, contribute to the building of a stronger community, develop innovative approaches and local social issues and are in accordance with Council's strategic objectives.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible Applicants

- Community-based not-for-profit organisations
- Incorporated groups or organisations
- An unincorporated organisation sponsored by an incorporated organisation (other than West Wimmera Shire Council)

Ineligible Applicants

- Individuals
- Applicants who have not satisfactorily acquitted previous council grants
- Applicants who have received a council grant within the previous twelve months
- Applicant not based within West Wimmera Shire

Eligible Applications

- Demonstrate that the purpose of the grant meets a recognised community need in accordance with the relevant funding categories.
- Community infrastructure, including upgrades to facilities and purchase of equipment
- Organisational development, including skill development and strategic business development
- Community development projects and activities
- One-off events or new elements for community events and festivals held within West Wimmera Shire

Ineligible Applications

- Core business and operational responsibilities of the organisation
- Staff wages and salaries and ongoing operational, maintenance or administrative costs
- Retrospective funding for projects commenced prior to receipt of grant funding
- Ongoing projects or a duplication of existing services
- Support for individual pursuit without community benefit
- Projects that do not involve the West Wimmera Shire Council community
- Services or activities which are considered to be primarily the responsibility of the State or Federal Governments.
- Incomplete applications and those without the required supporting documents

SELECTION CRITERIA

It is a requirement of the program that applicants should demonstrate that their proposed project, program or activity meets the following mandatory selection criteria:

- Targets a recognised community need or identified gap.
- Will strengthen the liveability of the community.
- Has been designed to foster community engagement and participation.
- Will primarily benefit the residents in the West Wimmera community, and benefits the broader community rather than just the members of the applicant organisation.
- Encourages a strong sense of community wellbeing that supports learning, participation, inclusiveness, healthy lifestyles and environmental sustainability.
- The project can stand alone and will not require recurrent funding from council.
- Wherever possible, goods and services are being sourced from West Wimmera suppliers (where the purchase of goods and services forms part of the application).

Once applications have met the mandatory criteria, priority will be given to those that meet the following conditions:

- Target groups of special need within the community.
Youth | Aged | Socially isolated | People with a disability | Culturally diverse | Disadvantaged
- Demonstrate the capacity to contribute to the project through their own financial or in-kind resources.
- Have clearly defined, specific objectives and measurable outcomes.
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively administer the grant within 12 months.
- Encourage and support the involvement of volunteers.
- Demonstrate innovation and incorporate a new approach to meeting a community need.

FUNDING CATEGORIES

Applications must be submitted in one of the following funding categories:

Community Projects

Funding is for a maximum of \$5,000 on a \$2 for \$1 basis

These are projects that are designed to provide benefits to the community in a wide range of areas, for example:

- Community and cultural development
- Sport and recreation
- Community health and safety
- Environmental improvement

Requirement: Quotations must be submitted with all applications in this category.



Community Events

These are events that contribute to the community in the following ways:

- Strengthening a sense of community, belonging and civic pride
- Encourage residents to participate in social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities
- Foster social and cultural diversity
- Promote local business and trading groups
- Enhance the West Wimmera Shire Council as a desirable destination

Requirement: Applications in this category must include evidence of public liability insurance.

Facilities Upgrades and Equipment Purchases

Funding is for a maximum of \$5,000 on a \$2 for \$1 basis

This category covers the funding of works or equipment related to community capacity building projects which support an ongoing community activity, program or project that can demonstrate one or more of the following objectives:

- Increases community participation in projects and activities
- Assists community groups to operate more effectively
- Encourages and supports the involvement of volunteers
- Improves occupational health and safety
- Contributes to environmental sustainability

Priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate a high level of community need, or where the service or program is in danger of being discontinued without the required facility upgrade or equipment purchase.

Requirement: Quotations must be submitted with all applications in this category.

Requirement: Prior approval must be sought from Council for any proposed improvement to Council owned property. It is strongly suggested that applicants contact West Wimmera Shire Council's Planning and Building Department prior to submitting an application, to determine whether planning and/or building approval is required.

Grants may be provided for a lesser amount than the amount requested.



APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications will only be accepted on the forms made available by Council at the time the grant funding round is advertised.
- Responses must be provided to all questions on the application form.
- Applications not received by the closing date will not be considered.

Applications must include all supporting documentation, where required, as per the guidelines ie. budget, Certificate of Incorporation, quotations, etc.

ASSESSMENT

- Applicants will receive a letter acknowledging receipt of their application within one week of the funding round closing.
- A nominated Council officer will assess applications against the eligibility requirements and selection criteria and make preliminary recommendations.
- All applications, together with the recommendations of the nominated Council officer, will be presented to the Community Strengthening Grants Committee at a meeting held approximately four weeks following the closing date of the funding round.
- The members of the Committee will review the applications and officer recommendations and make a decision on which applications will be approved and for what amount of funding.
- Applications will be approved depending on their level of compliance with the selection criteria, the funds available, and the number of applications received.
- Decisions regarding the allocation or non-allocation of funding made by the Committee are considered final.
- The Committee reserves the right to part-fund an application.
- Subsequent to the final decisions by the Committee, applicants will receive written notification about the success or otherwise of their grant application. Unsuccessful applicants will be encouraged to seek feedback from council in order to maximise their opportunity to obtain funding for future applications.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- All grant monies must be expended within 12 months of the grant being made available, or the funds must be refunded to Council. An extension may be sought before the 12 months has expired, by writing to the Council outlining the reasons and when the funds will be spent. Consultation will occur with the responsible Council officer and Community Strengthening Grant Committee Chairperson, and a written response will be provided to the applicant advising of the outcome.
- Monies received must only be spent on the project as approved by Council. Any unspent funds must be returned to Council.
- To vary the purpose for the allocated grant funds, written permission must be obtained in writing from West Wimmera Shire Council prior to spending the funds.
- Within 12 months of receipt of the grant, the grant recipient must provide Council with a statement of expenditure detailing how the monies have been expended, a summary and evaluation of the completed project and confirmation that West Wimmera Shire Council was acknowledged in promotional material or publicity about the funded project. A proforma will be provided by Council to assist with this process.
- Failure to abide by the grant conditions could jeopardise your organisation's chances of receiving further funds from West Wimmera Shire Council.



DISCLAIMER

- Council will not be responsible for under estimation of costs.
- A successful applicant cannot be guaranteed funding to the level requested.
- An applicant meeting the key selection criteria will not be guaranteed funding.

HOW TO APPLY

The Community Strengthening Grants application form is available at www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au/Community/Community-Strengthening-Grants-Program or by telephoning 03 5585 9900 (hard copy or electronic copy can be provided).

Please refer to Council's website to confirm the opening and closing dates for the next round of grants.

Late applications will not be considered.

NEED TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

If you require any assistance with your application or further information, please contact the Council by telephoning 03 5585 9900.

Please forward completed application to:

West Wimmera Shire Council
Community Strengthening Grants Program
PO Box 201
Edenhope VIC 3318

Fax | 03 5585 9950

Email | grants@westwimmera.vic.gov.au

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS

These information sessions provide community groups and organisations with useful information about how to apply, the selection criteria, the assessment process and provide an opportunity to ask questions. For upcoming session times and to book your place, please contact the shire office.

