Social Investment Partnerships Guidelines

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City of Melbourne Community Grants and Partnership Framework

City of Melbourne adopted the Community Grants and Partnerships Framework 2022-25 in September 2022. The full Framework can be downloaded here[1].

Through the Community Grants and Partnerships Framework, the City of Melbourne provides funding, expertise and support to socially-oriented organisations that address key social issues to support and enable our community to thrive. For the purpose of the Community Grants and Partnership Framework we define community as people who live in the municipality of the City of Melbourne.

The Council Plan[2] is the guiding document which sets out Council's priorities and the Community Grants and Partnerships Framework enables the City of Melbourne to:
- empower communities[3] to identify and respond to local need
- partner with community organisations to deliver shared outcomes
- activate community participation
- build capacity within communities and in the community sector.

We encourage communities to take an active role in identifying and responding to social issues. The following best practice principles and practices underpin the Community Grants and Partnerships Framework and inform the priorities for funding:

Principle	Practice
Impact	We take a purposeful and strategic approach to funding projects that deliver meaningful social impact in line with municipal priorities.
Partnership	We know we can't solve tough problems alone. We use our funding to establish partnerships with organisations and individuals who share our ambitions for our communities.
Innovation	We discover new solutions to changing needs and foster innovative approaches to addressing our social challenges.
Transparency	We are transparent in our funding priorities, processes and decisions.
Responsiveness	We listen to our communities and adapt our funding focus areas and processes to be relevant, timely and proportionate.

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[1] https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/strong-communities/funding-grants/Pages/community-grants-partnerships.aspx
[2] https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/vision-goals/pages/council-plan.aspx
[3] https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-melbourne/research-and-statistics/city-population/pages/community-profiles.aspx

Purpose of the Social Investment Partnerships Program

City of Melbourne is committed to partnering with organisations and communities to address social issues. The purpose of the program is to support projects and programs that deliver equitable opportunities, that enable, empower and build capacity of our diverse communities and individuals and building a more inclusive Melbourne.

The SIP enables the City of Melbourne to:

- address current and emerging social issues
- support initiatives that advance inclusion
- support the needs of local communities and to empower and build capacity
- partner to advance sustainable outcomes for community
- support neighbourhoods to be resilient, connected and engaged
- support social enterprise

Program Priorities

The SIP prioritises projects that enable and empower diverse communities, that build capacity and contribute to a more sustainable, socially just and resilient city.

The City of Melbourne recognises that some individuals and groups in our municipality are more likely to experience inequality and disadvantage.

SIP priority people and groups

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people living in insecure housing or who are experiencing homelessness
- people seeking asylum and / or from a refugee background
- people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- LGBTIQ+ people
- international students
- people living with disabilities
- people who experience violence including family violence
- people experiencing systemic / entrenched poverty
- children, youth, older people
- women

SIP priority social issues and opportunities

- address loneliness and isolation
- address digital literacy and access
- address discrimination and improve access, equality and equity
- uphold social justice and human rights
- improve physical and mental wellbeing
- address homelessness and pathways to housing including affordable housing
- contribute to community safety
- increase community participation – voices are heard and people contribute
- create pathways to employment and build capacity through education, training and other initiatives

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for funding through the SIP, applications must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant organisations must be a not-for-profit constituted body, a certified B Corporation or a social enterprise that meets the [Social Traders definition](#)[4] of a social enterprise.

  - B Corporations must provide matched financial contribution. For example if you are applying for $50,000 funding from the City of Melbourne the applicant must also contribute $50,000 to the project.

- Applicant organisations must be located within, or be delivering the project within, the [City of Melbourne municipality](#)[5] and the project must be targeted to benefit people (the community) who live in the City of Melbourne.

- The proposal must align with the purpose of the program responding to and guided by key City of Melbourne plans including *Future Melbourne 2026* vison, *Council Plan 2021-25*, and the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022-32

Ineligibility

Funding will not be considered for:

- core operational funding or proposals considered 'business as usual'

- projects and/or programs currently or previously delivered

- projects previously funded through the Social Partnerships Program, Social Innovation Partnership or Long Term Funding programs

- projects delivered by the City of Melbourne or services contracted by the City of Melbourne

- capital works

- projects based around a one-off event or experience

- projects that are solely for research purposes

- auspiced applications

- projects with a religious or political focus

- fundraising activities, competitions, prizes or award events

- interstate and international travel costs including travel costs for facilitators/consultants

- projects that have already commenced or occurred

- projects that are being, or have already been, funded through other City of Melbourne grant or sponsorship programs

- organisations with outstanding acquittals or debts owing to the City of Melbourne

- late submissions.

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[4] [https://www.socialtraders.com.au/about-social-enterprise/what-is-a-social-enterprise/social-enterprise-definition/https:/www.socialtraders.com.au/about-social-enterprise/what-is-a-social-enterprise/social-enterprise-definition/](#)
[5] [https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/suburb-map-boundary-city-of-melbourne.pdf](#)

Funding Level

Applications for the SIP can be made for any value between $25,000 and $80,000 per year for a two-year period. The program supports not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises and B Corporations.

Key Dates

- Applications open 9am on Monday 21 November.

- Information session: Wednesday 7 December 10.00-11.00am.

- Applications close 11.59pm on Monday 6 February.

- Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application by mid-June 2023.

- City of Melbourne will work with successful applicants to strengthen and refine project plans from June to July 2023.

- Successful applicants will receive funding to launch their projects from August 2021.

- Second year funding will be distributed from July 2024 pending successful achievement of annual KPIs.

- Funded projects must be completed by 30 June 2025.

Assessment Process

After the application period has closed and applications received:

- Applicant organisations will receive an email confirming receipt of application.

- Eligible applications will be assessed by an external Panel.

- The Panel recommends applications to Council for endorsement.

- All applicants will receive an email notice of the result of their application. Information about grants decisions will not be given over the phone.

- The list of successful applicants will be published on the City of Melbourne's website after all applicants have been notified of the outcome of their application.

Assessment Criteria

SIP applications are considered against four broad criteria listed here and including guiding questions for applicants. Applications must respond to the assessment criteria.

1. **Addressing purpose, social priorities / issues and priority local people and groups experiencing disadvantage**

   - Does the proposal align to the purpose of Social Investment Program?

   - Does the proposal address a social priority area for the City of Melbourne?

   - Is there a clearly identified need for the proposed project? Has evidence of the need been provided?

   - Has the community cohort(s) participants been identified? How will the participants benefit?

   - Has the applicant appropriately engaged with target participants and other community stakeholders prior to submitting the application? What is the evidence of this engagement?

2. **Impact**

   - Will the proposal be successful in addressing the identified need?

   - Will the proposal create positive long term outcomes for the targeted community cohort(s)?

   - Will the proposed project be sustainable beyond the two year funding?

3. **Organisational capacity and partners**

   - Is the scope of the proposal appropriate to the organisation's resources and expertise? Do they demonstrate capacity to deliver?

   - Is the proposal well-planned with clear and achievable deliverables and timeframes?

   - Does the proposal identify appropriate partners for collaboration? Is the collaboration well-articulated?

   - Does the organisation have a track record of successful project delivery of similar or other type? Has the organisation provided evidence of previous success?

4. **Budget**

   - Does the budget accurately reflect the scope and scale of the proposal?

   - Have other funding sources been identified?

   - Have the resources that are required to deliver the project been clearly identified?

   - Is there sufficient detail in the budget so as to clearly identify items of expenditure and income?

   - Does the total revenue match the total expenses?

   - Have quotes been provided to support capital purchases (if applicable)?

Additional Assessment Notes

City of Melbourne reserves the right to:

- not consider applications that do not meet the eligibility or assessment criteria

- request further information to inform our assessment

- recommend partial funding, in consultation with the applicant.

Permit requirements apply for projects. If relevant, these should be outlined in the application. (Refer to the City of Melbourne website[6] for permits required within the City of Melbourne).

If quotes and/or other proposed services are provided by family, friends or committee members, this must be declared in the application.

Lobbying

Canvassing or lobbying in relation to an application is strictly prohibited during the application process. No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant that canvasses or lobbies the Lord Mayor, City of Melbourne councillors or employees of the City of Melbourne.

Grant Terms and Conditions

If your application is successful, you will be required to:

- Sign a funding agreement with the City of Melbourne that provides details about the terms and conditions of funding. The funding agreement will outline reporting and acquittal requirements specific to your application.

- Supply all requested information prior to any funding being released.

- Projects that target children or young people aged 0-18 years will be required to have in place a Child Safe Action Plan and ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers involved in the project have valid Working with Children's checks.

- Use the funding allocated for the purposes specified in the application. Grants may not be used for any purpose other than for which it is granted, without the written permission of City of Melbourne.

- Deliver the project within the allocated budget. City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the applicant is unable to meet project costs.

- The City of Melbourne must be acknowledged in all promotional materials relating to the successful application, including use of the logo.

- Complete the project by the date stated in the funding agreement. Any requests for extensions will need the written approval of the City of Melbourne.

- Provide receipts to acquit the grant.

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[6] http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/pages/permits.aspx

Completing Your Application

Applications will be submitted and managed online via SmartyGrants. Application forms can be accessed from the City of Melbourne website.

Applications will automatically be closed by the SmartyGrants system at 5pm on Monday 6 February 2023.

Please avoid submitting your application at the last minute. If there is heavy use of the system with others submitting last-minute applications, there may be delays which will affect your ability to lodge your application before the deadline and it will be deemed ineligible.

When your application is fully submitted you will receive an automated email containing a PDF copy of your application and confirmation that it has been received.

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system, please contact SmartyGrants directly (contact information below).

Contacts

General enquiries:

Please contact the City of Melbourne Grants and Projects Officer by email[7]
The City of Melbourne Grant and Projects Officer will refer you to Council staff who are subject matter experts in a variety of fields including homelessness, youth, cultural diversity, ageing & inclusion, alcohol and other drug safety, international students, gender equity, prevention of violence against women, family services, recreation, health and life-long learning.

SmartyGrants technical assistance:

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system please contact them directly on email[8] or by phone: (03) 9320 6888.

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[7] commstrength@melbourne.vic.gov.au
[8] service@smartygrants.com.au

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can an organisation submit more than one application?

A: No. An organisation can only submit one application. Please consider which idea best meets the assessment criteria and develop that into an application. An organisation can, however, be a partner organisation in support of another application.

Q: The organisation already receives funding from the City of Melbourne; can an application be submitted to the Social Investment Partnerships Program?

A: Yes, as long as you are not applying for the same project.

Q: What is a social enterprise?

A: Social enterprises[9] are commercially viable businesses existing to benefit the public and the community, rather than shareholders and owners. There are an estimated 20,000 social enterprises across Australia. City of Melbourne strongly encourages applications from social enterprises, including those in partnership with other organisations.

Q: What kind of social enterprises are eligible for Social Investment Partnerships Program Funding?

A: As social enterprises can have the same legal structure as for-profit enterprises, it can be difficult to determine the bona fides of social enterprises. City of Melbourne will accept applications from established social enterprises that are certified by Social Traders. Social enterprises must meet the following criteria defined by Social Traders:

- are driven by a public or community cause, be it social, environmental, cultural or economic

- derive most of their income from trade, not donations or grants

- use the majority (at least 50 per cent) of their profits to work towards their social mission.

Q: How can an organisation be certified by Social Traders?

A: See Social Traders[10] for details. This process can take two weeks or more.

Q: What is a B Corp?

A: Certified B Corporations[11] are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Corps are accelerating a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

Q: How can an organisation become a B Corp?

A: Any for-profit company with at least a year of operations may pursue B Corp Certification. See Certified B Corporations[12] for details. For a small to medium sized corporation the B Corp certification process can take 6-8 months.

Q: Do B Corps have to provide matched funding?

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[9] https://www.socialtraders.com.au/about-social-enterprise/what-is-a-social-enterprise/social-enterprise-definition/https://www.socialtraders.com.au/about-social-enterprise/what-is-a-social-enterprise/social-enterprise-definition/
[10] https://www.socialtraders.com.au/suppliers/
[11] https://bcorporation.com.au/about-b-corps
[12] https://bcorporation.com.au/become-bcorp/

A: Yes, all B Corps who apply to this program are required to match the funding they are requesting for the project.

Q: What is matched funding?

A: Matched funding is where an applicant must provide the same amount of funding (through cash or services in kind such as staffing, evaluation etc.) as what they are requesting in a grant. For example if you are requesting $60,000 a year in funding you must provide $60,000 in matched funding either through a cash contribution by your corporation or through actual costs such as staffing for the project etc.

Q: What do I need to include with my application?

A: You can view the application form from our [website](#)[13]. Please be aware that the application form uses conditional formatting so the questions you need to answer may vary depending on your responses to other questions.

Q: How long can the project be funded for?

A: Social Investment Program funding is for a maximum of two years.

Q: Does funding support staff wages?

A: Yes, as long as they are aligned to delivery of the project and advised in project budget.

Q: Does funding support administration?

A: Yes however administration costs should not me more than 15 per cent of the total request.

Q: Does funding support operational costs?

A: No, although you can ask for a contribution to administrative costs (see above).

Q: Who will assess the application?

A: An external assessment panel assesses applications and makes recommendations to Council.

Q: Does funding support a project that has already commenced?

A: No, funding does not support a project that has commenced.

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[13] https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/strong-communities/funding-grants/pages/social-innovation-partnerships.aspx