

CITY OF MELBOURNE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GRANTS PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2024

Acknowledgement

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection the Wurundjeri, Bunurong, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wadawurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin have to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.

We are committed to our reconciliation journey, because at its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, for the benefit of all Victorians.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In June 2022, Council endorsed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary Local Review. This is guiding framework for the City of Melbourne with targets to achieve a more socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically just future for the municipality by 2030.

Social enterprises and place-based initiatives aim to solve local issues that often align strongly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Further detail can be found [here](#).

Overview

The Social Enterprise Grants Program (the program) supports the establishment and expansion of businesses with a social purpose. The program is aligned to our [Economic Development Strategy 2031](#) – enhancing the City of Melbourne’s reputation for business vitality, diversity and inclusiveness, and contributing to the city’s economy and community.

Social enterprises are businesses that trade like any other business, but exist specifically to make the world a better place. For the purpose of this program, a ‘social enterprise’ is defined as a business that derives most of their income from trade and uses profits to contribute to their social mission. Within this definition, types of applicants may be not-for-profit or for-profit businesses.

Program objectives

This grant round is intended to:

- encourage the establishment, development and expansion of sustainable social enterprises which enhance the City of Melbourne’s business vitality, diversity and inclusiveness
- support social enterprises and circular economy solutions that demonstrate a unique point-of-difference and benefit the city.

Applying businesses must be located within the City of Melbourne, have most of their workforce for their main activity within the City of Melbourne, or are committed to establishing within the City of Melbourne.

Topic streams

The program has a stream specifically for applicants working on circular economy solutions, and an open stream which is available to applicants working on any other social impact solution.

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- **Circular Economy Stream:** City of Melbourne is interested in bold and inventive circular economy solutions, challenging the notion of what 'waste' is, and finding pathways towards a circular economy and zero waste. This stream is for businesses who are developing and/or delivering innovative circular economy related products and services.
- **Open Stream:** This stream is open to any other type of social enterprise that meets the eligibility criteria and program objectives.

To help understand if you are a social enterprise, the Victorian Government provides some resources [here](#). More information on circular economy can be found [here](#).

Funding available

- There is up to \$200,000 available in total for the program, with \$100,000 available in each of the above streams.
- Up to \$20,000 is available per application.

For this round of the program, the City of Melbourne is open to applications from individual business and also from groups of businesses proposing a collaborative project.

For collaborative projects a lead applicant must apply for the grant. Partnering businesses can provide letters of support to attach to the application form.

Key dates

- Applications open 12pm Monday 29 January 2024
- Applications close 3pm Thursday 29 February 2024
- Assessment and approval March and April
- Successful applicants publicly announced by June

Assessment criteria

Applicants will individually be assessed against the following three criteria.

1. Social purpose, vision and solutions (30 per cent)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly demonstrate the social purpose and vision of the business including ethical and sustainable business practices.• Describe how the business incorporates social, environmental, economic and other values in decision making processes.• Clearly define the problem the business is solving and the target market/customers.• <i>Circular economy stream applicants are required to clearly define how the business contributes to creating initiatives that promote circular economy development within the City of Melbourne. See FAQs document on the website.</i>
2. Business viability and demonstrated experience (20 per cent)

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- Demonstrate that the business has a viable and operating business model that is fit for market.
- Outline the relevant experience of the core team members and ability to deliver on the social enterprise mission and goals.
- Demonstrate that the team has a track record of successful project delivery and summarise evidence of previous successes.
- Mention specifically if your event includes collaborations with other businesses or organisations in the City of Melbourne.

3. Impact and benefits to the City of Melbourne (50 per cent)

- Define how the applicant is:
 - located in City of Melbourne and/or
 - looking to establish itself in City of Melbourne and/or
 - provides a workforce in City of Melbourne
- Describe how the requested funding will result in economic, social and/or environmental benefits to City of Melbourne places and people.
- A guide to how City of Melbourne aligns to your project's impacts and benefits can be sourced from [Council Plan 2021-25](#), the [Economic Development Strategy 2031](#), and [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- Further detail on how City of Melbourne aligns to your project can be sourced from the [Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030](#)
- *Circular economy stream applicants are required to provide a detailed diagram of the lifecycle of the product or service being provided and its place within a circular resource recovery system. More information can be found in FAQ document on the [website](#).*

Note: Following assessment of each individual application, the City of Melbourne will consider the diversity of applications (as a set) before making a recommendation to Council for their approval.

More information about the assessment process is found below.

Eligibility checklist

Once applications have been received, the City of Melbourne will assess against the following eligibility checklist. Applicants must:

- have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN)
- meet the program guidelines definition of a social enterprise
- have documented evidence of an appropriate legal structure, such as a sole trader, an Australian registered company, business cooperative or partnership
- have no outstanding acquittals or debts to the City of Melbourne
- demonstrate financial viability as evidenced by a basic business plan, including projected financial statements
- demonstrate sustainable business practices in line with the Australian ethical charter
- be able to commence the funded activity upon receiving the grant
- complete and acquit the funded activity within 12 months, no later than two weeks after the agreed completion date of the proposal as stated in the funding agreement.

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Ineligibility

The program will not support applicants that:

- have already received funding from City of Melbourne for the same activity being requested in this program
- are political organisations or that have a political purpose
- are government departments of agencies, foundations or grant making bodies
- have a primary focus on fundraising
- are current City of Melbourne employees, immediate families and contractors
- denigrate, exclude or offend parts of the community.

How to apply

Applications for grants are completed online using [SmartyGrants](#). Applications must address the eligibility, assessment criteria, answer all questions and be submitted prior to the program closing date.

Application process

1. Read the guidelines
2. Register online at [SmartyGrants](#) and preview a copy of the application
3. Plan, research and gather information required for your application
4. Complete and submit your application before the closing date and time (Note: Late applications will not be accepted)
 - a. Complete all questions
 - b. Allow ample time to upload supporting documents
5. Submit only one application for this funding round
6. On submission, you will receive an electronic reply acknowledging receipt from [SmartyGrants](#). Once you have submitted your application, no further editing or supporting materials will be accepted.

Where the application is for a collaborative project, a lead applicant will submit the application form, then note collaborating businesses within an application field by clicking the collaboration button and adding collaborators in [SmartyGrants](#). Attach brief letters of support from appropriate business representatives incorporating their contact details.

Support material

Applicants **must** attach with their application the following documents as evidence:

- proof that the business is either located in and/or looking to establish itself in and/or provides a workforce in City of Melbourne (this can include evidence of site for proposed activity, evidence of business planning outlining the activity and proposed space, evidence of partnerships with an existing City of Melbourne site)
- certificates of currency
- certificate of incorporation or registration of business name
- skills and qualifications of key business personnel
- latest financial statement (including profit and loss statements, cash flow and balance sheets)

Applicants **can** also include the following documents as evidence:

- letters of support from project partners and industry groups/associations
- project plans, including Gantt charts
- marketing strategy, photos of current activities
- a map showing the location(s) of activities or material flows
- an organisational chart
- examples of marketing, public relations (PR) or other evidence to support your application.

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In selecting the optional material to attach, applicants are asked to limit the number and length of the attachments to relevant supporting evidence.

What we won't fund

- Operational expenses that are considered as general business costs such as rent, utilities, wages and personal expenses not associated with this project.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility or assessment criteria
- Expenditure items incurred prior to approval of application funding
- Anything else outside of the agreed budget
- Any activity that denigrates, excludes or offends parts of the community, is contrary to anti vilification laws, or freedom of speech, or not aligned with Council policies, priorities or values
- Activities that pollute land, air or water, or destroy or waste non-renewable resources.

Applicants are expected to have the majority of their business funding from other sources, in addition to the funding sought through this program.

Assessment process

- City of Melbourne check applications to establish that all eligibility criteria are met. This is referred to as due diligence.
- Applications are individually assessed in relation to the criteria through a competitive process. This is undertaken with an assessment panel including internal staff from City of Melbourne.
- City of Melbourne senior management consider the diversity of applications as a set.
- Recommended applications are provided to Council for their decision.
- Applications are confidential. The contents will not be disclosed to any person outside the application and assessment process. A short summary of the project concept will be used in reports to Council.
- The City of Melbourne does not seek to correct errors in applications or supporting material. Applications are assessed as they have been submitted.
- The City of Melbourne reserves the right to request further information in considering any application, as well as the right to reject any application that is ineligible or does not meet the grant category criteria.
- Assessment panels may recommend part funding.
- All funding decisions of Council are final. Unsuccessful applicants are eligible to re-apply in future funding rounds in accordance with the grant guidelines.
- The applicant names, brief project description and funding amounts of successful applicants will be made publicly available, including publication on the City of Melbourne [website](#) and in media releases.

Lobbying

Canvassing or lobbying of Councillors, employees of the City of Melbourne or assessment panel members in relation to any grant application is prohibited. No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant who has canvassed or lobbied City of Melbourne staff, Councillors or assessors in relation to their application.

Outcome notification

All applicants will be notified of their application outcome in writing. Unsuccessful applicants will not be reimbursed for the time spent on the application process.

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Payment and funding agreement

Successful applicants must provide details of their nominated bank account in order for City of Melbourne to pay the grant amount directly into the account. Successful applicants must also submit an invoice to Melbourne City Council for the approved funding amount plus GST. Payment terms are 30 days from the date of invoice, subject to the receipt of a signed funding agreement, tax invoice and other requested information.

The funding agreement outlines the application outcome, the items to be funded and any conditions associated with the use of the funds. Payments are not processed before the timeframes stipulated in the funding agreement. The City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the grant recipient is unable to meet project costs.

For successful applicants grant payments will be paid:

- 90 per cent once signed funding agreement is returned to City of Melbourne
- 10 per cent on completion of project as set out in an agreement.

Reporting and acquittal

Recipients must report on the outcome of their proposal through an online acquittal through SmartyGrants. Reports provide valuable feedback to the City of Melbourne on the success of the proposal, in relation to the agreed outcomes, performance measures and any lessons learnt.

Reports are confidential, however applicants are advised a short summary of the report will be shared in reports to Council. Final reports must be submitted within 12 months, no later than two weeks after the agreed completion date of the proposal as stated in the funding agreement.

Before submitting a grant application, it is important to understand the types of activities and initiatives we fund and those we do not as outlined in these guidelines. You are expected to provide invoices to the value of your grant total unless otherwise negotiated and approved in writing via your Business Funding Officer.

Evaluation

As part of this program, Council request quarterly updates from successful participants on outcomes and learnings.

Terms and conditions

Applicants must comply with the following terms and conditions:

- payment and funding agreement (see above)
- reporting and acquittal (see above)
- return a signed agreement detailing the funding obligations
- payment terms are 30 days from the date of invoice, subject to the receipt of a signed funding agreement, tax invoice and other requested information. This may include revised budgets, project details, venue confirmation and auspice details where relevant.

Support for applicants

If you would like more information about the program please contact the business funding team through businessfunding@melbourne.vic.gov.au or call 03 9658 96568. For circular economy specific enquiries contact circulareconomy@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

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Technical assistance

Refer to the [SmartyGrants help guide](#) for technical assistance related to submitting your application. The [SmartyGrants](#) support desk is open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or by email service@smartygrants.com.au.

Interpreter and translation services

If you need an interpreter when calling the City of Melbourne, please call the following relevant translation services:

If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, please call us via the [National Relay Service](#):

Teletypewriter (TTY) users phone 133 677 then ask for 03 9658 8710 or 03 9658 8874

Speak & Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9658 8710 or 03 9658 8874

Our multilingual information telephone service offers assistance to people from a non-English speaking background. Visit [Translation services](#).