Communities Innovation Fund:

Responses to Social Isolation and Loneliness for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Small grants guidelines

FY2023-24

Contents

1. Overview of the grant

The Communities Innovation Fund is being delivered as a competitive grants program to support flexible, person-centred, and place-based responses to social isolation and loneliness in Queensland communities. In 2023-24, these grants will support initiatives that respond to the unique experiences of social isolation and loneliness amongst culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities.

The department acknowledges the cultural diversity of First Nations peoples. However, for the purposes of this grant round, the term 'culturally diverse' refers to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, people seeking asylum, and Australian South Sea Islander peoples.

In 2023-24, only small grants are available. These guidelines are for small grant applications and describe the requirements for proposals for small initiatives to the value of up to **$50,000.**

The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts (DTATSIPCA) is under no obligation to provide any ongoing funding or any future funding.

The Communities Innovation Fund is a highly competitive grant. Eligible organisations are encouraged to assess whether their initiative is appropriate for this grant and focus their efforts on the quality of their proposals and responding directly to assessment criteria. Even highly competitive applications may not be selected for funding.

2. Purpose of the grant

Eligible organisations are invited to submit proposals outlining their ideas for projects, programs, services or supports which align with the primary objective of the fund:

- to identify innovative approaches to addressing social isolation and loneliness in culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Queensland, that are at heightened risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

Initiatives could also contribute to the fund's secondary objectives, which include:

- to increase community understanding of social isolation and loneliness including the causes, impacts, barriers and enablers to overcoming social isolation and loneliness
- to establish and maintain social and community connections and promote inclusion
- to support capacity building within organisations to respond to those experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for this grant, your organisation must be incorporated and can be:

- a not-for-profit organisation
- a company limited by guarantee
- a cooperative
- an incorporated association
- A university or research organisation
- A Local Government

- an unincorporated community group or user-led group that is auspiced by an eligible entity
- a profit-for-purpose company.

If you are applying as a consortium or partnership, a lead agency must be identified and the contract will be entered into with that organisation. You will be required to provide evidence of your partnership through a letter of support from participating partners.

Your organisation must also maintain public liability insurance for a sum of not less than $10 million.

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- a state, territory or federal government agency or body
- an unincorporated organisation that is not auspiced by an eligible entity
- an individual
- an organisation that is not based in Queensland
- fixed trusts
- a political party.

To be eligible your initiative must:

- be available to people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, social isolation and loneliness within the identified cohort of culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities
- be culturally responsive and inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- be delivered **in Queensland**
- not duplicate any currently funded services or initiatives in your proposed location, including services or initiatives funded through Queensland State Government agencies.

If your application does not meet the eligibility criteria, it will not be assessed.

4. Assessment

If your application meets the eligibility criteria, it will be initially assessed on the below key criteria:

> The proponent demonstrates **strong community connections, partnerships or alliances** with (as relevant) local community groups, networks, organisations and service providers.

You will be required to provide a letter of support from any organisations listed as partners or alliances in the initiative.

If your application meets the initial assessment criteria, it will be assessed in full against the following four weighted criteria:

1. The proposal demonstrates **excellence in innovation**, in responding to social isolation and loneliness **(30%)**
2. The proposal clearly demonstrates **benefits to individuals at risk of, or experiencing, social isolation and/or loneliness** in preventing, responding to and

  mitigating the social, wellbeing, health and mental health impacts of social isolation and loneliness **(30%)**

   a. Including expected participants and the significance of the benefit.

3. The proposal demonstrates **sound planning**, with reference to financial feasibility, value for money and the capacity to deliver in the selected community **(20%)**
4. The proposal includes an **evaluation component (20%)**.

Your application will be considered on its merits, based on how well it addresses the assessment criteria; and how it compares to other applications. You may be asked to submit further details or provide clarification during the assessment process.

In assessing your application, DTATSIPCA may also take into consideration local need, existing service provision and the geographical spread of applications to avoid duplication and/or concentration of service delivery in a single area.

Recommendations for funding are forwarded to the Director-General of DTATSIPCA for consideration and approval.

Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the assessment process.

Your proposal should describe how you plan to measure success in achieving outcomes, including how you will measure improved physical and mental health outcomes before, during and after your initiative. If you're not sure how to do this, the Ending Loneliness Together *Guide to Measuring Loneliness* and *Guide to Evaluating Loneliness* are a good place to start.

5. Target group/service users:

The Communities Innovation Fund aims to target groups that are most at risk of social isolation and loneliness. In 2023-24 Communities Innovation Fund grants will be targeted towards initiatives that respond to social isolation and loneliness amongst **culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities.**

6. Definitions

Social isolation and loneliness

There are no agreed, universal definitions of social isolation and loneliness. For this grants program, we are adopting flexible definitions for social isolation and loneliness.

Social isolation can be understood as having little or no subjectively meaningful and beneficial interaction with others and a low level of involvement in community life.

Loneliness is a subjective experience that results from a discrepancy between what we want in social relationships and the actual experience of those relationships.

Innovation

Social isolation and loneliness are 'wicked' social problems and there is no 'one size fits all' approach to addressing them. We are therefore seeking proposals that present new, innovative approaches to combating social isolation and loneliness. Innovation is a key selection criterion of this fund. We are only willing to consider proposals for initiatives, programs or events that fulfil **at least one** of the below criteria:

- Completely new and untried

- new to the target cohort
- new to the place or community where the proposal is to be implemented.

7. Examples

Short-term projects may include, but are not limited to:

- events that bring together people experiencing social isolation and loneliness and service providers to co-design, discuss and develop ongoing service models and approaches
- courses that bring people experiencing social isolation and loneliness together in a group environment for learning and social contact
- innovative professional development activities for frontline sector workers who support people experiencing social isolation and loneliness. The professional development activities must be directly relevant to combating social isolation and loneliness
- development of innovative connection methods that will encourage communication and reduce social isolation
- projects that create social connections by supporting the development of friendships, peer support networks and community groups
- targeted responses that respond to social isolation and loneliness that are delivered from community infrastructure including neighbourhood and community centres, libraries and community halls.
- **A list of [successful recipients of the 2022-23 Communities Innovation Fund grant round](#)**.

8. Funding term

We will enter into a service agreement with successful applicants for the financial year in which they are successful for, as prescribed by the duration of the grant.

9. Timeframe

Funding is available from June 2024 and must commence within three months of the funding date. Your program must be fully completed within twelve months of the funding date.

A final evaluation report must be provided by 30 September 2025 (three months after completion of the 2024-25 financial year).

A new funding round will be opened for activities during the 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years, with activities to be completed within the financial year, and final reports due by 30 September of the following financial year.

10. What the grant can be used for

Grants must be used for programs, projects, services or supports that address social isolation and loneliness and are inclusive of at least one group from the target service users outlined above.

Proposals must embed cultural considerations into design, delivery and evaluation.

Eligible costs include wages, marketing costs, training, educational materials, project consumables, equipment or venue hire, office equipment or technology.

11. What the grant cannot be used for

Grants cannot be used for:

- Capital expenditure and equipment including renovations, building and maintenance
- Purchase of capital assets such as land
- Reimbursement of costs already incurred
- Unrelated professional development
- Personal gain
- Projects outside of Queensland
- Campaigns
- Purchasing vehicles
- Project management or consultancy fees
- Expenditure to develop submissions for the grants program
- Payment for individuals to participate in grants program initiatives (e.g. payment to participate in a survey)
- Payments for individual hardship support.

12. Making an application

You may only submit one proposal. Your application must address the selection criteria, and include the following information:

1. A brief description of the project you are seeking funding for, including:
   a. Where the project will be delivered.
   b. For what cohort(s) the project is being delivered.
2. What existing connections, partnerships, networks or alliances you already have within the community that you will be utilising for this project.
3. Why the project is innovative, with explicit reference to one of the definitions of innovation in this guide.
4. How your project should address social isolation and loneliness, and evidence of the need for this project for your cohort(s).
5. A brief project plan which demonstrates your capacity to commence and deliver within the grant timeframe (including resources, capability and required relationships) **(maximum 5 pages)**, including:
   a. Timeframes and key milestones for establishment and delivery.
   b. Your approach to governance, stakeholder engagement and managing risk.
   c. Your transition plan to promote ongoing impacts from the initiative after the funding has ceased.
   d. How you will monitor and evaluate the impact of the project for individuals and the community.

Please note that the department cannot fund you if you are not eligible or do not meet the criteria.

13. Other requirements

All services must:

- operate with low or no entry requirements to ensure services are accessible to all service users
- ensure processes are in place to refer service users to alternative services where appropriate
- monitor and supervise volunteers
- build strong relationships and engagement strategies with culturally and linguistically diverse organisations
- ensure activities are responsive to the needs of service users and are relevant to reducing vulnerability and disadvantage.

14. Successful applications

Applicants successful in obtaining funding will be required to:

- enter into a service agreement. (Please view the department's agreement templates at https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/about-us/funding-sponsorship/streamlined-agreements)
- comply with the requirements and conditions within the Service Agreement, including reporting
- comply with the *Community Services Act 2007*.

We must execute a service agreement with you before we can make any payment.

Grant recipients will be bound to the grant agreement and contractual terms and conditions. Additional individual conditions may be specified at the time of approval. If necessary, a revised project plan may be negotiated.

15. How to apply

Applications will be managed online through SmartyGrants. Before applying, you must read and understand these Grant Program Guidelines.

To apply you must:

- Complete the online application form via SmartyGrants platform
- Provide all the information requested
- Address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- Include all necessary attachments
- Submit your application by the closing date and time.

Late applications will not be accepted.

If you have any technical difficulties with logging in, progressing or submitting your application, please contact SmartyGrants on 03 9320 6888 or by email service@smartygrants.com.au

16. Acknowledgement of funding

If your application is successful, you must ensure the Queensland Government is acknowledged in your annual report and any promotional materials, including on your website. Any acknowledgement in promotional material must use an acknowledgement logo which you must obtain from us.

17. Background of the Communities Innovation Fund

Social isolation and loneliness have serious impacts on people's mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as broader effects on communities, service systems and the economy. For many Queenslanders, the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health measures needed to contain its spread compounded pre-existing social isolation and loneliness.

In May 2021, in recognition of the widespread and significant impacts of social isolation and loneliness, the Queensland Parliament agreed to a motion that the Community Support and Services Committee (CSSC) commenced an Inquiry (the Inquiry) into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland. The Inquiry was wide reaching, charged with examining the nature, extent, causes, drivers, protective factors and benefits of addressing social isolation and loneliness.

Through 196 written submissions, and public hearings across the length and breadth of the state, the committee heard from experts, community leaders, service providers, government departments and people with lived experience, that social isolation and loneliness are critical issues in Queensland. The Queensland Government accepted all 14 recommendations of the Inquiry in full or in principle.

As part of the government's response to the Committee's recommendations, the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts (DTATSIPCA) established the Communities Innovation Fund. This fund was established to support trials of innovative new responses to social isolation and loneliness within Queensland communities.

18. Feedback and complaints

Due to the large volume of applications we expect to receive, we are unable to provide individual feedback on applications. Applicants may request generalised feedback on the grant application up to four weeks after they are notified of the outcome. Requests should be directed to grantqueries@chde.qld.gov.au.

We are committed to effective complaints management and will deal with all complaints against our actions, decisions or officers' conduct in a responsive, confidential and fair manner. Please refer to the Customer service compliments and complaints section of our website https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/contact-us/compliments-complaints.

19. Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld)*.* This includes letting you know:

- What personal information we collect
- Why we collect your personal information

- Who we give your personal information to.

In submitting a grant application, you agree to the Queensland Government collecting your personal information, including your name, contact details and role in your organisation, in order to assess your application and for the purpose of grants administration. If you do not provide this information, we cannot assess your grant application.

The Queensland Government may also use and disclose information collected about you under this grant in any other Queensland Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts website and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share information you give us in your application, including personal information, with other State entities, the responsible Minister and their staff, and with Members of Parliament, for other purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, or as otherwise authorised or required by law.

Further information and assistance

Questions about the grant program can be directed to: **grantqueries@chde.qld.gov.au**

Questions about SmartyGrants can be directed to: **Service@smartygrants.com.au**

Please refer to the *SmartyGrants—HelpGuideforApplicants* https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/ for assistance on completing your application form