

2024-25 Community Food Relief Program – Coordination Grants

Guidelines

To receive this document in another format, email the Food Relief Policy team at foodrelief.team@dffh.vic.gov.au

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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# Message from the Minister for Carers and Volunteers Ros Spence

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting Victorians who are facing food insecurity to access healthy and culturally appropriate food.

Since 2020, we’ve invested more than $56 million into food relief and security initiatives, including continuing to support the operations of the state’s six regional foodshare hubs and the Regional Food Security Alliance.

We know many families and communities are doing it tough with the current cost-of-living pressures. That’s why we’re delivering this new **$4.5 million Community Food Relief Program**, to provide food relief where it’s needed, across metropolitan Melbourne, regional and rural Victoria.

The Coordination Grants stream of this program will strengthen partnerships and collaboration between regional and state-wide food relief providers.

Sourcing and distributing healthy food to thousands of Victorians, these state-wide and regional food relief providers play an important role in supporting charity partners and local community and volunteer-led organisations to ensure food relief reaches those who need it most.

These new grants will help to foster and strengthen those networks and encourage innovation in Victoria’s food relief sector, so that more food can be provided to individuals, families and communities.

I look forward to seeing the way these fantastic partnership initiatives funded through the Community Food Relief Program help to support families and communities across Victoria.

# About the program

## Overview

The Victorian Government’s **Community Food Relief Program – Coordination Grants** supports partnership projects focused on strengthening Victoria’s food security ecosystem.

The program aims to improve partnerships and coordination to enhance the supply and distribution of food relief across Victoria, with a particular focus on regional areas.

Applications are sought from established regional and state-wide food relief providers who provide centralised food rescue, warehousing and logistics to support a network of charity partners.

## Context

Food relief services are experiencing unprecedented demand, which continues to rise with increased cost-of-living pressures experienced by many Victorians. According to the 2023 Taking the Pulse of the Nation survey rates of reported food insecurity among adults exceed 20 per cent in Victoria.

The Community Food Relief Program is designed to help respond to this need by supporting local, regional and statewide approaches. Two grant streams will both strengthen local food relief activities in neighbourhood houses, community and volunteer-led organisations across Victoria, and enhance coordination across the sector to improve food relief supply and distribution approaches.

The program recognises that some areas, including regional and rural Victoria, are experiencing greater food insecurity, alongside pockets of significant disadvantage in metropolitan Melbourne.

Food insecurity also particularly affects those Victorians who already face disadvantage and vulnerability in the community, including people on lower incomes, experiencing unemployment and/or underemployment or family violence. Some communities may face additional barriers to accessing appropriate food relief when they need it, including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities, young people, older people, single parent households, migrants, refugees or people seeking asylum, people with chronic illness, disability or mental health conditions.

## Funding objectives

The objectives of the **Coordination Grants** program are to:

* Support more Victorian communities currently facing food insecurity to access healthy and culturally appropriate food relief.
* Develop or enhance sustainable models for distribution of food relief across Victoria, filling critical gaps and/or improving the quality and variety of food supply.
* Strengthen collaboration and enduring partnerships across the food relief sector to enhance community food access, reduce duplication and improve system effectiveness and efficiency.

Grant applications must respond to **at least one** of the program objectives.

Organisations will be required to identify the relevant objective/s that their proposal responds to and provide a rationale for how their proposed activities will meet the objective, based on community need.

Applications that do not specifically respond to at least one program objective **will not** be considered.

## Available funding

The minimum grant amount that can be applied for is $100,000 and the maximum is $300,000.

Grant funding is once-off.

# Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the **Community Food Relief Program – Coordination Grants**, your application must:

* Respond to at least one of the [program objectives](#_Funding_objectives).
* Be submitted by an [eligible organisation](#_Eligible_organisations) in a formal partnership with at least one other organisation.
* Seek funding for [eligible activities](#_Eligible_activities).
* Include the [mandatory attachments](#_Mandatory_attachments) in an acceptable format.

## Eligible organisations

Applicant organisations must be an established food relief provider with existing donor relationships, warehousing and logistics capacity and a network of charity partners.

Eligible organisations must have a **current Australian Business Number (ABN)** and be either:

* **a not-for-profit entity** – that is:
	+ registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission; or
	+ registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria (or equivalent body in a neighbouring state) as an incorporated association; or
	+ registered under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) or the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic); or
	+ demonstrated through your organisation’s constitution or governance documents.
* **an Aboriginal entity** incorporated under Commonwealth or Victorian legislation, including Victorian Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), Traditional Owner groups and land trusts.
* **a social enterprise** that is an incorporated entity with a clearly stated purpose or mission related specifically to supporting food relief or food security.

*Definition: social enterprises are led by an economic, social, cultural, or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit; derive a substantial portion of their income from trade; and reinvest the majority of their profit/surplus in the fulfilment of their mission.*

In addition, organisations must have **no overdue reports** from previous or current Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) grant programs.

### Entities that are not eligible include:

* unincorporated associations and groups
* private (for profit) companies
* sole traders and individuals
* charitable trusts
* local government entities.

Auspice arrangements are not appropriate for grants provided through this program.

## Eligible activities

Activities funded through the **Community Food Relief Program – Coordination Grants** must be for the benefit of Victorians and may include:

* Strategic planning, partnership development and similar activities to enhance the capacity or sustainability of current or future food distribution programs.
* Transport, logistics and coordination costs, including reimbursement of volunteer expenses (where directly related to the project and proportionate to the overall cost).
* Program supplies, such as nutritious or culturally appropriate foods, packaging materials and storage.

Where appropriate, up to 10 per cent of funding sought may be allocated to project management to directly support delivery of the project.

### Funds cannot be used for

* Retrospective costs for activities that were delivered or commenced prior to funding approval.
* Activities and programs extending beyond December 2025.
* Core operational expenses such as rent, insurance, current wages, overheads and consumables.
* Staff catering (food or alcohol), gifts and other benefits.
* Activities that are already funded through other Local, State, or Commonwealth Government programs.

## Mandatory attachments

Eligible applications must include:

* Project plan in template provided.
* Evidence of partnership such as letters of intent or Memoranda of Understanding
* Insurance certificates of currency.

# How to apply

Applications must be submitted via the [DFFH Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/) https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au by 4:00pm Tuesday 27 August 2024.

Key information for completing a grant application

| Key dates | Tasks |
| --- | --- |
| Applications open30 July 2024 | * Make sure your organisation and proposed activity meets the [eligibility criteria](#_Eligibility_criteria_2).
	+ Read the program guidelines (this document).
	+ Download templates and review the factsheet at: [Community Food Relief Program – Coordination grants](https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-coordination-grants) https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-coordination-grants
 |
| Prepare and submit application | * Register or log in to the [DFFH Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/) https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au
* Complete the online application form via the DFFH Grants Gateway.
	+ Draft forms will be saved and can be returned to through-out the application period.
	+ Answer all questions and attach mandatory documents.
	+ Submit the application by the due date and time.
 |
| Applications close4:00pm 27 August 2024 | * Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.
 |

# Assessment process

All applications to the **Community Food Relief Program – Coordination Grants** will undergo the following review and assessment process:

| Process | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Eligibility check | * All applications will be reviewed against the [eligibility criteria](#_Eligibility_criteria_2).
	+ The eligibility check determines whether the application will proceed to further assessment.
 |
| Ratings against selection criteria | * Eligible applications will be assessed against the [selection criteria](#_Selection_criteria) based on responses provided in the application and content of mandatory attachments.
	+ Applications should outline the relevant capability and experience of each partner.
* We may ask for further information or clarification during the assessment period.
 |
| Funding recommendations | * The final selection of highly rated applications will consider:
	+ Demonstrated effectiveness, efficiency and/or innovation.
	+ Geographic spread and targeting to communities in need.
 |
| Application outcome | * The Minister for Carers and Volunteers makes the final decision based on recommendations from the department’s assessment.
* All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email.
 |

The department may withdraw from the application process described in this document for any reason, prior to signing any agreement with any organisation.

Organisations are reminded that they should not attempt to exert influence on the outcome of the assessment process by lobbying, directly or indirectly, departmental staff or members of parliament.

## Application outcomes

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email once the assessment process is complete. If your application is successful, the department will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant and next steps for establishing a grant agreement.

Unsuccessful applicants may ask for feedback within one month of being advised of the outcome. The department will aim to provide written feedback within 20 business days following any request.

All decisions in relation to the program are final and no discussion or review will be entered into. This includes any aspect of the application, eligibility and assessment process and any decision in relation to offering a grant.

## Selection criteria

All aspects of your application will inform the assessment, this includes the project details, responses to the selection criteria and content of mandatory attachments. Necessary additional documents will be noted but may not be read in their entirety.

Eligible applications will be assessed against the criteria listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria | Weighting |
| Identified community need* Application clearly describes the community need and key issues that the project is seeking to address, including outlining the target location/s and cohorts, and any identified gaps in supply
* Application demonstrates how the proposed project is an appropriate response to the community need, including cultural appropriateness
 | 25% |
| Demonstrated effectiveness and efficiency* Application provides a credible and efficient plan for delivery of the proposed project, based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money
* Project plan includes realistic objectives and measures of success; sound methods for data capture and reporting; and strategies to identify and share good practice across the food relief sector
* The organisation/s has a robust approach to monitoring and evaluation and demonstrated ability for continuous improvement
 | 25% |
| Demonstrated experience and capability* Application relates to an established food relief distribution service and leverages existing capability to support a network of community food programs
* Organisation/s has demonstrated successful delivery of outcomes though food relief programs and/or other relevant projects
 | 20% |
| Organisational capacity and readiness* Project plan provides a detailed and specific plan for delivery, including realistic timeframe for deliverables, consideration of risks and mitigation strategies and clear roles and responsibilities
* The organisation/s has robust governance, program management and risk management processes to oversee delivery and respond to challenges
* The organisation/s has existing community partnerships and engagement channels to support delivery of the project
 | 20% |
| Sustainability* Proposal demonstrates how the project will strengthen sustainability for the food relief sector and/or provide longer-term benefits for the community. Projects must also outline close-out activities for the end of the funding period.
* The organisation demonstrates strategies to limit any negative environmental impact of their operations and the proposed project
 | 10% |

# Conditions of funding

Organisations must be able to commence project establishment immediately following written confirmation from the department.

The project activities must be delivered by 31 December 2025.

If successful, project details including project name, description and grant amount will be published online at [Community Food Relief Program – Coordination grants](https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-coordination-grants) https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-coordination-grants.

## Data collection requirements

Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence of project outcomes in their final reports, as per the objectives and key measures outlined in their project plan and subsequently agreed with the department.

## Funding agreements

If successful, you must enter a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with the department within two weeks of notification. If a funding offer is not accepted during this period, it may be withdrawn.

The VCFA outlines:

* the grant’s terms and conditions, including use of funds
* key deliverables and due dates
* reporting requirements.

### Payment of grant funds and reporting requirements

Funded organisations will:

* be paid on completion of agreed project milestones and deliverables outlined in the VCFA
* complete quarterly progress reports
* submit a project acquittal, including a financial acquittal and evaluation report at the completion of the activities.

Milestone payments are made via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) once deliverables are met, in line with the VCFA.

### Goods and Services Tax (GST)

* GST will be paid if the grant is funding a good or service and if the recipient organisation is registered for GST.
* GST will not be paid if the recipient organisation is not registered for GST, a government entity (e.g., school, local council) or if the grant is *not* funding a good and/or service.

## Funding acknowledgement

Successful applicants must acknowledge funding from the Victorian Government. Guidelines will be provided to all successful grant recipients and form part of the VCFA.

Activities to acknowledge Victorian Government support include logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material, inviting the minister to open any funded activities.

## Legal responsibilities

You must ensure the project activity follows relevant legislation, regulations, by-laws and codes. It must also meet the requirements of any Commonwealth, state, territory or local authority. It is your responsibility to be aware of laws and protocols that regulate the way you conduct your work.

## Insurance requirements

You must have public liability insurance and any other insurance that is relevant to the activities of your project. The department will ask for proof of insurance that covers the project period.

# Further information

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions and How to Apply factsheet, available at [Community Food Relief Program – Coordination grants](https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-coordination-grants) https://www.vic.gov.au/community-food-relief-program-coordination-grants

You may contact the Food Relief Policy team in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing via foodrelief.team@dffh.vic.gov.au if you have any other questions.