

2025–26 Men’s Shed Funding Program

Program guidelines

**We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right and recognise the hard work of many generations of Aboriginal people.**

**We are committed to safe and inclusive workplaces, policies, and services for people from LGBTIQA+ communities and their families.**

To receive this information in another format, phone the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing on (03) 8633 4765 or via email at [mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au).

**Help for people with hearing or speech communication difficulties**

Contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS). For more information on the NRS visit [National Relay Service](https://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs) https://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs or call the NRS Helpdesk on 1800 555 660.

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In these guidelines, ‘we’ refers to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. ‘First Nations’ and ‘Aboriginal’ refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Available at the [Men’s Shed Program webpage](file:///C:/Users/janetwestwood/Documents/Tight%20Lines%20Editing%20/DFFH%20grant%20guidelines%20editing%202023/Men%27s%20Shed%20Funding%20Program/Men’s%20Shed%20Program%20webpage) https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program

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# Message from the Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Men’s sheds are great places for building connections while building community assets. At the shed men can get together, work on common projects and put their considerable skills to good use.

The Victorian Government proudly supports men’s sheds because we recognise the important role they play in supporting men’s health and strengthening Victorian communities.

That’s why the Government is providing $860,000 for the 2025–26 Men’s Shed Funding Program.

Grants of up to $100,000 are available to help build new sheds, upgrade or extend existing ones or purchase major equipment to help the shed grow.

There are more than 360 communities across Victoria enjoying the benefits of having a local men’s shed. These grants will support sustainable volunteer programs that create ongoing local value, so more Victorian men can build important social connections and contribute to their communities.

I look forward to announcing the projects we’ll be supporting through the 2025–26 Men’s Shed Funding Program.

**The Hon. Ros Spence MP**

Minister for Carers and Volunteers

Contents

[Message from the Minister for Carers and Volunteers 3](#_Toc197521397)

[About the program 5](#_Toc197521398)

[What is a men’s shed? 5](#_Toc197521399)

[Men’s sheds working in partnership with local communities 5](#_Toc197521400)

[Funding purpose and objectives 5](#_Toc197521401)

[Purpose 5](#_Toc197521402)

[Objectives 6](#_Toc197521403)

[Eligibility criteria 6](#_Toc197521404)

[Who is eligible to apply for a grant? 6](#_Toc197521405)

[Auspicing 7](#_Toc197521406)

[How to check your organisation type 7](#_Toc197521407)

[Who is *not* eligible for a grant? 7](#_Toc197521408)

[What can the grant money be used for? 7](#_Toc197521409)

[What will *not* be funded? 8](#_Toc197521410)

[Required funding contributions (including in-kind contributions) 8](#_Toc197521411)

[How to apply 9](#_Toc197521412)

[Application checklist 10](#_Toc197521413)

[Assessment process 11](#_Toc197521414)

[Selection criteria 11](#_Toc197521415)

[Application outcomes 12](#_Toc197521416)

[Conditions of funding 12](#_Toc197521417)

[Funding agreements 12](#_Toc197521418)

[Payment of grant funds and reporting requirements 13](#_Toc197521419)

[Goods and services tax 13](#_Toc197521420)

[Funding acknowledgement 13](#_Toc197521421)

[Legal responsibilities 13](#_Toc197521422)

[More information and help 13](#_Toc197521423)

# About the program

Some men find it difficult to maintain strong community connections. This can create a risk of negative health and mental health outcomes due to social isolation. Spending time on activities in a workshop environment, in the company of other community members, can reduce social isolation and improve community connection.

The Men’s Shed Funding Program supports men’s shed groups with funding for capital upgrades and equipment to facilitate these social connections.

## What is a men’s shed?

Men’s sheds provide safe, accessible and friendly places where men can work on meaningful projects at their own pace in the company of other men, usually in a workshop environment.

Men’s sheds are run by community-based non-profit organisations, either as the primary activity of the organisation or as a program of that organisation.

The primary objective of men’s sheds is to **advance the health and wellbeing of men in the organisation’s local community**.

## Men’s sheds working in partnership with local communities

The majority of men's sheds are fully volunteer organisations run by the shedders themselves.

Men’s sheds may partner with other organisations to share resources, build on existing services and deliver projects to help the wider community. Partnerships may include:

* local businesses
* councils
* other government agencies
* community groups
* Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
* local clubs and associations.

In addition to men-only programming, some men’s sheds may also decide to include occasional programming for people of all genders, with the overall aim of improving men’s health, wellbeing, social relationships and community connections.

# Funding purpose and objectives

## Purpose

A total of $860,000 is available in grants of up to $100,000 for:

* constructing new men’s sheds, including converting a building that is not a men’s shed into a men’s shed
* refurbishing, extending or upgrading existing men’s sheds
* purchasing major equipment that will remain in, and be used by, the men’s shed.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Victorian Men’s Shed Funding Program are to:

* strengthen social connections between community members and reduce social isolation for men
* support men to be actively involved in their local communities in a way that suits them
* increase the capacity and variety of activities sheds can provide, to respond to community need
* build and strengthen connections between shed groups and their local community
* increase the number and diversity of men who take part in men’s sheds.

Applications must respond to at least one of these objectives to be eligible.

# Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for funding, your application must be for a shed located in Victoria and:

* meet the definition of a men’s shed as outlined in the program guidelines
* respond to at least one of the program’s objectives
* show a community need for the project in line with the grant amount requested
* be submitted by an eligible organisation (refer to ‘[Who is eligible to apply for a grant?](#_Who_is_eligible)’)
* be seeking funding for an eligible purpose (refer to ‘[What can the grant money be used for?](#_What_can_the)’)
* provide a 20% co-contribution (refer to ‘[Required funding contributions (including in-kind contributions)](#_2:1_Funding_Ratio)’)
* incorporate the principles of universal design, including disability access requirements (for information on universal design, visit the [Victorian Health Building Authority website](https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design) https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design)
* have no outstanding reports from previous Men’s Shed Funding Program grants.

If you are applying for $10,000 or more, the group must have:

* security of tenure in the form of a lease or licence of 5 years or more, or land ownership
* a strategic plan that covers the new or refurbished facility
* detailed design plans (in keeping with the complexity of the project) that include a proven understanding of building permit and planning requirements, including overlays.

## Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible to apply for grant, applicants must:

* have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) – to check your ABN, visit the [Australian Business register](https://abr.business.gov.au/) https://abr.business.gov.au/

**and**

* be an organisation incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, Corporations Act* *2001* (Cth) or equivalent state legislation, **or**
* be a company incorporated under the Corporations Actand registered as a not-for-profit through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, **or**
* if an Aboriginal entity, be incorporated, including Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Traditional Owner groups and land trusts, **or**
* be a local government entity

**and**

* demonstrate appropriate insurance cover (**note:** these grants do not include insurance cover).

If your group is not incorporated, you may be auspiced by an incorporated organisation for the purposes of this application. You must have a memorandum of understanding (MoU) or Auspice Agreement in place (refer to [‘Auspicing’](#_Auspicing_1)).

From 1 January 2025, organisations that are not registered for GST can use grant funds to cover the cost of GST from goods and services purchased with DFFH grant funds. Further information, including what this means for your grant application is available from the [Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/s/login/?ec=301&startURL=%2Fs%2Fassessment%2Fa2COa00000297VnMAI%2Fasmt116541).

## Auspicing

To be eligible for funding, organisations must be incorporated and have an Australian Business Number (ABN).

If a men’s shed group is **not incorporated with an ABN**, it must either become incorporated or arrange for an incorporated organisation to manage the funds. This organisation will be the ‘auspice’ organisation for the grant application. If the application is successful, the grant will be paid to the auspice organisation.

Shed groups with auspice arrangements must have a memorandum of Understanding (MoU), or detailed auspice agreement in place with their auspice organisation. The MoU should specify the nature of the auspice relationship and each organisation’s roles and responsibilities. The MoU should also specify the ownership of all assets and funds. Include a copy of the MoU with your grant application.

For information about how to build a successful auspice arrangement and what makes a strong MoU, visit the [Victorian Men’s Shed Association](http://www.vmsa.org.au/) website http://www.vmsa.org.au.

## How to check your organisation type

* For incorporated associations, cooperatives or organisations incorporated in other ways, visit the [Consumer Affairs website](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au) https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au.
* For a Company Limited by Guarantee, visit [ASIC Connect Online](https://connectonline.asic.gov.au/) https://connectonline.asic.gov.au.
* For registered charities, visit the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission](https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity) https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity.
* For Aboriginal corporations, visit the [Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations](https://www.oric.gov.au) https://www.oric.gov.au.

## Who is *not* eligible for a grant?

The following organisations are not eligible for funding through this program:

* private (for-profit) companies
* sole traders and individuals.

## What can the grant money be used for?

Grant funding can be used to construct a new men’s shed or to upgrade an existing shed. This could mean:

* building a new men’s shed
* transforming an existing community facility into a men’s shed
* refurbishing an existing shed
* purchasing major shed equipment, such as dust extractors, defibrillators, machinery or fittings, to be located at the shed. (Note: grants cover once-off purchases and sheds will be responsible for any ongoing and future costs associated with maintenance, replacement and training.)

No more than 10% of the total grant amount sought can be used for project management and administration costs.

Applications should balance the amount requested against the type and size of community need the project is responding to. For example, a men’s shed group with 10 members is likely to undertake a smaller, lower cost project than a shed with 200 members.

For new men’s shed groups, likely community need can be established through:

* community consultation
* partnerships with other local organisations
* assessment of other community resources available in the local area.

## What will *not* be funded?

The Men’s Shed Funding Program **will not** fund:

* projects that do not respond to at least one of the funding objectives
* costs not directly related to the funding purpose (building, construction or major equipment purchases)
* projects that have already been funded through the Men’s Shed Funding Program
* staged projects that require more than one grant from this program to be completed
* leases or site purchases
* projects that have started or are completed before receiving funding approval
* projects that need ongoing funding from the Victorian Government, including costs to maintain or replace funded equipment
* costs to cover existing debt or budget deficits
* operational costs including shed coordination costs not related to project construction (rent, wages, overheads, consumables, training costs)
* vehicles, computers, loose furniture or hand tools
* projects that cannot be completed within 2 years.

## Required funding contributions (including in-kind contributions)

For every $100 of funding received under the men’s shed grant, an extra $25 must be provided from other sources to contribute to the total project cost. This means 20% of the total project cost must be from other sources.

Other sources may include funding and support from:

* the men’s shed group
* other government organisations
* businesses
* philanthropic organisations
* local government
* community fundraising.

Half of the funding contribution can include realistically costed in-kind expenses such as voluntary labour and donated materials. The other half of the funding contribution must be a financial contribution and must be confirmed in writing as available, as part of the application.

**Example:**

For a grant application of $80,000, the men’s shed needs to provide an extra $20,000 towards the project from other sources. This brings the total project budget to $100,000.

Of the $20,000 contribution, up to $10,000 can be from in-kind contributions (refer below for more information) the rest of the funding contribution must be a financial contribution.

Written evidence of the applicant’s capacity to deliver the cash contribution must be uploaded as part of the application. This can be a letter of success from another grant stream, a screenshot of the men’s shed account balance showing that there are adequate funds available, or a written commitment from a funding partner, specifically stating the amount of their contribution.

### In-kind contributions

As outlined above, in-kind contributions can comprise up to 50% of the extra funding contributions.

If in-kind contributions include voluntary labour, applicants must describe the type of voluntary labour and in-kind support expected to be contributed to the project. Upload as an attachment to the application specific information on:

* what the in-kind volunteers will do
* the number of hours per volunteer and per task
* the calculated rate of the labour.

### Examples of in-kind contributions

In-kind contributions could include:

* if a building contractor gives a discount on their normal rate and shows this on the invoice
* if the shed group contributes volunteer labour towards the project (site clearing, landscaping, etc.) – this can be calculated using the calculator linked to the application form and a dollar figure can be established
* if equipment or materials are donated – provide estimated value(s) in the application.

# How to apply

**Applications open:** 8 May 2025

**Applications close:** 4:00pm, 17 July 2025 (late applications will not be accepted)

**Steps to apply:**

* Read these program guidelines and FAQ document. These are available from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing [men’s sheds webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program) https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program.
* Make sure your organisation meets the eligibility criteria.
* Contact the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (department) **Social Inclusion team** if you have any questions:
  + email: [mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au)
  + phone: (03) 8633 4765.
* Register or login to the [Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/) https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au.
* Complete the online application form.
* Answer all questions.
* Attach relevant documents with the application. Follow the application checklist to ensure your application is complete.
* Submit the application by the due date and time.

## Application checklist

| Can you answer yes for each of the below? | Y/N |
| --- | --- |
| Does my application respond to at least one of the funding objectives and outline the community need for the project, in line with the funding sought? |  |
| Is my organisation eligible? (refer to ‘[Who is eligible to apply for a grant?](#_Who_is_eligible)’) |  |
| Have I provided my organisation’s insurance information? |  |
| Has my organisation completed all past projects and reports from previous government funding? |  |
| Am I proposing to spend the funding on an eligible expense? (refer to ‘[What can the grant money be used for?](#_What_can_the)’) |  |
| Have I **provided evidence** of being able to contribute to the project on a 25% basis? (refer to ‘[Required funding contributions’](#_Required_funding_contributions)) |  |
| Is the in-kind contribution specified in detail? (people, hours, tasks, rate) |  |
| Is the project located in Victoria? |  |
| If construction is involved, is the project based on the principles of [universal design](https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design) https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design? Does the project include all-gender toilets if toilets are in scope? |  |
| Does the grant amount sought include no more than 10% of the total project cost in project management and administration costs? |  |
| Are costs based on evidence (quotes or websites)? Is the evidence provided? |  |
| If applying to cover the cost of a defibrillator or other equipment, have you uploaded the required evidence (such as a bank statement or balance) that the shed can cover any associated ongoing training or maintenance? |  |
| Are all financial contributions confirmed in a letter or email from the contributor? Is that evidence provided? |  |

### If the grant amount sought is $10,000 or more:

| Can you answer yes for each of the below? | Y/N |
| --- | --- |
| Have I provided professional plans that align with the complexity of the project? |  |
| Have I provided evidence of security of tenure for 5 years or more? |  |
| Have I provided the shed group’s strategic plan? |  |

# Assessment process

All applications will undergo the following review and assessment process.

| Stage of process | Details of process |
| --- | --- |
| Eligibility check | * We will review all applications against the eligibility criteria (refer to ‘[Who is eligible to apply for a grant?](#_Who_is_eligible)’).   + The eligibility check determines whether the application will go to further assessment. |
| Ratings against selection criteria | * We will assess eligible applications against the merit selection criteria. This is based on responses provided in the application and any attachments (refer to ‘[Selection criteria](#_Selection_criteria)’). |
| Funding recommendations | * The final selection of highly rated applications will consider:   + geographical spread and targeting to areas/communities in need, including small and geographically isolated communities   + the availability of similar infrastructure (nearby sheds, neighbourhood houses, bowls clubs)   + how the mix of projects achieves the objectives and priorities of the grants program, as outlined in these guidelines   + alignment with the Victorian Government’s commitment to self-determination (we will prioritise First Nations–led organisations for projects designed to support Aboriginal people)   + support for diverse men’s sheds. |
| Application outcome | * The Minister for Carers and Volunteers makes the final decision. This is 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 before signing an agreement with an organisation.

Organisations should not try to influence the assessment process by lobbying departmental staff or members of parliament, either directly or indirectly.

## Selection criteria

We will assess eligible applications against the following criteria.

| Criteria | Weighting |
| --- | --- |
| **Meets one or more of the funding objectives**   * Strengthens social connections between community members and reduces social isolation for men. * Supports men to be actively involved in their local communities in a way that suits them. * Increases the capacity and variety of activities sheds can provide, to respond to community need. * Builds and strengthens connections between shed groups and their local community. * Increases the number and diversity of men who take part in men’s sheds. | 25% |
| **Fosters community partnerships**   * Provides benefits to the broader community such as sharing facilities on some days. * Builds and strengthens partnerships with other community organisations and groups. * Outlines the capability and roles of any partners. * Provides strong evidence of community need, including showing where the project will fill a gap. | 20% |
| **Supports inclusivity**   * The shed is proactively open to all men in the local community in a meaningful way, including men from diverse cultural and social backgrounds * The shed is geographically inclusive, which means the location can be accessed by most men in the target community. * Where appropriate, the shed includes women and gender-diverse people on some days or for specific activities, to help strengthen community relationships. * The shed is accessible for people with disabilities and aligns with the principles of [universal design](https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design) https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design. | 20% |
| **Organisational capacity and readiness**   * Project costs are proportionate to the expected outcomes and benefits and are based on evidence provided in the application. * Details of financial and in-kind contributions are confirmed in writing, and in-kind contributions are costed at the rate outlined in the guidelines. * The application clearly shows how the organisation will deliver the project on time and on budget. | 35% |

## Application outcomes

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

If you **are successful**, the department will let you know about:

* any specific conditions attached to the grant
* the next steps for setting up a grant agreement.

If you **are unsuccessful**, you can ask for feedback on your application. You must request feedback within a month of the outcome. The outcome letter will include details on how to ask for feedback. The department will aim to provide feedback within 20 business days of requests.

# Conditions of funding

## Funding agreements

If successful, your organisation must enter a *Victorian common funding agreement* (VCFA) with the department. If a funding offer is not accepted by a set date, the department may withdraw the grant.

The funding agreement outlines:

* the grant terms and conditions, including how to use the funds
* key deliverables and due dates
* reporting requirements.

**You must complete all funded activities by 31 October 2027.**

**Note:** The funding agreement does not come with insurance for men’s shed activities. Applicants must have insurance cover from other sources.

If successful, the department will publish your details on the [Men’s Shed Program webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program) https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program. This will include the applicant group name and grant amount.

## Payment of grant funds and reporting requirements

The department will pay successful organisations based on completing agreed project milestones and deliverables outlined in the VCFA.

The department makes milestone payments via electronic funds transfer (EFT) once organisations meet their deliverables. This is in line with the VCFA.

## Goods and services tax

* **GST is paid** if the recipient organisation is registered for GST.
* **GST is not paid** if the recipient organisation is not registered for GST.
* **GST is not paid** if the recipient organisation is a government entity (for example, a public school or local council).

## Funding acknowledgement

Successful applicants must acknowledge funding from the Victorian Government. Promotional guidelines are part of the VCFA and include that all activities must acknowledge Victorian Government support through:

* logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material
* placing a Victorian Government–endorsed sign at the site of infrastructure activities.

All successful grant recipients will be sent details of the requirements.

## Legal responsibilities

If you apply for a grant, you must ensure the project 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.

## More information and help

Read these program guidelines and FAQ document. These are available from the department’s [men’s sheds webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program) https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program.

Online information sessions will be delivered during the application period. Details on dates and how to access the sessions are available from the department’s [men’s sheds webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program) https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program.

If you have questions about your eligibility or application or the assessment and funding processes, please contact the Social Inclusion team at the department:

* phone (03) 8633 4765
* email [mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au).