

Youth Opportunities Program Guidelines 2023

www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/youth-opportunities-program



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These Guidelines

The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide potential applicants with an overview of what is required under the Youth Opportunities program, including specific deliverables and expected outcomes, as well as information about the application and assessment process and reporting requirements.

All applicants are advised to read these Guidelines carefully before completing a grant application.

The Youth Opportunities program is administered by the Department of Communities and Justice. For more information visit www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/youth-opportunities-program or email questions to youth@fac.s.nsw.gov.au

Key Dates

Event	Date
Grant applications open	26 June 2023
Grant applications close	07 August 2023
Successful applicants announced	November/December 2023
Contract negotiations commence	December 2023
Projects commence	April 2024
Projects completed by	June 2025

About the Program

The Youth Opportunities program provides one-off, time-limited grants of between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to incorporated not-for-profit community organisations and local government councils in NSW. Funding is for *new* projects that enable marginalised young people to lead and participate in their communities.

The Youth Opportunities program requires applicant organisations to have spoken with young people and involved them in developing the project proposal prior to submitting a grant application.

Organisations must involve young people at every stage of the project – from identifying the need and developing the project proposal through to design, project delivery and final review. For more information on how to involve young people throughout the life of the project. See *Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project*, page 10.

NSW Government Priorities for Young People

The Youth Opportunities program aligns with the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-2024¹, which advocates that children and young people in NSW have hope for the future, love, connection and safety, a good standard of living, environments for joy and fun, as well as respect and acceptance.

The Youth Opportunities program contributes to this by investing in projects that strengthen marginalised young people's connection to their community via the delivery of youth-led and youth-driven community initiatives.

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice Strategic Direction 2020-2024² sets out the Department's vision for active and inclusive communities. The Department provides a range of community support to improve wellbeing, increase community participation, and promote social inclusion and cohesion.

Purpose of the Program

The Youth Opportunities program is informed by evidence which indicates that community connectedness³ promotes a positive sense of wellbeing in young people. Young people can however experience a range of barriers⁴ that hinder their participation in the community. These barriers are particularly experienced by marginalised young people.

The purpose of the Youth Opportunities program is to increase marginalised young people's participation in activities that strengthen their connection and belonging to their communities.

The Youth Opportunities Program supports organisations to empower marginalised young people to design and deliver community projects, enabling them to:

- overcome barriers to participating in the community
- build community based partnerships and networks
- feel a greater sense of belonging within their community
- feel empowered, as their ideas and opinions are respected, considered and acted upon
- gain relevant training to support their participation
- feel more confident within themselves and their abilities, having expanded their knowledge and skills
- seek further opportunities to participate and stay engaged in their community.

This is best achieved by taking a partnership approach, where adults and young people collaborate on all aspects of group decision making, from visioning, planning, delivery and evaluation.

A Partnership Approach to Youth-led Project Design and Implementation

The Youth Opportunities program provides a unique platform for eligible organisations to build authentic and meaningful partnerships with marginalised young people in their community. The more successful these relationships are, the more likely young people are to seek further opportunities to participate and stay engaged in their community beyond the project.

Funded organisations are to engage marginalised young people in a way that evokes a shared sense of responsibility and ownership across all stages of the project including planning, design, delivery and evaluation. See *Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project*, page 10.

Successful partnerships strike the right balance between enabling youth ownership whilst providing the right organisational supports and resources required to participate⁵. To do this effectively, adults must be willing to share their power (and control) with young people and work in partnership on issues that are important to them.

Working in partnership with young people requires organisations (adults) to have the flexibility to step in and out of the process as required, without taking over. It is also important that young people are able to dictate the nature and level of their involvement.

Youth-led project design and implementation is best achieved when a smaller group such as a project steering committee is established. This can help to structure the project and create space

for young people to actively influence decisions, chair and facilitate meetings, lead discussions and provide input on budgeting and expenditure.

In 2016, the Advocate for Children and Young People consulted with 150 young people to develop a 'Participation Charter'⁶ which states, *We respectfully request that adults assist us to make meaningful contributions by:*

- providing guidance, balanced with independence
- providing training and skill development
- providing resources and financial support
- understanding that we have many commitments
- encouraging us to work collaboratively
- fully informing us of our role and our rights in the decision making process.

Applicant organisations must have the capacity to encourage, support and facilitate a youth-led and youth-driven community project.

Best Practice Youth Engagement

Youth engagement is defined as any activity or process where young people are empowered to share their contributions and influence decisions in a respectful and inclusive environment.⁷

A recent review conducted by the Centre for Evidence and Implementation, determined that youth-led project implementation is vital to the successful implementation of projects that engage young people.⁸ The review acknowledged that although this approach is essential for successful project delivery, it is also complex and challenging to adopt in a real-world setting.

To respond to these challenges, the review found that efforts should be focused on creating an environment with which supportive adult relationships and authentic youth voice coexist.⁹

The review determined eight elements that facilitate the successful implementation of projects that engage young people, in a community setting. The core components of the Youth Opportunities program align with these best practice elements. Organisations can use these elements to shape their engagement with young people during the project and beyond.

The following eight elements provide an evidenced informed framework for partnering with young people on youth engagement projects:

1. **Supportive adult relationships:** Adults are available to support and/or mentor young people and assist with project coordination and execution.
2. **Authentic youth voice:** Young people's voices and perspectives are prioritised and all young people are encouraged to participate.
3. **Youth-led project design:** Young people are primarily responsible for designing the mission, goals and actions of the project to reflect a topic that is important to them.
4. **Youth-led project implementation:** Young people are primarily responsible for project delivery and decision-making.
5. **Team building:** Developing a supportive and cohesive team of young people.
6. **Knowledge and skill building:** There is a focus on preparing young people to lead the project by building their confidence, knowledge and skills (e.g. leadership, critical thinking, decision making).
7. **External partnerships:** Young people feel respected as capable of creating change in the community. Their roles are legitimised by engaging with external stakeholders (e.g. local government, community groups or sponsors). These connections are a key indicator for

project success and young people establishing and maintaining ongoing community connection.

8. **Reflection:** As part of project delivery, young people have the opportunity to recognise their achievements and reflect on the success of the project.

Project Objectives and Core Components

Projects funded under the Youth Opportunities program are to involve young people at every stage of the project. It is expected that young people will take an active role in identifying, designing and implementing these projects.

Projects are required to meet the following objectives and core components:

Project Objectives	Core Project Components	Activities
<p>1. Partner with marginalised young people to deliver a youth-led and youth-driven community project</p>	<p>Supportive adult relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with marginalised young people to identify a community project that is important to them • Work with marginalised young people to develop their ideas into a project proposal prior to submitting a grant application • Be available to support and/or mentor marginalised young people as required • Assist with project coordination and execution without taking control • Establish partnerships with marginalised young people based on mutual respect.
	<p>Meaningful engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a project steering committee where young people can actively influence decisions, chair and facilitate meetings, lead discussions and provide input on budgeting and expenditure • Conduct team building exercises to develop a supportive and cohesive team of young people • Make sure young people's ideas, opinions and perspectives are elevated and prioritised so that projects are an authentic reflection of their voices.
<p>2. Improve marginalised young people's access to and inclusion in community activities such as sport and recreation, cultural and other activities</p>	<p>Access to resources and financial support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and address any barriers that may prevent marginalised young people from participating.
<p>3. Provide marginalised young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to participate in their local community and support future social and economic participation</p>	<p>Acquiring and expanding knowledge and skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with marginalised young people to identify skills that align with their interests, and support their participation in the project and in the community. <p>These could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critical thinking and problem solving - planning, organising and time management - leadership - communication and presentation skills - negotiation and conflict resolution

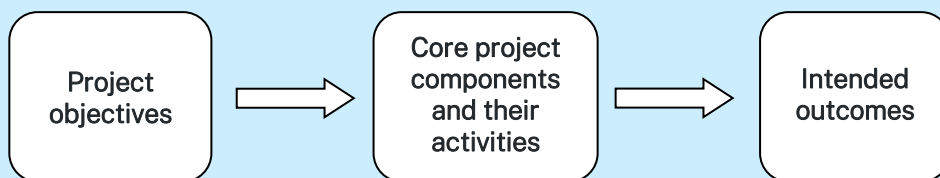
		skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - team building/collaboration - emotional intelligence and self-awareness - project management and/or event management - writing applications, resumes, reports and letters - dealing with the media - formal certificates in Mental Health First Aid, First Aid, Love Bites, RSA, White Card and driving courses.
	External partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support marginalised young people to establish relationships with external stakeholders (local government, other community groups, sponsors, schools), helping them to extend their community based networks.
4. Recognise the contributions marginalised young people make to their local community	Respect, value and recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the project within the community and to the media • Promote marginalised young people's contributions and impact on issues that are important to them and their community • Recognise marginalised young people's involvement via certificates, references or any other form of recognition identified by participants • Provide participants the opportunity to reflect on their achievements and success of the project.

Funded organisations will be required to report on the progress made against each of these objectives and their associated outcomes.

See **Appendix A Reporting and Data Collection** on pages 23-24.

Program Logic

A Youth Opportunities Program Logic has been developed to show the relationship between:



The Youth Opportunities Program Logic is available to download via the Government's [Youth Website](#).

Intended Outcomes

Funded projects are expected to contribute towards the following outcomes:

Project Outcomes (short-term)

- **Increased participation in youth-led and youth-driven community activities** (indicated by the number of youth-led and youth-driven community projects funded per round and the number of marginalised young people directly involved in planning and organising the project).
- **Marginalised young people address and overcome barriers to participation** (indicated by the number of marginalised young people that attend and participate in events/activities as part of the project).
- **Marginalised young people participate in activities that strengthen their connection to their local community** (indicated by the number of youth-led and youth-driven community events/activities held as part of the project).
- **Marginalised young people learn a range of skills that strengthen their ability to participate in their local community and support future social and economic participation** (indicated by the number of marginalised young people that undergo training (formal or informal) as part of the project).
- **Marginalised young people's contributions are recognised and valued** (indicated by the number of recognition activities and events that were held as part of the project).

Program Outcomes (medium-term)

- **Marginalised young people feel a sense of choice and control (self-determination) in their lives** (indicated by the proportion of marginalised young people who report being involved in decision making throughout the project).
- **Marginalised young people feel a sense of connection and belonging to their local communities** (indicated by the proportion of marginalised young people who report feeling a sense of belonging in the place and community where they live).

Contributions towards these outcomes are tracked over the life of the project. Funded organisations are required to provide information against a set of measures and indicators at three intervals:

- commencement (participant survey)
- mid-term (progress report)
- completion (final report and participant survey).

See **Appendix A Reporting and Data Collection** on pages 23-24.

Target Group

Marginalised young people 12 – 24 years of age who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood and from dependence to independence.

Young people who face marginalisation may include but are not limited to young people transitioning from Out of Home Care, young people experiencing homelessness, young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, young people with a disability, young carers, or young people in contact with the justice system.

The program seeks to fund a diverse range of projects from across NSW, particularly in rural and regional areas, and encourages applications from Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse organisations.

Note: projects do not need to cater to all ages. Applicants are encouraged to consider the

practicality of keeping age groups close in range i.e 12-14, 15-17, 18-20, and 21-24. Applicants can stream project groups into older/younger teams/groups if warranted, so that activities are more age appropriate.

Project Themes - Priorities Identified by Young People

Young people have told us through a number of different mechanisms what is important to them, what concerns them, and what they are interested in¹⁰.

The following themes highlight key issues identified by young people:

- Community inclusion and participation
- COVID-19 recovery
- Cultural identity and connection
- Cyber safety and awareness
- Domestic and family violence
- Healthy relationships
- Financial literacy (budgeting, rent, phone, contracts, fines)
- Health and wellbeing
- Homelessness/housing
- Natural disasters (preparedness, resilience and recovery).

Youth Opportunities projects may seek to address one or more of these issues, or they may address other issues raised by marginalised young people, which are important to them and their local communities.

Applicant organisations must engage marginalised young people in the initial ‘Identifying the need’ stage of the project (see *Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project*, page 10) to ensure the project is responsive to their needs.

Acquiring and Expanding Knowledge and Skills

While addressing a youth identified issue, all applicants will be asked to demonstrate how they are supporting marginalised young people to build their skills and experience throughout the project. This can include hands on learning to build skills, or the completion of short courses related to the project’s implementation.

Developing marginalised young people’s knowledge and skills to support their participation in the project and more broadly in their community will help to strengthen their future social and economic participation.

Skill development enables marginalised young people to feel more confident in their abilities and can facilitate a smooth transition from dependence to independence by fostering a sense of agency and self-mastery.

It is important however, that marginalised young people are consulted on the types of skills they would like to acquire as part of the project. These could include personal development skills to the attainment of certificates.

See *Project Objectives and Core Components*, pages 6-7 for a list of skills young people may be interested in.

Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project



Applicant organisations must ensure the input of marginalised young people is firmly embedded in each stage of the project.

Successful Project Implementation

The Centre for Evidence and Implementation conducted a review of the Youth Opportunities program to determine whether the program was generating its intended benefits for young people.

To ensure a well-rounded review of project implementation and benefits, the evaluation explored the perspectives and experiences of both young people participating in the projects and key project staff. The evaluation examined 35 projects funded in 2021.

Part of the evaluation sought to determine what factors influenced the successful implementation of projects. Participants (young people and project staff) identified eight key factors. Organisations should consider these when designing, planning and implementing their projects in partnership with young people:

- **preparedness of project teams** – make time for preparation and planning outside project delivery
- **training and preparing young people** – ensure young people are supported to develop the skills they need to deliver the project
- **supporting and valuing young people** – make sure to create a safe environment for young people to express their ideas and opinions
- **youth-led project implementation** – ensure young people’s ideas are embedded at every stage of the project
- **engagement of young people** – make sure the benefits to participate are clear and that young people are fully aware of the time commitment and their role and responsibilities. It is also important that young people are involved in determining these. Where possible include food when meeting with young people, be understanding of young people’s busy schedules and adopt a partnership approach to troubleshoot any hurdles that may arise
- **team building** – develop and foster peer to peer and intergenerational relationships based on mutual respect and inclusivity
- **community support and partnerships** – promote the project to the community to generate support and scope potential partnerships to support the delivery of the project and expand young people’s networks
- **flexibility of project delivery** – ensure flexibility when working with young people, particularly when scheduling meeting and event dates and times, try to work in and around their schooling and other life commitments.



Eligibility Criteria

Under this program, eligible organisations are:

Applicant	Eligible
Incorporated not-for-profit community organisations	✓
NSW local councils operating under the Local Government Act 1993	✓
Local Aboriginal Land Councils or Indigenous corporations registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)	✓
Trusts registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)	✓
NSW non-government organisations established under their own Act of Parliament	✓
Public companies limited by guarantee (must have ACNC registration and/or DGR status)	✓
Propriety companies and companies limited by shares	✗
Individuals (a sole trader) or groups of individuals	✗
Unincorporated organisations	✗
For profit commercial organisations	✗
NSW Government or Australian Government agencies and their entities (including schools, Colleges, TAFE campuses, universities, local health districts, and public hospitals). These organisations should consider whether they have an incorporated not-for-profit body or entity that may be eligible to apply for funding.	✗
An eligible organisation applying on behalf of another eligible organisation	✗

During the assessment process, checks will be conducted to confirm the eligibility of organisations. Registers such as the ACNC, ASIC, ABN Lookup, ORIC and the NSW Office of Fair Trading Register will be considered.

ABN

It is preferable that your organisation hold an ABN and that it links to your organisation's name, trading name or business name. If your organisation's name does not match the details for the ABN, please visit www.abr.gov.au to update your details prior to submitting your application.

If your organisation does not have an ABN but is incorporated, you are still eligible to apply for funding. If successful, you will be required to provide a Statement by a Supplier form (please visit www.ato.gov.au) to receive payment of the grants funds.

Other Requirements

The following are mandatory program requirements:

- all applicant organisations must have appropriate insurance (minimum of \$10 million)
- all applicant organisations must address the NSW National Redress Scheme sanctions
- all funded projects must adhere to NSW Government public health orders and advice in regard to COVID-19. Up-to-date information is available on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#).

Available Funding

Up to \$1.5 million is available for incorporated not-for-profit organisations and local Councils in NSW to apply for a grant between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to deliver a Youth Opportunities project.

Project Budget

A detailed budget outlining all project related expenses is required as part of the grant application. The following funding limits apply to all applications:

- a reasonable portion of the budget can be used for project coordination
- up to 10% of the budget can be used for minor administration costs (promotion, marketing, printing, stationary, postage, external book keeping fees if required)
- up to 15% of the budget can be used to purchase minor equipment (applicants must demonstrate the need for these purchases in their application)
- up to 10% of the budget can be used for catering.

Note: funds can only be used for expenses/activities directly associated with the implementation of the project.

Exclusions

Funding must **not** be used for:

- any activity of a commercial nature that is for profit
- interstate or overseas travel, scholarships and/or conference attendance
- case-management or counselling services for young people
- business as usual costs or general operating expenses such as rent, insurance, electricity, water, rates or the running of other programs within the organisation
- costs that are not directly associated with the implementation or delivery of the project
- capital works (e.g. establishing or refurbishing a youth center/space)
- large equipment purchases (e.g. vehicles)
- existing projects/programs
- projects that deliver outcomes under the school curriculum. Projects that intend on using school grounds or school facilities, cannot be run as part of the school curriculum or other areas of school responsibility

- projects/programs that have already been implemented at the time of application, after application or prior to contracting. Funding cannot be used to reimburse retrospective project delivery
- religious festivals, rituals, events or promotions (except multi-faith events which involve young people from more than one religion).

In-kind Contributions

Donated materials and/or contributions by paid staff and/or volunteers (either from the applicant organisation or project partners) are encouraged as part of the applicant's contribution towards the delivery of a project. In-kind contributions (materials and/or volunteer hours) will be looked upon favourably and considered during assessment to help determine whether the project represents good 'value for money' (see *Assessment Criteria*, page 18).

Although in-kind contributions are not a mandatory program requirement, it is our view that community projects do well when they are supported by the community they are being delivered in. In-kind sources of support strengthen the project's ability to deliver on its intended outcomes for young people.

In-kind contributions may include:

- Time from volunteers to support a range of activities
- Design, marketing and promotional services
- Guest speakers, workshop facilitators, industry mentors
- Workshop and event support
- Project coordination and administrative support
- Transport
- Access to office spaces, meetings rooms, community centers, event spaces and recording studios
- Durable equipment such as recording equipment
- Video and photography services
- Catering.

The estimated value of any in-kind contributions sourced for the project are to be recorded in the application form under the project budget.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Your funding request should include any GST that you will be charged by contractors or suppliers as part of the cost of delivery. This GST is part of your project expenses.

If your application is successful and your organisation's ABN is registered for GST, you will be paid GST on top of the approved grant amount, this is the GST you are obligated to charge and collect on behalf of the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

If your organisation's ABN is not registered for GST or you do not have an ABN, you will only be paid the approved grant amount.

Project Partners and Subcontractors

For the purposes of this grants program, a project partner refers to one or more organisations or individuals engaged to assist your organisation (the lead organisation and the applicant are one in the same) to provide resources, supports and /or activities that can either be provided in-kind or funded through the grant.

Subcontractors are hired on a short-term, fee-for-service arrangement to deliver particular services or project activities and are funded through the grant.

Where there are project partners and/or subcontractors required, we encourage the lead organisation (the applicant) to have a partnership or subcontracting agreement in place to conduct specified activities. We expect the lead organisation to keep full financial control of the grant funds, where funds are released to project partners or subcontractors via the payment of a valid invoice.

The lead organisation will retain all contractual obligations under the Grant Agreement for delivery and accountability. For this reason, it is important that the necessary due diligence is conducted before entering into an agreement with a project partner or subcontractor.

For more information on subcontracting, visit <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/working-with-us/fcm-resources/subcontracting>

Auspicing Arrangements

Auspice arrangements are often used to help community organisations access funding to programs that have eligibility requirements they cannot meet in the timeframe required.

The lead organisation (the applicant) known as the ‘auspicator’ is contracted to lead, manage and support the implementation of the project on behalf of an organisation (the auspicee) who would otherwise not be eligible to apply for funding.

The organisation requiring the support known as the ‘auspicee’, not only benefits from accessing funds they would otherwise not be eligible to access, they also benefit from the management, infrastructure, insurance protection and resources of the auspicator, which are made available to the auspicee for the term of the grant.

The following guidelines apply:

- The lead organisation (the applicant and auspicator) must be eligible to apply as per the Program Guidelines (see *Eligibility Criteria*, page 12).
- The auspicator will retain all contractual obligations under the Grant Agreement for delivery and accountability, including full financial control of the grant funds and all reporting requirements. Funds are paid out via a valid invoice.
- The auspicee that’s delivering the project activities can invoice the auspicator as a subcontractor, on a fee for service basis.
- The auspicator and auspicee must enter into an auspicing agreement (a legally binding contract) that sets out the legal obligations and the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- The auspicator may also charge a fee (such as a management or coordination fee) for making the relevant arrangements on behalf of the auspicee. This should be reflected in the grant application.

For more information on auspicing arrangements, visit <https://www.nfplaw.org.au/free-resources/working-with-others/what-is-auspicing>.

NSW National Redress Scheme sanctions

The National Redress Scheme is part of the Commonwealth Government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The Scheme:

- Acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions;
- Holds institutions accountable for this abuse; and
- Helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a Redress payment.

The Scheme started on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years. The NSW Government will not award a grant to a non-government organisation with Redress Obligation (or to any of its Related Entities) if that non-government organisation:

- Has declined to join the Scheme, or
- At the expiry of six months after the time it is notified to join the Scheme, has failed to do so.

Visit the website for further information about the [NSW National Redress Scheme](#) sanctions.

COVID-19

Projects must adhere to NSW Government public health orders and advice in regard to COVID-19. Up-to-date information is available on the [NSW Government COVID-19](#) website.

Insurance

Grant recipients must maintain current and adequate insurance appropriate to the activities/services funded under this grant program to cover any liability of the grant recipient that might arise in connection with the performance of its obligations under a Grant Agreement. This includes activities carried out by any other individual or organisation that you subcontract for the purposes of this grant. This must include but is not limited to a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance.

Successful applicants may be asked to provide a copy of all relevant insurance policies and certificates as part of the contracting process.

When asked, you must provide evidence of the above insurance for an amount recommended by a professional insurance adviser, or any such other insurance policies as may reasonably be required by DCJ, and as required by law, for you and any of your employees, volunteers, or sub-contractors, in relation to the performance of the services.

If your organisation is successful, and is not covered by the appropriate insurance, you will either need to:

- take out appropriate insurance coverage for the duration of the project, or
- approach another organisation (such as your local council or an incorporated not-for-profit) to auspice the grant so that your project will be covered under their insurance. See *Auspicing Arrangements*, page 15.

Application Process

Step 1 – Check your eligibility

- Before you start an application, read these Guidelines in full to make sure you understand all the relevant requirements for the Youth Opportunities grants program. See [Eligibility Criteria](#), page 12.

Step 2 – Prepare your application

- Once you have confirmed that your organisation is eligible to apply, you can commence the application process. Applications are submitted via SmartyGrants, an online grants administration system. To access SmartyGrants and the online application form, please visit the Government's [Youth Website](#).
- Make sure you have spoken with young people and involved them in developing the project proposal prior to submitting a grant application. Remember a key element of the Youth Opportunities program is that young people take an active role in identifying, designing and implementing these projects.
- Read over the [Project Objectives and Core Components](#) on pages 6-7 to make sure your project adheres to these guidelines.
- Read over the [Project Budget and Exclusions](#) lists on page 13 to make sure your project fits within these guidelines.
- Read over the [Assessment Criteria](#) on page 18 to understand what the assessors are looking for.
- If you have any issues with the application form or the SmartyGrants platform, please refer to the Help Guide for Applicants, available on the Government's [Youth Website](#).

Step 3 – Submit your application

- Read through and complete the application form at your own pace. You are not required to submit the form in one sitting, you can save and return at a later date to complete and submit. Remember to save the form regularly.
- Applications can be submitted at any time before the deadline, but no applications will be accepted after the deadline. The SmartyGrants system will automatically shut off at 5:00pm on the due date.
- At the end of the online application form, you will be prompted to review your application. Any errors (word limits not reached, questions not completed) will be highlighted in red and you will be prompted to go back and correct the error before your application can be submitted. Carefully check your application prior to submitting.
- Once you have reviewed your application and you are ready to submit it, you will need to click the submit button. Once submitted no changes can be made. Simply saving your application does not lodge your application with the Department.
- Once your application has been submitted you will receive an automated response from SmartyGrants – a confirmation of submission email. If you have not received this email, your application has not been successfully submitted, or the confirmation email has ended up in your junk mailbox. Please check this before contacting us. You can also log in to SmartyGrants and click 'My Submissions' to view your submitted and unsubmitted applications. Submitted applications are identified by a green tick.
- If you realise that you have made an error once you have submitted your application please email youth@facns.gov.au for assistance before the closing date.

- The Youth Opportunities program team can assist organisations with queries regarding the application process, but not the content of the application. If you have any questions regarding the process please email youth@facs.nsw.gov.au.

Confidentiality

Information received in applications for funding is treated as confidential. However, documents held by the Department of Communities and Justice are subject to the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*. This means that the information contained in application forms and other relevant documents may be released in response to a request lodged under this Act.

In order to adequately assess applications for funding and implement the funding program, information contained in the application may be shared with delegated officers or shared with other government agencies should it be deemed appropriate. Should this project be successful, the following information will be made public; the name of the applicant, project title, project description, location of the project and the amount awarded to the project.

These terms are part of the Declaration Agreement you must sign at the end of the application form and if successful will also form part of the Grant Agreement.

Assessment Criteria

Each application will be considered on its merits, based on how well it meets the assessment criteria and how it is ranked against other applications. Assessments are conducted by independent assessment panels.

Each application is assessed against the following criteria:

1. The project demonstrates that marginalised young people have had and will have meaningful input at every stage of the project (identifying the need, planning and design, delivery, final review and recognition) - the project is youth-led and youth-driven.
2. The project improves marginalised young people's access to and inclusion in community activities such as sport and recreation, cultural and other activities.
3. The project provides marginalised young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to participate in their local community and support future social and economic participation.
4. The project recognises the contributions marginalised young people make to their local community.
5. The project clearly demonstrates substantial benefits to young people compared with the total cost of the project - the project represents good value for money.

Assessment Process

The assessment process for the Youth Opportunities program is:

Eligibility assessment: Delegated staff conduct a review to ensure eligibility against the eligibility criteria (see *Eligibility Criteria*, page 12) and general compliance with these guidelines.

Competitive merit based assessment: Each eligible application will be assessed against the selection criteria listed above by an assessment panel.

Recommendations: The assessment panel will make recommendations to the final decision maker.



Feedback

If your application is unsuccessful, it does not mean your application is without merit. Funding is limited and not all applications are successful. Due to the high volume of applications, the Department is unable to provide individualised feedback on each unsuccessful application. There are no appeals under the Youth Opportunities program.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will enter into a Grant Agreement with the Department of Communities and Justice and will be required to report on the progress and completion of the project at various intervals. Specific reporting requirements will be advised, if successful.

Successful applicants are required to return the signed Grant Agreement (including a Project Plan and Budget) within two weeks of receipt. Agreements can only be signed by authorised officers of your organisation. This may be a member of the executive/committee (as deemed under the Articles of Association or Constitution), the General Manager or a delegated officer.

Once the signed Grant Agreement (including Project Plan and Budget) has been received, the Department will countersign the Agreement (and the Project Plan and Budget) and return to you by email. Once this has been completed, the payment process can commence. Specific instructions will be advised, if successful.

Please note: Successful applicants are required to submit a Project Plan and Budget as part of the contracting process. The Project Plan is a more detailed version of what is provided in the application. Any **variations** to the project, including scope, location or timing outlined in the original application must be formally requested and approved in writing before any related work takes place. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the grant offer.

Funding Acknowledgement

Recipients of NSW Government funding must acknowledge the NSW Government in all written materials for the project, in accordance with the NSW Government Branding Guidelines. The NSW Government Logo (provided on request) and an acknowledgement statement such as 'Proudly funded by' or 'Proudly supported by' should appear in materials such as annual reports, media releases, digital and printed materials, web pages and online documents, advertising, posters and signs.

For more information regarding the NSW Government's Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines, please visit www.nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines

Obligations and Reporting

Successful applicants are required to report on the progress and completion of the project at three intervals:

- commencement (participant survey)
- mid-term (progress report)
- completion (final report and participant survey).

Funded organisations will provide information against a set of measures and indicators to track progress towards the program's objectives and intended outcomes. See **Appendix A Reporting and Data Collection** on pages 23-24.

A participant survey is distributed (core project participants only) at commencement and completion. See below for further information. The progress and completion report templates are provided and submitted via SmartyGrants. From time to time, adhoc project updates may also be requested.

Participant Survey

Funded organisations are required to facilitate the distribution of a survey to their core group of project participants (those who are directly involved with the planning and implementation of the project) at commencement and completion of the project. The survey captures young people's voices in the program and helps to track progress towards two program level outcomes:

1. ***Marginalised young people feel a sense of choice and control (self-determination) in their lives*** (indicated by the proportion of marginalised young people who report being involved in decision making throughout the project).
2. ***Marginalised young people feel a sense of connection and belonging to their local communities*** (indicated by the proportion of marginalised young people who report feeling a sense of belonging in the place and community where they live).

The participant survey is distributed via Qualtrics. Funded organisations will be provided a link to the survey to distribute to their young people. More information will be provided, if successful.

Please note: The survey is de-identified and can be completed via mobile phone.

Progress Report

This report will include:

- a statement of income and expenditure (to date)
- evidence demonstrating progress (copies of project records; surveys; media; promotional material; photos; social media pages; or any other evidence which demonstrates that the project is progressing).

Completion Report

This report will include:

- a signed/certified statement of income and expenditure for the entire grant
- a signed/certified acquittal form (provided closer to the time)
- evidence demonstrating completion (copies of project records; surveys; media; promotional material; photos; social media pages; or any other evidence which demonstrates the life of the project).

Please note:

- An officeholder in your organisation will be required to certify that the grant funds have been expended as per your financial acquittal.
- Any unspent grant funds, or grant funds not expended in accordance with the Grant Agreement must be returned to the Department.
- All financial records related to grant expenditure and acquittal must be retained by the organisation for seven years.
- Any photographs or videos containing images of participants and/or staff submitted in the Completion Report must be accompanied by a signed *Still and Moving Images Consent Form* which will be provided to you closer to the time.

Further information

For further information on the Youth Opportunities program, please email questions to youth@facns.gov.au

Youth Opportunities Program
Creates opportunities to connect and thrive



APPENDIX A

Reporting and Data Collection

NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework	Empowerment	Social and Community	Education and Skills
<p>Project Objectives Through the provision of one-off grants, the Youth Opportunities program funds organisations to partner with marginalised young people to design and deliver community projects.</p> <p>Each project is required to meet these objectives.</p>	<p><i>Partner with marginalised young people to deliver a youth-led and youth-driven community project</i></p>	<p><i>Improve marginalised young people’s access to and inclusion in community activities such as sport and recreation, cultural and other activities</i></p> <p><i>Recognise the contributions marginalised young people make to their local community</i></p>	<p><i>Provide marginalised young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to participate in their local community and support future social and economic participation</i></p>
<p>Project Outcomes (Short- term)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation in youth-led and youth-driven community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalised young people address and overcome barriers to participation Marginalised young people participate in activities that strengthen their connection to their local communities Marginalised young people’s contributions are recognised and valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalised young people learn a range of skills that strengthen their ability to participate in their local community and support future social and economic participation
<p>Measure (Contributions towards the project outcomes will be captured in the progress and completion reports)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has marginalised young people’s input been imbedded at every stage of the project including planning, design, delivery and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have marginalised young people been supported to overcome barriers to participate How has participation in the project strengthened marginalised young people’s connection to their local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What skills have marginalised young people learnt as part of the project How have these skills improved their ability to participate in their local communities How will these skills support marginalised young people’s future economic participation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have marginalised young people's contribution to their local communities been recognised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have marginalised young people been supported to establish relationships with external stakeholders to extend their community based networks
Indicator (Contributions towards the project outcomes will be tracked using these indicators in the progress and completion reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of youth-led and youth-driven community projects funded per round Number of marginalised young people directly involved in planning and organising the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of marginalised young people that attended and participated in events/activities as part of the project Number of youth-led and youth-driven community events/activities held as part of the project Number of recognition activities and events that were held as part of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of marginalised young people that undergo training as part of the project
Program Outcome (Medium-Term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalised young people feel a sense of choice and control (self-determination) in their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalised young people feel a sense of connection and belonging to their local communities 	
Measure (Contributions towards the program outcomes will be captured in the completion report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have marginalised young people been supported to make decisions across all stages of the project including planning, design, delivery and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has participation in the project improved marginalised young people's sense of connection and belonging to their local communities 	
Indicator (A participant survey (core group of young people only) will be distributed at commencement and completion of the project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of marginalised young people who report being involved in decision making throughout the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of marginalised young people who report feeling a sense of belonging in the place and community where they live 	

¹ Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-2024, accessible at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/strategic-plan-2022-2024>

² NSW Department of Communities and Justice Strategic Direction 2020-2024 accessible at <https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/about-us/building-stronger-communities>

³ The Measurement of Social Connectedness and its Relationship to Wellbeing, The Ministry Of Social Development, Te Manatu Whakahiato Ora (New Zealand), 2018, accessible at <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/literature-reviews/social-connectedness-and-wellbeing.html>

Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People's Participation 2015, accessible at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/participation-resources/understanding-and-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-participation>

⁴ International Public Management Review · electronic Journal accessible at <http://www.ipmr.net> Volume 11 · Issue 3 2010 International Public Management Network

⁵ Journal of Community Psychology Vol. 33 No. 1, 57-74 (2005) A Comparison of youth-driven and adult-driven youth programs

⁶ Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (2019) Engaging children and young people in your organisation, accessible at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/participation-guide>

⁷ Aston, R., & Tse, J. (2022). Youth Engagement Evaluation Framework: Prepared for The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Centre for Program Evaluation, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne.

⁸ Steele, T, Mitchell, J, Jacob, C, Williamson, A, Rose, V. 2022. Youth Opportunities Program Evaluation Final Report. Centre for Evidence and Implementation.

⁹ Steele, T, Mitchell, J, Jacob, C, Williamson, A, Rose, V. 2022. Youth Opportunities Program Evaluation Final Report. Centre for Evidence and Implementation.

¹⁰ Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (2018) NSW Youth Week Forum, Parliament House, Consultation Responses to NSW Department of Family and Community Services
Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (2018) Report on Consultations with Socially Excluded Children and Young People, accessible at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/report-on-consultations-with-socially-excluded-children-and-young-people-2018>

Youth Action (2018) Inequality in Australia: A Young Person's Perspective, accessible at http://www.youthaction.org.au/inequality_in_australia

UNICEF Australia (2019) In their own words: the hidden impact of prolonged drought on children and young people, accessible at <https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/unicef-in-australia/the-drought-report>

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Note: Images used in this document show young people participating in Youth Opportunities funded projects.