[Click to enter Grant Program Name]

[Click here to enter Subtitle]

[Click here to enter month and year]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grant Program Details |  |
| Opening date and time | Click or tap to enter a date and time. |
| Closing date and time | Click or tap to enter a date and time.  |
| Application outcome date | Click to enter date |
| Project delivery timeframe (for successful applications) | Enter date range |
| Evaluation timeframe (for successful applications)  | Enter date range |
| Decision-maker | Enter decision-maker |
| NSW Government Agency | Enter source agency or agencies |
| Type of grant opportunity | Choose an item. |
| Grant value (total available funding for the grant and the available individual grant amounts, excluding GST) | Enter value of grant (total funding and individual grant amounts, excluding GST) |
| Enquiries | Enter relevant contact details including name, email address, phone number |

|  |
| --- |
| Guidance NoteNSW Grants Administration Guide – Mandatory Legislative RequirementsGuidelines are required for all grants, except for one-off or ad hoc grants. Grant guidelines are not mandatory for one-off or ad hoc grants (see section 6.1.7 and section 6.2 of the Grants Administration Guide (**Guide**)) but may be voluntarily developed. The format and complexity of guidelines may vary depending on the grant. The guidelines **must** be used to guide the assessment of applications. Officials and Ministers who are involved in the grants administration process **must** administer the grant in accordance with the guidelines and the Guide.Guidelines must include the following (section 6.1.7):* The purpose and objectives of the grant
* Selection criteria (comprising eligibility and assessment criteria) and assessment process
* Grant value
* Opening and closing dates
* Any support available to grant applicants (see section 6.18)
* Application outcome date
* Source agency or agencies
* The decision-maker.

Where relevant, guidelines should also include:* Requirements for evidence and documentation in support of an application (for example a business case, community feedback, or evidence of previous project delivery experience)
* Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements
* The process that applies where aspects of the project for which funding is obtained change after the grant has been approved (i.e a variation to the approved funding activity)
* A description of complaint handling, review and/ or access to information mechanisms.

Where it is anticipated that a grant opportunity will involve input from MPs or other stakeholders (such as other levels of government or industry representatives), officials must ensure that: the guidelines clearly outline the role of stakeholders; there are processes in place to manage this interaction (including equitable opportunity for MPs); and all stakeholder input is documented as part of the assessment process, where relevant. Where such input is received outside of the process set out in the guidelines, this must be documented.Where possible, changes to the grant guidelines should be minimised once a grant opportunity has opened. However, where significant changes have been made in relation to a grant opportunity, such as changes affecting the assessment of applications or changes to the grant amount, officials must revise grant guidelines accordingly and, except in the case of any guidelines developed for one-off or ad hoc grants, publish the revised guidelines. It may be appropriate to advise applicants whose applications have already been received of the changes and provide them with an opportunity to modify their applications. |

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# Message from the Minister

##

Click or tap here to enter a message from the relevant Minister or other delegate introducing the grant program and its purpose.

Delete section if unnecessary.

1

Overview of grant/grants program

# Overview of grant/grants program

Consider adding an introductory paragraph to explain what the grant/grant opportunity is (if this is not covered by a Minister/representative’s message). This could include information such as:

* Relevant history, such as when the grant/grant opportunity was established
* Who the grant/grant opportunity is administered and/or funded by, including delivery partners
* Why the grant/grant opportunity was established, and its intended recipients
* The grant purpose, objectives and required outcomes
* How the grant will deliver value for money
* The type of grant opportunity such as, open, targeted or closed (applicant audiences) and competitive or non-competitive (grant program structure)
* If it is a single or multiple round grant, the relevant round of funding
* Any linked grant opportunities of which an applicant needs to/should be aware
* The scope and types of initiatives at which the grant/grant opportunity is aimed
* The program period, for example, ‘all projects must be completed within four years from commencement of the funding deed’

As part of this section, include an instruction to encourage applicants to read all the details in these guidelines before applying.

## Purpose and objectives

**Identify the purpose of the grant** (for example, *to support communities in recovering from a natural disaster event*).

**Detail the objectives of the grant and the intended outcomes of the grant opportunity (for example, *to help community organisations to replace or restore facilities or equipment damaged in a natural disaster event*).** Clearly state priorities such as targeted industry sectors, regions, businesses or community types.

## Grant value

Detail:

* Total value of grant program
* Value of grant subcategories (if applicable)
* Value of individual grants, including minimum or maximum amount per grant.
* List any associated funding or co-contribution obligations (for example, 25% financial co-contribution is required). Consider adding details to clarify how co-contribution obligations can be met (for example if funding from another grant program can be accepted as co-contributions).

2

Selection criteria

# Selection criteria

Selection criteria for a grant comprises both eligibility and assessment criteria. This section should include details of the eligibility and the assessment criteria for the grant. Note that the Guide specifies mandatory selection criteria for one-off or ad hoc grants (see section 6.1.4). If an agency chooses to develop guidelines for one-off or ad hoc grants, they may choose to make use of the separate template for one-off or grants guidelines.

**Note: In the case of all** grant opportunities that are complex, high-risk or of high value, officials must conduct checks of the applicant (the potential grant recipient) proportionate to the value and risk of the grant (see further at section 6.1.2 of the Guide). The information obtained from these checks may be used to determine if the applicant meets specific eligibility criteria, or to inform the merits brief provided to the Minister. For example, information obtained from these checks may be relevant in assessing the capacity of the proposed grant recipient to deliver the proposed project. If it is necessary to conduct these checks, this should be captured in the guidelines where relevant – for example, it may inform eligibility criteria, or be addressed in the assessment criteria section, or be outlined in the process section below, or all of the above.

## Eligibility criteria

The Guide provides that all grants should have clear eligibility criteria which outline the minimum requirements an applicant must meet to be eligible for funding. The criteria should enable applicants to consider whether they are eligible before applying for a grant. This should include specifying the evidence the applicant will need to submit to satisfy the eligibility criteria, where relevant. **The eligibility criteria for a grant, and any evidence necessary to demonstrate satisfaction of that criteria, should be specified here.**

Eligibility criteria may include specifications such as:

* eligible entities or applicant types
* eligible project activities or funding uses
* eligible locations
* required co-contribution amounts.

To support applicants’ understanding of what may or may not be eligible, the guidelines should include examples – such as eligible and ineligible entities, applicant types, activities, funding uses, locations or co-contribution amounts – where this may assist applicants.

|  |
| --- |
| ***Example text:*****To be eligible you must:*** **List eligibility criteria**

**[Include if relevant] You are not eligible to apply if you are:*** **List criteria that would exclude an organisation or individual’s grant application from being considered.**
 |

## Assessment criteria

NOTE: This section may be removed for grants that are non-competitive (including demand-driven grants)

Detail the assessment criteria in this section. The assessment criteria should:

* Be clear and concise so that applicants understand how applications will be assessed
* Permit an objective assessment of relevant factors
* Enable assessment of the relative extent to which applications meet the criteria, rather than binary factors
* Allow for consideration of:
	+ how value for money will achieved
	+ how the proposed grant will be an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of money (see section 10.3A(2) of the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018* (NSW))
	+ financial arrangements
	+ capability, experience and skills of the applicants
	+ deliverability of the project - including demonstrating that the applicant has the capacity and expertise to deliver the project within budget and timeframes, and the infrastructure and technical capacity to fulfil the project requirements)
	+ community support for the proposed project
	+ government priorities or policies (e.g. sustainability considerations or the ability of a project to encourage market participation of diverse groups, or increase local employment)
* Detail if grants will be prioritised and how (i.e. if a large number of applicants meet the selection criteria, will grants be prioritised based on location, policy priority or target groups? Or will it be ‘first-in, first-served’? Or do all applications that meet the criteria obtain approval?)
* Be aligned with program objectives

Ensure that following information is also provided:

* Specify if applicants have to address all or only some of the assessment criteria
* Outline the criteria weighting that will be applied (Consideration should be given to whether the criteria are given equal weighting)
* Any requirements for evidence or documentation to support an application

You may use the table below to list the criteria, if appropriate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Specific information and evidence required | Weighting |
| Criterion 1: Insert name/ description of criterion | You should demonstrate this through identifying:* Indicator 1a (note any evidence requirements)
* Indicator 1b (note any evidence requirements)
* Indicator 1c (note any evidence requirements)
 | XX% |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

3

Application process

# Application process

## How to apply

Outline the application process, including if the assessment involves a one stage or multiple stage process and what is involved at each stage. Note that the Guide recommends a two-stage process (assessment stage and decision-making stage) for competitive grants.

Include any links to relevant forms the applicant must complete. (NOTE: there should be no information on application forms that is not in the grant guidelines).

This section should include details such as:

* Portals or platforms through which applications must be submitted (such as SmartyGrants)
* In what circumstances the applicant may be contacted for verification or for further information
* What happens after the application is submitted, including a notification of receipt
* Details of discretionary decisions that may be made under certain circumstances, such as extending an application close date or accepting late applications
* A list of documents required for inclusion in the application. Examples of documents may include, but are not limited to:
* Completed application form
* Completed project plan and budget templates
* Risk management plan
* Evidence of public liability insurance
* The process that applies if an applicant would like to correct information or provide additional information (or if applications cannot be changed once submitted).
* Applicants must not provide false or misleading information, and how an application containing false or misleading statements will be dealt with.

## Support available to applicants

Outline how applicants can obtain support in preparing their applications (see section 6.18 of the Guide for further guidance).

Include contact details such as a website hyperlink, telephone number and/or email address, and direct applicants to any other relevant sources of information, such as a scheduled webinar, training, or pre-recorded video.

When considering the kids of support that should be made available to applications, consideration should be given to:

* Equity – the support must not unfairly advantage or disadvantage certain applicants
* Characteristics of the application cohort – the application cohort, or some of the applicants, may have particular needs where it is appropriate to provide additional support
* Proposed support is economical and represents value for money – consider if the cost to provide support is justifiable, especially against the grant funding available
* Transparency – how support provided is appropriately documented and made public
* Separation of roles – where possible those involved in providing support to applicants are not also involved in making recommendations or decisions about the grant application.

Note: officials must document what support has in fact been given to a grant applicant and the reasons for giving that support, meaning that any support provided must be appropriately documented in due course.

4

Assessment process

# Assessment process

## Assessment of grant applications

Detail the process for applications to be assessed – e.g. against the eligibility criteria (the eligibility ‘cull’) and then the assessment criteria, with a recommendation then to be made in writing to the decision-maker.

Explain how applications are assessed, which will depend on the type of grant involved. For example, for an open, competitive grant, eligible applications will be assessed on their merits against other criteria and be compared with other applications, whereas for an open, non-competitive grant applications will be assessed individually against the selection criteria, without reference to the comparative merits of other applications.

Identify the relevant assessment structure, such as the approach to assessing eligibility (is there a team undertaking the eligibility cull?), the composition of the assessment panel, and the engagement of external specialists such as a probity advisor. Clearly specify the roles and responsibilities of all people/ parties involved in the selection process, at each stage, including those making recommendations and the designated decision-maker (for example, Departmental delegate or Minister). It is appropriate to identify decision-makers by their roles or grades, rather than by their names.

You should make clear whether the decision-maker will take advice from a probity adviser, noting that probity advice is required for all grant opportunities that are complex, high-risk or high-value. Where it is anticipated that a grant opportunity will involve input from MPs or other stakeholders (such as other levels of government or industry representatives), the guidelines must clearly outline the role of stakeholders and the process for engaging with those stakeholders, including that all stakeholder input is documented, together with how it was considered in the assessment process.

## Notification of application outcome

Outline how and when successful and unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the application outcome. Notification should be in writing.

Notification should also make clear how and when grants will be announced publicly. Announcements should not be made regarding grants awarded before the grantee has been informed. Written advice to unsuccessful applicants (where practicable, with reasons for the application being unsuccessful) should be provided on or before the announcement.

### Feedback on applications [and appeal process]

Outline if and how applicants can request feedback on their application and if there are any appeal mechanisms for decisions.

## Publication of grants information

The Guide sets out certain requirements with respect to the publication of grants information and it is worth recording these requirements in the guidelines. Where relevant, the below example text should also include an outline of the requirement to provide emergency relief grants information to the Auditor-General (see section 6.5.1 of the Guide).

***Example text:***

The Grants Administration Guide (**Guide**) requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW) (**GIPA Act**), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the grants awarded will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the grant funding is approved or declined.

All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

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Successful grant applications

# Successful grant applications

Outline the process for successful grant applicants and list any associated commitments attached to funding.

For successful applicants, include the requirement to enter into a funding deed with the NSW Government.

## Grant agreement

Attach the grant agreement (if applicable) and/or list the important terms and conditions associated with the funding, which may include the following:

* Regular project progress reports and other reporting requirements
* Milestones or targets to be met
* Acknowledgement of the financial support by the NSW Government.
* Not make any financial commitments until funding deeds are executed
* Clarity as to termination rights
* Monitoring and acquittal requirements
* Repayment of unspent funds
* Being responsible for any project cost overruns
* Participating in a program evaluation or audit to determine the extent to which projects have contributed to the program objectives.

Note if project variations will be accepted.

## Grant payment

Outline how the grant will be paid, with reference to grant deliverables, schedule payments, reporting requirements and co-contributions.

## Unspent funds

The guidelines should specify what is required in respect of unspent funds.

For example, if a grant recipient’s project is completed and there are unspent funds remaining from the grant allocation, the agency may require the grant recipient to return the unspent funds, and that should be made clear in the guidelines and the grant terms and conditions.

Alternatively, the grant program may allow for the grant recipient in such circumstances to request to use the funds to extend the scope of the project. If that is an available option, the guidelines should make clear how such a request will be assessed (for example, it might be approved if the request aligns with the objectives of the grant program) and what information the grant recipient will need to provide in support of their request (for example, the agency may require the grant recipient to provide supporting information such as revised economic or social impact data). These details should also be included in the grant terms and conditions.

## Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements

Outline how the grant will be monitored (e.g. through reporting (progress and final reports) and how grant recipients should keep the relevant agency updated if their circumstances change.

## Evaluation

Explain how the grant or project will be evaluated against the stated purpose and objectives of the grant program.

6

Additional information and resources

# Additional information and resources

## Complaint handling

Detail how complaints in relation to the process can be made and how these will be reviewed.

## Access to information

***Example text:***

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order.  The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

Provide any relevant contact details or other sources of information for individuals seeking information from the relevant agency about the GIPA Act and/or Standing Order 52.

## Ethical conduct

Consider outlining any ethical conduct requirements associated with the grant application process – including the process for identifying and reporting conflicts of interest.

### Conflict of interest management

Officials must consider and develop a plan to manage conflicts of interest that may arise throughout all stages of the grant program.

The mechanisms for managing potential conflicts of interest (such as a register of interests and procedures for declaring interests) should be outlined here.

### Confidentiality

The guidelines should outline any confidentiality requirements with respect to the outcomes of the application process. For example, successful applicants may be required to keep the outcome of the application process confidential until the Government makes a public announcement.