

# COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund

## FAQs

### About the Fund

#### 1. What is the Aboriginal COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund?

The Fund has been established by the Victorian Government to support Aboriginal Victorians to deliver community-led initiatives to respond to the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19) within their local area or community.

The Fund will provide grants to Aboriginal organisations and community members for initiatives that support emergency relief, outreach and brokerage, cultural strengthening, and social and emotional wellbeing.

While regional or statewide initiatives are eligible for funding, these must be rolled out in a place-based way to ensure they are tailored to the needs of each local area.

#### 2. How does it work?

An expression of interest (EOI) process will open on 31 July 2020 and close on 26 February 2021. The EOI process will be a rolling process for submissions, which will be reviewed and shortlisted on a monthly basis between July 2020 to February 2021. Applications will be assessed, and funds distributed each month to successful initiatives through the relevant Victorian Government department.

#### 3. What is the relevant Victorian Government department for my initiative?

The relevant department will depend on the issue and solution that your initiative covers. If successful, you will be contacted by a representative of the relevant department who will explain their role and how the department can facilitate the funding agreement.

Victorian Government departments include:

- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Transport
- Department of Treasury and Finance.

#### 4. What is my local community?

You need to live, work, provide services in or be connected to the area in which you submit an application for your initiative.

#### 5. What grants are available?

Grants are available for initiatives that support emergency relief, outreach and brokerage, cultural strengthening, and social and emotional wellbeing.

## 6. Why is the funding needed?

The impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19) have been felt across all of Victoria. The Victorian Government has launched the COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund to support local Aboriginal communities and organisations to address the impacts of coronavirus and keep their communities safe and thriving.

## 7. What other support may be available to Victoria's Aboriginal communities during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

On 16 June 2020, the Victorian government announced \$13 million to be provided to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to support their services and programs through the pandemic.

For further information on the Aboriginal specific COVID-19 funding package click [here](#).

## 8. How will the funding be distributed?

A minimum of \$1 million will be distributed across five regions in Victoria:

- Metro
- North East
- North West
- South East
- South West

You can view an interactive map of the regions [here](#).

Remaining grant funding will be distributed equitably. This means that funding will be provided to regions based on demonstrated COVID-19 impacts on the Aboriginal community.

To ensure a range of small and large communities have the opportunity to access the Fund, no more than 50 per cent of a region's funding can be awarded to one local government area.



## Eligibility

### 9. What do I need to do before I submit my application?

The first thing to do is read the Fund Guidelines to make sure you and your initiative idea are eligible for the Fund.

*Organisations:*

You will need to demonstrate local need, demand and support from the Aboriginal community for your idea.

*Individual Applicants:*

You will also need to identify and seek agreement from an eligible organisation to partner with you to help deliver your initiative.

### 10. I don't have a partner organisation. How do I find one?

You can do this a few ways:

- Visit the [Community Services Directory](#) and use the search tool
- Ask your local council and councillors for some ideas
- Contact your [Local Aboriginal Network](#) broker to connect you with local Aboriginal organisations.

### 11. I'm an organisation. Can I partner with another organisation?

Yes you can, but the organisation leading the initiative must be Aboriginal (e.g. an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO), Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) or an Aboriginal entity). Grant funding will only be provided to the Aboriginal organisation to administer.

### 12. How do I know if my partner organisation is eligible?

Call and ask your partner organisation about their ABN status. Another way you can get this information is to search for them on the [ABN register website](#).

### 13. Can a business be a partner organisation?

Local businesses can partner with you to deliver your initiative. However, any applications must be in accordance with the Fund Guidelines and must not be in any way for a private or for profit purpose.

### 14. Can a government department or agency deliver an initiative with an organisation or individual?

No, government departments and agencies are not eligible therefore organisations and individuals cannot partner with them to deliver an initiative.

### 15. Can a Local COVID-19 Network submit a proposal?

We certainly encourage Local Networks to discuss solutions to address COVID-19 impacts, including developing initiatives. However, applications for funding must be submitted by an eligible entity, for example, an ACCO, which also must deliver the initiative. Local Networks in themselves are not eligible entities, rather, they are governance bodies.

### 16. I don't know who my Local COVID-19 Aboriginal Response Network is. How do I find this out?

You can contact Joshua Atkinson at [joshua.atkinson@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:joshua.atkinson@dpc.vic.gov.au) or on 0427 438 379 who can direct you to your Network.

## Submissions

### 17. Can I submit more than one idea?

Yes, you can submit as many initiatives as you wish. However, it is preferable that organisations combine their various initiatives into one application to facilitate the review process.

### 18. When can I submit my initiative idea?

Applications are open between 31 July – 26 February 2021. Applications are reviewed each month, with successful applicants notified on a monthly basis. Note the Fund may be fully expended before 26 February 2021 depending on how many applications are received.

### 19. I don't have access to the internet – how do I submit my initiative idea?

Visit your local library where computers with internet are offered free-of-charge. If you cannot access a local library, you can contact your [Local Aboriginal Network \(LAN\) Broker](#).

### 20. Can I get support to prepare my application?

As grant funding will need to be provided quickly during the pandemic, government will not be able to provide support to applicants to prepare their application. If you are a community member, we suggest you seek the support of your partner organisation.

### 21. My organisation has a great initiative idea – can we submit?

Organisations are welcome to submit. However, you must make sure your local community needs and supports your initiative idea, and you must operate in the community where your initiative is proposed.

### 22. What can be included in the initiative administration costs?

This Fund is focused on providing direct support for communities. While some initiative administration costs can be included (such as contract management, processing funds and invoices and tracking progress), these costs need to be justified, and will be carefully considered as part of the selection process.

As per the Terms and Conditions, initiative administration costs up to 10 per cent for initiatives up to \$100,000 (GST inclusive) and 15 per cent for initiatives up to \$200,000 (GST inclusive) may be included.

### 23. Can I include salaries or wages in my initiative idea budget?

The Fund is focused on providing direct support for communities. While some salary or wage costs can be included, these costs need to be justified.

### 24. Can I submit multiple applications?

It is preferable that you submit one application per organisation. Your application can include various components and initiatives. You can also re-apply if your original application is unsuccessful, and these will be assessed again against the selection criteria. However, government is unable to provide any additional support in preparing your application.

## Assessment

### 25. What happens during the assessment/review phase?

The Fund's assessment team will be reviewing all submitted initiatives and checking these against the Guidelines. They'll look at:

- the eligibility criteria outlined in the Guidelines
- feasibility of the initiative
- the detail included in the initiative's budget
- any priorities identified through Local COVID-19 Aboriginal Response Networks
- legislative constraints and technical constraints which might affect the success of the initiative.

If our assessment team need more information about an initiative idea, they'll email the applicant directly. Where appropriate, the Fund team may follow up with landholders to confirm their support. Initiatives rejected by the landholder won't proceed to shortlisting.

Initiatives that don't meet the eligibility criteria in the Guidelines won't proceed to shortlisting. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email.

### 26. When is the monthly cut-off date to submit my application?

Applications are reviewed and shortlisted on a rolling, monthly basis between July to February 2021. The cut-off dates for submissions to be considered are:

August 31<sup>st</sup>, September 30<sup>th</sup>, October 31<sup>st</sup>, November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 31<sup>st</sup>, January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>.

### 27. If my initiative is ineligible, will I be told why?

If your initiative is deemed ineligible by the Fund's assessment team, you will receive an email advising you of this. If you need more information, you'll be able to contact our team for further information.

### 28. Can I ask for a reassessment?

Given the timeframes, we're unable to reassess any applications that are deemed ineligible.

### 29. How can small towns compete with larger towns and cities?

We have rules in place to help ensure the funds are equitably distributed across Victoria, and to a range of small, medium and large organisations. We're helping to make sure Funding is fair by ensuring that:

- No more than 50 per cent of funding in a region can be awarded to one local government area;
- Funding will be equitably distributed across five regions

### 30. If my initiative is successful, how much time do I have to complete it?

All successful initiatives must be completed by 31 December 2021.