

About these guidelines

The guidelines outline key information about the COVID-19 Aboriginal Response and Recovery Fund (Fund), including who can apply, how to apply and the selection criteria.

All interested applicants should read these Guidelines before submitting a funding application.

Eligibility

1. Initiatives must be Aboriginal-led

All funded initiatives must be led by eligible Aboriginal entities and/or individuals.

2. Eligible organisations

All entities applying for the Fund must be Victorian based and have a registered Australian Business Number (ABN).

To be eligible, you must be an Aboriginal entity incorporated under Commonwealth or Victorian legislation. This includes; Victorian Aboriginal businesses and not-for-profit organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), Traditional Owner groups and land trusts.

3. Eligibility for individuals

Aboriginal individuals residing in Victoria can apply for the Fund provided they partner with a Victorian based entity that has a registered Australian Business Number (ABN), and is:

- an eligible Aboriginal entity (listed above)
- in extenuating circumstances, a non-Aboriginal entity (for example, a local council or other organisation)

The eligible entity must also have the capacity to receive funding and work with the individuals to deliver and manage the initiative, including meeting the reporting requirements.

Note that individuals cannot partner with entities outside of Victoria as they are not eligible for funding.

Eligible individuals must:

- be aged 16 and over
- if aged 16 or 17, obtain guardian approval
- live in the community for which you submit an idea for an initiative

Key conditions


- The partnering entity must have the capacity to receive funding and work with the individuals to deliver and manage the initiative, including meeting the reporting requirements.
- When an individual submits an application, they should attach a confirmation of support from their nominated partner entity. The entity's board of management, responsible officer, or equivalent must have consented to act as a partner entity before the initiative is submitted. If support isn't granted, an individual cannot progress their initiative further.

The proposed initiative must fall within at least one of the following categories:

- **Emergency relief:** to provide flexible, practical support for individuals and families in crisis, such as material aid, food, transportation, mobile phone data, funerals, accommodation, supports to resolve lateral violence or emerging family conflicts.
- **Outreach and brokerage:** to support 'at risk' cohorts, including those at risk of disengagement from education, training and/or employment, or involvement in the child protection, family violence and justice system, etc.
- **Cultural strengthening:** to ensure connection to culture, community and Country.
- **Improved social and emotional wellbeing (including improved mental health outcomes):** initiatives to promote and protect mental wellbeing. For examples of how this could be done, refer to page 26 of the [Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social emotional wellbeing framework. 2017-2027](#).

4. All documentation must be completed to be eligible

Initiatives are only be eligible for funding if the applicant submits a complete application form that includes all the supporting information requested.

 Application Form - COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund
PDF 265.23 KB

Selection criteria



When applying, you should consider the selection criteria, which are equally weighted:

Aboriginal-led

- Initiatives should be led by an Aboriginal organisation or an Aboriginal community member.

Effective and/or innovative

- Initiatives should demonstrate how new knowledge, traditional or contemporary Aboriginal cultural knowledge, technologies, methodologies or processes will improve the effectiveness or quality of outcomes for Aboriginal communities.
- Initiatives may be an extension of an existing program or idea, but must demonstrate significant enhancement or adaption to be successful.

Address a service gap

- Initiatives should not duplicate existing services and/or initiatives.

Demonstrates local need and support from the community

- Initiatives should be place-based initiatives that respond to the needs/demand from the local community. Statewide and regional responses will be considered but they must demonstrate place-based delivery. Assessment will include consideration of any priorities identified through Local Aboriginal Response Networks.

Equitable distribution

- Initiatives will be selected so as to support equitable distribution across Victoria, as well as distribution to different sized organisations and communities.

What can be funded



To be eligible for funding, your initiative must:

- align with the Fund's eligibility criteria
- be responsive to a coronavirus (COVID-19) impact experienced in your local Aboriginal community
- be completed within 6 months from the date of signing the funding agreement, excluding any necessary approvals and permissions
- be able to be funded entirely through this Fund, unless additional funding has already been sourced

What can't be funded



The following initiatives are not eligible for funding:

- initiatives that do not align with these guidelines
- ongoing operational or maintenance costs for initiatives upon initiative completion
- initiatives from which the applicant or their immediate family will personally profit (noting that salaries for initiative administration are not considered personal profit)
- initiatives that have been completed prior to the application being submitted

- initiatives that are located outside Victoria
- illegal, malicious or discriminatory activities or initiatives that will result in neighbourhood division
- initiatives that are contradictory to government or landholder policy or practices
- initiatives already accounted for in a local council's 2020-21 budget statement
- costs for feasibility studies, research/study placements, business cases or similar reports
- costs associated with the preparation of the application
- initiatives that are deemed to be unfeasible (due to budget, time constraints, legislative or regulatory constraints, technical constraints or similar)
- initiatives for a private or for-profit purpose
- initiatives that cannot be delivered within 6 months of signing the funding agreement (excluding time required for receipt of any necessary approvals and permissions)

If you're unsure about your initiative's eligibility, contact the COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund project team at AboriginalCOVID19Fund@dpc.vic.gov.au.

Application process

Step 1: Applicants to submit their initiative proposal (July 2020 - February 2021)

Interested applicants should:

1. Identify an issue or gap in their community that is due to coronavirus (COVID-19).
2. Develop an initiative idea that responds to this issue and can help their community respond and recover.
3. Collect evidence that shows how their initiative demonstrates local need and support/demand from the local community, e.g. impacts identified by their Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Network. To find your Network contact Joshua Atkinson at joshua.atkinson@dpc.vic.gov.au or on [0427 438 379](tel:0427438379).
4. Read these guidelines to make sure they are an "eligible entity" and their application aligns with the Fund's guiding principles and considers the selection criteria.
5. Submit their application via (insert link) prior to midnight 26 February 2021. When submitting an application, applicants must:
 - complete the application form with the information requested
 - register their contact information (and where relevant, their guardian's contact information if they are aged 16 or 17, by completing and uploading the guardian consent form)
 - agree to these guidelines and relevant privacy policies

Step 2: Assessment of applications (monthly)

Department of Premier and Cabinet review

Each month, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) will shortlist applications by:

1. reviewing applications against these guidelines
2. advising applicants if their application is eligible or ineligible
3. assessing applications against any priorities identified by Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks to ensure initiatives reflect the needs of the community
4. reviewing eligible applications against the selection criteria and making initial assessments

Step 3: Departmental review

The Victorian Government department/s with portfolio responsibility for eligible initiatives will review all relevant applications.

Step 4: COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Taskforce (Taskforce) Fund Subcommittee review

1. On a monthly basis, a Taskforce Fund Subcommittee will review the shortlisted applications against the Fund's guiding principles and selection criteria. The Subcommittee comprises Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations who are members of the Taskforce and work across the following service systems:

- children, family and home
- health and wellbeing
- learning and skills
- justice and safety
- opportunity and prosperity
- culture and Country
- elders
- youth

2. Any conflicts of interest will be managed appropriately.

3. The Taskforce Fund Subcommittee will make recommendations to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on initiatives for approval based on the selection criteria.

Step 5: Ministerial approval and announcement

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will approve and announce initiatives on a monthly, rolling basis across the EOI period.

Funding for successful applicants



1. Enter into a funding agreement with the Victorian Government

Successful applicants will need to enter into a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (Agreement) with the relevant Victorian Government department. The Agreement will specify the initiative to be delivered and set out the funding conditions, a project plan, milestones and reporting requirements.

2. Reporting

While funding recipients will be required to comply with initiative monitoring and reporting requirements, the reporting is designed to be as least burdensome as possible. Standard templates will be provided for reporting. Key reporting requirements will include:

- verbal updates where appropriate to the relevant department
- a short written progress report halfway through the initiative timeline, providing a summary of the activities against milestones provided in the project plan
- a short written final report within six weeks of completion of the initiative, including photographs, films or mixed media, where appropriate
- a financial acquittal

3. Payments and milestones

The Victorian Government will pay invoices submitted upon completion of the milestones specified in the Agreement. Any proposed changes or variation to the initiative and initiative budget must be submitted to the relevant department and approved. Successful applicants can spend funds prior to the closure of the EOI process.

4. Overspend

Any overspend on initiatives will be the responsibility of the applicant and no further funding from the Fund will be provided. In the event of an underspend, the recipient organisation will need return any surplus funds they hold.