

GUIDELINES

Multicultural Business Chambers and Trader Groups program

1 Program summary

The Multicultural Business Chambers and Trader Groups program will provide grants to metropolitan and regional business chambers and trader groups to deliver locally led-activities or programs that increase multicultural business participation and provide support.

The program reflects the Victorian Government's commitment to support multicultural trader associations to ensure their members have access to services they need.

1.1 Program objectives

Key objectives of the grants program are to support business chambers and trader groups to run locally led initiatives between September 2024 and 30 April 2025 that:

- Enable local business collaboration and networking
- Educate, inform and empower multicultural small businesses
- Support culturally diverse small businesses to build capability and grow
- Promote and activate local economic activity.

1.2 Program outcomes

The intended outcomes of this program are:

- More multicultural businesses are participating in business development activities
- More multicultural businesses are participating in networking activities
- Business chambers and trader groups have a better understanding of the needs of culturally diverse businesses.

2 Available funding

Grants of between \$5,000 and up to \$20,000 are available to successful applicants.

A business chamber or trader group is eligible for one grant under the program.

3 Eligibility criteria

3.1 Eligible applicants

To be eligible to apply for a grant, the applicant must:

- a) be based in Victoria¹
- b) be a not-for-profit member organisation with a membership that is inclusive of multicultural businesses that operate in Victoria²
- c) have the core purpose of acting for its members
- d) hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- e) be registered with the responsible federal or state regulator³
- f) have completed all contractual obligations under rounds of the former Business Chambers and Trader Groups program (if applicable).

3.2 Ineligible applicants

Organisations that have received or are nominated to receive a multicultural trader grant to ensure their members have the right access to services they need under the Supporting our Multicultural Traders and Precincts commitment are not eligible for support under this program.

4 Project eligibility

4.1 Eligible Project Activities

The grant must be spent on eligible activities and expenditure that support the program objectives.

Eligible activities may include:

- business engagement and networking events, including in language
- business skill and capability development, including through information sharing, training, short courses, workshops and webinars
- upgrading digital channels and engagement to better support and promote members, including website development and in language resources
- enhancing business activation, including business promotion through marketing campaigns and local business expo events.

Applications to extend or repeat a previously funded initiative under rounds of the former Business Chambers and Trader Groups program must demonstrate the new benefits this project will deliver.

4.2 Eligible project expenses

Eligible expenses are costs directly attributable towards the project and may include:

- guest presenter, speaker or trainer engagement
- digital content development costs
- equipment hire
- advertising
- in language services
- supplementary resourcing to deliver a project, such as additional wages or contractor costs
- developer costs.

¹ Business chambers and trader groups that operate Australia-wide but with operations in Victoria are not eligible. The business chambers and trading groups must operate solely in Victoria for Victorian businesses.

² Multicultural businesses refers to businesses that identify as being of a specific ethnic, language or cultural community that has common needs, customs and traditions. Organisations that represent Victorian multicultural businesses in multiple locations or state-wide in Victoria are eligible.

³ Verification of business details provided may be undertaken with the Australian Business Register, Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulators.

4.3 Ineligible project expenses

Ineligible expenses include:

- business-as-usual operating expenses, unless a percentage of such expense is deemed an eligible expense in advance by the Department
- current wages paid to existing staff
- activities that have already received government funding support
- purchase of property and/or assets
- construction or capital works or related activities.

The Department reserves the right to determine eligible activities and expenditure in alignment with program objectives.

5 Assessment process

The following assessment process will be followed:

- All applications will be assessed for eligibility and may undergo due diligence checks.
- Eligible applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below by a panel of representatives of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (the Department).
- All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.
- The Department decides which grants to approve, based on the recommendations of the panel, the availability of grant funds and the purpose of the grant program.

Only final applications that are lodged with the Department will be assessed. Applications in draft stage will not be accepted or considered.

The Department's decisions on all matters pertaining to the award of funding under this program is at the Department's absolute discretion. This includes approving a lower amount than that applied for and amending funding conditions without notice.

5.1 Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below.

| Assessment criteria | Considerations | Weighting |
|--|--|------------|
| Criterion 1 – Objectives and Outcomes | | 60% |
| Project alignment with the program objectives and the potential to contribute to program outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well the project aligns with one or more of the program objectives and has the potential to contribute to program outcomes. • How well the project targets Victorian multicultural businesses and meets their needs. • The types of project activities to be delivered and the target group(s). • The expected reach of the activity (geographic, industries, community) and the ability to maximise numbers of participants, including multicultural businesses. • If the application proposes to extend or repeat a previously funded project under the former Business Chambers and Trader Groups program, what are the new or additional benefits of this project. | |

| Criterion 2 – Project implementation and organisational capability | | 40% |
|---|--|------------|
| The capability and capacity of the applicant to deliver the project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of in-house capability to develop and deliver the project. • Prior record of the successful delivery of projects to members and the target business community. • Quality of project and implementation planning, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ budget information including forecast costs ○ timing and key dates for project outcomes ○ resourcing and identification of contracting support. • Available co-funding or potential to attract extra sponsorship funding. | |

5.2 Applicant checks

Applicants are subject to due diligence assessments to enable the Department to assess the financial and other non-financial risks associated with the application. Outcomes from such assessments may be taken into account in any decision to recommend or award a grant and in contracting with successful applicants.

The Department may, at any time, remove an applicant from the application and assessment process, if in the Department's opinion, association with the applicant may bring the Department, a minister or the State of Victoria into disrepute.

6 How to apply

Applicants will apply online at the Business Victoria website.

Applications will be open from 15 May 2024 until 5:00pm on 17 July 2024.

All questions in the application form must be answered to enable timely assessment. Applicants must address the assessment criteria and provide a project budget and timeline.

Applicants may add attachments to the application form, noting:

- Up to 5 files and/or 5 URLs (external links) can be uploaded
- Attached files can be no more than 25MB in size each
- It may be necessary to combine supporting material into one document in some instances (eg. multiple images may be compiled into one PDF or PowerPoint file).


If you need an interpreter call TIS National on 13 14 50 and ask for the Business Victoria hotline. The operator will connect you with an interpreter in the language you asked for. You will be asked to provide your name and the name and phone number of the organisation you need to contact. The Business Victoria hotline number is 13 22 15.

If you have any other accessibility requirements please email Small Business Victoria at multicultural@business.vic.gov.au.

7 Conditions of funding

Successful applicants must enter into a grant agreement with the Department. The grant agreement outlines the commitments and obligations under the grant, as well as the general funding terms and conditions.

The applicant will be required to sign the grant agreement within 5 business days from notice of offer. The offer may be withdrawn if the grant agreement is not signed within the timeframe given.



The project, and any expenditure of funds associated with the project, must not commence until the grant agreement has been executed. Agreement execution means the grant agreement has been signed by both the Department and the applicant.

Once the agreement has been executed, the grant recipient (successful applicant) will be required to commence the project within the agreed timeframe. If a recipient does not commence the project by the commencement date, the Department has at its absolute discretion the option of terminating the agreement.

Grant funds will be released under agreed milestone payments after the grant agreement has been executed by both parties, anticipated as follows:

- 80% upon grant agreement being executed
- 20% upon receipt of the final project report, to the satisfaction of the Department.

Grant recipients will be required to report by 15 May 2025 on the outcomes of their project and contribute information and data about the funded project to the Department for the evaluation of the program.

Grant recipients may be required to provide copies of supporting documentation to evidence reported project expenditure and to return any unspent funds.

The Department reserves the right to request the applicant to provide further information should it be deemed necessary.

The State makes no representation that funding will be granted to any applicant and the State reserves its right to make no funds available under the Multicultural Business Chambers and Trader Groups program.

7.1 Publicity/Acknowledgement

The Department requires grant recipients to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support on marketing and promotional materials, which must be approved in advance by the Department. Acknowledgement of the Victorian Government's support in marketing and promotional material will depend on the grant given and should be specified in the grant agreement, e.g., required representation on channels or collateral such as websites, signage, advertisements, and brochures. The Department will supply the grant recipient with a logo suite and associated brand guidelines, as well as a guide on how to acknowledge government support, for the purposes of acknowledgment.

Grant recipients must obtain written approval from the Department before making public announcements about receiving the grant.

The Department may publicise the benefits accruing to a grant recipient associated with the grant and the State's support for the project, and recipients must cooperate with the Department in promoting the program. These requirements are currently outlined in the Grant Agreement. The Department may include the name of the grant recipient and the amount of funding granted in any publicity material and in the Department's annual report.

7.2 Privacy

Any personal information provided for this program will be collected and used by the Department for the purposes of assessing eligibility, program administration, program review and evaluation.

The Department completes a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied. This is part of our auditing and monitoring processes and for confirming eligibility across this program.

In the assessment of an application for the program, it may be necessary to share personal information with State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, as well as other external experts. If personal information about a third party is included in the application, the applicant must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.

The Department collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and other applicable laws.

Enquiries about access or correction to your personal information, can be emailed to multicultural@business.vic.gov.au.

Other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit.

7.3 Post Project Evaluation

By receiving a grant payment, all recipients agree to comply with the Department's performance monitoring and evaluation processes.

As a condition of funding, grant recipients will be required to participate in any program monitoring and evaluation activities initiated by the department. This may include completing surveys throughout the program and for a nominated period of time after program completion to measure progress to achieving outcomes.

Reporting is critical to the department in understanding program impact, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and delivering effective grant program outcomes for Victoria.

7.4 Compliance and Audit

The organisation provided with a grant may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives on the veracity of their application and use of government funds at the request of the Victorian Government, for a period of one year from receipt of payment.

If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading (as determined by the Department in its discretion), or the grant payment is not applied in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines and the application, the grant payment will be repayable on demand.

8 Probity and Decision-making

The Victorian Government makes every effort to ensure the grant application and assessment process is fair and undertaken in line with the published program guidelines.

Decisions in recommending and awarding grant funding under this program are at the Department's discretion. This includes not making any funding available or approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

These guidelines and application terms may be changed from time to time, as appropriate.

The Department may request the applicant provide further information should it be necessary to assess an application to the program's objectives.

8.1 Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations. A conflict of interest may arise where a grant applicant:

- Has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who is able to, or may be perceived to, influence the application assessment process, such as a Victorian Government staff member, or
- Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently.

Applicants must advise the department of any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest relating to a project for which it has applied for funding.

Victorian Government staff are required to act in accord with the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (Section 61)* issued under the *Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic)*. This includes an obligation to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible, and declare and manage any conflicts of interest that cannot be avoided.

9 GST

The Department will add GST to your grant payment if you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable. For example, if the approved funding is \$10,000 GST exclusive, the Department will process payments totalling \$11,000 (\$10,000 GST exclusive funding + \$1,000 GST).

The Department will not add GST to your grant payment if you are not registered for GST.

10 Complaints or feedback

Any complaints or feedback you have about this grant opportunity may be made in relation to:

- The timeliness of the process
- Communication provided by the Department
- Adherence to the published program guidelines.

The Department aims to respond to all complaints within 28 days. Re-assessment of an application or overturning of a funding decision for a merit-based grant, will not be considered through the complaints process.

You can send your written feedback to multicultural@business.vic.gov.au.

11 Other information

The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.

The Department will endeavour to notify all applicants of the outcome of their fully completed and submitted application by 31 August 2024. There may be delays if your application:

- does not meet all the eligibility criteria
- does not have correct evidence or documentation
- has incorrect information, such as ABN or incorporated association registration number.

Further information may be obtained at business.vic.gov.au or by contacting Business Victoria at multicultural@business.vic.gov.au or by phoning 13 22 15.