



Feedback for Applicants

Seniors Connected – Village Hubs National Grants Manager

Overview

The purpose of this grant is to engage a suitable organisation or consortia to manage the selection and administration of the grants to other organisations that will operate Village Hubs.

The successful Village Hubs National Grants Manager will assist the Australian Government establish at least 10 additional Village Hubs in various locations across Australia, targeting older Australians aged 55 years and over (or Indigenous Australians aged 50 or over) living in their community.

A number of Village Hubs already exist in Australia and overseas, demonstrating how this model can bring older Australians together through a range of social, physical, learning, arts and cultural activities. Village Hubs aim to address loneliness, build community connection and offer a network of informal community support.

The Seniors Connected Village Hub projects will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the model to build a long-term sustainable community-led initiative.

The application period opened on 8 October 2020 and closed on 4 November 2020. Up to \$4.7 million (GST exclusive) over 4 years is available for this grant opportunity (this includes \$3.9 million for the Village Hubs Grants Fund), starting from February 2021 and finishing in 30 June 2021. A total of 29 applications were received, of which 26 were eligible, making the assessment of the most suitable applications highly competitive. After assessment, and ranking of the most suitable applications, one application was selected for the total amount of \$4.7 million (as per section 3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines).

The feedback provided below on behalf of the Department of Social Services is to help grant applicants understand what generally comprised stronger and weaker responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity, and how to strengthen future applications.

Future grant opportunities may be available for this program. You can find out about new grant opportunities on [GrantConnect](#).

Selection process

An open competitive selection process was undertaken, allowing a range of organisations that met the eligibility criteria to apply.

Applications were first screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, including entity types, late applications, multiple

applications. All eligible and compliant applications were then assessed and moderated by the Department of Social Services against the 3 assessment criteria.

A Department of Social Services Selection Advisory Panel, with a mix of relevant policy, program and delivery expertise made funding recommendations to the Department of Social Services' Decision Maker. The recommendations were based on the strength of responses to the assessment criteria and the applicant's ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The Selection Advisory Panel considered all applications and their assessment results and made recommendations on applications having regard to:

- whether the project, or any of its elements did not align with the program objectives
- value for money
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- service provider mix
- how the services and/or project will be delivered.

The Department of Social Services' Decision Maker approved funding to the successful grant recipient.

The successful applicants proposed activities that were eligible, appropriate and considered effective for achieving the program objectives. They demonstrated their suitability for public funding, value for money and met all of the eligibility requirements in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

General feedback

Applicants could have generally strengthened their application by:

- ensuring they thoroughly read the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- ensuring all aspects of the criteria were addressed
- demonstrating their consideration of the grant program's objectives
- only including relevant information that is not ambiguous
- supporting claims with relevant, reliable and current evidence linking claims back to the policy objectives and the Village Hubs National Grants Manager Activity to be delivered.

Criterion 1

Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity to the specified target group.

Successful applications clearly:

Demonstrated an expert knowledge and understanding of all of the following:

- mental health issues associated with loneliness and social isolation in the older Australian population, with a particular focus on older Australians living in the community
- how the Village Hubs model can support older Australians living in the community to achieve positive mental health outcomes by alleviating loneliness and social isolation, and complement other services in the community such as clinical mental health treatment and other aged care services

delivering services to Indigenous Australians in a culturally safe and appropriate way where relevant.

Stronger responses clearly demonstrated:

- expert knowledge and understanding of the mental health issues associated with loneliness and social isolation in the older Australian population, with a particular focus on older Australians living in the community
- expert knowledge and understanding of the Village Hubs model and how it can support older Australians living in the community
- made a strong case for how Village Hubs can complement other services in the community such as clinical mental health treatment and other aged care services

expert knowledge and understanding of delivering services to Indigenous Australians in a culturally safe and appropriate way.

Weaker responses did not:

- clearly demonstrate an expert knowledge and understanding of the mental health issues associated with loneliness and social isolation in the older Australian population, with a particular focus on older Australians living in the community
- clearly demonstrate an expert knowledge and understanding of the Village Hubs model and how it can support older Australians living in the community, and complement other services in the community such as clinical mental health treatment and other aged care services
- clearly demonstrate an expert knowledge and understanding of delivering services to Indigenous Australians in a culturally safe and appropriate way

OR

align with the objectives of the Village Hubs National Grants Manager Activity.

Criterion 2

Describe how you will achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders.

Successful applications clearly:

Addressed requirements in section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and demonstrated the following:

- experience in developing, delivering and managing similar/relevant services; working collaboratively with other government and non-government agencies to ensure quality service delivery, including already established relationships with relevant organisations in the community sector
- how their selection and assessment process to establish the new Village Hubs (refer to section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) will be developed in consultation with the department and incorporate good grants administration practice including coverage of the key principles of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)

how they will encourage and support individual Village Hubs towards long-term financial sustainability.

Stronger responses clearly:

- demonstrated experience in developing, delivering and managing similar/relevant on-funding services collaboratively with other government and non-government agencies to ensure quality service delivery
- demonstrated established relationships with relevant organisations in the community sector
- described an appropriate selection and assessment process to establish the new Village Hubs in consultation with the Department of Social Services and in line with section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- demonstrated expertise with grants administration with appropriate systems and risk management processes cover the key principles of the CGRGs

made a strong case for how, as the National Grants Manager, the organisation will support individual Hubs towards long-term financial sustainability.

Weaker responses did not:

- clearly demonstrated experience in developing, delivering and managing similar/relevant on-funding services, supported by evidence
- clearly describe an appropriate selection and assessment process to establish the new Village Hubs in line with section 2.2 of the GOGs, in consultation with the Department of Social Services

OR

- clearly described how, as the National Grants Manager, the organisation will support individual Hubs towards long-term financial sustainability.

In a limited number of responses:

Proposals had a narrow focus, small coverage area, or proposed supporting a cohort not aligned with the Activity objectives.

Criterion 3

Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capabilities to deliver the activity objectives.

Successful applications clearly:

Demonstrated all of the following:

- your organisation's capacity to administer the Village Hubs Grants Fund, (undertaking selection, on-funding and oversight of at least 10 new Village Hubs), including:
 - appropriate management, financial and administration systems
 - facilitating outcomes measurement and reporting
 - a statement regarding your organisation's financial viability to undertake this activity
 - knowledge and understanding of the PGPA Act and the CGRGs, and capability to meet the reporting and performance requirements necessary to ensure compliance
 - risk mitigation and management associated with fraud and conflict of interest, including relationship management with grant recipients and sector experts.
- how your organisation, as the National Grants Manager, would use existing infrastructure to allow for efficient implementation and oversight of the new Village Hubs

the relevant experience, qualifications and skills of the members of your organisation to assist in delivering the Village Hubs Activity.

Stronger responses clearly demonstrated:

- demonstrated experience and capacity to administer the Village Hubs Grants Fund (selection and on-funding), supported by relevant evidence
- demonstrated experience and understanding of the importance of the CGRGs with systems and processes to meet the reporting and performance requirements necessary to ensure compliance
- demonstrated national reach, relevant experience and capacity to assume the role of National Grants Manager, overseeing the establishment of at least 10 new Village Hubs in communities across Australia
- demonstrated preparedness to leverage existing infrastructure to allow for efficient implementation and oversight of the Village Hubs, including how the Village Hub Grant Manager role would be integrated into their core business

clearly described the details of relevant members of the organisation that have the experience, qualifications and skills to assist in delivering the Village Hubs Activity.

Weaker responses did not:

- clearly demonstrate capacity to administer the Village Hubs Grants Fund (selection, on-funding and oversight of at least 10 Village Hubs)
- clearly demonstrate how existing infrastructure would allow for efficient implementation and oversight of the Village Hubs

OR

provide sufficient information of relevant members of the organisation to demonstrate they have the experience, qualifications and skills to assist in delivering the Village Hubs Activity.