

Mount Alexander Shire

Community Grants Program Guidelines

Working together for a healthy, connected shire



Our Community Grants Program

Program Objective:

Mount Alexander Shire Council allocates funds each year to support new and innovative community projects that align with the pillars and strategic objectives in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Two funding rounds of \$50,000 are open each year (January and July).

All applications must be for projects that are:

- based in Mount Alexander Shire and
- benefit the Mount Alexander Shire community

Applicants are encouraged to read our Council Plan 2021-2025 and other relevant strategies and plans available on our website prior to applying. These include but not limited to Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan, Climate Change Strategy, Active Transport Strategy.

Our pillars and strategic objectives:

Pillars		
A healthy, connected and inclusive community	An environment for people and nature	A resilient and growing local economy
Objectives		
Services in our community are accessible and coordinated	We are working locally to address the climate emergency	Our local economy is diverse and resilient
Our community is inclusive and connected	We are maintaining, improving and celebrating our places and spaces	We are supporting continuous learning and personal growth
Our community feels safe, regardless of identity or circumstance	Our community is growing in harmony with nature	We are helping businesses make their work simpler and more sustainable
Our community is physically and mentally healthy	We are focused on the housing affordability challenge in our community	We are attracting and building investment in our cultural and creative community
	We are facilitating managed growth of our towns while protecting natural assets	

Key dates and timelines for 2025:

	Round 1	Round 2
Community Grants Program OPENS	22 January	14 July
Community Grants Program CLOSES . Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.	10 February (at 4:00pm)	4 August (at 4:00pm)
Applications assessed.	February	August
Councillors briefed on funding recommendations. Applicants notified of the outcome of their application.	March	September
Outcome of funding round presented at Council Meeting	April	September/October
A list of successful applications will be published on Council's website and to local media. Signed funding agreements & invoices due. Funds paid to successful applicants	April/May	October

Our funding streams:

Small Grants

- Up to \$3,000 available per application.
- Applicants must be a not-for-profit, incorporated association, registered charity or have an auspice. Noting that an auspice must have an ABN.
- Application process: Online application including budget.
- Reporting requirements: Completion report with a summary of outcomes, including benefits and challenges of the project and photo evidence and/or media links. Public acknowledgement of Council/Community Grant support must also be included.

Partnership Grants

- Up to \$10,000 available per application.
- Funding for projects of up to three years in length involving a minimum of three partners.
- Applicants and all partners must be a not-for-profit, incorporated association or a registered charity. Auspice arrangements are not applicable.
- Application process: Online application including an itemised budget, project plan and evidence of partnership.
- Reporting requirements: Completion report with a summary of outcomes, including benefits and challenges of the project, a financial statement of income and expenditure, and photo evidence and/or media links. Public acknowledgement of Council/Community Grant support must also be included.

How to apply:

- you are required to discuss your project idea with a member of the Community Partnerships Team, to ensure that your project adheres the guidelines. Please phone 5471 1700, or email grants@mountalexander.vic.gov.au, to arrange a time to discuss.
- We use an online platform called SmartyGrants where you can complete and submit your application. If this is the first time you have used SmartyGrants you will be prompted to register before beginning your application.
- Once your application is complete, you will receive an automated email acknowledging successful submission. Please check the round closing date so you don't miss the deadline to submit.
- **Apply online** via <https://mountalexander.smartygrants.com.au/>

Applications will not be considered if:

- Late or incomplete.
- The project or activity has not been discussed with a Council officer.
- The applicant has an outstanding grant acquittal or debt to Council.
- The applicant already receives funding from Council for the activity.
- The project has already commenced or has been completed, and the funds are to be applied retrospectively.

Who can apply?

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

- Be listed as an incorporated association ([see Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)), a registered not-for-profit ([ACNC Charity Register](#)), a registered foundation or have an auspice arrangement.
- Have an ABN or provide a Statement by a Supplier form from the Australian Taxation Office. The statement can be found via the ATO <https://www.ato.gov.au/forms/statement-by-a-supplier-not-quoting-an-abn/>
- May only receive ONE grant, per funding stream, per 12 months. For example; If you were successful for a Small Grant in 2024 Round 1, as long as that grant has been acquitted, you could next apply for a Small Grant during 2025 Round 1.

Who can't apply?

- An unincorporated association, unregistered charity or an individual/group without an auspice.
- Private, profit making individuals, organisations or businesses.
- Applicants with an outstanding acquittal for a Mount Alexander Shire Council Community Grant.
- Applicants already receiving funding from Mount Alexander Shire Council for the same project or where an existing agreement precludes receipt of additional Council funding.
- Community Asset Committees (previously Section 86 committees).

What will not be funded?

- Applications seeking funding to cover recurring projects or activities.
- Ongoing and/or operational costs (e.g. insurance, utilities, rent, salaries, administration, acquitting your grant).
- Applicants seeking to make a profit that would mostly benefit an individual.
- The costs associated with establishing and running events held in Mount Alexander Shire. These may be applied for via Events Grants.
- Groups, projects or activities that are:
 - religious or political in nature or support a religious or political cause
 - of a discriminatory nature in terms of race, disability, age, sex, gender or sexuality
 - requesting donations or fundraising on behalf of a third party
 - already commenced, recurrent or have been completed
 - the responsibility of the State or Federal Government, exemptions will be considered for projects that fall outside of core business funded activities that provide benefit to the local community. This include: local CFA and SES branches, Dhelkaya Health Community Health (CHIRP), local state schools.
- Maintenance or capital works to buildings, with the exception of environmental sustainability initiatives and accessibility improvements. Capital works is defined as 'building and engineering works that create an asset as well as constructing or installing facilities & fixtures associated with and forming an integral part'.

- Projects that have the purpose of improving Council owned land or buildings.
- Activities or works on land which is managed by State or Federal Government.
- On the ground environmental works.
- Partnership grant applications for equipment only.

Preparing your application:

- This is a competitive program and no application is guaranteed funding. Please consider your responses carefully, and if needed seek advice from council officers when discussing your project.
- Before starting your application, you are required to discuss your project idea with a member of the Community Partnerships Team, to ensure that your project adheres the guidelines. Please phone 5471 1700, or email grants@mountalexander.vic.gov.au, to arrange a time to discuss.
- Please ensure your project or initiative can be linked back to the objectives of council.
- Give clear explanations of the need and benefit to the community.
- All successful applications will be required to acknowledge council support, consider how you will achieve this in your project planning (as required per Funding Agreements).
- Auspiced applications must have a signed auspice agreement. An auspice agreement template is available on Council's website (for Small Grants only).

Quotes are not required but projected project costs and or budgeted items are reviewed as part of the assessment.

How will my application be assessed?

Eligible applications are assessed by a cross-organisational panel against the following weighting and criteria listed below.

Applications will be ranked from highest to lowest score and those with the highest scores will be awarded funds until the total pool is exhausted.

25% how well the project aligns with the strategic objectives of the Council Plan

50% how the project benefits and/or meets a need in the Mount Alexander Shire community

25% demonstrated ability to plan and deliver the project

How will I know the outcome of my application?

Successful applicants will be notified by email and sent a funding agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the funding being provided by Council.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email and provided with feedback. Applicants may also request to speak with a Council officer about their unsuccessful application for further feedback.

Next steps for successful applicants:

Each successful applicant is required to submit a signed funding agreement and tax invoice to indicate their acceptance of the funding and Council's terms.

Applicants (and where relevant, their auspice and all partner's in a Partnership Grant) are required to sign the funding agreement.

To receive your funding, Council now requires all applicants to be registered with a third-party entity called Eftsure. You will be contacted via email and phone by Eftsure and asked to verify your details, please check your junk inbox and follow the links to verify your information.

Council requires you to verify with Eftsure to be able to pay your funded amount. For quick payment please verify at your earliest convenience once you received the email. You will only need to do this once, unless your details change.

This system has been introduced to tighten security and eliminate the risk of fraudulent behaviour.

If you have any questions please contact Procurement 5471 1700.

You will be requested to also invoice Council with the following details:

- Funding amount, plus GST if the organisation is registered for GST
- Bank account details BSB and Account number
- Your SmartyGrants application number as a reference, for e.g. CG2024/1/01
- Organisations name, address, email & phone number
- ABN
- Invoices to be made out to Mount Alexander Shire Council
- For those applicants with an auspice, the auspice organisation will need to issue the invoice and funds can only be paid to the auspice organisation.

If a group or auspice is registered for GST, GST should be paid in addition to the grant amount (E.g. for a grant of \$2,500 awarded to a group registered for GST, the total payment amount would be \$2,750.) The Australian Business Register indicates if a group is registered for GST.

Do you require assistance?

We are happy to discuss any requirements that would be of assistance in completing an application for the Community Grants Program.

Please contact the Community Partnerships team:

Phone: (03) 5471 1700

Email: grants@mountalexander.vic.gov.au