

# Uptown Grant Program – Round 4

## Guidelines

February 2026

[nsw.gov.au/uptowngrantprogram](https://nsw.gov.au/uptowngrantprogram)



# Uptown



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# 1 Glossary

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## 1.1 Glossary

For the purpose of the grant program, the following terms have been provided to be drawn upon when applying:

**Active District Team members** are those that are part of the Eligible Entity and are actively involved in the participation, planning, management, delivery or decision-making for the funded project.

**Collaborations** are formal working arrangements with other organisations which may include sponsorships or partnerships.

**Company Limited by Guarantee** means a company registered as such under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), being a company formed on the principle of having the liability of its members limited to the respective amounts that the members undertake to contribute to the property of the company if it is wound up.

A **co-contribution** may include cash or in-kind support such as other grant funding, earned income (e.g. membership fees, ticket sales or merchandise sales), fundraising, corporate sponsorship, donated goods, subsidies, and fee waivers. General volunteering or goodwill collaboration from local businesses within the District does not constitute a co-contribution.

**Districts** are geographically distinct micro-areas (e.g. a high street or block of streets) that have unique identities and diverse cultural and entertainment offerings across multiple venues within walking or biking distance.

A **District Team** is an incorporated entity with membership that consists of representatives from eight (8) or more local businesses, and are aligned under a unified identity as a means of engaging residents, visitors, and collaborators to a district. Members of the District Team are formally registered in the incorporated entity.

Members may come from various sectors to serve the community around them with a range of amenities and services, such as accommodation, arts and culture, tourism, hospitality, live performance, retail and sport.

**Incorporated Association** is an association registered under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* (NSW). Equipment refers to physical or tangible resources or property.

A **new or enhanced collective initiative** is strategic activity designed to generate measurable collective impact within a district. It may involve the creation of a new event, program, or initiative, or the enhancement of an existing one, with clearly defined outcomes tracked through reportable metrics.

**Non-distributing Co-operative** means a co-operative registered under the *Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012* (NSW) that is prohibited from giving returns or distributions on surplus or share capital to members, other than the nominal value of shares (if any) at winding up. (Section 19, *Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012* (NSW)).

**Previous recipient** is a District Team comprising of members that are substantially the same, and that represent geographical boundaries that are substantially the same, as a District Team that has previously executed an Uptown Grant Program funding deed. The final decision on whether an applicant is a previous recipient will be determined by the Department.

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# 2 Overview of the grant program

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## 2.1 Introduction

This document contains information about the Uptown Grant Program (the Program) Round 4 and how you can make an application. You should read this document in full before you apply. It sets out:

- the purpose of the Uptown Grant Program
- eligibility requirements
- assessment criteria
- how applicants are assessed
- how funding recipients will be monitored and evaluated.

The Program has been developed by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner (O24HEC) and is administered by Create NSW, both within the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (the Department).

The Program Guidelines (Guidelines) may be updated by the Department at any time. If this occurs, the revised Guidelines or any addenda will be published on the Uptown Grant Program Round 4 webpage. Should there be an update to the Guidelines and your application is already submitted, you will be notified and be provided with an opportunity to modify your application.

The Program will be administered in accordance with the [NSW Grants Administration Guide](#).

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## 2.2 Key dates and details

Grant Program Details	
Opening date and time	25 February 2026, 10:00AM AEDT
Closing date and time	31 March 2026, 2:00PM AEDT
Application outcome date	May 2026
Project delivery period (for successful applications)	1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027
Payment schedule	Milestone 1: 80% of the funding amount upon execution of funding deed Milestone 2: 20% of funding amount on O24HEC's written approval of the Progress Report (February 2027)
Reporting requirements	Baseline Report – by September 2026 Check-in Report and Meeting – by November 2026 Progress Report – by February 2027 Acquittal Report – by July 2027
Decision-maker	Secretary, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, or delegate
NSW Government Agency	Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner
Type of grant opportunity	Open, competitive
Grant funding pool	\$4 million (excl. GST)

Grant Program Details	
Grant value	<p>From \$100,000 to \$120,000 (excl. GST) per District Team.</p> <p>Districts that have already received two rounds or more of Uptown Grant Program funding will be required to co-contribute a minimum of 20% of the requested or final approved funding amount as additional funding.</p>
Enquiries	<p><a href="mailto:uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au">uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au</a></p> <p>Department staff can be contacted between 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday</p>

## 2.3 About the Program

The Uptown Grant Program is a key element of the *Vibrant, Coordinated Precincts and Places* strategic pillar within the NSW Government’s 24-Hour Economy Strategy.

Round 4 of the Uptown Grant Program (the Program) is designed to support and strengthen formally aligned business communities (District Teams) to further develop their local area into vibrant going-out hubs.

A total of \$4 million (excl. GST) is available for this round.

The value of the grant is available from \$100,000 to \$120,000 (excl. GST).

District Teams that have already received two rounds or more of Uptown Grant Program funding will be required to co-contribute a minimum of 20% of the requested or final approved funding amount as additional funding.

## 2.4 Purpose and objectives

The Program aims to advance the development of vibrant going-out districts across New South Wales by supporting formally aligned groups of local businesses (District Teams) to collectively enhance their district offering and build consumer engagement with their district.

The Program will provide funding to District Teams for coordination and the delivery of new or enhanced collective initiatives. The purpose of the funding is to:

- Strengthen local business collaboration within districts
- Diversify the consumer offering within districts
- Improve awareness of the unique identity of districts
- Improve social, cultural, environmental or economic outcomes for districts.

## 2.5 Districts

Districts are geographically distinct micro-areas (e.g. a high street or block of streets) that have unique identities and diverse cultural and entertainment offerings across multiple venues within walking or biking distance. Applicants will be asked during the application process to identify the

geographical boundary of their district for the purposes of the Program, noting that funding must be used for activities that benefit the approved district.

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## 2.6 District Team

A District Team is an incorporated entity with membership that consists of representatives from eight (8) or more local businesses, and are aligned under a unified identity as a means of engaging residents, visitors, and collaborators to a district. Members of the District Team are formally registered in the incorporated entity.

Members may come from various sectors to serve the community around them with a range of amenities and services, such as accommodation, arts and culture, tourism, hospitality, live performance, retail and sport.

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## 2.7 Grant value

The amount available for each recipient is \$100,000 to \$120,000 (excl. GST).

Districts Teams that have already received two rounds or more of Uptown Grant Program funding will be required to co-contribute a minimum of 20% of the requested funding amount or final approved as additional funding.

All grants will be paid inclusive of GST.

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# 3 Selection criteria

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## 3.1 Eligibility criteria

District Teams which meet the eligibility criteria:

1. are an Eligible Entity; and
2. located in an Eligible Local Government Area or are a previous Uptown Grant Program recipient.

Applicants are not eligible to apply if, at the time of application, they are not currently one of the below eligible entities.

The Department cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

The Department cannot award a grant if you receive funding from another government source for the same scope of works for the project, to mitigate against the risk of 'double dipping' for government funding.

The Department reserves the right to not recommend a previous Uptown Grant Program recipient for funding where it has not formally acquitted Round 1 and/or Round 2 Uptown Grant Program funding to demonstrate that the funded activities have been delivered.

### 3.1.1 Eligible entity types

District Teams must be one of the following entities to apply:

- Incorporated Association;
- Company Limited by Guarantee; or
- Non-distributing Co-operative.

Refer to the Glossary for a definition of each eligible entity.

To be eligible, applicants **must**:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) for an entity that is registered in NSW;
- be registered for GST;
- have an account with an Australian financial institution;
- have a minimum of eight (8) registered members of the applying entity that operate under different ABNs based in the district;
- be solvent; and
- be able to execute a funding deed with the NSW Government if your application is successful.

The Department cannot provide applicants with legal, business or financial advice about entity types.

### 3.1.2 Council letter of support

To be eligible, applicants must provide a letter of support from the relevant local council organisation, which:

- is from a senior staff member (e.g. Chief Executive, General Manager, Director) of the council (the letter **must not** be from an elected official such as a councillor)
- confirms the council's support for the collective initiative(s) proposed in the application
- provides the contact details of a relevant staff member that can be contacted about the application.

If the letter of support is not available at the time of application, applicants must provide evidence (e.g. email correspondence) confirming that the council are in the process of obtaining formal support from a senior staff member (e.g. Chief Executive, General Manager, Director). The final letter of support must be submitted to the O24HEC within a week of applications closing and will be required prior to any funding decision.

### 3.1.3 Eligible Local Government

1. Bayside Council
2. Blacktown City Council
3. Blue Mountains City Council
4. Burwood Council
5. Camden Council
6. Campbelltown City Council
7. City of Canada Bay Council
8. City of Canterbury-Bankstown
9. City of Newcastle
10. City of Parramatta Council
11. City of Ryde
12. City of Sydney
13. Cumberland City Council
14. Fairfield City Council
15. Georges River Council
16. Hawkesbury City Council
17. Hornsby Shire Council
18. Hunter's Hill Council
19. Inner West Council
20. Ku-ring-gai Council
21. Lane Cove Council
22. Liverpool City Council
23. Mosman Municipal Council
24. North Sydney Council
25. Northern Beaches Council
26. Penrith City Council
27. Randwick City Council
28. Strathfield Council
29. Sutherland Shire Council
30. The Hills Shire Council
31. Waverley Council
32. Willoughby City Council
33. Wollondilly Shire Council
34. Wollongong City Council
35. Woollahra Municipal Council

#### Local Government Areas exception

Applicants will not be subject to the LGA eligibility criteria if they were a previous recipient under Round 1, Round 2 and/or Round 3 of the Uptown Grant Program.

### 3.1.4 Co-contribution

Applicants who have previously received two or more rounds of funding through the Uptown Grant Program are required to co-contribute a minimum of 20% of the requested or final approved funding amount as additional funding.

For example, a funding request of \$100,000 requires a minimum co-contribution of \$20,000. Based on this request, the total project budget will be a minimum of \$120,000.

Applicants that are required to co-contribute, and that do not identify a contribution income source in their Budget, may not be considered further, at the discretion of the Department.

Refer to the Glossary for what constitutes co-contribution.

### 3.1.5 What can be funded

Only eligible activities may be funded from the proceeds of a grant under the Program.

Eligible activities are set out in the tables below.

Funding purpose	Example initiative
<p>Funding may be used to deliver new or enhanced collective initiatives that seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen local business collaboration within the district</li> <li>diversify the consumer offering within the district</li> <li>improve awareness of the unique identity of the district</li> <li>improve social, cultural, environmental or economic outcomes for the district.</li> </ul> <p>Collective initiatives must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>involve a minimum of eight (8) businesses in the District</li> <li>have reportable metrics to measure the impact of the initiative, such as ticket sales, voucher redemption, in-venue spend, consumer perception etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Initiatives may include, but are not limited, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activations that leverage major events</li> <li>collaborative programming to showcase First Nations and multicultural artists</li> <li>events that embed sustainability principles into a District</li> <li>collective late night trading initiatives</li> <li>implementing a revenue scheme to strengthen the financial sustainability of the district (E.g. membership fee structure development, merchandise development)</li> </ul> <p>Applicants should consider environmental sustainability for any marketing/promotional activities and/or events and activations, such as avoiding the production of single-use items, where appropriate.</p>

Budget category	Eligible costs
<p><b>Coordination (25% minimum spend)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coordinating the District Team (including the project administration, record keeping, reporting, business engagement, etc.)</li> <li>being the main contact point for the District Team and for the O24HEC (and Create NSW as the grant administrator) and for local council</li> <li>community and stakeholder outreach and engagement</li> <li>growing the number of businesses involved in the District Team</li> <li>delivering the District Team's Project Plan</li> <li>ensuring activities that are funded under the proceeds of the Program are delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>salary/wages and entitlements for employees specifically engaged for the project, i.e. the direct employment of a staff member to manage the coordination of your district and its activities</li> <li>contract employment of a staff member(s) to manage the coordination of your District and its activities</li> <li>third-party professional services to manage the coordination of your District and its activities, e.g. bookkeeping systems, legal fees.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: The staff member may be employed by either the Eligible Entity or a member business that is reimbursed.</p> <p>Businesses will be required to provide evidence of any payments relating to the above activities. Payments must be in line with relevant standards,</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring reporting requirements for the Program are met</li> <li>embedding Purple Flag principles into the precinct</li> <li>growing the number of partnerships and collaborations with the District</li> </ul>	industry rates and awards (if applicable).
<b>Collective initiatives</b>	Any eligible costs that are required to deliver the collective District Initiative(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>artist fees</li> <li>AV and staging equipment hire</li> <li>program and production development fees</li> <li>advisory costs e.g. revenue scheme development</li> <li>First Nations consultant fees</li> <li>sustainability consultant fees</li> <li>council fees, including venue hire fees and traffic management costs</li> <li>licensing fees</li> <li>graphic design</li> <li>photography and other assets</li> <li>website domain fees and subscriptions</li> <li>branding pack</li> <li>creative agency fees</li> <li>design and production costs</li> <li>social media ads</li> <li>advertising fees</li> <li>marketing/PR agency fees</li> <li>influencer fees</li> <li>promotional material e.g. merchandise</li> </ul>

If the application is successful, we may ask applicants to verify the project cost and request evidence of costs such as supplier contracts, quotes, invoices and receipts. We may request financial reports and credit checks from independent third-party service providers.

Applicants must demonstrate value for money by ensuring project costs are reasonable and reflective of market rates.

The Department will make the final decision on whether a claimed cost is eligible or reasonable and only pay the reasonable amount in its sole discretion.

### 3.1.6 Ineligible costs

The grant cannot be used to fund the following activities:

- rent and utilities
- the purchase of land or property
- venue hire (excluding council-owned venues)
- activities, equipment or supplies that are already being supported through other sources
- financing costs, including interest and debt financing

- maintenance and repairs
- capital works, infrastructure and signage
- purchasing and installation of permanent equipment/fixed assets
- fundraising/prizes
- education or training costs
- costs incurred before the approved project start date
- activity that takes place before the start or after the end of the project delivery period
- activity that constitutes the normal course of business for District Team members, not related to eligible grant activities
- activity that is un-related to the district
- activity that is not clearly aligned to the Program objectives
- hospitality costs associated with business-as-usual activities such as District Team member meetings
- activities that will not be delivered prior to the end of the project delivery period
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation.

The above list of ineligible activities is not exhaustive.

### 3.1.7 Number of applications

Eligible entities may only submit one application under the Program.

## 3.2 Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following 4 assessment criteria:

- Value for money
- District Team
- Governance
- Longevity

Criteria and key considerations	What you need to provide	Weighting
<b>Value for Money</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment to the Program objective</li> <li>• Deliverability within the project delivery period</li> <li>• Reportable metrics and outcomes</li> </ul>	<b>Project Plan</b> A comprehensive 12-month Project Plan for your District which outlines the deliverables you seek to achieve. The 12-month Project Plan should clearly outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinator role and activities</li> <li>• new or enhanced collective initiative(s), including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ initiative description and purpose</li> <li>○ initiative dates</li> <li>○ target audience</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	50%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility of budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participating businesses (must involve a minimum of eight (8) businesses in the District) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities and deliverables</li> <li>communication overview (e.g. platforms, channels to be used)</li> <li>outcomes</li> <li>success measures</li> </ul> </li> <li>timeline for delivery, including key milestones and ability to deliver within 12 months.</li> </ul> <p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>A budget breakdown for costs associated with Coordination and costs associated with each collective initiative.</p> <p>The budget must demonstrate clear use of funds through identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the total amount being sought</li> <li>costs for eligible activities and deliverables</li> <li>adherence to the minimum 25% spend on Coordination</li> <li>how co-contribution will be spent (if applicable).</li> </ul> <p><b>Co-contribution</b></p> <p>District Teams that have previously received two rounds or more of funding must also co-contribute a minimum of 20% of the requested or final approved funding amount. Co-contributions may include cash or in-kind support such as other grant funding, earned income (e.g. membership fees, ticket sales or merchandise sales), fundraising, corporate sponsorship, donated goods, subsidies, and fee waivers. General volunteering or goodwill collaboration from local businesses within the District does not constitute a co-contribution.</p> <p><b>Minimum fees for musicians</b></p> <p>The NSW Government requires that all musicians involved in publicly funded events receive a minimum performance fee of \$250. All applicants must demonstrate they meet this requirement in their proposed budget.</p>	
<p><b>District Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance to the Project Plan and vision</li> <li>Experience and ability to deliver the project</li> </ul>	<p>Details of the District Team including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of members</li> <li>relevance to the Project Plan and vision</li> <li>relevant experience delivering collective initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>Details of the registered members within the Eligible Entity that are actively involved in the Project Plan (minimum of eight (8), including a breakdown of:</p>	<p>15%</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the names and addresses of the businesses involved</li> <li>• the sectors represented</li> <li>• the role of the members in delivering the Project Plan.</li> </ul> <p>These actively involved businesses (“<b>Active District Team members</b>”) will be assessed for the purposes of the Assessment Criteria.</p>	
<p><b>Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational readiness and accountability</li> <li>• Risk mitigation</li> </ul>	<p>Governance structures and processes that support the successful delivery of the Project Plan and collaboration of the District Team:</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will key decisions be made?</li> <li>• How will key decisions be communicated?</li> <li>• How will procurement of suppliers be undertaken?</li> <li>• How will issues and conflict be resolved?</li> </ul> <p>Demonstration that risks relating to the Project Plan have been identified in a Risk Management Plan and how they will be managed.</p>	15%
<p><b>Longevity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment and capacity for growth</li> <li>• Local business community support</li> <li>• Future viability</li> <li>• Alignment with local government</li> </ul>	<p>Local business engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategy for increasing and/or sustaining District Team member engagement</li> <li>• evidence of local businesses participating in District initiatives or activities</li> <li>• number of businesses featured in District marketing and promotion activities.</li> </ul> <p>Sponsorships and external partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence of past, current or planned sponsorships and/or external partnerships</li> <li>• strategy for increasing and/or sustaining District Team sponsorships and/or external partnerships (including in-kind support)</li> <li>• evidence of local government engagement on District initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>Other income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence of other District income generated in the last 12 months, such as other grant funding, membership fees, merchandise sales, ticket sales, corporate donated goods, subsidies, fundraising and fee waivers.</li> </ul>	20%

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## 3.3 Application requirements

To be considered for this Program, applications must:

- be sufficiently detailed and specific to allow consideration against the Assessment Criteria
- provide a completed application form and associated templates
- be submitted by the deadline.

Where an applicant does not provide the required information identified above, the Department reserves the right to:

- provide the applicant with the opportunity to provide the required information within probity requirements
- assess the application on the basis of the information provided
- deem the application to be non-conforming and decline the application, including where the application is considered not viable due to unsatisfactory governance or where the application does not meet a satisfactory standard against one or more of the assessment criteria.

Other relevant factors and risks may also be considered, as determined by the Department, through its due diligence activities, in its sole discretion, including:

- assessment of the applicant's management, its directors and officers and entities or individuals that exercise control over an applicant against the eligibility criteria
- assessment of other factors that may cause applicants to be unsuitable for support, such as any personnel or business activities that could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government.

The Department reserves the right to use any other resource, process or procedure available – which may include the use of third-party services – to assess any claims made by, or risks associated with, the applicant.

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## 3.4 Approvals

Endorsement/provision of a grant under this Program does not negate the need for successful applicants to obtain all necessary/required approvals or consents for events or activations if applicable. Events or activations must adhere to local planning controls and approvals and have the endorsement of any relevant sponsors.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to ensure they are aware of all approvals or consents required and can demonstrate they have consulted with relevant parties.

Proposed projects are not required to have received approvals prior to applying. However, they must demonstrate an approach to achieving approvals in the Project Plan. Proposals with existing approvals may be ranked higher for their deliverability.

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# 4 Application process

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## 4.1 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these Grant Guidelines. The Grant Guidelines, any alterations and addenda<sup>1</sup> will be published on the [Uptown Grant Program Round 4](#) webpage.

To apply, you must:

- complete and submit the application through the SmartyGrants portal
- provide all information requested
- address and meet all the eligibility criteria
- address all the relevant assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments and templates
- submit your application in accordance with the timelines outlined in these Guidelines.

You are responsible for ensuring your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Crimes Act 1900 No 40*. We will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

Applications are completed and submitted online via the SmartyGrants portal. You will receive an automated email from SmartyGrants when your application is received. You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at [uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au](mailto:uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au)

We do not have to accept any additional information or requests from you to correct your application after the closing time. You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

In the unlikely scenario that there are changes to the Grant Guidelines or the application process, the Department will notify you via email and provide you with information about whether and how to amend your application accordingly.

Applicants must not lobby the NSW Government on an issue related or seen to be related to the Program that may or may be perceived to give an unfair advantage to the applicant. Applicants are required to comply with all applicable laws including the [NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct](#).

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## 4.2 Late applications

Applications will not be received after the closing date and time, unless there were technical difficulties outside of your control that prevented you submitting your application.

Failure to allow sufficient time to prepare, review and submit an application is not considered a technical issue.

A technical issue could include major network outages, or errors with the SmartyGrants platform.

If a technical issue has occurred, you must contact the Department within 60 minutes of applications closing and provide the following:

- time-stamped error message/s (this may be in the form of screenshots with relevant meta-data) to support and verify your claim

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<sup>1</sup> Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to closing times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

- any other supporting documentation, which may include downloaded copies of your application form and any attachments.

Late applications due to technical difficulties will be reviewed and eligibility determined with absolute discretion by the Director, Programs within the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. Late applications will only be considered where the acceptance would not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process. Applicants will be notified on the outcome and next steps following the review.

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## 4.3 Enquiries and application help

If your district program involves working or engaging with Aboriginal communities, artists and/or arts and cultural workers please refer to the NSW Aboriginal Arts & Cultures for guidance. Just as Aboriginal culture is living and continues to evolve, these Protocols have been developed to be a living document so please refer to that link for the latest version of the document.

The Department staff are available to provide technical advice and general information to potential applicants on the interpretation of these guidelines, including the types of activity eligible for funding and support with the online application process. The Department staff cannot help directly with your application. To maintain a fair and equitable process, staff cannot edit or correct any applications or provide advice on the content or choices required against the Assessment Criteria.

For further information or clarification, please contact the Department staff between 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday at [uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au](mailto:uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au)

Please contact staff well before the closing date.

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

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# 5 Assessment process

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## 5.1 Assessment of grant applications

The Program is an open, competitive grant program.

This means that applications that satisfy stated eligibility, adequately satisfy assessment criteria, and are ranked as the most competitive applicants will be recommended for funding.

All applications are to be submitted and assessed through the staged process below.

### Eligibility check

Applications will be checked for eligibility against the published Eligibility Criteria.

If eligible, the application will proceed to the next assessment stage.

If ineligible, the applicant will be advised via email within 14 business days after the closing date of the Program and your application will not proceed to assessment.

The Department reserves the right to provide applicants with an opportunity to provide clarification or additional information regarding the Eligibility Criteria provided the principles of probity are not breached.

Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible unless otherwise determined by the Department.

### Assessment stage 1

The Assessment Panel will assess all eligible applications against the published Assessment Criteria.

The Assessment Panel will be chaired by the Department and include representatives from across NSW Government. External experts/advisors may be invited to provide advice during any part of the assessment process.

### Assessment stage 2

The Assessment Panel's scores will be amalgamated and presented at an assessment meeting to determine their final recommendations. They will consider the assessment criteria, distribution, range, and scale of the initial recommendations.

This may include prioritising applications and activities with outcomes that better meet the Program objectives or address and ensure equity and the best outcomes for NSW Government investment. For example, considering the geographic spread of funded applicants, program risks, or the range in types of initiatives being delivered to ensure the key objectives of the Program are being met.

The Department may also request further advice and/or clarification from applicants during the assessment process.

Applicants are not guaranteed funding, or the full funding amount requested even if the application meets the Assessment Criteria.

Applicants who meet the assessment criteria but are not ranked among the most competitive applications for funding may be placed on a waitlist for consideration if any additional funding becomes available. These waitlisted applications will be considered 'unfunded applications of merit' and ranked.

### Decision-making

The Assessment Panel's advice and recommendations will be provided to the Secretary, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport or delegate for final consideration and approval.

The Department has the discretion to reject, refuse or cease to assess an application at any time.

### Rescindment of Grant

The Department retains the right to rescind a grant offer at any stage in the grant lifecycle, including after notifying successful applicants. The Department is not responsible or liable for any costs incurred by applicants prior to the execution of a funding deed if a grant offer has been rescinded.

## Probity advice

An independent probity advisor will provide guidance to the Department and the Assessment Panel on any issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the application, assessment, and decision-making process. This will ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW.

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## 5.2 Notification of application outcome

### Successful

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application under embargo as soon as possible after an application is approved. If the application is successful, we will advise the applicant of any specific conditions attached to the Program.

### Unsuccessful

Applicants who are not successful will be notified by email of the outcome of their unsuccessful application. Unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application from the Department.

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## 5.3 Publication of grants information

The Grants Administration Guide (Guide) requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the grants awarded will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the grant funding is approved or declined.

All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998*.

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# 6 Successful grant applications

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## 6.1 Grant funding deed

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding deed with the Department prior to payment of the funding. The funding deed will be prepared by the Department and set out the obligations of the successful applicant, including but not limited to monitoring and reporting, project scope, completion of milestones and payment, and permitted use of the funding.

The funding deed will require the successful applicant to provide a copy of all relevant project approvals, insurances and other supporting documentation relevant to the project or as requested by the Department.

The Department makes no funding or other commitment to the successful applicant until all parties have signed a grant agreement. You must not make financial commitments reliant on this grant until the grant agreement is signed and executed by all parties.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their staff have the capacity and availability to understand, complete and sign documents, to carefully read the terms and conditions of their grant agreement, and for it to be signed by the correct authorised signatories. Important terms and conditions associated with the funding are attached to the grant agreement.

The grant agreement can only be signed by authorised officers or delegates of your organisation.

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## 6.2 Under embargo

When applicants are notified under embargo, they are not permitted to publicise the outcome until the official announcement has been made by the NSW Government. The embargo period is taken seriously and failure to comply may impact an applicant's current or future funding eligibility.

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## 6.3 Grant payment

80% of the funding will be paid on execution of the funding deed by both parties, and remaining 20% upon approval of the Progress Report, which must be submitted to the Department.

The funding deed will include project scope of works and project conditions and set out payment milestones and the expected activities to satisfy each milestone.

The grant will be paid to the nominated bank account only after the grant agreement has been executed by the relevant parties. Payment will not be made until any former outstanding acquittals have been submitted to the Department.

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## 6.4 Acquittal

Successful applicants will be required to submit final reporting on their project outcomes to acquit their funding. This reporting will include evidence of Eligible Activities, measures of success including reporting against indicators as required by the Department.

Funding recipients who do not complete satisfactory final reporting and/or fail to provide evidence of funds being expended for the purpose for which they were intended, may be required to repay funds.

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## 6.5 Variations to the funding deed

Any variations to the funding deed, including project scope or activities, location or timeframes outlined in the application form and Grant Guidelines must be submitted for approval from the Department. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the grant offer.

The Department has the discretion to approve or reject any variation request from a grantee where the grant agreement has already been executed.

All requests for a variation must be submitted in writing to the Department at [uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au](mailto:uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au)

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## 6.6 Unspent funds

Organisations must not use the funds provided by the Department for the project, nor any interest earned on the funds, for any other purpose beyond what the Department approved in the submitted application and in the funding deed. Organisations must not carry over funds provided for the approved project to other programs, events, or organisational operating budgets. All grant funds are required to be spent on the approved project and any unspent funds must be returned to the Department in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding deed.

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## 6.7 Reporting indicators

Successful applicants will be required to provide data on key reporting indicators throughout the Program. Indicators may include, but are not limited to:

Indicator	Measure	Evidence
<b>Membership</b>		
No. of members	Quantity	Self-reported
No. of meetings held	Quantity	Self-reported
No. of industry sectors involved	Quantity	Self-reported
Change in district membership	Quantity	Self-reported
<b>Engagement</b>		
Workers employed or engaged	Additional employees engaged / Additional hours worked	Self-reported
Change in website traffic	Quantity	Self-reported
Change in digital media engagement	Quantity	Self-reported
No. of promotional campaigns	Quantity	Self-reported
No. of generated media stories	Quantity	Self-reported

<b>Partnerships and sponsorships</b>		
No. of partners and sponsors	Quantity	Self-reported
No. of collaborations	Quantity	Self-reported
\$value of partnerships and sponsorships	Amount	Self-reported
<b>Events and activations</b>		
No. of events delivered	Quantity	Self-reported
Change in footfall	Quantity	District member survey Observation / Counters
Change in dwell time	Quantity	District member survey Observation / Counters
Change in sales turnover	Amount	District member survey - includes anecdotal feedback from district members
Attendee satisfaction	Qualitative	Consumer survey
Performers and artists engaged	Quantity	Self-reported
<b>Income</b>		
\$value of income generated	Amount	Self-reported

## 6.8 Acknowledgment

You must seek our written consent prior to any significant public announcement, marketing, media announcements, or official launch in relation to the Program.

Permission to use the NSW Government logo must be sought for all relevant materials related to funding provided to the project, prior to production. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the NSW Government. If a funding recipient makes a public statement about a project funded under the Program, we require the funding recipient to seek permission to acknowledge the Program and the support provided.

A communication pack will be provided to funding recipients containing approved key messages and multimedia to help promote the project and acknowledge the funding contribution.

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# 7 Additional information and resources

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## 7.1 Evaluation

The Department regularly evaluates its initiatives in order to determine the effectiveness of implementation and to examine the extent to which outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Evaluations are conducted and published in line with requirements from NSW Treasury and the NSW Grants Administration Guide.

We may use information from your application, grant activities and reports you have submitted for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand your experience with the grant program, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in achieving its objective(s) and outcomes. All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, may be contacted to participate in interviews or surveys for evaluation purposes.

We may contact your organisation for up to three years after you submit your final acquittal report under the Program for more information to assist with this evaluation.

You consent to the use of your information for this purpose by:

- the Department
- NSW Treasury
- the Minister or Minister's office
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW
- office staff, consultants and advisers
- any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the office to have a need or an entitlement to know that information (including any federal, state or territory agency or body), where that need or entitlement to know that information arises out of or in connection with the purpose above.

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## 7.2 Complaint handling

If you wish to make a complaint, you may contact the Department staff between 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday at [uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au](mailto:uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au)

In the first instance, complaints will be reviewed by the Department. If we cannot resolve the complaint within 20 business days of receipt, we will refer the matter to an internal review team within the Department who will advise of the next steps.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved, a complainant is able to refer the matter to the NSW Ombudsman for external review. Please note that the NSW Ombudsman will not consider a complaint unless the matter has been first raised directly with the Department.

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## 7.3 Accessibility, inclusion and support

The NSW Government is committed to improving accessibility to all our funding programs.

If you are an applicant with a disability and you require this information in a format which is accessible to you, or if you require this information in another language, you can contact us at [uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au](mailto:uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au) between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday (except on public holidays).

The National Relay Service numbers are:

- TTY users: Phone 133 677 then ask for (02) 9228 4578.
- Speak and Listen users: Phone 1300 555 727 then ask for (02) 9228 4578.

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## 7.4 Access to information

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

More information about the Department's practices for managing requests to access information under the GIPA and for publishing information is available on the Department's [Information access guide](#).

You can also contact Department by email or by post as follows:

Attn: Legal Officer (GIPA)  
Office of the General Counsel  
Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport  
Email: [information@dciths.nsw.gov.au](mailto:information@dciths.nsw.gov.au)  
McKell Building  
2-24 Rawson Place, Haymarket NSW 2000

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## 7.5 Ethical conduct

The Department will administer the grant in accordance with the published Grant Guidelines and the principles and processes set out in the [NSW Grants Administration Guide](#).

The Department will implement measures and controls to enable a fair and transparent process and incorporate appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities, and other inappropriate conduct.

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## 7.6 Conflict of interest management

Conflicts of interest are any factors that could compromise the judgement, decisions, or actions of a person or group of people.

Conflicts may arise if a party in the grants administration process, whether it be Department staff, assessment panel members, the applicant or staff employed by the applicant:

- has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the applicant received a grant
- are involved in any other situations which could lead to unfavourable advantage.

Conflicts of interest for the Department will be handled as set out in the Department's Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Applicants will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest at any time, you must inform the Department immediately.

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## 7.7 Confidentiality

Successful applicants may be required to keep the outcome of the application process confidential until the Government makes a public announcement. The Department follows all requirements of confidentiality required as part of the grants administration and assessment process as outlined in the NSW Grants Administration Guide.

Unless otherwise stated, any commercial-in-confidence provisions (as defined under the GIPA Act) provided by you as part of, or in connection with, a registration, application or negotiation process will be treated confidentially by the office. We may disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by You to the following parties:

- The Minister or Minister's office;
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW;
- office staff, consultants and advisers;
- any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the office to have a need or an entitlement to know that information (including any federal, state or territory agency or body), where the need or entitlement to know that information arises out of or in connection with the office's assessment, verification or due diligence of any aspect of your application; and
- where authorised or required to by law.

If we disclose commercial-in-confidence information to any of the above parties, we will inform the party that the information is strictly confidential. We will otherwise only disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by You with Your consent.

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## 7.8 Privacy

The Department will collect and store the information you voluntarily provide to enable the implementation of this grant program.

The Department is required to comply with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PPIP Act). The Department collects the minimum personal information to enable it to contact an organisation and to assess the merits of an application. Applicants must ensure that people whose personal details are supplied with applications are aware that the Department is being supplied with this information and how this information will be used.

We treat your personal information in accordance with the PPIP Act and the [Department's privacy policy](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect;
- why we collect your personal information; and
- who we give your personal information to.

The personal information will only be used for the purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

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## Checklist

Your application will need to include the following:

- the total grant amount requested
- evidence that the applicant meets the Eligibility Criteria
- a District Team member register list
- a nominated application key contact for your District Team, including contact information
- a letter of support from a senior staff member (e.g. Chief Executive, General Manager, Director) of the relevant local council organisation (not an elected official, such as a councillor), as outlined in eligibility criteria, or evidence that support is being progressed
- responses to each of the Assessment Criteria
- a Risk Management Plan
- a well substantiated budget for how you will spend the grant, including any co-contributions (if require)

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2-24 Rawson Place  
Haymarket NSW 2000

E: [uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au](mailto:uptown@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au)  
W: [nsw.gov.au/24houreconomy](http://nsw.gov.au/24houreconomy)

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