

# Connecting Carers in their Community | Small grants program 2025/2026

## Application Guidelines

## CONNECTING CARERS IN THEIR COMMUNITY

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM 2025/2026



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# Connecting Carers in their Community | Small Grants Program

The *Connecting Carers in their Community* Small Grants Program in 2025 will award grants of between \$15,000 and \$25,000 to assist with activities that strengthen the local and social connection of unpaid carers. This grant initiative is supported by the Victorian Government and administered by Carers Victoria. Small organisations and groups such as carer support groups and peer groups are invited to create opportunities to support and connect to carers in their local community.

## Who is an unpaid carer?

An **unpaid carer** is anyone who provides essential, unpaid support and assistance to a partner, family member or friend with care support needs. They care for those with a disability, mental illness, dementia, drug and alcohol addiction, life-limiting illness, chronic illness, or an older person. The care provided could be a few hours a day to around-the-clock assistance. Carers are diverse and come from all walks of life, cultural backgrounds, and age groups. The health and wellbeing of carers is important. Carers experience improved wellbeing when their access to support and social connections is strengthened.

A **Carer group** is a term used to describe any group that exists to support carers. This could be a social or cultural group, formal carer support group, a peer group, yarnning circle or informal gathering of carers.

## Grant Objectives

The Connecting Carers in their Community 2025/2026 small grant round has the following objectives:

1. Carers are better connected to their local supports, services and community
2. To support local organisations and carer groups to connect with carers in their local, social and cultural communities.
3. Provide activities that support the creation, maintenance and continuity of carer groups.
4. Enhance and extend the reach of existing and new carer support groups, including activities that support governance and sustainability.

## About the grants

Grants are \$15,000 up to \$25,000 (excluding GST), and applications are welcome from across Victoria. The following groups will be prioritised:

- Regional and remote groups, especially those impacted by fire and flood events
- Groups working directly with First Nations carers, families, and communities
- Multicultural and diverse communities, including younger carers and language and cultural groups.

Successful grant applications will be publicly announced in October 2025, with all grant activities to be complete and funds expended by June 2026. Final reporting is due in July 2026.

This funding is not recurring.

## Key Selection Criteria

An independent assessment panel will assess applications against the following criteria.

1. The grant application is **responsive to the needs of carers**.
  - a. What is the need
  - b. Who the project activities will assist
  - c. Why this is a priority
2. The grant application demonstrates **the organisation's capacity to deliver the grant project activities**.
  - a. Project activities are clearly outlined and budgeted
  - b. Project activities are achievable, and where possible sustainable
  - c. Project governance is outlined
3. The grant application demonstrates **strong relationships with local community** with detail of:
  - a. how the organisation or carer group is working with, or plans to work with, their local community services or systems
  - b. the grant project activities offer carers something currently not available to them and avoids duplication.
4. The grant application describes the **intended outcomes and impacts** including:
  - a. what success might look like
  - b. how the grant project impact will be evaluated
5. The grant application conveys strong **enthusiasm for the project** by highlighting:
  - a. what might inspire carers to feel passionate about the project activities
  - b. the specific need/s it aims to address for carers.

## Eligible groups and auspice organisations

Organisations that are not-for-profit or volunteer groups may apply. It is essential to hold an ABN. If your volunteer group does not have an ABN, you will need to find an auspice partner to receive the grant funds and support your group to produce an end of activities financial report. Carers Victoria can provide advice on finding an auspice partner if required. If you need assistance, please email: [grants@carersvictoria.org.au](mailto:grants@carersvictoria.org.au)

### Examples of groups or organisations that are eligible and encouraged to apply:

- Neighbourhood Houses
- Carer Support Groups
- New and emerging Carer Support Groups
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)

- Peer-led programs
- Community groups
- Men's sheds
- Community Health Organisations
- Multicultural associations or groups
- Leisure and Sporting Clubs
- Social enterprises.

#### **Organisations that may auspice a volunteer group:**

- Local councils
- Neighbourhood houses
- Community Health Organisations
- Incorporated, not for profit service providers
- Primary Health Networks
- Schools
- Peak Bodies.

### **Ineligible groups**

This funding is intended for community and small organisations responding to local need. The following entities, organisations and programs are ineligible to apply outright for a grant. They can however auspice a carer group.

#### **Ineligible entities:**

- Organisations currently funded through the Victorian Government's Support for Carers Program or Additional Respite initiative
- Providers of the Victorian government funded Strengthening Parents Program
- Education providers, including public, private or independent schools
- For-profit or commercial organisations/entities or sole traders are **not** eligible for these grants.

### **Note for previous grant recipients**

Previous grant recipients for *Connecting Carers in their Community* grant rounds are welcome to apply. Planned activities should focus on building on the success of previous activities, and how the work will be extended and enhanced. Previously funded applicants will also be assessed on their past ability to meet the project milestones and achieve their outcomes. Where multiple applications are judged as equal, preference will be given to new applicants. Please note that all applications must meet the focus and objectives of this grant round.

### **Funding amount and budget items**

The grant amount is \$15,000 up to \$25,000.

Funds will be dispensed in October 2025 and must be spent by June 30, 2026.

Grant funding is not recurrent. Grant projects are to be completed by 30 June 2026 and final reports will be due by 31 July 2026.

Types of items the grant will fund include:

- Wages for staff to conduct activities
- Costs to develop promotional materials, such as printed brochures or social media promotion
- Costs related to activities such as catering and venue hire
- Interpreting, translating or access costs
- Hosting an event
- Transport to an event or activity
- Art supplies
- Guest speaker/s
- Costs to enable volunteers to deliver and assist delivery of activities, such as Working with Children Checks
- Costs that support a carer group to strengthen its governance and support sustainability.

Items that are ineligible for grant funds include:

- Equipment or aids for personal use
- Donations or subscriptions to other groups
- Capital expenditure items such as property rent, vehicles or computers
- Costs related to writing the grant application
- Items that were purchased prior to the grant approval.

## Applying for a grant

### To apply for a grant, you need to:

- be a not-for-profit entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN) OR be auspiced by an organisation with an ABN
- have a bank account in the name of the applicant or the auspice organisation
- provide a plan on what activities you aim to deliver, the timelines for delivery, and the expected outcomes
- list items and activities you will spend the funds on and a costing breakdown for these items

To apply, please click on the following link: <https://carersvictoria.smartygrants.com.au/CCC2025>

This link will take you to the SmartyGrants portal, with clear instructions for completing your application form online.

Available on the Carers Victoria grants page is a Frequently asked Questions (FAQ) document.

Applications will close 12pm 18 August 2025, and late applications will not be accepted. You are encouraged to commence your application as soon as possible and save your progress. It is recommended that you aim to submit your final application at least one hour before the deadline. This will help to ensure you can submit on time. If you have any issues submitting your application, you can contact: [grants@carersvictoria.org.au](mailto:grants@carersvictoria.org.au)

## Key dates

Applications open	Tuesday 29 July 2025
Applications close	Monday 18 August 2025, 12pm
Online Grant information session	Monday 4 August, 11 - 12 pm
Online Grant Q&A	Tuesday 12 August, 1 - 2pm
Successful grantees advised in confidence	September 2025
Public announcement	Carers week October 2025
Grant payments available	September 2025
Project activities cease	30 June 2026
Final reporting due	July 2026

## Assessment process

Carers Victoria will convene a panel of assessors from across Victoria, with strong knowledge of carer services and activities. The applications will be assessed against the key selection criteria and priority groups. A panel of community service organisations will be convened to review and make recommendations for funding.

## Grant recipient responsibilities

### Applicants who are successful in receiving a grant must:

- enter into a funding agreement with Carers Victoria
- invoice Carers Victoria for between \$15,000 and \$25,000. Where GST is to be applied, the final invoice amount will include an additional 10%. ie a grant of \$25,000 will be invoiced for \$27,500
- ensure that grant funding is expended by June 30, 2026
- provide an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have a bank account in the name of the applicant group or auspice organisation
- commit to evaluation and reporting requirements for the grant funding
- attend the grant Community of Practice (minimum four sessions)
- ensure that grant funding is spent on the activities described in the application and in the funding agreement. Any proposed variation to the approved activity should be discussed immediately with Carers Victoria
- hold public liability insurance.

## Payments and reporting

Grants will be paid in full. Carers Victoria reserves the right to recall funds where a grant project significantly diverges from the application, where reporting and acquittal obligations are not met, or in other exceptional circumstances.

### Acquittal and reporting obligations

Carers Victoria will provide guidance to assist with planning and reporting responsibilities. Resources will be provided for:

- an activity plan
- final project reporting

- financial reporting.

## Evaluation requirements

Evaluation provides valuable feedback to you as the organisation and assists Carers Victoria to understand the impact of the grants program. Evaluation support including a survey will be provided to you. The grants team will provide instruction, advice and guidance to assist you with the use of the tools.

## Privacy

Information provided in your application is for the purpose of administering your grant and informing the public of successful grant recipients.

For us to administer your application effectively and efficiently, we may need to disclose this information within our organisation, with our assessment panel and with the Victorian Government. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure that they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application 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.

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**End of guidelines**

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