



Communities
& Justice

Youth Opportunities Program Guidelines 2020-21



Youth Opportunities Program

Guidelines

All applicants are advised to read these Guidelines carefully before completing an application for funding. These Guidelines provide an overview of the program's aim and objectives as well as information about the application and granting process.

For further information on the Youth Opportunities program please visit www.youth.nsw.gov.au/youth-opportunities or email your questions to youth@facs.nsw.gov.au

Key Dates

Opening Date	9:00am Monday, 10 August 2020
Closing Date	5:00pm Monday, 28 September 2020
Successful applicants announced	January/February 2021
Contract negotiations	January/February 2021
Projects to commence	February 2021

About the program

Overview

The Youth Opportunities program provides one-off, time-limited grants of between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to non-government organisations and local government councils in NSW. Funding is for **new** projects that enable young people to lead and participate in community development activities.

Organisations applying for funding must have spoken with young people and involved them in developing the project proposal prior to submitting an application.

NSW Government Priorities for Young People

The Youth Opportunities program aligns with the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016-2019¹, which advocates that children and young people in NSW be safe, connected, respected, healthy and well, with opportunities to thrive and have their voice heard in their communities.

The Youth Opportunities program contributes to this by investing in projects that strengthen young people's connection to their community via the delivery of youth-led and youth-driven community initiatives.

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice Strategic Direction 2020-2024² sets out the Department's vision for active and inclusive communities. The Department provides a range of community support to improve wellbeing, increase community participation, and promote social inclusion and cohesion.

The Youth Opportunities program is administered by the Department of Communities and Justice.

Program Purpose

The Youth Opportunities program is informed by evidence which indicates that community connectedness³ promotes a positive sense of wellbeing in young people. Young people can however experience a range of barriers⁴ that hinder their participation in the community.

The purpose of the Youth Opportunities program is to break-down barriers and increase young people's access to and inclusion in the community.

The Youth Opportunities Program supports organisations to empower young people to design and deliver community projects, enabling them to:

- overcome barriers to participating in the community
- build community based partnerships and networks
- feel a greater sense of belonging within their community
- feel empowered, as their ideas and opinions are respected, considered and acted upon
- gain relevant training to support their participation
- feel more confident within themselves and their abilities, having expanded their knowledge and skills
- seek further opportunities to participate and stay engaged in their community.

Download the Youth Opportunities Program Logic from www.youth.nsw.gov.au/youth-opportunities for further information on the purpose and intended outcomes of the Youth Opportunities Program.

Community Based Partnerships

The Youth Opportunities program provides a unique platform for eligible organisations to build authentic and meaningful partnerships with young people in their community. The more successful these relationships are, the more likely young people are to seek further opportunities to participate and stay engaged in the community beyond the project.

Eligible organisations are to engage young people in a way that evokes a shared sense of responsibility and ownership across all stages of the project including planning, design, delivery and evaluation.

Successful partnerships⁵ strike the right balance between enabling youth ownership whilst providing the right organisational supports and resources required to participate. To do this effectively, adults must be willing to share their power with young people and work in partnership on issues that are important to them.

Working in partnership with young people requires organisations (adults) to have the flexibility to step in and out of the process as required, without taking over. It is also important that young people are able to dictate the nature and level of their involvement.

In 2016, the Advocate for Children and Young People consulted with 150 young people to develop a 'Participation Charter'⁶ which states *We respectfully request that adults assist us to make meaningful contributions by:*

- providing guidance, balanced with independence
- providing training and skill development
- providing resources and financial support
- understanding that we have many commitments
- encouraging us to work collaboratively
- fully informing us of our role and our rights in the decision making process.

Youth-led and Youth-driven Community Projects

The Youth Opportunities program funds projects which are genuinely youth-led and youth-driven. This means that young people are involved at every stage of the project - from identifying the need, through to design, delivery and final review (see page 7, Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project).

Applicant organisations must have the capacity to encourage, support and facilitate a youth-led and youth-driven community project.

Project Objectives

Projects funded under the Youth Opportunities program are to involve young people at every stage of the project. It is expected that young people will take an active role in identifying, designing and implementing these projects and that these projects offer creative solutions to issues that are important to them.

Organisations funded under the Youth Opportunities program will:

1. partner with young people to deliver a youth-led and youth-driven community project
2. improve young people's access to and inclusion in community activities such as sport and recreation, cultural and other activities
3. provide young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to participate in their local community such as developing teamwork, communication, decision-making and leadership skills
4. recognise the contribution young people make to their local community.

Funded organisations will be required to report on the progress made against each of these objectives. The program measures, found on page 12 of this document, align with these Project Objectives.

Target Group

Young people 12 – 25 years of age who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood and from dependence to independence, including young people who face disadvantage.

The program seeks to fund a diverse range of projects from across NSW, particularly in rural and regional areas, and encourages applications from Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse organisations.

Project Themes

Priorities Identified by Young People

Young people have told us through a number of different mechanisms what is important to them, what concerns them, and what they are interested in⁷.

The following themes highlight key issues identified by young people:

- Community inclusion and participation
- COVID-19
- Cultural identity and connection
- Cyber safety and awareness
- Domestic and Family violence
- Financial literacy (budgeting, rent, phone, contracts, fines)
- Health and wellbeing
- Homelessness/housing
- Young people impacted by drought

Youth Opportunities projects may seek to address one or more of these issues, or they may address other issues raised by young people, which are important to them and their local communities.

Applicant organisations are to engage young people in the initial ‘Identifying the need’ stage of the project (see page 7, Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project) to ensure the project is responsive to the needs of young people.

Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project



Applicant organisations must ensure that the input of young people is firmly embedded in each stage of the project.

Application for Funding

Non-government organisations and local Councils in NSW are invited to apply for a grant between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to deliver a Youth Opportunities project for up to 12 months.

All applicants must complete and submit an online application form which is available at www.youth.nsw.gov.au. The NSW Youth website also includes downloadable resources to support the application process.

Deadline for applications is 5:00pm on Monday, 28 September 2020.

Applications submitted after the advertised closing date will not be accepted.

Who Can Apply

Eligible organisations must be:

- an incorporated non-government (not-for-profit) organisation operating in NSW
- a NSW local government authority

Who Cannot Apply

You should **not** apply for this grant if you are:

- a Commonwealth or State Government agency
- a school (including P&Cs), a university or TAFE college
- an individual or sole trader
- a commercial for-profit organisation
- a sub-contractor engaged to manage or deliver the project on behalf of a non-eligible organisation

How to Apply

Applications are submitted via SmartyGrants, an online grants administration system. To access SmartyGrants and the online application form please visit www.youth.nsw.gov.au/youth-opportunities

Applications must be completed and submitted online via SmartyGrants by **5:00pm on Monday, 28 September 2020**. The SmartyGrants system will automatically shut off at 5:00pm on that day. It does not allow for extensions to be granted.

Project Exclusions

Projects will **not** be eligible for funding if they:

- are run in schools as part of the curriculum or other areas of school responsibility
- include interstate or overseas travel, scholarships and/or conference attendance
- provide case-management or counselling for young people.

Project funding must **not** be used for:

- religious festivals, rituals, events or promotions, except multi-faith events which involve young people from more than one religion
- major capital works (e.g. establishing or refurbishing a youth centre)
- large equipment purchases (e.g. vehicles)
- costs that are not directly associated with the implementation or delivery of the project
- operating expenses such as rent, insurance, electricity, water, rates or funding towards the running of other programs within the organisation
- existing projects or programs.

Project Budget

A detailed budget identifying expenses as well as any in-kind contributions are required as part of the grant application.

Project funding **can** include:

- costs associated with implementing the project, including project coordination
- up to 10% of the budget can be used for minor administration costs
- up to 10% of the budget can be used to purchase minor equipment (applicants must demonstrate the need for these purchases in their application)
- up to 5% of the budget can be used for catering.

Assessment Criteria

Each application will be considered on its merits, based on how well it meets the assessment criteria and how it is ranked against other applications. Assessments are conducted by Independent Assessment Panels.

Each application is assessed against the following criteria:

- The project clearly aligns with the purpose of the Youth Opportunities program:
 - to break-down barriers and increase young people's access to and inclusion in the community
- The project demonstrates that young people have had and will have meaningful input at every stage of the project (identifying the need, planning and design, delivery and final review and recognition) - the project is youth-led and youth-driven
- The project improves young people's access to and inclusion in community activities such as sport and recreation, cultural and other activities
- The project provides young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to participate in their local community
- The project recognises the contributions young people make to their local community.
- The project clearly demonstrates substantial benefits to young people compared with the total cost of the project - the project represents good value for money.

Recommendations for funding are made to the NSW Minister responsible for Youth. Please allow up to 16 weeks for advice regarding the outcome of your application. All applicants are notified in writing.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department of Communities and Justice and will be required to report on the progress and completion of the project. Specific reporting requirements will be advised when the grant is approved.

Once the project is completed, any unspent grant funds, or grant funds not expended in accordance with the Funding Agreement must be returned to the Department of Communities and Justice.

Further Information

For further information on the Youth Opportunities program please email questions to youth@fac.s.nsw.gov.au

Reporting and Data Collection

A: Youth Opportunities Program Measures – Data Collection	
Funded organisations report and provide evidence on:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the number of young people directly involved in planning and organising the project 2. the number of young people that attended and participated in events/activities as part of the project 3. the number of youth-led and youth-driven community events/activities held as part of the project
B: Youth Opportunities Program Measures – Project Objectives	
Funded organisations report and provide evidence on:	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> partner with young people to deliver a youth-led and youth-driven community project.</p> <p>Measure: how young people’s input has been imbedded at every stage of the project (see page 7, Life Cycle of a Youth Opportunities Project).</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> improve young people’s access to and inclusion in community activities such as sport and recreation, cultural and other activities.</p> <p>Measure: how young people have been supported to overcome barriers to participate and linked to community organisations and services.</p> <p><u>Objective 3:</u> provide young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to participate in their local communities such as developing teamwork, communication, decision-making and leadership skills.</p> <p>Measure: how young people’s knowledge and skills have been developed and whether the skill development has improved their ability to participate.</p> <p><u>Objective 4:</u> recognise the contribution young people make to their local community.</p> <p>Measure: how young people have been recognised for their contribution to their local communities.</p>

References

- 1 Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016-2019, accessible at <http://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/plan>
- 2 NSW Department of Communities and Justice Strategic Direction 2020-2024 accessible at <https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/about-us/building-stronger-communities>
- 3 The Measurement of Social Connectedness and its Relationship to Wellbeing, The Ministry Of Social Development, Te Manatu Whakahiato Ora (New Zealand), 2018, accessible at <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/literature-reviews/social-connectedness-and-wellbeing.html>
- Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People's Participation 2015, accessible at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/participation-resources/understanding-and-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-participation>
- 4 International Public Management Review · electronic Journal accessible at <http://www.ipmr.net> Volume 11 · Issue 3 2010 International Public Management Network
- 5 Journal of Community Psychology Vol. 33 No. 1, 57-74 (2005) A Comparison of youth-driven and adult-driven youth programs
- 6 Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (2019) Engaging children and young people in your organisation, accessible at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/participation-guide>
- 7 Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (2018) NSW Youth Week Forum, Parliament House, Consultation Responses to NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (2018) Report on Consultations with Socially Excluded Children and Young People, accessible at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/report-on-consultations-with-socially-excluded-children-and-young-people-2018>
- Youth Action (2018) Inequality in Australia: A Young Person's Perspective, accessible at http://www.youthaction.org.au/inequality_in_australia
- UNICEF Australia (2019) In their own words: the hidden impact of prolonged drought on children and young people, accessible at <https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/unicef-in-australia/the-drought-report>
- Carlisle, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Perrens, B. and Plummer, J. (2018) Youth Survey Report, Mission Australia, accessible at <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey>
- ReachOut (2018) Cyberbullying a growing public health and safety issue for Australian families, accessible at <https://about.au.reachout.com/cyberbullying-nd-australian-families/>