



What Makes a Good Grant Application?

Guidance on how to prepare a DSS grant application and effectively address selection criteria

When preparing a DSS grant application, ensure you understand the DSS grant programme, check your eligibility, and submit a completed Application Form before the application closing date.

A good grant application effectively addresses the selection criteria by demonstrating your organisation's ability to deliver services that respond to issues in the community. Claims against selection criteria should also be supported by evidence to demonstrate capabilities, past performance, and benefits for intended clients.

A separate fact sheet on [Strong Evidence](#) is also available, and the [Checklist for submitting an application](#) at the end of this document may assist.

Understand the grant programme and check eligibility

Before completing an Application Form, you should make yourself familiar with **all** documents contained in the relevant Application Pack available on the [Funding Open for Application](#) webpage, including the Programme Guidelines Overview, Funding Round Summary, and any supporting material. This will ensure you understand the DSS grant programme and whether your organisation is eligible to apply for funding before investing time and resources into preparing an application.

How to address selection criteria

You must address the selection criteria in the specific Application Form, and meet the objectives of the funding round stated in the Funding Round Summary.

Below are examples of standard DSS selection criteria which are often used in DSS. The information and examples provided are generic and should only be used as high level guidance for consideration in the development of grant applications. You should consider how to tailor information to be relevant to the specifics of the grant you are applying for, including any specific target groups, locations or service delivery requirements.

Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded Activity in an *identified community and/or for an identified target group*

Your application should demonstrate that there is a strong need for the proposal in the identified community and/or for the target group. It should:

- **identify** and **demonstrate** an awareness of the **specific needs** of the target group and/or the community in which the service is to be delivered;
- include **evidence about the needs** of the target group/s and location/s. This may include evidence that the community:
 - has a high proportion of the target group or anticipates high growth in emerging needs.
 - is identified as a priority area by the Department or other indices.
 - has poor access to services.

- demonstrate **strategies to respond to the emerging needs** in the identified community or target group such as flexible service provision, collaboration and linkages with other organisations and service providers;
- demonstrate **how** the proposed service or project will **benefit the target group and community** including intended benefits, and **evidence** to support the service approach.

Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the grant funding.

Your proposal should be in accordance with the Activity's Programme Guidelines Overview, Funding Round Summary and other documents within the Application Pack. It should:

- demonstrate a **clear understanding** of the Activity's **objectives** and be supported by **evidence based** statements;
- provide a **clear and detailed description** of how the proposal will be implemented, including **evidence** of how the proposal will **achieve value for money** such as the link between proposed outcomes or projected deliverables, benefit to the community or target group, and the amount of funding sought;
- identify **strategies** with **key elements** to demonstrate how the Activity objectives will be met.
- describe how the proposal will **complement or add to existing services and resources** within the community;
- describe your **links with the community or target group** including established relationships with stakeholders, relevant organisations, clients, and other service providers.

Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring Activities to achieve Activity objectives for all stakeholders.

Your proposal should clearly define the way in which you plan, develop, deliver, manage and monitor your proposed service or project. It should:

- outline your organisation's experience in establishing and delivering similar types of projects/services;
- demonstrate an **understanding** of the proposed outcomes of the Activity and how you will **establish and maintain services** in the identified community or for the target group;
- describe your **stakeholder engagement** and **relationship management** processes to ensure effective delivery of the proposal;
- provide **evidence** of how you **engage with the community** when **planning** and **delivering** services;
- provide **strategies** for how you will provide **ongoing assessment** to ensure you meet the identified outcomes such as using key performance indicators or reporting arrangements;

Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the Activity objectives in the *identified community* and/or for the *identified target group*.

Your proposal should demonstrate the relevant expertise, skills, qualifications and experience of your executive, directors and those that are or will be involved in the management and delivery of proposed services. It should:

- Outline the **governance arrangements for the proposal** and demonstrate that **governance principles and processes** to support service delivery are in place across all aspects of the organisation;
- describe the relevant **expertise, skills, qualifications and experience**, including broad structure of the organisation, as well as business management, relevant expertise and leadership;
- **demonstrate** how the **expertise, skills, qualifications and experience** contribute to:
 - the **effective and efficient delivery** of your proposal.
 - the **continuous improvement and evaluation** of the day-to-day management and quality of your organisation.

Examples of good applications

Strength	Examples
Demonstrates an understanding of the objectives of the funding round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of how the expected outcomes of the activity are relevant to the identified issues and objectives. • Discussion of objectives of the funding/Activity and the way in which the service proposed would meet the objectives.
Proposes a comprehensive service delivery model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of a service delivery model that includes a range of methods to deliver services to clients. • Documented community engagement strategy detailing specific strategies for both metropolitan and rural areas - e.g. use of videoconferencing. • Description of a marketing strategy to encourage involvement in and participation in activities. • Comprehensive description of how the service and all of its elements would be implemented e.g. how clients will access the service, referral and escalation points, the staffing structure for delivery, and methods to overcome potential risks.
Demonstrates an understanding of the target group/s or community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the expected clients to access and benefit from the services – e.g. clients with low, or no, income or low financial literacy skills and/or difficulty living within their means. • Demonstrate the importance of addressing an identified service gap – e.g. minimal/no access to existing similar services and the impact this has on the target community. • Description of the benefits for clients – e.g. expected outcomes in the short term, how referral and assistance activities improve outcomes, or relevance of services to the identified service gap. • Familiarity with the services already available to the target group/s or community. • Reference to relevant reports, studies and other evidence.
Provides evidence and an understanding of unmet need in the target group/s or community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate an understanding of changing needs or an increase in demand for services over the past years – e.g. citing data on waiting lists or evidence of an increase in clients accessing similar or related services. • Interpretation of a range of socioeconomic indicators of unmet need – e.g. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. • Statistical evidence on the impact of the unmet need on the wellbeing of those in the target group or community. • Proposed activities are informed by research and address specific issues or life stressors relevant to the objectives of the funding.
Demonstrates experience delivering the required activities/services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of developing and delivering similar services for the target group/s or community or similar groups/communities. • Outlines established referral processes. • Staff have extensive experience and/or qualifications in delivering services. • Describe how similar activities have benefitted clients based on evidence, research, or current activities.
Proposal represents value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed budget which outlines how services would be efficiently delivered, involve collaborating with other organisations to provide services, and/or describe leveraging off other funding sources and existing infrastructure. • Proposal builds on existing service delivery models or current activities delivering proven outcomes by leveraging well established existing services and networks or applying innovation to harness new and emerging technology.

Strength	Examples
Outlines strong governance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References the organisation's strategic plan and/or supporting operational and business plans. Details of financial management systems, including internal policies, procedures and quality improvement mechanisms. Deliverables and outcomes are clearly specified, with identified roles and responsibilities. Current services of the organisation are evidence-based with robust research and evaluation frameworks, and a strong governance structure.
Demonstrates collaborative approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of existing links or existing relationships in the target group/s or community. Capability to involve the target group/s or community in the development and delivery of the activity. Provides a strategy for development or coordination of local networks of service providers. Clients will be referred to specialised services (internal or external) where required, to enhance overall client outcomes. A commitment to collaborate with other organisations where there are shared interests and opportunities, such as reducing sector fragmentation, reducing duplicative efforts and/or improving coordination.
Proposes evaluation and continuous improvement approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal includes timeframes for conducting an evaluation or determining how outcomes are achieved. Commitment to evaluation and continuous improvement through monitoring programme design and service delivery, measuring outputs and outcomes, measuring staff performance. Details of experiences of reporting (including against key performance indicators), measurement, evaluation systems and quality assurance. Proposal references results from evaluations of current or previous services and activities.
Skilled/trained staff and development support available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of a detailed organisational chart highlighting capabilities relevant to the funding. Details of support mechanisms, training and development activities which staff can access. Evidence of rigorous recruitment processes – e.g. description of recruitment processes and selection criteria. Effective use of volunteers. Estimates of total staff time that will be spent on the project or delivering specialist services – e.g. Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff allocation Identification of key roles and/or professional qualifications of staff.
A plan for ongoing delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of risk management and stakeholder engagement strategies in place. Evidence that the organisation's structure supports delivery of the activity through compatibility with current workload and organisational and reporting mechanisms. Specify how evidence from the target group/s or community will be used to refine activities over time or anticipate future issues, trends and barriers.
References previously received and effectively administered government funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of funding previously received and outcomes achieved, demonstrating capacity to meet reporting and funding requirements. Demonstrate benefits to government – e.g. cost per client/service or analysis of social return on investment.

Checklist for submitting an application

Use the following checklist to help prepare an application for DSS grant funding.

Carefully read the Application Pack available on the [Funding Open for Application](#) webpage

Always follow instructions provided in the Application Pack specific to the funding round you wish to apply for, as some requirements may vary.

Check application submission format

All applications must be submitted electronically using the relevant Application Form. Each form contains instructions for technical requirements and how to lodge an application.

Respond to all selection criteria

Answer all criteria within the word limits specified in the Application Form. All selection criteria are equally important, unless specifically stated.

Attach requested supporting documentation

Only attach supporting documents as specified in the Application Form and Funding Round Summary. Documents enclosed with the application which are not requested in the Application Form will not be assessed.

There is a 2MB size limit for each file attached, a 20MB size limit for the submission and a maximum of 15 attachments per submission.

Read and complete the declaration part of the Application Form carefully

Prepare your application in advance of the closing date and time

Late applications may not be accepted.

Keep a record of your application

You will receive an electronic receipt when you submit your application, however please ensure you make a copy of the entire package and keep it on file for your own records.

Check the website regularly for updates

You are encouraged to regularly review information provided on the funding round page during the application open period. This includes questions and answers that may be updated throughout the process.

If you require assistance or support in using and/or submitting the Application Form, please call 1800 020 283 or TTY 1800 555 677.

If you have any questions which are not answered in the Application Pack and supporting documents, send your question to grants@dss.gov.au or call 1800 625 136 or TTY 1800 555 677.