



Volunteer Management

Feedback summary

Overview

Volunteer Management grants support, encourage and increase and support participation in volunteering – a critical component of many civil society organisations in Australia.

Funding in this activity is for the delivery of Volunteer Support Services or one-off Innovation and Collaboration projects that enable and maximise the important participation of volunteers in Australia and improve the effectiveness of volunteer participation.

Grants are to:

- maximise and promote volunteering participation including opportunities to increase the diversity of volunteers and the ways in which people volunteer
- maximise opportunities for volunteering to provide pathways to other forms of social and economic participation
- support the development of a volunteering sector that is responsive to emerging trends and issues
- encourage / maximise leadership, mentoring and volunteering activity
- provide on-the-ground support and information for volunteers and volunteer-using organisations in locations where there is identified need
- provide access to the resources and support volunteers and volunteer using organisations need to operate effectively and efficiently
- build effective volunteering practices and opportunities within organisations and communities.

Selection results

The Volunteer Management selection round was highly competitive, with large numbers of applications from very skilled and capable organisations delivering a diverse range of activities aimed at maximising volunteering participation. Funding has been offered to organisations based on the scope and potential impact of their activities, their geographical service locations and the delivery of their activities which are all in line with the four selection criteria. With the high numbers of applications received, only proposals assessed as very high quality against the selection criteria and within the location and scope coverage could be funded.

Selection process

DSS received 714 applications from across all States and Territories with proposals for the Volunteer Management funding round.

DSS considered each proposal against four equally weighted selection criteria which are listed below. Only organisations which rated highly in all aspects of the selection criteria were identified as preferred applicants.

The Department also emphasised that in responding to any of the selection criteria for funding rounds, applicants needed to provide evidence to support claims about how they meet each of the criteria. During the application process, the Department provided assistance for applicants in providing evidence including a fact sheet on the types of evidence that could be used for addressing selection criteria as well as guidance on what strong evidence looks like.

In determining the results of the round, DSS considered a national spread of grant recipients and also factored in high need areas. Consideration was given to factors such as socioeconomic status, age, gender, ethnicity, disability and intercultural relations when identifying at risk communities, in line with broader DSS and Australian Government social objectives.

Further individualised feedback will not be offered for the 2014-15 Volunteer Management funding round. The [DSS Feedback Policy](#) on the DSS website outlines the department's approach to providing feedback to funding applicants and supporting the sector to prepare strong proposals.

Criteria 1: Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity in the chosen community/communities and/or target group.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a range of strengths in relation to Criteria 1, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The applicant showed a comprehensive understanding of the volunteering sector and its benefits for the community.	Research and evidence demonstrated national benefit to organisations, the community and individuals of increasing youth participation in volunteering.
The applicant demonstrated an increase in demand for services over the past years.	Evidence of increase in persons that accessed volunteer-delivered services and increase in organisations accessing volunteer-support services.
The applicant demonstrated a strong need for the activity.	Statistical evidence demonstrated disadvantage faced by target groups in the community and how provision of the services / activities will assist the target groups.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 1 in a number of ways:

- providing targets and goals for increased volunteering participation rates
- demonstrating an understanding of the community outcomes of increased participation in volunteering
- increasing use of relevant data (e.g. census, population, academic or other research).

Criteria 2: Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the grant funding.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 2, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The applicant clearly articulated the activities to be conducted.	Proposal detailed an implementation plan including methods to overcome potential barriers and issues.
The applicant’s proposal builds upon current activities which are delivering proven outcomes.	Proposal leveraged well-established existing services and networks, and applies innovation to harness new and emerging technology.
The proposal anticipated issues, trends and barriers into the future.	The organisation clearly described how the project will achieve outcomes in the short and long term.
The Innovation and Collaboration proposal had national application.	The project involved a comprehensive strategy to address a significant issue impacting on volunteering participation across Australia.
The proposal represented value for money.	The proposal provided a detailed budget breakdown and involved leveraging of other funding sources and existing infrastructure.
The proposal maximises volunteering participation and support within the wider community, and not just within a single organisation.	The proposal delivered the full range of Volunteer Support Services to meet the volunteering needs of all individuals and organisations within the community/region, and not limited to particular individuals or organisations.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 2 in a number of ways:

- demonstrating value for money, including providing a proposed budget
- providing information on the number of volunteers intended to be involved in the proposed activities
- for Innovation and Collaboration proposals, providing clear detail on how the proposed activities will involve innovation and collaboration and the outcomes this will achieve.

Criteria 3: Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring activities to achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 3, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The organisation had demonstrated experience in volunteer management and development.	Detailed history of service development and delivery in the sector, citing specific examples of past successful projects, workshops and forums etc.
The organisation demonstrated its commitment to evaluation and continuous improvement.	Activities and outputs were reported and monitored.
The applicant had previously received and effectively administered funding from all levels of government.	Details of funding previously received and outcomes achieved, demonstrating capacity to meet reporting and funding requirements.
The applicant has strong ties to the volunteering sector and community organisations.	Details of existing and ongoing partnerships and relationships and outcomes achieved through collaboration.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 3 in a number of ways:

- demonstrating the link between current activities and services and grant objectives
- providing qualitative and quantitative data substantiating outcomes of past activities (such as number of volunteers involved in organisations, number of programs run or resources developed, number of subscribers to website/newsletter, etc.)
- including evidence of experience in providing monitoring and reporting to government.

Criteria 4: Demonstrate your organisation’s capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the activity’s objectives in the chosen community/communities and/or target group).

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 4, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
Individuals within the organisation had suitable skills and experience.	Detailed descriptions of key positions and their roles in ensuring the effective delivery of the project included.
The organisation’s structure supports delivery of the services.	Inclusion of detailed organisational chart highlighting capabilities.
The organisation had a proven track record in delivery of volunteer development and management services.	Details of qualifications and experience in the delivery of comparable projects at the same scale demonstrated.
The organisation invested in staff development and training to achieve improved outcomes.	Staff will undergo assessment and receive support, with feedback surveys to enable evaluation and ongoing development.
The proposed governance structures were sound.	Comprehensive information about governance structures and processes demonstrating appropriate mechanisms to support the project and administration of the grant.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 4 in a number of ways:

- providing greater detail of continuous improvement strategies within governance structures
- including details on strategic and operational planning
- providing information on the resources and infrastructure available to support the delivery of services.