

Knox Community Grant Guidelines 2026 – 2027



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Front cover image credit: Orana Neighbourhood House 'Connecting Through Community Lunches' Project

Introduction

Knox Council provides an annual budget to a range of grant programs designed to capture the priorities of the community and enable our community to thrive. The below grant programs are underpinned by the following principles:

- Funded projects/activities will provide benefit to the Knox community and help meet Council’s objectives;
- Co-operation and collaboration between groups is encouraged;
- Grants' processes will be consistent, equitable and transparent; and
- Grants' processes will support and strengthen community groups in developing local solutions to local needs.

The community grants outlined in these Guidelines are:

<p>Minor Grants Program</p>	<p>These can help Knox's not-for-profit community organisations with quick response grants up to \$2,500. Grant applications are assessed and allocated monthly to eligible groups. Examples include first aid training for volunteers, purchase of portable tables and chairs, craft materials for art therapy program.</p>	<p>Monthly</p>
<p>Community Development Fund</p>	<p>This funding is for projects, programs and events that benefit the Knox community across seven different categories. Examples include projects that build community participation, inclusion and sustainability such as multicultural workshops, youth leadership projects, development of volunteer base, mental health peer-support groups.</p>	<p>Yearly</p>

Community Partnership Fund

The Program assists not for profit organisations with eligible operational costs to deliver measurable community outcomes that respond to local priorities and identified strategic service requirements and will provide funding from 2027-2030. Organisations need to offer programs aligned to the strategic priorities in the Knox Council and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-29.

4-Yearly

Equity and Inclusion

Council is committed to equity and inclusion and welcomes applications from groups that may experience disadvantages or barriers to participation. This includes (but is not limited to) First Nations Peoples, LGBTIQ+ communities, over 55's, young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with disability. We also encourage partnership and collaboration between organisations.

Who can apply?

Organisations who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for the:

- Minor Grant Program;
- Community Development Fund;
- Community Partnership Fund.

Operational location

Applicants must be located within, or be delivering a project within, the City of Knox.

Australian Business Number

The organisation must have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or complete a Statement by Supplier form.

Governing Body

The organisation must have a Committee of Management or similar governing body that accepts responsibility for administering the grant.

Previous Grant Expenditure

The organisation must have provided evidence to Council's satisfaction regarding the expenditure of any previous grants received from Council.

No Outstanding Debts

The organisation must have no outstanding debts to Knox City Council.

Not-For-Profit Status

The organisation must be a not-for-profit legal entity that provides services, support, or activities to the Knox community.

Public Liability Insurance

The organisation must hold adequate public liability insurance appropriate for the activity outlined in the application.

Required Permits and Plans

All required permits and approvals, including Council permits, must be obtained as part of the funding agreement.

Grant Conditions and Compliance Requirements

Prohibited Expenditures and Funding Exclusions

- In line with the Knox Gambling Harm Prevention Policy, Council grant funding will not be provided to organisations or businesses that operate electronic gaming machines or other gambling activities strongly associated with gambling harm. Grant funding will also not support events, activities or programs delivered at venues where electronic gaming machines operate.
- Grant funds cannot be used for the purchase of alcohol in any circumstances. This includes items that support the consumption, storage or sale of alcohol.
- Expenditure contributing to carbon emissions when more sustainable options are available, including the purchase or use of single-use plastics, is not permitted.
- Funding will not be provided for CCTV, visual surveillance, cameras, monitoring systems, or associated installation and maintenance costs.

- State or Federal government responsibilities – projects may not be an event or activity that is the core funding responsibility of another level of government.
- Projects, programs or activities delivered by political or religious groups where the primary purpose is to promote political views, advocate for a political party, or promote religious beliefs, doctrine or worship.
- Educational institutions: Grants cannot be used for school curriculum activities or projects that only take place at, or benefit, a school.
- Voucher support must be limited to grocery purchases only. This includes supermarket-specific vouchers or gift cards (for example, Coles or Woolworths) that restrict the purchase of alcohol and tobacco. Vouchers must not be redeemable for alcohol or tobacco products.
- Ticketed events must include projected ticket income in their application to ensure accessibility considerations and enable proper assessment and acquittal.
- Projects must be accessible to, and provide a clear benefit for, Knox residents. Applications that are not open to the wider Knox community will only be considered where a significant community benefit can be clearly demonstrated.
- Capital works and the purchase or installation of fixed assets are not eligible for funding under this grant program. This includes any works or items that create, enhance, or extend the life of a physical asset or infrastructure. Capital works generally refer to construction, structural improvements, or permanent upgrades to land, buildings, or facilities. Fixed assets are items of enduring value that are not easily moved and are intended for long-term use.

Examples of ineligible capital works and fixed assets include (but are not limited to):

- Construction of new buildings, extensions, or permanent structures
- Renovations, refurbishments, or upgrades to existing facilities (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, clubrooms)
- Installation or replacement of fixed equipment (e.g built-in seating, lighting infrastructure)
- Purchase of large or fixed equipment that becomes part of a facility (e.g. scoreboards, fixed shelving, commercial kitchen fit-outs)

What may be considered eligible:

- Portable equipment (e.g. marquees, tables, chairs)

Grant conditions / Use of grant Funds

Once a grant has been approved, grant funds must be used solely for the purpose approved in the grant application and Funding Agreement. Grant funds must not be

gifted, transferred or passed on to another organisation, either as cash or through the purchase or transfer of equipment.

Any changes to the approved use of grant funds will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and require prior written approval from Council Officers within the Community Grants Team (delegated Officers) using approved forms.

Funding Agreement

All successful applicants are required to enter into a funding agreement within three weeks of grant approval. Funding agreements detail the terms and conditions of the grant, accountability requirements for project delivery and financial reporting expectations.

Alignment with the Knox Council and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029

All funding applications must demonstrate how the proposed project will benefit the Knox community and align with the objectives and priorities of the Knox Council and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029.

Applicants must address this requirement through mandatory application questions. Demonstrated alignment will form part of the eligibility screening and assessment criteria. Applications that fail to demonstrate alignment will not be considered for funding.

Conflict of Interest - Community Group Members

Any individual or related business/organisation benefiting from grant funds must declare this conflict. If work or quotes are supplied by a connected party, it must be reported and supported by a second quote.

Change of Circumstances

We understand from time to time, circumstances may change. Please contact the Community Grants Team on grants@knox.vic.gov.au or 03 9298 8000 to discuss your project and any foreseeable impacts to the delivery of your project.

Child Safe Standards

Council is committed to creating a child safe and child friendly city. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to ensuring all children and young people are safe, valued and protected from harm. Child safety is embedded in the everyday work of Council staff, contractors and volunteers.

All organisations funded through the Knox Grants Program must comply with all relevant child safety laws, including but not limited to, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

This includes:

- Reviewing the Worker Screening Act 2020 to understand any Working with Children Check (WWCC) requirements;
- Reviewing the Child Employment (Amendment) Act 2022 to determine whether your organisation requires a licence to employ children under 15;
- Implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards, where applicable; and
- Understanding your organisation's obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Plain language guides, fact sheets-language guides, fact sheets and other resources are available from the Social Services Regulator: [Child Safe Standards | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards).

Compliance with Child Safe Standards

As a condition of receiving Community Grant funding, organisations must comply with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

If your organisation has direct or indirect contact with children under 18, your application must include evidence of your organisation's commitment to child safety.

This includes:

- Policies and procedures related to the Child Safe Standards (where required organisations with no involvement with children are not expected to provide these);
- Confirmation that all relevant staff and volunteers hold a Working with Children Check, where applicable.

Suspension or Withholding of Payments

Council may withhold or suspend funding where reporting is late, incomplete or unsatisfactory; where the Applicant has failed to remedy a breach; or where Council reasonably considers there to be a risk to health, safety, child safety or Council's reputation. Payments resume once issues are remedied.

The Role of an Auspice

An auspice arrangement is when a larger, eligible organisation supports a smaller unincorporated group to apply for and manage a grant. The larger organisation, known as the auspice, is responsible for managing the grant funds and providing public liability insurance for the activity or event.

If you wish to use an auspice, you must provide evidence of their agreement, usually a letter which should be uploaded with your grant application in SmartyGrants. The auspice organisation must also meet the Eligibility Criteria outlined in the ‘Who Can Apply’ section of these Guidelines.

Events/Artwork on Council-Owned Sites

All relevant permits and applications must be received prior to grant money being released.

Equity, Inclusion and Respect

Grant recipients are required to demonstrate behaviour that promotes respect, integrity, inclusivity, accountability and responsibility throughout the delivery of the funded project or activity. Activities should actively foster an inclusive environment for all community members, including culturally and linguistically diverse participants, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups. Compliance with this requirement will be assessed as part of the grant acquittal process. Organisations that fail to uphold these standards may be required to return grant funds to Council and may not be eligible for future grant funding.

Privacy of Information

As part of the Information Privacy Act Statement of Consent, Council collects information from Grant applicants for the purpose of registering and administering grant applications for the specified funding period. The information may also be used to send information and to ascertain satisfaction with our services. The information will not be disclosed except as required by law. In particular, the information will not be disclosed to others for marketing purposes.

Application Process

How to apply

Council’s grant programs are accessed through the SmartyGrants Online Portal platform where you can read more about the grant and view the application form. Once you start your application, you can upload documents and save your progress, returning as often as needed before submitting it to Council.

When will I know the outcome of my application?

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email following consideration and approval by Council. Applicants will be advised of the outcome in the days following the relevant Council meeting.

What happens if my application is successful?

Successful applicants will be required to sign a formal funding agreement outlining the details of the grant. This Agreement will clearly define the approved purpose of the funding and set out the terms and conditions to support effective project delivery and ensure public funds are used appropriately.

What happens if my application is unsuccessful?

If you are not successful, we encourage you to talk to the Community Grants Team to seek feedback on your application and make further applications in the future.

Privacy and Data Protection Act

As part of the Information Privacy Act Statement of Consent, Council collects information from grant applicants to register and manage grant applications for the relevant funding period. The information may also be used to provide related updates and to assess satisfaction with Council services. Your information will not be shared except as required by law and will not be disclosed for marketing purposes.

Administrative Updates

From time to time, minor administrative updates may be required to this document. Changes that do not significantly affect the Guidelines can be made administratively and approved by the CEO. Examples include updates to Department or position names, Government Department titles, or minor legislative amendments with no substantial impact. Any changes that could materially affect the intent of the Guidelines must be submitted to Council for consideration.

I Need Help

If you are having difficulty applying online, we are here to help. Contact the Community Grants Team on 03 9298 8000 or email grants@knox.vic.gov.au.

Dates to remember

28 April	10.00am to 12.00pm	Knox City Council information session
6 May	6.30pm to 9.00pm	Grants writing workshop
28 May	7.00pm to 9.00pm	Knox City Council grant information session
11 June	9.30am to 12.30pm	Drop-in session Knox City Council grant information session

Minor Grants Program

The Minor Grants Program provides accessible funding to support community-led activities in Knox that promote volunteer effort, civic participation, and align with the Knox Council and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029.

Grants are available for small, short-term projects, activities and project-related items, up to a maximum of \$2,500 per financial year. Applications are assessed and allocated monthly, except in January.

Application Amount	Assessment and Determination	Grant Accountability and Acquittal
\$1 to \$2500	Assessed by the CEO or delegate. Determined by Council at the monthly Ordinary Meeting of Council.	Funding Agreement and Acquittal required that show proof of expenditure/ purchase (i.e. receipt, paid invoice or bank statement) and benefit of grant.

Minor Grant Eligibility

Refer to page 5 of the Guidelines.

Minor Grant Process

All applications must be completed through the SmartyGrants Online Portal and are considered at each mid-month Council meeting.

Key dates for application submissions

Grant submission deadline	Council meeting date
19 January 2026	9 February 2026
16 February 2026	10 March 2026
23 March 2026	13 April 2026
20 April 2026	11 May 2026
22 June 2026	13 July 2026
20 July 2026	10 August 2026
24 August 2026	14 September 2026

Grant submission deadline	Council meeting date
21 September 2026	12 October 2026
19 October 2026	9 November 2026
23 November 2026	14 December 2026

Your project / activity start date must be after the Council meeting date where your application is being presented for approval. **Projects / Activities that are due to begin before the Council meeting date will not be considered.**

We may request extra information about your application so please allow enough time before the monthly deadline. Otherwise, we may defer your application to the next month's Council meeting.

The administration and management of the grants program is guided by the Community grants Framework policy which can be accessed via Council's website - [Community grants framework policy](#).

Application Submission Deadlines

Applications must be submitted at least 15 working days before the Council meeting to allow time for assessment.

Late applications for the May Council meeting will be carried over to the new financial year.

Minor Grants will not be awarded during June due to end of financial year processes, or in January, as Council meetings are not held during this period. Applicants will be advised if their application is delayed and assessed as part of the new financial year processes.

Minor Grants Program Oversight

The Minor Grants Program and any allocation and payment of Minor Grants will be temporarily suspended prior to any Council election or by-election, including the 2028 Council election, in accordance with Council's Election Period Policy.

Minor Grant applications that may be supported

- Small, incidental (secondary or miscellaneous) amounts for one-off projects, activities or equipment purchases or repairs that will benefit Knox residents, with funds to be expended within 12 months of receiving the grant.
- Funding for equipment purchases is only available to groups located within Knox.

- Applications that support groups to minimise waste or adapt to climate change are encouraged.
- Funding is available for amounts up to \$2,500. Applicants may contribute additional funding towards the project or activity
- Have no overdue grant acquittals and have successfully acquitted previous grants received.
- Applicants must have no outstanding debts owing to Council. This will be verified by Council as part of the application assessment process.
- Sporting equipment required for regular everyday participation (e.g. balls) may be funded up to a maximum of \$500 per annum.
- You can only include catering costs up to 20% of the amount you apply for. If Council gives you less than you requested, the amount allowed for catering will be adjusted accordingly.

Minor Grant applications and expenditure that won't be supported

The following outlines applications that will not be supported and costs that grant funding cannot be used for. Some items are applicable at the assessment stage, while others are applicable to how grant funds may be spent.

- Activities that take place in a private residence.
- An individual person's expenses.
- Applications that are more appropriately funded under another Council grant program.
- Funding will not be provided for the same or substantially similar activity from any Knox Grants Program stream or other Council funding source in either the current or previous financial year.
- Applications where the funding will be used to provide grants to a third party.
- Retrospective payments or expenses for activities or expenses undertaken before Council approval.
- Recurring applications – Equipment that was funded in the previous financial year will not be supported again, unless a clear and significant community benefit can be demonstrated.
- Camps that include overnight stays.
- Operating expenses – salaries, insurance, utilities, cleaning, general maintenance, subscriptions, annual software licences, website or social media maintenance fees, professional grant writer fees.
- Funding for prizes, fundraising, competitions, sponsorships, donations, trophies, vouchers, tobacco, gambling or gifts, e-cigarettes and fireworks.

- Transport costs for participants are not supported. This includes bus hire, public transport fares, and presenter travel. Accessibility-related exceptions may apply.
- Funding will not be provided for printed or branded uniforms or merchandise.
- Projects must be accessible to, and provide a clear benefit for, Knox residents. Applications that are not open to the wider Knox community will only be considered where a significant community benefit can be clearly demonstrated.
- Equipment insurance or storage fees.

Minor Grant Assessment Process

All Minor Grant Applications will first be reviewed by Council Officers for eligibility outlined in these Guidelines and the Grant Framework Policy and recommended to Council based on the following criteria:

- Does the application provide adequate benefit to Knox residents - 20%;
- Has the applicant demonstrated community or organisational need, including the organisation's need for funding to deliver the proposed project or activity? (20%);
- Is the application aligned to at least one of the themes outlined in the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan - 20%;
- Is the budget realistic - 20%; and
- Is it evident that the organisation has capacity to deliver the project - 20%.

Crisis Response Provision for Minor Grants

In the event of a declared emergency or exceptional circumstance, such as a natural disaster or pandemic impacting the municipality, Council or its delegate may waive specific clauses in this document to enable appropriate support to community organisations.

Budget Allocation

If the Minor Grants Program budget allocation is exhausted before May, the Program will be suspended immediately, and new applications will not be accepted until the beginning of the new financial year.

Community Development Fund

The Community Development Fund (CDF) is an annual grant program that supports activities, projects and programs that benefit the Knox community. It is designed to reflect community priorities and help our community thrive. CDF grants assist not-for-profit organisations to develop, enhance and support their ongoing sustainability in delivering initiatives that make a positive impact in Knox.

Council allocates funding to the CDF program as part of its annual budget. The funding period for this round is November 2026 to November 2027.

Funding Categories and Objectives

Community Development Fund Category	Max Grant	Purpose / Objectives	Requirements
Active Ageing	\$2,501 to \$5,000	Promote social connection, health, wellbeing, volunteer engagement for over 55's	Applications should provide participation outcomes and encourage intergenerational connections that value the contribution of over 55's in Knox.
Community Strengthening	\$2,501 to \$15,000	Strengthen Knox community through diverse activities/services	Applications will need to demonstrate significant benefit to Knox residents and include strategies for sustainable delivery (if required) of the project beyond the grant program.
Cultural Celebrations & Community Events	\$2,501 to \$3,000	Increase awareness/understanding of diverse cultures, enhance social inclusion	Applications should demonstrate collaboration and partnership where possible. A community event usually attracts less than 500 people.
Arts & Events	\$2,501 to \$15,000	Support community festivals, creative activities	Applications should demonstrate engaging with and showcasing local artists, musicians, theatre performers, etc. To qualify as an eligible event in this category, the event must be open to the wider community and attract more than 500 people.
Environment & Sustainability	\$2,501 to \$5,000	Projects/purchases supporting environment, sustainability, or environmental groups	Applications will need to demonstrate positive biodiversity and/or sustainability outcomes in alignment with Council strategies.

Community Development Fund Category	Max Grant	Purpose / Objectives	Requirements
Active Communities	\$2,501 to \$5,000	Capacity building for sport/leisure clubs to promote wellbeing, diversity, inclusion, gender equity	Applications will need to show consideration of diverse communities and contribute to the sustainability of the club.
Small Equipment Grants	\$2,501 to \$5,000	Small, essential equipment enhancing sustainability	Applications may request equipment that is essential to delivering a specific project or activity. Everyday sporting equipment is not eligible for funding. Items commonly used for regular training or ongoing participation such as balls, bibs, cones or gloves will not be supported. Examples of eligible equipment include defibrillators to improve safety, non-branded marquees, and stackable seating for program delivery.

Community Development Fund Eligibility

Refer to page 5 of Guidelines.

Community Development Fund Process

Applications for the 2027-30 period will be open from **Monday 25 May 2026** and will close at **11.59pm on Monday 22 June, 2026**.

Use Council’s link below to access the **Community Development Funding (CDF)** webpage and submit your application through the SmartyGrants Online Portal, found on this page: [community-development-funding-grants](#). All applications must be completed through the SmartyGrants Online Portal.

Applicants are encouraged (but not required) to contact the Grants Team before submitting to confirm their eligibility. The Team can be contacted on 03 9298 8000 or email grants@knox.vic.gov.au.

The administration and management of the grants program is guided by the CPF Grants Framework which can be accessed via Council’s website - [Community grant framework policy](#).

Please note: The SmartyGrants program will not receive applications beyond the specified closing date and time. Please ensure you allow adequate time in submitting online to anticipate the possibility of last-minute technical challenges.

The 2026-2027 Community Development Fund information sessions, opening and closing dates are shown below, and we encourage you to attend the Grant Information Sessions.

Dates to remember

28 April 2026	10.00am – 12.00pm	Knox City council information session
6 May 2026	6.30pm – 9.00pm	Grant Writing Training Session
13 May 2026	7.00pm – 9.00pm	Knox City Council Grant Information Session
25 May 2026	9am	Applications Open
28 May 2026	7.00pm – 9.00pm	Knox City Council Grant Information Session
11 June 2026	9.30am - 12.30pm	Knox City Council Grant Drop-in Information Session
22 June 2026	11.59pm	Applications Close
26 October 2026	7.00pm	Council meeting (endorsement of Panel recommendations)
1 November 2026		Funding commences

Applications that may be supported

- Funds for one-off projects, activities, or equipment purchases that benefit Knox residents.
- Applications that support groups to minimise waste or adapt to climate change.
- Grant funds must be expended within twelve (12) months of receipt, or by the project or activity end date nominated by the applicant in their application, whichever occurs first.
- Clear project goals, defined outcomes, and a detailed plan and budget.
- Support Council’s strategic objectives and priorities in the Council and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029.
- Community need must be demonstrated and addressed.
- Collaboration with other local organisations, shared resources, and volunteer involvement encouraged.
- Have no overdue grant acquittals and have successfully acquitted previous grants received.

- Applicants must have no outstanding debts owing to Council. This will be verified by Council as part of the application assessment process.
- Complete applications with all requested attachments and 2 quotes for all costs.
- The organisation must have no active breaches with Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), or the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), as confirmed through publicly available registers or self-declaration.
- Conflict of interest Committee members or their businesses benefiting from grant funds must be disclosed; any quotes or work from a Committee member's business should be reported.
- Short-term wages may be funded where staffing is essential to delivering the project or activity, provided wages do not exceed relevant award rates, enterprise agreements, or recognised industry pay standards.
- You can only include catering costs up to 20% of the amount you apply for. If Council gives you less than you requested, the amount allowed for catering will be adjusted accordingly.

Applications that won't be supported

- Applications submitted after the closing date.
- Activities that take place in a private residence.
- More appropriately funded under another Council grant program.
- Funding will not be provided for the same or substantially similar activity from any Knox Grants Program stream or other Council funding source in either the current or previous financial year.
- Applications where funding will be used to provide grants to a third party.
- Projects must be accessible to, and provide a clear benefit for, Knox residents. Applications that are not open to the wider Knox community will only be considered where a significant community benefit can be clearly demonstrated.
- Retrospective payments or expenses for activities or expenses undertaken before Council approval.
- Camps that include overnight stays.
- Operating expenses – salaries, insurance, utilities, cleaning, general maintenance, subscriptions, annual software licences, website or social media maintenance fees, professional grant writer fees.
- Everyday sporting equipment is not supported.
- Funding for prizes, fundraising, competitions, sponsorships, donations, trophies, tobacco, gambling or gifts, e-cigarettes and fireworks

- Transport costs for participants are not supported. This includes bus hire, public transport fares, and presenter travel. Accessibility-related exceptions may apply.
- Funding will not be provided for printed or branded uniforms or merchandise.
- Equipment insurance or storage fees.

Community Development Fund Application and Assessment Process

The annual Community Development Fund submission round will be widely publicised and promoted to the Knox community.

All applications are to be submitted via the Knox City Council SmartyGrants Online Portal and must include:

- Your current Public Liability Insurance Certificate of Currency;
- Your most recent full year financials;
- Quotes to support the proposed expenses/budget;
- Evidence of your organisation's legal status; and
- Project Plan and Risk Assessment.

How are Community Development Fund applications assessed?

Applications are first checked for eligibility by Council Officers then evaluated by the Community Grant Assessment Panel, which consists of Community Representatives and Council Officers.

The assessment is conducted in accordance with the Community Grants Assessment Panel Terms of Reference.

All Community Development Fund applications are assessed on the following weighted criteria:

- Clear demonstration of community need and proposed project objectives – 30%;
- The capacity of the organisation applying for the grant to deliver the project and manage the grant – 25%;
- The degree to which the project is shown to have a clear financial need, is feasible and financially viable – 20%;
- The level of benefit to Knox residents – 15%; and
- Demonstration of consultation and partnership with others – 10%.

In addition, expert advice is gathered from relevant Council Officers who provide subject matter expertise on specific submissions. This Officer advice is presented to the Assessment Panel as an additional resource to assist in their thorough review and consideration of each application.

A report is then presented to Council, summarising the recommendations from the Community Grant Assessment Panel. Council will then consider and endorse these recommendations.

Community Partnership Fund

The Community Partnership Fund (CPF) supports community organisations to deliver services and activities that benefit Knox residents and align with Council’s strategic objectives under the Knox Council and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029. The funding will be provided across four financial years, spanning from 1 January 2027 to 30 June 2030.

Following a review of the CPF program in 2025, the funding structure has been streamlined from six streams to three. The first cycle commencing in January 2027.

Organisations that are receiving funding through a Service Agreement will not be eligible to apply for CPF grants during the same funding period for all projects and programs that relate to their core business.

Program Purpose and Who Can Apply

The Program provides funding to not-for-profit organisations to support eligible operational costs that deliver measurable community outcomes aligned with local priorities and identified strategic service needs. Funding is delivered through three distinct streams, and organisations must apply under the stream that best reflects their service type and intended outcomes.

Dates to remember

6 May 2026	6.30pm – 9.00pm	Grant Writing Training Session
13 May 2026	7.00pm - 9.00pm	Knox City Council Grant Information Session
25 May 2026	9am	Applications Open
28 May 2026	7.00pm – 9.00pm	Knox City Council Grant Information Session
22 June 2026	11.59pm	Applications Close
26 October 2026	7.00pm	Council meeting (endorsement of Panel recommendations)
1 January 2027		Funding commences

Community Partnership Fund Eligibility

Refer to page 5 of Guidelines.

Community Partnership Fund Process

Applications for the 2027-30 period will be open from **Monday 25 May 2026** and will close at **11.59pm** on **Monday 22 June, 2026**.

Use Council's link below to access the **Community Partnership Funding (CPF)** webpage and submit your application through the SmartyGrants Online Portal, found on this page: [community-partnership-funding-grants](#).

Applicants are encouraged (but not required) to contact the Grants Team before submitting to confirm their eligibility. The Team can be contacted on 03 9298 8000 or email grants@knox.vic.gov.au.

The administration and management of the grants program is guided by the CPF Grants Framework which can be accessed via Council's website - [Community grants framework policy](#).

Please note: The SmartyGrants program will not receive applications beyond the specified closing date and time. Please ensure you allow adequate time in submitting online to anticipate the possibility of last-minute technical challenges.

Applications that may be supported

- Align with the key directions of the Council and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-29.
- Align with the purpose and requirements of this grant stream.
- Include current public liability insurance with an appropriate level of cover and a copy of your Certificate of Currency.
- Provide quotes for each item or service to be funded.
- Be submitted by the due date.
- Be located in Knox.
- Have no overdue grant reports or debts with Council.
- Have no active breaches against the obligations of Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Australian Not-for-Profit and Charities Commission, or the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, as applicable.
- Be legally constituted (e.g. incorporated association, company limited by guarantee, Aboriginal Corporation, Statutory Authority, or a Church established by legislation). Evidence of legal status must be provided.
- Be not-for-profit and managed by a volunteer board/committee of management; and provide evidence of your last annual report or AGM minutes complying with

Consumer Affairs Victoria, Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission, or Australian Securities and Investments Commission obligations.

- Be financially sustainable and able to operate for the full funding period with support from the grant and provide your organisations latest financial statement complying with Consumer Affairs Victoria, Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission, or Australian Securities and Investments Commission obligations.

Applications that won't be supported

- Applications that are more appropriately funded under another Council grant program.
- Funding for prizes, sponsorships, donations, trophies, vouchers, tobacco, gambling or gifts, e-cigarettes and fireworks.
- Applications submitted after the closing date.
- Applications where funding will be used to provide grants to a third party.
- Funding for prizes, fundraising, competitions, sponsorships, donations, trophies, tobacco, gambling or gifts, e-cigarettes and fireworks
- Transport costs for participants are not supported. This includes bus hire, public transport fares, and presenter travel. Accessibility-related exceptions may apply.
- Funding will not be provided for printed or branded uniforms or merchandise.
- Equipment insurance or storage fees.
- Projects must be accessible to, and provide a clear benefit for, Knox residents. Applications that are not open to the wider Knox community will only be considered where a significant community benefit can be clearly demonstrated.
- Retrospective payments or expenses for activities or expenses undertaken before Council approval.

Community Partnership Fund Application and Assessment Process

The Community Partnership Fund submission round will be widely publicised and promoted to the Knox community.

All applications are to be submitted via the Knox City Council SmartyGrants Online Portal and must include:

- Your current Public Liability Insurance Certificate of Currency;
- Your most recent full year financials;
- Quotes to support the proposed expenses/budget;
- Evidence of your organisation's legal status; and
- Project Plan and Risk Assessment.

Applications are first checked for eligibility by Council Officers then evaluated by the Community Grants Assessment Panel, which consists of approved Community Representatives, with support from Council Officers.

The assessment is conducted in accordance with the Community Grants Assessment Panel Terms of Reference.

All Community Partnership Fund applications are assessed on the following weighted criteria:

- Relevance to specified funding stream objectives (30%);
- Scope of service delivery (accessibility for residents across Knox) (10%);
- Organisational capacity (demonstrated ability and experience) (25%);
- Clarity of proposed funding expenditure (evidence of realistic budget planning for funding period) (25%); and
- Opportunities to strengthen effective partnership and collaboration (10%).

A report is then presented to Council, summarising the recommendations from the Community Grant Assessment Panel. Council will then consider and endorse these recommendations.

Funding Streams

Applicants must request funding above \$15,001, with each stream able to award up to \$150,149.50 for the 2027–2028 financial year. Grant requests must be financially realistic and full amounts may not be awarded. Final allocations will vary between streams and will be based on assessment outcomes.

1. Specialist Community Support Services

For organisations delivering essential community support services, or those providing specialised support for specific population groups such as older people, young people, children and families, First Nations communities, and culturally diverse communities.

This stream supports organisations to:

- Deliver essential services and support to Knox residents
- Address identified service gaps
- Enhance existing services
- Improve equitable access

Examples

Financial, legal and crisis assistance; housing support; mental health programs; family violence support; addiction support (alcohol, gambling, etc.); and food security initiatives.

2. Community Development

For organisations delivering programs that foster social connection, inclusion, participation, resilience and capacity building.

This stream supports organisations to:

- Promote equal opportunities for participation
- Focus on primary prevention and early intervention
- Strengthen partnerships and community connections
- Build organisational or community capacity
- Improve access to programs and facilities

Examples

Neighbourhood and community connection activities; community arts or cultural participation projects; peer support or social inclusion groups; youth or intergenerational programs; skills building workshops; community education sessions; and organisational capacity building projects (e.g., governance or planning support).

3. Volunteer Resourcing and Support

For organisations that strengthen the coordination, support, and development of volunteering in Knox.

This stream supports organisations to:

- Connect residents with meaningful volunteering opportunities
- Promote the value and benefits of volunteering
- Equip organisations to support, manage and retain volunteers
- Facilitate networking and information sharing across volunteer engaging organisations

Examples

Volunteer recruitment and onboarding programs; training and development for volunteers; volunteer management tools or systems; volunteer recognition initiatives; networking or information sharing events; or resources that help organisations create safe, supportive volunteer environments.

Funding Agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with Knox City Council outlining the terms and conditions of the funding and the accountability requirements associated with the use of public funds. Funding Agreements are issued

for a maximum period of four years, based on the agreed funding objectives. Program meetings will be held twice a year with the Community Grants Team to ensure the organisation is meeting its service objectives and delivering the outcomes funded through the program.

Successful applicants must also notify Council of any significant organisational changes (e.g. governance or financial changes) that may affect their ability to meet the Funding Agreement objectives or deliver agreed service priorities.

Payment of Grants

Grant funds will be paid via electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the funded organisation.

Payments will be made according to the timeframes set out in the individual Funding Agreement and are subject to the submission of required acquittal documentation and reporting.

Where an applicant is registered for GST, grant funding will not include GST for salary, project management costs, equipment or other items that attract GST.

All invoices submitted as proof of expenditure must clearly indicate whether GST has been applied, and where applicable, invoices and quotes must include GST and show this separately.

Where screenshots are provided as proof of expenditure, applicants must clearly confirm whether the amounts shown include GST.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Information collected by funded organisations throughout the funding period will be used to assist Council to monitor trends relating to community need and service delivery.

Council will undertake regular monitoring with funded organisations during the funded period to include assessment of:

- Achievement of annual work plan objectives for which the Council funding was allocated;
- Proper acquittal and use of Council funds by the recipient;
- Achievement of obligations contained within the Funding Agreement;
- Identification of opportunities for project collaboration; and
- Any other matter considered relevant.

A full strategic review will be undertaken by Council within the final year of the Funding Agreement period and will include an assessment of:

- The continuing benefit of the service/activity to the Knox community;

- Whether the service/activity continues to be a priority of Council including alignment with Council's policies, strategies and vision; and
- Any other matter considered relevant.

Recognition of Council Funding

Recipients of funding from this program are expected to acknowledge Council's contribution and support through one or more of the following means:

- Use of the Council logo on relevant promotional material;
- Recognition in annual reports and at relevant events, launches and other public activities; and
- Invitation of the Mayor and Councillors to attend relevant events, activities and/or project milestones.

Specific instructions regarding the use of Council's logo will be included in the Funding Agreement. Recipients will be required to provide evidence of this acknowledgement as part of their grant acquittal.

Acquittals

What is an acquittal?

An acquittal is a report that the successful grant applicant submits, showing how the grant was spent and the outcomes of the funded activity. This report helps confirm that the funding was used as intended.

The submission of a satisfactory acquittal within the agreed timeframe is mandatory. If the acquittal report is incomplete, missing, or does not include the required documentation, it may affect your organisation's eligibility to apply for future Knox City Council grants.

Why is an acquittal important?

An acquittal is an important part of the grants process, as it ensures public funds are used responsibly and in line with the Funding Agreement and Grant Program Guidelines.

Applicants must provide evidence of purchases and confirm that all funds were spent on approved items.

As with the financial acquittal, failure to report on project outcomes may result in the applicant being ineligible for future funding. Any unreported or unspent funds must be returned to Council.

If funds are not used in accordance with the agreement with Knox Council, applicants will be required to return the funds.

Funds will also be required to be returned if the spending is found to be retrospective.

Timeline for Grant Acquittals

- **Minor Grants:** Acquittals will be due 2 weeks after the end date of the project / activity.
- **Community Development Fund Program Grants (CDF):** Acquittals will be due 2 weeks after the end date of the project / activity.
- **Community Partnership Fund Program Grants (CPF):** Acquittals will be due each year for the previous year.

Tips for a successful acquittal

- Complete and submit the acquittal online using the SmartyGrants Online Portal.
- Submit the acquittal within two weeks of completing your project or activity.
- Upload evidence of acknowledgement of Council funding.
- Include receipts or other proof of payment equal to the value of the grant. Documents must clearly show that the amounts have been paid in full, for example marked as “paid” or showing a zero balance (quotes or unpaid invoices are not sufficient).
- Attach photos or videos of your project/event.
- Provide a summary outlining the benefits and outcomes of the project for the community.
- If required return any unspent grant funds to Council.

Definitions

Acquittal	Means the information provided by the grant recipient that proves that funds have been spent responsibly and in line with the guidelines of each grant program.
Assessment Panel	A specific purpose committee to provide recommendations to Council on the Community Development Fund grant allocations.
Auspice	An established not-for-profit legal entity that agrees to take responsibility for the grant obligations of an unincorporated or informal or newly established group with no legal status.
Chief Executive Officer	Means the Chief Executive Officer of Knox City Council.
Community Group/Organisation	Means a legal entity which provides services, support or activities to the Knox community.
Community Representative	A member of the community appointed by Council to participate in the Panel Assessments.
Council	Means Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of these Guidelines.
Delegate(s)	Means a Council Officer selected by the Chief Executive Officer to administer the Grant Programs.
Event	Means an event, celebration, conference, performance or exhibition open to the community and held within the boundaries of Knox City.
Funding Agreement	Means an agreement between the grant recipient and Council that documents the agreed objectives of the grant and the accountability requirements of the grant.
Grant	Means a sum of money given to an organisation with the expectation that the money will be used for an agreed and specific purpose.
GST	Goods and Services Tax.
Individual	Means a person who lives, works, studies, or has a demonstrated connection to the Knox municipality.

Legal Entity	<p>An incorporated association, a co-operative, a company limited by guarantee or a trust or other organisation established under an Act passed by the State or Commonwealth.</p>
Not-for-Profit Group	<p>A group or organisation that is not operating for the profit or gain of its individual members and any profit or surplus is directed back into the operation of the organisation to carry out its purpose.</p>
Capital Works & Fixed Asset	<p>Capital works and the purchase or installation of fixed assets are not eligible for funding under this grant program. This includes any works or items that create, enhance, or extend the life of a physical asset or infrastructure.</p> <p>Capital works generally refer to construction, structural improvements, or permanent upgrades to land, buildings, or facilities. Fixed assets are items of enduring value that are not easily moved and are intended for long-term use.</p> <p>Examples of ineligible capital works and fixed assets include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of new buildings, extensions, or permanent structures • Renovations, refurbishments, or upgrades to existing facilities (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, clubrooms) • Installation or replacement of fixed equipment (e.g. built-in seating, lighting infrastructure) • Purchase of large or fixed equipment that becomes part of a facility (e.g. scoreboards, fixed shelving, commercial kitchen fit-outs)

References

Knox City Council Plans

Knox Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029

Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020
- Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Bill 2021

Charter of Human Rights

These Guidelines have been assessed against and complies with the Charter of Human Rights.

Related Council Policy

- Council Grant Framework Policy (April 2025)
- Election Period Policy
- Electronic Gaming Machine Policy
- Complaint Policy
- Knox City Council Governance Rule (Chapter 5 Conflicts of Interest)
- Fraud and Corruption Control Framework
- Child Safe Policy

Related Council Documents

- Knox City Council Fraud and Corruption Control Procedure
- Community Grant Assessment Panel Terms of Reference
- Community Events in Knox – Information Pack