

Communities and Justice

Community Safety Investment Fund

Grant Program Guidelines - Stream 1

November 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Communities and Justice acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this document.

We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

Community Safety Investment Fund

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1 Key dates and information

Application Opening	7 November 2025
Information Sessions	11 November 2025 at 13.30 pm 14 November 2025 at 10.00 am 19 November 2025 at 11.30 am
Applications Close	14 January 2026
Application outcomes advised	March 2026
Decision-maker	Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice
NSW Government Agency	Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) on Behalf of Youth Justice
Type of grant opportunity	Open, competitive
Grant value	Stream 1 up to \$40,000 per annum for 2025/26. Total funding pool of \$500,000
Enquiries	GrantDesignandSupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au YJGrantsFunding@dcj.nsw.gov.au

2 Overview

Community Safety Investment Fund Grant Program

The Community Safety Investment Fund (CSIF) aims to provide community organisations opportunities to design and deliver locally focused, community led solutions to prevent or respond to youth offending, strengthen families and improve community safety.

Under the CSIF, organisations can apply for a one-off grant in both funding streams, a maximum of one application per stream.

There are two Grant Programs:

- **Stream 1:** One Stage, Open Competitive Grant up to \$40,000 for smaller one-off initiatives delivered within 12 months.
- **Stream 2:** One stage, Open Competitive Grant up to \$300,000 for larger initiatives that will be delivered over two years.

Note there is a separate application processes for each stream; to be considered for Stream 1 and Stream 2 funding, organisations must apply for each stream separately.

These guidelines relate specifically to the **Stream 1** grant process. The guidelines contain an overview of the grant program, information about the application process, eligibility and assessment criteria, how the funds can and cannot be used, and reporting and other key requirements.

It is recommended that these guidelines are read prior to completing your application for the Community Safety Investment Fund grant program.

Grant streams and funding amounts

The grant will allocate up to \$500,000 (exclusive of GST).

Stream 1 grants are up to \$40,000 for smaller one-off initiatives delivered in under 12 months.

DCJ may also offer successful applicants a package lower than the amount requested.

Grants process

The Community Safety Investment Fund Grant Program - **Stream 1** will be a one stage application process. Organisations apply and will be assessed against the grant program eligibility and assessment criteria.

Objectives and outcomes

The Community Safety Investment Fund aims to provide community organisations opportunities to design and deliver locally focused, community led solutions to prevent or respond to youth offending, strengthen families and improve community safety.

Programs and initiatives will contribute to the achievement of objectives:

- Deliver holistic¹ responses that address the underlying needs and risks that contribute to young people's involvement with the justice system and improve their outcomes.
- Deliver culturally responsive initiatives that build long-term resilience and protective factors, increase connection to culture and improving social and emotional wellbeing for young people and families.
- Deliver programs and initiatives that empower young people and their families to achieve change in the young person's behaviour and safety.
- Support young people and families to re-engage with education, training, or employment.
- Increase community safety through tailored initiatives for high-risk youth.
- Whole of community initiatives that engage young people in pro-social activities.

We are particularly interested in grant applications that align with and help achieve the NSW Government's **Closing the Gap** priorities, including:

Target 11: to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system, so that by 2031, the rate of Aboriginal young people (10-17 years) in detention is reduced by 30 per cent. This may include (but is not limited to) programs and initiatives that:

- prevent and respond to youth offending
- divert young people from court which create positive pathways with communities
- Support young people transitioning from custody back to their community and provide support and opportunities to help them thrive to reduce reoffending.

Target group

The target group for the Community Safety Investment Fund Grant Program is young people aged 10–17-year-olds involved with or at risk of involvement with the justice system, their families and broader community.

See section 3.2 for information on the cohorts that will be prioritised in the assessment process.

Geographical reach

The grant is open to organisations across NSW.

See attached for the areas of highest demonstrated needs

Grant applications that target areas with the highest demonstrated needs and service gaps will be prioritised. This may mean that areas with recent investment from NSW Government that are focused on addressing youth crime may not be prioritised.

Organisations can still apply to deliver grants in areas that are not priority locations - and will be required to outline the specific need and gap in the community that the project will be seeking to address.

Types of initiatives

This grant program provides an opportunity for organisations to design projects and initiatives that meet local needs and priorities.

Below are examples of different activities and projects, noting organisations are not limited to these types of initiatives. Projects may have multiple components and activities:

¹ A holistic approach means to provide support that looks at the whole person, not just their mental health needs. The support should also consider their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. This approach is aligned with the concept of Aboriginal health – which is holistic in that it includes physical, social, emotional and cultural well-being of individuals and the whole community.

- **Pro-social activities** - engage young people in positive pro-social activities that are engaging, challenging, rewarding and age appropriate. This includes access to local sports, art, music and camps, media projects, fishing. It could include transport to activities, fees and equipment to participate. Importantly, activities and programs could be delivered after hours, when young people need them the most.
- **Mentoring and coaching support** – provides young people with a consistent and prosocial relationship with an older peer or adult mentor, supporting the young person to develop and build their skills, pro-social role modelling. Aboriginal cultural mentoring and healing programs provide culturally safe guidance and identity support for Aboriginal young people in community.
- **Skill building** – teaching young people how to build emotional regulation skills, problem solving, new thinking and behavioural skills. Skill building programs may also focus on life building skills, employment readiness skills, and literacy and numeracy skills (particularly important for young people who have disengaged from school). Pathways-based initiatives focus on developing young people’s confidence, independence, and practical work skills.
- **Cultural activities** - culture mentoring, cultural activities and programs that strengthen young people’s engagement with and connection to culture – such as cultural camps for Aboriginal young people.
- **Youth hubs** - establish a safe, positive and welcoming space for young people to hang out, engage in a range of activities and access support services in the one location. Hubs can involve the delivery of group programs as well as one-on-one support, and link in a range of local services to collaborate and provide support through the hub.
- **Service delivery** – setting up a new service or enhancing an existing service in an innovative way to focus on priority cohorts in areas of need that address key service gaps. This could be working with young people 1:1 through case co-ordination and navigation, case management, family work, support to re-engage with education, training and employment. It could also be delivery of services to groups of young people – such as youth hubs.
- **Community activities and events** – workshops, gatherings on Country, cultural and wellbeing camps for young people.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants

All applicants are required to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- be able to enter into a grant funding agreement with Department of Communities and Justice
- have an Australian bank account
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have appropriate insurance; this must include but is not limited to a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance
- address the NSW National Redress Scheme sanctions (included in this template)
- be a registered Australian business, or a not-for-profit Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO), or other incorporated organisation;

Incorporated organisation registered and approved as a not-for-profit body by NSW Fair Trading will be considered eligible, if they are:

- incorporated organisations that are registered and approved as not-for-profit bodies by NSW Fair Trading.
- Not-for profit companies limited by guarantee, registered in NSW (must have ACNC registration and/or DGR status)
- Indigenous Corporations (must be registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations)
- NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- religious organisations operating in NSW
- NSW non-government organisations established under their own Act of Parliament.
- a not-for-profit non-Aboriginal organisation partnering with a lead ACCO or Aboriginal business.

Ineligible applicants

You are not eligible if you are:

- An individual.
- Federal and State Government agencies and bodies.
- NSW educational facilities (public schools, private schools, TAFE).
- Local government organisations, including:
 - NSW local councils operating under the Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act)
 - Joint Organisations (s4000 of the LG Act)
 - County Councils (s383 of the LG Act)
 - Regional Organisations of Councils (which are voluntary groupings of councils).
 - Unincorporated organisations or groups without an eligible subcontracting organisation.
 - Organisations that have not met project requirements, including acquittal and reporting, for funding received from DCJ in the previous two years.
 - Organisations with Redress Obligations under the National Redress Scheme that have not joined the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

- have overdue acquittals with DCJ
- Do not have appropriate insurance; this must include but is not limited to a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance.

Note that NSW educational facilities and Local Government Organisations may partners in application.

4. Application process

Organisations will have the opportunity to apply online via Smarty Grants; the NSW Department of Community and Justice online grants platform.

Note for all applicants:

- must ensure that their contact details are up to date.
- must not have any outstanding acquittals for any other funding program with DCJ.

Stream 1

The application process for **Stream 1** is one stage open competitive grant process. Organisations are required to demonstrate eligibility and complete an application process that outlines how your organisation will design and deliver locally focused, community led solutions to prevent or respond to youth offending, strengthen families and improve community safety in your community. This includes:

- A broad outline of your initiative and how it aligns with the grant program objectives.
- Outline who will participate in the project.
- Outline the outcomes of your project.
- Request a specific grant funding amount to deliver the project, up to \$40,000.

Providers will need to complete the following as part of their application:

- key milestones and activities
- identifying potential risks and processes for managing these risks
- detailed budget breakdown
- detailed measurable outcomes

You may provide supporting information on experience delivering similar projects, although this is not mandatory.

Grant applications will be comparatively assessed. DCJ staff may request additional information and/or clarification from applicants at any time during the assessment process.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

Partnerships

Projects can be delivered by a group of organisations or partnerships. Organisations should outline the nature of the partnership in their application process.

The lead applicant must meet the eligibility criteria set out in these guidelines.

Late applications

Late submissions will not be considered or accepted unless in emergency or extreme circumstances.

DCJ's decision on whether to accept the request will be final.

5. Assessment process

This is an open competitive grant program.

Applicants will be assessed against the eligibility criteria and assessment criteria below.

Assessment criteria

Criteria	Specific information and evidence required
1. Alignment with objectives & activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clearly outlines project objectives and activities that will be delivered at the community level, in alignment with the objectives of the grant program.Outline if it is a new initiative or building of an existing initiative or service.
2. Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifies outcomes and benefits the project will work to achieve for young people, families and the community.
3. Local need and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate understanding of local need including the needs of the target cohort, service gaps the project aims to address.How the project will be tailored for the specific target group and community.Outline community support and leadership in the development and delivery of the project, including evidence of support (e.g. support letters).
4. Youth/family led	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Outline how the project will be informed by community knowledge, and insights and experienced of young people/families.Demonstrate that young people and families will be part of or lead decision making.
5. Cultural responsiveness:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate cultural responsiveness in the design and implementation of projects.For projects focused on Aboriginal young people and families, provide evidence of community support or partnerships with Aboriginal organisations (where appropriate).
6. Collaboration and partnerships:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate how the project will strengthen relationships and foster collaboration in the community where the project is being delivered.For joint/partnership application – projects have clear roles for partners linked to specific activities and outcomes.
7. Impact and outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How the project will measure and monitor progress and outcomes achieved, at the client and community level throughout the life of the project.Proposals should show examples of past and current success, or the potential to achieve these results.

Prioritisation

The target cohort for the grant is young people aged 10-17 involved with or at risk of involvement with the justice system, their families and broader community.

The assessment process for both Streams will prioritise:

- Projects that focus on priority cohorts:
 - Aboriginal young people
 - Young people with disability
 - High risk offenders
 - Young women
- Grant applications that target areas with the highest demonstrated needs
- Grant applications delivered by Aboriginal and/or Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCO)

Decision Making

The Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice is the delegated decision maker for funding. The Secretary will consider the recommendations of the assessment panel in this decision-making.

Feedback and appeals process

If your application is not successful, it does not mean your application is without merit. Funding is limited and not all applications are successful. Due to the high-volume applications, we are unable to provide individual feedback on each unsuccessful application.

Publication of grant information

The NSW Grant Administration Guide requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

8 Successful grant applications

Grant Funding Agreement

Successful applicants are required to:

- Enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with NSW Department of Communities and Justice within four weeks of the grant offer being made.
- Start and complete funded activities and events within the dates specified in the Funding Agreement.
- Seek approval from NSW Department of Communities and Justice for any proposed changes to a funded activity prior to the proposed changes being made, in writing.
- Acknowledge the support of the NSW Government in accordance with the Funding
- Acknowledgement Guidelines: “The NSW Government proudly supports this community-led partnership with funding provided under the NSW Community Safety Investment Fund Grant Program.”

Grant payment

Organisations successful in securing a Stream 1 grant will be paid via a one-off payment in the 2025/26 financial year that must be spent that year.

Reporting and acquittal requirements

- Any variations to the approved project scope, project location and completion time frames outlined in the original application form must be formally requested and approved in writing before any related work takes place.
- To discuss a variation, please contact the Grant Design and Support email grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au.
- All projects must be completed by 30 December 2026.
- You are required to submit a Final Report Acquittal in SmartyGrants no later than four weeks from the project end date. DCJ will send you the final acquittal form prior to the required date that you will need to complete in the SmartyGrants portal.
- Please note that any photographs or videos containing images of participants and/or staff submitted in the Final Completion Report must be accompanied by a signed [DCJ still and moving images consent form](#).
- It is a requirement that all financial records related to grant expenditure and acquittal be retained by the committee of the organisation for seven years. If the committee changes, these documents must be forwarded to the new incoming committee.

9 Grant funds expenditure

Funds can only be used for expenses and activities directly associated to the grant. Your application must clearly outline your proposed expenditure in relation to the funding amounts identified above and included in the budget you submit with your application.

What funding can be used for:

Organisations must use the grant funds, including any interest earned, for the purposes of the grant.

- Consumables – such as catering, equipment items and materials for the purposes of the project or event
- Hiring equipment to be used for the period of the project or event
- Leasing of vehicles and/or facilities to run projects
- Engaging contractors such as facilitators, trainers and teachers
- Eligible costs associated with holding local sporting and cultural events, or costs associated with young people's participation in local sports and cultural events.
- Purchasing minor equipment to support delivery of program activities with equipment up to the maximum combined value of \$5000.
- Salaries and wages to deliver projects, activities and services.

Grant fund exclusions

Items or activities that funding cannot be used for including:

- Any activity of a commercial nature that is for profit
- Existing debt or budget deficits.
- Business as usual costs or general operating expenses
- Capital works, including building work
- Permanent salaries/wages (costs for temporary wages for your program or activity can be included – see 2.5.1).
- Purchase of vehicles
- Permanent equipment purchases (unless considered Minor Equipment)
- Programs or activities that encourage gambling such as bingo, or the consumption of alcohol
- Programs and activities coordinated by NSW Government Departments and Statutory Authorities
- The same project twice. For example, two different organisations cannot apply for funds for the same program or activity.

Unspent project funds

If a grant recipient's project is completed and there are unspent project funds remaining, these must be returned to NSW Department of Communities and Justice unless otherwise specified in the grant funding agreement if more than \$250.

Alternatively, the recipient may request a project extension to deliver the approved project.

Subcontracting

For more information about subcontracting please refer to the [DCJ Subcontracting policy](#).

National Redress Scheme

The NSW Government will not award a Grant Funding Arrangement to a non-government organisation with Redress Obligation (or to any of its Related Entities) if that non-government organisation:

- has declined to join the Scheme, or
- at the expiry of six months after the time it is notified to join the Scheme, has failed to do so.

Visit the [website](#) for further information about the [NSW National Redress Scheme](#) sanctions.

Insurance

Grant recipients must maintain current and adequate insurance appropriate to the activities/services funded under this grant to cover any liability of the grant recipient that might arise in connection with the performance of its obligations under a Grant Funding Agreement. This must include a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance.

Applicants will be asked to provide a copy of all relevant insurance policies and certificates in the application form.

If your organisation is not covered by the appropriate insurance, you will need to approach another organisation (such as your local council or an incorporated not-for-profit) to sponsor your application so that your project will be covered under their insurance.

Bank details

It is your responsibility as the applicant to provide correct banking details, including the authorised signature to verify your bank details in the application form. Funds transferred to an incorrect bank account may not be recoverable.

10 Performance, Monitoring and Reporting

Any variations to the approved project scope, project location and completion time frames outlined in the original application form must be formally requested and approved in writing before any related work takes place. To discuss a variation, please contact DCJ by email @ GrantDesignandSupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au

Stream 1 grants are required to complete a Final Report on project outcomes and Financial Acquittal within 4 weeks of project completion and may be asked to participate in a mid-project review meeting.

Under your Grant Funding Agreement, you will be required to respond to any other reasonable request for information on your project status and progress.

- Agree that DCJ staff may meet virtually or visit in person, during or at the completion of your grant activity, to review your progress. We will seek your permission to visit, in accordance with local protocols, and provide you with reasonable notice of any visit.
- Please note that any photographs or videos containing images of participants and/or staff submitted in the Final Completion Report must be accompanied by a signed [DCJ still and moving images consent form](#).
- It is a requirement that all financial records related to grant expenditure and acquittal be retained by the committee of the organisation for seven years. If the committee changes, these documents must be forwarded to the new incoming committee.

11 Additional information

SmartyGrants

Smarty Grants will be used to support the application process. The DCJ Grants team can assist organisations with any queries regarding the application process. Organisations can contact via email the Grant Design and Support at grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

Please quote your Application ID in all correspondence. If you are not familiar with the SmartyGrants management system, please refer to the SmartyGrants Help Guide for Applicants or check out Applicant FAQs. You can also contact SmartyGrants directly if you are having technical difficulties with the application form or your SmartyGrants account/password, email service@smartygrants.com.au.

Complaint handling

Any complaints should be sent in writing to GrantDesignandSupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

Access to information

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Before information is released in response to an application under the GIPA Act, there will be an assessment of the public interest considerations in favour of and against disclosure of that information, and there may be consultation requirements that apply.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Ethical conduct

Conflict of interest management

Conflicts of Interest between DCJ and applicants will be managed in accordance with the DCJ's code of conduct, and declarations are made and recorded by all persons involved in performing functions related to the assessment process.

Confidentiality

DCJ staff who assist an applicant with an application will not be involved in assessment for that application.

Information relating to the successful applications, including the name of the applicant, description of the funded project and the funding amount, will be included in:

- Public media releases.
 - An announcement on the DCJ website.
 - The NSW Grants finder website.
 - DCJ social media.
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Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication is free from error and/or omission at the date of publication. The authors, publisher and any person involved in the preparation of this publication take no responsibility for loss occurring to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of information contained herein.

Communities and Justice

6 Parramatta Square
10 Darcy Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Locked Bag 5000
Parramatta 2124

Office hours:
Monday to Friday
9:00am – 5:00pm

E: grantdesignandsupport@dcj.nsw.gov.au