

Guiding Principles for Youth Grants

Partnership approach with young people

The Office for Youth's goal is to provide a unique platform to build authentic and meaningful partnerships with young people in their communities. Strong and successful relationships increase the likelihood that young people will continue to seek opportunities to participate and remain engaged in community beyond the life cycle of the grant program.

Organisations are expected to engage young people in ways that foster shared responsibility and ownership across all stages of program development and implementation, including planning, design, delivery, and evaluation.

Applicants must ensure the input of young people is firmly embedded in each stage of their grant projects. This is outlined here:

Life Cycle of a Youth Project

1. Identifying the need

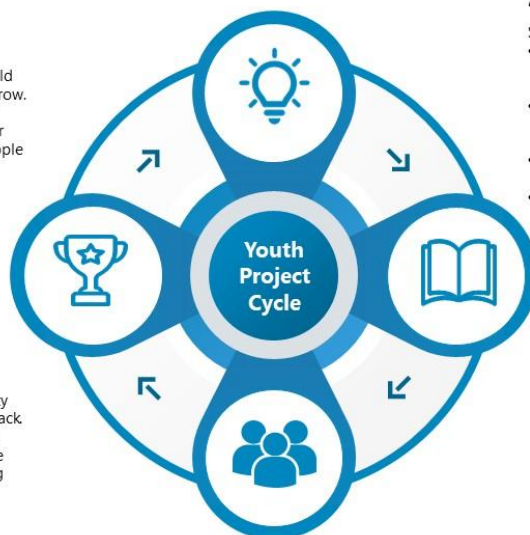
Sample activities:

- Consider ideas or issues raised by young people in the community, make sure to build in potential for these ideas to evolve and grow.
- Generate new ideas with young people via different methods of consultation. Consider and address barriers preventing young people coming forward with ideas.
- Identify young people to participate in planning and delivery.

4. Final Review and Recognition

Sample activities:

- Discuss key learnings from the project, activity or event. Include opportunities to give feedback. Include feedback in your Completion Report.
- Formal recognition of the contributions made by the team and individuals, in the way young people want.
- Thank participants for their contributions.
- Identify new ideas or improvements for the future.



2. Planning and Design

Sample activities:

- Establish a working group or committee of young people to lead and oversee the project, activity or event
- In partnership develop the idea into a project with a plan and budget, remember to identify risks and mitigation strategies with young people
- Cost each item in the project, activity or event, include in-kind contributions
- Consider sustainability and accessibility and inclusion as part of your project, activity or event

3. Delivery

Sample activities:

- Ensure the project, activity or event is youth-led and driven in its delivery.
- Adults help with oversight and hands on training of young people
- Young people participate at events and activities
- Young people are involved in the review and reporting process, and are involved in decision-making along the way.

Effective partnerships balance youth ownership with appropriate organisational support and resources. This requires adults to share power and decision-making with young people, working collaboratively on issues and activities that matter to them. Organisations must demonstrate flexibility, stepping in and out of the process as needed, while ensuring that young people retain the ability to determine the nature and level of their involvement.

Youth-led design and implementation is best supported through the establishment of a smaller group, such as a project steering committee. This structure enables young people to actively influence decisions, chair and facilitate meetings, lead discussions, and provide input into budgeting and expenditure.

There are several elements that facilitate the successful implementation of projects engaging young people in a community setting. The key components of Office for Youth programs aim to align with this best practice, providing organisations with a framework to shape their engagement with young people during the grant and beyond.

Engagement Framework throughout grant lifecycle

Key component	Description	Success factors / Implementation guidance
Supportive adult relationships	Adults provide mentoring and guidance, assisting young people with project coordination and execution.	• Make time for preparation and planning outside delivery • Provide training and support to build skills • Create a safe environment for young people to express ideas
Authentic youth voice	Young people's perspectives are prioritised, and all are encouraged to participate meaningfully.	• Ensure youth ideas are embedded at every stage • Clarify benefits of participation and roles/responsibilities • Be flexible and responsive to young people's schedules
Youth-led project design	Young people take primary responsibility for defining the mission, goals, and actions of the project, ensuring it reflects issues important to them.	• Support young people to prepare and plan • Encourage ownership of project direction and priorities
Youth-led project implementation	Young people lead project delivery and decision-making, fostering ownership and accountability	• Adopt a partnership approach to troubleshoot hurdles • Provide resources and mentoring without taking control
Team building	A supportive and cohesive team of young participants is developed to strengthen collaboration.	• Foster peer-to-peer and intergenerational relationships • Promote inclusivity and mutual respect • Include food and informal settings to build rapport
Knowledge and skill building	Young people are prepared to lead by building confidence, knowledge, and skills such as leadership, critical thinking, and decision-making.	• Provide training aligned with project needs • Support attainment of certificates or formal recognition • Encourage reflection on skill growth
External partnerships	Young people's roles are legitimised through engagement with external stakeholders (e.g., local government, community groups, sponsors), reinforcing their capacity to create change and sustain community connections.	• Promote projects to the wider community • Scope partnerships with local government, schools, sponsors, and community groups • Expand young people's networks
Reflection and Evaluation	Young people are given opportunities to recognise achievements and reflect on project outcomes. Reflection reinforces learning, growth, and sustained engagement.	• Build reflection into project delivery • Provide recognition (certificates, references) • Encourage evaluation to sustain engagement

Skills development for young people

As part of the Office for Youth grants process, organisations will be required to demonstrate how they supported young people to build skills and gain experience through their projects. This may include hands-on learning opportunities or the completion of short courses directly related to project implementation.

Developing young people's knowledge and skills not only strengthens their participation but also enhances their broader engagement in community life. These experiences contribute to future social and economic participation, building confidence and supporting the transition from dependence to independence by fostering agency and self-mastery.

It is essential that young people are consulted on the types of skills they wish to acquire during the development and delivery of activities and events. These may range from personal development skills to the attainment of formal certificates.