



# Communities Innovation Fund:

## Responses to Social Isolation and Loneliness

Small grants guidelines

*FY2022-23*



## 1. About the grant

Social isolation and loneliness have serious impacts on people’s mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as broader effects on communities, service systems and the economy. For many Queenslanders, the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health measures needed to contain its spread compounded pre-existing social isolation and loneliness.

In May 2021, in recognition of the widespread and significant impacts of social isolation and loneliness, the Queensland Parliament agreed to a motion that the Community Support and Services Committee (CSSC) commenced an Inquiry (the Inquiry) into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland. The Inquiry was wide reaching, charged with examining the nature, extent, causes, drivers, protective factors and benefits of addressing social isolation and loneliness.

Through 196 written submissions, and public hearings across the length and breadth of the state, the committee heard from experts, community leaders, service providers, government departments and people with lived experience, that social isolation and loneliness are critical issues in Queensland.

The Queensland Government accepted all 14 recommendations of the Inquiry in full or in principle.

As part of the government’s response to the Committee’s recommendations, the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (DCHDE) is establishing Communities Innovation Fund. This fund is being established to support trials of innovative new responses to social isolation and loneliness within Queensland communities.

## 2. Purpose of the grant

The Communities Innovation Fund is being delivered as a competitive grants program to support flexible, person-centred, and place-based responses to social isolation and loneliness in Queensland communities.

Eligible organisations are invited to submit proposals outlining their ideas for projects, programs, services or supports which align with the primary objective of the fund:

- to identify innovative approaches to addressing social isolation and loneliness in identified target groups that are at heightened risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

Initiatives could also contribute to the fund's secondary objectives, which include:

- to increase community understanding of social isolation and loneliness including the causes, impacts, barriers and enablers to overcoming social isolation and loneliness,
- to establish and maintain social and community connections and promote inclusion, and
- to deliver a new program, service or initiative that – in addition to supporting people experiencing social isolation and loneliness – will build the capacity of organisations to respond to those experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

Your proposal should describe how you plan to measure success in achieving outcomes, including how you will measure improved physical and mental health outcomes before, during and after your initiative. If you’re not sure how to do this, Ending Loneliness Together’s [Guide to Measuring Loneliness](#) is a good place to start.

### 3. Target group/service users:

The Communities Innovation Fund aims to target groups that are most at risk of social isolation and loneliness, including:

- older people
- young people
- First Nations peoples
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- newly arrived migrants and refugees
- people with disability
- unpaid carers
- people who identify as LGBTIQ+
- people experiencing or who have experienced domestic and family violence
- single parents
- people experiencing financial disadvantage due to unemployment and underemployment
- people with poorer health and mental health
- people who have been incarcerated.

### 4. Geographic catchment area/location:

Applications are invited from eligible organisations located within Queensland.

The service must be delivered in Queensland.

### 5. Timeframe

Funding is available from April 2023 and must commence within three months of the funding date.

Your program must be fully completed by 30 June 2024.

A final evaluation report must be provided by 30 September 2024 (three months after completion of the 2023-24 financial year).

A new funding round will be opened for activities during the 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years, with activities to be completed within the financial year, and final reports due by 30 September of the following financial year.

### 6. Definitions

#### Social isolation and loneliness

There are no agreed, universal definitions of social isolation and loneliness. For the purposes of this grants program, we are adopting flexible definitions for social isolation and loneliness.

**Social isolation** can be understood as having little or no subjectively meaningful and beneficial contact and interaction with others and a low level of involvement in community life.

**Loneliness** is a subjective experience that results from a discrepancy between what we want in social relationships and the actual experience of those relationships.

## Innovation

Social isolation and loneliness are ‘wicked’ social problems and there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to addressing them. We are seeking proposals that present new approaches to combating social isolation and loneliness.

We are willing to consider proposals that are completely new and untried, new to the target cohort, or new to the place where the proposal is to be implemented.

We will also consider proposals that represent a significant variation to an existing service or program or expansion to a location in which the service is not currently available and would represent innovation in the community.

The Communities Innovation Fund recognises that the issues of social isolation and loneliness are different across Queensland’s unique geography, and addressing social isolation and loneliness will require innovative, unique approaches that respond in place to local issues.

## 7. Funding available

The Queensland Government has announced a total of \$4 million over four years for the Communities Innovation Fund, which is being administered through two separate grants processes – one for small grants for short-term initiatives and one for large grants for longer-term initiatives.

These program guidelines describe the requirements for proposals for small initiatives to the value of up to \$50,000. The total value of funding available for small initiatives is \$800,000 for 2022-23 to 2025-26 (\$200 000 per year). This round has a total of \$200 000 available for the 2022-2023 year.

The Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy is under no obligation to provide any ongoing funding or any future funding.

Eligible organisations may submit more than one application if seeking funding for multiple initiatives and/or initiatives in more than one location, but only one grant for each round of small and large initiatives will be funded. Eligible organisations are encouraged to focus efforts on the quality of their proposals and ensuring they meet the selection criteria.

Proposals that address community needs in regional and remote Queensland will be highly regarded.

## Examples

Short-term projects may include, but are not limited to:

- events that bring together people experiencing social isolation and loneliness and service providers to co-design, discuss and develop ongoing service models and approaches;
- courses that bring people experiencing social isolation and loneliness together in a group environment for learning and social contact;
- innovative professional development activities for frontline sector workers who support people experiencing social isolation and loneliness. The professional

development activities must be directly relevant to combating social isolation and loneliness;

- development of innovative connection methods that will encourage communication and reduce social isolation;
- local community-based approaches that build on existing programs, projects and services to reduce the incidence and impacts of social isolation and loneliness;
- initiatives that build local capacity and opportunities to effect long-term change;
- projects that create social connections by supporting the development of friendships, peer support networks and community groups;
- targeted responses that respond to social isolation and loneliness that are delivered from community infrastructure including neighbourhood and community centres, libraries and community halls.

## 8. Funding term

We will enter into a service agreement with successful applicants for the financial year in which they are successful for, as prescribed by the duration of the grant.

## 9. Eligibility criteria

Your initiative should not duplicate any currently funded services or initiatives in your proposed location, including services or initiatives funded through Queensland State Government agencies, Local Governments, the Commonwealth Government or through non-government organisations.

To be eligible to apply for this grant, your organisation must be incorporated and can be:

- a not-for-profit organisation;
- a company limited by guarantee;
- a cooperative;
- an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation or corporation;
- an incorporated association;
- A university or research organisation;
- an unincorporated community group or user-led group that is auspiced by an eligible entity;
- a profit-for-purpose company.

Your organisation must also maintain public liability insurance for a sum of not less than \$10 million. Only applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be considered.

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- a state, territory or federal government agency or body;
- an unincorporated organisation that is not auspiced by an eligible entity;
- an individual;
- an organisation that is not based in Queensland;
- fixed trusts;
- a political party.

To be eligible your initiative must:

- be available to people experiencing or at risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness, particularly at-risk and hard-to-reach cohorts as outlined under 'Target Service Users', and
- be culturally responsive and inclusive of First Nations peoples and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

If your application does not meet the eligibility criteria, it will not be assessed.

If you are applying as a consortium or partnership, a lead agency must be identified and the contract will be entered into with that organisation.

## 10. What the grant can be used for

Grants must be used for programs, projects, services or supports that address social isolation and loneliness and are inclusive of at least one group from the target service users outlined above.

Proposals must embed cultural considerations into design, delivery and evaluation.

Eligible costs include wages, marketing costs, training, educational materials, project consumables, equipment or venue hire, office equipment or technology.

## 11. What the grant cannot be used for

Grants cannot be used for:

- Capital expenditure and equipment including renovations, building and maintenance;
- Purchase of capital assets such as land;
- Reimbursement of costs already incurred;
- Unrelated professional development;
- Personal gain;
- Projects outside of Queensland;
- Campaigns;
- Purchasing vehicles;
- Project management or consultancy fees;
- Expenditure to develop submissions for the grants program;
- Payment for individuals to participate in grants program initiatives (e.g. payment to participate in a survey);
- Payments for individual hardship support.

## 12. Making an application

You may submit more than one proposal. Each proposal must address one initiative.

Your application should address the following:

1. A description of the project you are seeking funding for, highlighting the innovative nature of the project.
2. Where the project will be delivered.

3. How your project addresses social isolation and loneliness, and for what cohort. Please provide evidence of the need for this project for your cohort.
4. How many people are likely to participate in, or benefit from this project.
5. What existing connections, partnerships, networks or alliances you already have within the community that you will be utilising for this project.
6. How you will evaluate the impact of the project for individuals and the community.
7. How the initiative will end and what the plans are for promoting ongoing impacts from the initiative beyond the period of the grant.

You may submit more than one proposal, if the proposals are for different locations, but each organisation will only be engaged for one project.

You will also be required to provide a project plan for the project, to demonstrate capacity to commence and deliver within the timeframe, and a budget over the life of the program to show the overall costs, and any in kind support being provided.

Please only make an application if you meet the eligibility criteria above. We cannot fund you if you are not eligible or do not meet the criteria.

## 13. Assessment criteria and process

The assessment panel will refer to your responses to determine your capacity to deliver innovative solutions to social isolation and loneliness. The assessment panel will also consider the extent to which the proposal clearly demonstrates benefits to individuals at risk of, or experiencing, social isolation and loneliness.

The assessment criteria are:

1. The proposal demonstrates excellence in innovation, in responding to social isolation and loneliness;
2. The proposal clearly demonstrates benefits to individuals at risk of or experiencing social isolation and loneliness in preventing, responding to and mitigating the social, wellbeing, health and mental health impacts of social isolation and loneliness;
3. The proponent demonstrates strong community connections, partnerships or alliances, including with local government or neighbourhood and community centres;
4. The proposal demonstrates financial feasibility, value for money and a social return on investment;
5. The proposal includes an evaluation component;
6. The proposal demonstrates sound planning, including the ability to deliver in the selected community.

Proposals that meet the eligibility and assessment criteria and are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations will be highly regarded.

In assessing your application, the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy may also take into consideration local need, existing service provision and the geographical spread of applications to avoid duplication and/or concentration of service delivery in a single area.

Your application will be considered on its merits, based on how well it meets the criteria; and how it compares to other applications.

You may be asked to submit further details or provide clarification during the assessment process.



Recommendations for funding are forwarded to the Director-General for the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy for consideration and approval.

Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the assessment process.

## 14. Other requirements

All services must:

- operate with low or no entry requirements to ensure services are accessible to all service users,
- ensure processes are in place to refer service users to alternative services where appropriate,
- monitor and supervise volunteers,
- build strong relationships and engagement strategies with First Nations peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse organisations, and
- ensure activities are responsive to the needs of service users and are relevant to reducing vulnerability and disadvantage.

Acknowledgement of funding

- If your application is successful, you must ensure the Queensland Government is acknowledged in your annual report and in any promotional materials, including on your website.
- Any acknowledgement in promotional material must use an acknowledgement logo which you must obtain from us.

## 15. Successful applications

Applicants successful in obtaining funding will be required to:

- enter into a service agreement. (Please view the department's agreement templates at <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/industry-partners/funding-grants/streamlined-agreements>)
- comply with the requirements and conditions within the Service Agreement, including reporting, and
- comply with the Community Services Act 2007.

We must execute a service agreement with you before we can make any payment.

Grant recipients will be bound to the grant agreement and contractual terms and conditions. Additional individual conditions may be specified at the time of approval. If necessary, a revised project plan may be negotiated.

Grant recipients will be required to submit performance reporting to the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy.



## 16. How to apply

Applications will be managed online through SmartyGrants

The department will open applications at SmartyGrants at 9:00am on 27 January 2023.

The application period will close at 2:00pm on 6 March 2023.

Before applying, you must read and understand these Grant Program Guidelines.

To apply you must:

- Complete the online application form via SmartyGrants platform
- Provide all the information requested
- Address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- Include all necessary attachments
- Submit your application by the closing date and time.

Late applications will not be accepted.

If you have any technical difficulties with logging in, progressing or submitting your application, please contact SmartyGrants on 03 9320 6888 or by email [service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:service@smartygrants.com.au)

## 17. Feedback and complaints

Applicants may request feedback on their grant application up to four weeks after they are notified of the outcome.

Complaints should be directed to [grantqueries@chde.qld.gov.au](mailto:grantqueries@chde.qld.gov.au)

We are committed to effective complaints management and will deal with all complaints against our actions, decisions or officers' conduct in a responsive, confidential and fair manner. Please refer to the Customer service compliments and complaints section of our website <https://www.chde.qld.gov.au/contact/complaints-compliments>

## 18. Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect,
- why we collect your personal information, and
- who we give your personal information to.

In submitting a grant application, you agree to the Queensland Government collecting your personal information, including your name, contact details and role in your organisation, in order to assess your application and for the purpose of grants administration. If you do not provide this information we cannot assess your grant application.

The Queensland Government may also use and disclose information collected about you under this grant in any other Queensland Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy website and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us in your application, including personal information, with other State entities, the responsible Minister and their staff, and with Members of Parliament, for other purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, or as otherwise authorised or required by law.

## Further information and assistance

Questions about the grant program can be directed to: [grantqueries@chde.qld.gov.au](mailto:grantqueries@chde.qld.gov.au)

Questions about SmartyGrants can be directed to: [Service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:Service@smartygrants.com.au)

Please refer to the *SmartyGrants—HelpGuideforApplicants* <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/> for assistance on completing your application form