



**Youth Opportunities
PROGRAM GUIDELINES
2015-16**

**Participation and Inclusion Directorate
Department of Family and Community Services**

Round Four

Applications must be received by 5:00 pm Monday 31 August 2015
Applications received after this date may not be considered

For further information, go to: www.youth.nsw.gov.au

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About the Guidelines:

- These guidelines provide a description of the *Youth Opportunities* program, its aim and objectives, and information about the funding grant process.
- All applicants are advised to read these Program Guidelines carefully before completing an application for funding.
- The program guidelines will form part of the Funding Agreement.
- Compliance with the funding agreement will be monitored throughout the life of the projects (refer to [7 Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation](#)).

1 Overview

1.1 Introduction

The *Youth Opportunities* program provides one-off, time-limited grants to non-government organisations and local government to fund projects that enable young people to initiate, lead, manage and/or participate in community development activities.

The *Youth Opportunities* program is managed by the Participation and Inclusion Directorate, Department of Family and Community Services. Information on the Department of Family and Community Services is available at <http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au>.

2 NSW Government Priorities

2.1 NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One

NSW 2021 is the Government's 10 year plan to rebuild the economy, deliver quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, and strengthen our local environment and communities.

The *Youth Opportunities* program is designed to address three Goals in the Plan:

- To make it easier for people to be involved in their communities (Goal 24). Priority Actions to achieve this goal include:
 - increase opportunities for children and young people to contribute and connect with other groups in their communities;
 - build supportive connections between community members using sport, recreation and cultural activities, events, facilities and venues; and
 - increase opportunities for people to participate in local community events, activities and decision making.
- To involve the community in decision making on Government policy, services and projects (Goal 32). A Priority Action to achieve this goal is:
 - increase opportunities for people to participate in local decision making.
- To strengthen the NSW skill base (Goal 6) by supporting young people to make a successful transition from school to further education, training and employment.

Further information on *NSW 2021* can be found online at <http://2021.nsw.gov.au>

3 Program Description

3.1 About the Youth Opportunities program

The *Youth Opportunities* program is based on a range of evidence which shows that with the proper support and opportunity all young people can address and overcome a range of risk factors in their lives.

Projects funded under the *Youth Opportunities* program are to involve young people in all aspects of the project.

Formal and informal participation processes can be used by projects. The NSW Government supports organisations using a range of participation mechanisms, including International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) methods. IAP2 principles acknowledge that those who are affected by a decision should be involved in the decision-making process. More information on IAP2 can be found at <http://www.iap2.org.au/>.

Strategies which focus on young people's participation, engagement, and inclusion in the community will be a key component of funded projects meeting the program objectives.

3.2 Key Principles

Youth Opportunities is based on the principles of:

- inclusiveness for all young people;
- community participation;
- community service (including volunteering); and
- partnering with young people in the development of community based networks.

3.3 Program Aim and Objectives

Aim:

To provide time-limited grants for new projects that enable young people to lead and participate in community development activities.

Objectives:

The objectives of the program are to:

1. increase the number of youth-led and youth-driven community activities throughout NSW;
2. engage young people in projects which overcome barriers to participation in the community;
3. enable young people to develop and strengthen teamwork, communication, leadership and decision-making skills;
4. improve young people's access to community-based activities that promote community involvement including sport and recreation, cultural and other activities;
5. recognise the contribution that young people make to their local communities; and
6. provide young people with the knowledge and skills to link them with further training and employment opportunities, or improve their educational outcomes.

Program measures that align with the *Youth Opportunities* program objectives are at [Schedule A](#). Successful grant applicants will be required to report on each of these measures.

3.4 Target Group

Young people who are in the transition from childhood to adulthood and from dependence to independence. The program aims to assist in minimising the risk of disengagement for all young people, particularly those who face disadvantage.

4 Application for Funding

Non-government organisations and local government in NSW are invited to apply for a grant of up to \$50,000 to conduct a *Youth Opportunities* project for up to 12 months.

Project funding cannot be extended beyond 2016.

All applicants must complete and submit an online application for funding which is available at www.youth.nsw.gov.au. The website includes downloadable **Application Guidelines** and **Frequently Asked Questions** to aid understanding of the program and application requirements.

Applicants must provide:

- organisational information, including name, focus, and key contacts
- project title and a brief description of the project
- target group, including age range
- description of the needs, issue to be addressed, including involvement of young people
- statement on how the project will address each of the Youth Opportunities program objectives and include:
 - strategies that have been and will be used for engaging young people – demonstrating young people’s role in initiating, leading, managing and/or participating in the project
 - description of the barriers to young people’s participation in your community and how the proposed project strategies will address these
- an outline of concrete and measurable outcomes to be achieved over the duration of the funding (projects will report on these outcomes every six months)
- a detailed budget outlining
 - the required funding from the Youth Opportunities program
 - other funding to be applied to the overall program
 - in-kind contributions from the applying organisation and/or project partners
 - breakdown and description of project costs
- project partners and overview of role and contribution to achievements

Further questions about the application process can be directed to:

Email: youth@facsnsw.gov.au

4.1 Key Dates

	Date
Applications for Funding Open	Monday 27 July 2015
Youth Opportunities Information Workshops or Webinar	Locations and dates to be advised visit www.youth.nsw.gov.au for details
Applications for Funding Close	5:00pm Monday, 31 August 2015
Announcement of Successful Applicants	October 2015
Commencement Date for Projects	November/December 2015

4.2 Eligibility Criteria for Applicant Organisations

To be eligible for funding the Organisation must be either incorporated non-Government not-for-profit organisations or a local government authority.

Organisations must have a valid ABN.

NSW Fair Trading will undertake a probity check to determine eligibility and financial viability of organisations as part of the application assessment process.

4.3 Program Exclusions

Funding will **not** be provided to:

- State and Federal Government agencies;
- Schools and their P&Cs, universities and TAFE colleges;
- Individuals;
- for-profit organisations;
- sub-contractors – either for program management or for project delivery on behalf of non-eligible organisations.

Projects will **not** be eligible for funding if they:

- are currently receiving funding under other NSW and Australian Government funding programs for similar projects;
- are run in schools as part of the curriculum or other areas of school responsibility;
- include overseas travel, scholarships and/or conference attendance; and
- provide case-management for young people.

Project funding must **not** be used for:

- costs that are not directly associated with the implementation or delivery of the project;
- capital works (e.g. establishing or refurbishing a youth centre) or equipment (e.g. purchasing vehicles); and
- administration costs that are not directly associated with achieving the project (e.g. using grants funding towards the running of other programs within the organisation).

4.4 Project Budgets and Use of Funding

A detailed budget is required to be submitted with the grant application. In-kind contributions are also to be identified in the budget.

Project funding can include

- costs associated with implementing the project.
- Up to 20% of the costs associated with the administration of the project.

5 Funding Agreement

Successful applicants will enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department of Family and Community Services

Project funding can only be used for the purposes outlined in the Funding Agreement.

The Funding Agreement is available to review as part of the application package available at www.youth.nsw.gov.au.

The Funding Agreement will specify how project funds are to be spent based on the budget provided in the application.

At the completion of the project, any unspent funds are to be returned to the Department of Family and Community Services.

6 Assessing Applications

All applicants will undergo an eligibility check as part of the assessment process.

Merit based assessment against the Program Guidelines and associated information provided on the application form.

Assessment will be by a specifically convened Review Panel to determine the relative merit of each eligible application in terms of how projects will achieve concrete outcomes against the program measures and value for money.

Application assessments will be combined and used to prepare recommendations to the Minister responsible for youth affairs on the relative merit of projects.

All applicants will receive written advice of assessment outcomes.

7 Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

Reporting requirements are detailed in the Funding Agreement and include:

- signed funding agreement and project plan prior to release of funding;
- 6 monthly report, including progress against achievements and outcomes; and
- consolidated outcome and financial final report on completion.

A report template will be forwarded to funded organisations within 4 weeks of the reporting date.

Funded organisations will be required to address progress against each of the program measures; number of young people engaged; number of community activities undertaken; and any other achievements or barriers to implementing the project or achieving the agreed outcomes.

Funded organisations must provide a signed Statement of Income and Expenditure, and an audited financial statement as part of the project acquittal. **Note:** this may be as part of an organisation's audited annual financial reports if specifically identified in the process.

Monitoring and Data Collection: Funded organisations will be required to report on program measures which link to the Youth Opportunities program objectives outlined at 3.3 Aims and Objectives.

Achievement and outcome based reporting may include:

- meeting notes and project records;
- project managers reports;
- surveys and participant feedback; and
- media, including promotional material, photos, and or social media.

8 Further Information

For further information on the Youth Opportunities program please email questions to: youth@facs.nsw.gov.au

9 Application Guidelines;

Frequently Asked Questions and Project Agreement are available at the NSW Government Youth website: www.youth.nsw.gov.au

10 Program Measures - Schedule A

Youth Opportunities program measures aligned to the program objectives:	
Funded organisations report and provide evidence on:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. number of youth-led and youth-driven community activities initiated through this project. 2. how young people have been involved in overcoming barriers to participation; and links to community organisations and services. 3. improved communication, teamwork, decision-making and leadership skills and outcomes resulting from this skill development. 4. access to community based activities and types of community-based activities in which young people participated. 5. young people’s recognition for their contribution to their local communities through this project. 6. participants knowledge and skills development has linked them with further training/employment opportunities, or has improved educational outcomes.