



ACT Community Garden Grants Program



Everyday
**climate
choices**

Guidelines for applicants
Round Twelve 2026-27

Applications close
Midnight, 18 August 2026



ACT
Government

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Acknowledgement of Country

We wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

We would also like to acknowledge any other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

Telephone: (02) 6205 9033

Website: [Community Garden Grants - Climate Choices](#)

Produced by the City and Environment Directorate.

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About the Program

The ACT Community Garden Grants Program is designed to support the delivery of community gardens across Canberra to enhance community places and spaces.

The popularity of community gardens is increasing across Australia and in our region. Community gardens are often established in urban areas, providing important opportunities for people to grow and consume locally produced fresh food. Other benefits include providing opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, celebration of cultural diversity, provision of spaces to connect with nature, an increased understanding of food production challenges, and fostering a stronger sense of community.

Eligibility

Not-for-profit community organisations, schools, community groups and owners' corporations are eligible to apply. An applicant must:

- be a not-for-profit organisation or not-for profit group with an incorporated legal structure registered under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) (e.g. be an incorporated association, a company limited by guarantee, an Indigenous corporation or a non-trading co-operative). Individuals and non-incorporated groups can apply through an auspicing incorporated not-for-profit organisation
- have an ABN and a minimum of \$20 million public liability insurance or provide a quote from an insurance company and then become insured for \$20 million public liability upon becoming successful for funding. This grant cannot be used to pay for the required insurance
- be applying for funding, for a project to be undertaken within the ACT and primarily for the benefit of ACT residents
- not be a government agency
- not be a political party registered under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act (1918)*
- be prepared to enter into a Deed of Grant with the Territory.

Auspiced applications

Individuals and non-incorporated groups must apply through an auspicating incorporated not-for-profit community organisation. An auspice is an organisation that accepts legal responsibility including financial accountability for a project.

If your organisation is not a legal entity you will need to arrange for an organisation that has legal status to act as an auspice. Where an application includes an auspicating organisation, they are required to:

- contract directly with the Directorate for the receipt of grant funding for the project and administer the funding in accordance with the Grant Guidelines and Deed of Grant
- disburse grant funding for the project to the auspicated party in accordance with the Grant Guidelines and Deed of Grant and not unreasonably withhold funding from the auspicated party for the implementation of the project
- comply with all grant funding contractual obligations, including the provision of progress reports, final reports and financial acquittal documentation
- submit the Project Evaluation Report and Financial Acquittal Report on behalf of the auspicated party.

How much is available?

\$40,000 (GST exclusive) is available for Round Twelve 2026-27.

How much can I apply for?

The minimum funding is \$2,000 (GST exclusive) with a maximum funding of \$10,000 (GST exclusive) per eligible organisation/s.

While organisations may submit multiple applications for consideration, only one grant can be awarded to each organisation per round. Joint applications with multiple organisations carrying out the project are welcomed.

Important dates for Round Twelve

- **Applications open:** 7 July 2026
- **Applications close:** Midnight 18 August 2026
- **Funding provided:** Within 30 days of the Deed of Grant being signed by both parties
- **Acquittal of funds:** Within 30 days of the end of the grant period

Project priorities for funding

Applicants are required to demonstrate that their project contributes to the delivery of new or existing community gardens. Appropriate land use approvals must be in place (or in progress) prior to applying.

Garden types

The Community Garden Grants Program funds gardens where a community group manages a plot of land (either by dividing it into allotments or creating shared gardens) to produce food. The site is usually fenced, and access is controlled by the community group.

The Community Garden Grants Program also includes funding for community gardens in open urban spaces (local parks and shops), schools, community centres and within unit titles. Proposed management styles for new community gardens will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

You can find out more in the [“Understanding different types of community gardens”](#) factsheet.

Funding is available for projects that support community gardens and meet one or more of the following Program Priorities:

1. Benefit the wider community and encourage social inclusion through:

- promoting the garden and related activities within the wider community
- supporting activities that encourage social inclusion and community connection
- establishment of new community garden locations to ensure easy local access across Canberra.

2. Promote healthy living through:

- improving awareness, skills and capability in buying and preparing healthy food
- supplying nutritious food to those facing barriers in accessing fresh produce
- improving mental health by providing inviting meeting spaces/gardens.

3. Promote a healthy garden environment and use of eco-friendly options:

- prioritising use of organic and eco-friendly options for soil enhancement, weed/pest management and increased food production
- minimising use of broad-spectrum chemicals that are toxic to insects, wildlife and our waterways
- educating the community on soil health (preparation, management, structure, moisture retention and composting/worm farms)
- enhancing garden resilience by conducting presentations/workshops such as seed saving, propagation, crop rotation, water harvesting and soil health.

4. Demonstrate principles of the circular economy and zero emissions through:

- repurposing, recycling and/or reusing resources, tools, or materials for projects
- accepting and managing food waste by establishing compost or a worm farm
- reducing emissions with electric alternatives to fossil fuel-powered tools and equipment.

The above priorities are aligned with the ACT Government's Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City, the ACT Wellbeing Framework, the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025 and the Canberra Region Local Food Strategy 2024-2029.

Projects should identify what they will deliver against the priorities listed above and how they comply with the Merit Criteria. Applicants are encouraged to develop collaborative projects that can demonstrate results at an appropriate scale.

What is eligible for funding

Projects eligible for funding include:

- small scale food production gardens (between 5-10 plots)
- enhancements to existing food gardens (such as improved production, improved safety, increased utilisation of the space, infrastructure to improve garden resilience to the impacts of climate change)
- non-food-related gardens such as sensory, native, pollination and inclusive meeting places.

Funding can be provided for, but not limited to:

- materials to establish a new community garden, or enhance/expand a current community garden
- equipment hire
- tools
- contractor hire, e.g. specialised labour required from a bricklayer or backhoe driver
- minor infrastructure, e.g. storage sheds, pergolas, repair to existing garden beds and garden edging
- significant infrastructure, e.g. earthworks for water harvesting and storage, plant propagation, fencing, plumbing, large-scale compost production and accessibility paths
- removal of artificial (plastic) grass and replacement with permeable surfaces such as mulch, garden beds, gravel, permeable pavers
- catering for volunteers for activities related to the grant project or activity, e.g. working bees or planting events
- garden memberships for duration of the grant project only (up to \$200), not funded beyond the grant period
- educational workshops/presentations to upskill the community in relation to enhancing the resilience and long-term survival of community gardens (up to 10% of the grant amount)
- project administration/oversight directly related to the administration of the grant project or activity (up to 10% of the grant amount).

What is not eligible for funding

Funding cannot be provided for:

- projects funded by another grant or funding source unless it can be demonstrated the projects are distinct from the separately funded work
- any project or activity that does not align with one or more of the program priorities
- any installation of artificial (plastic) grass
- any project or activity undertaken on a property not owned by the applicant and for which the applicant does not provide evidence the owner has approved the project or activity
- projects to be undertaken outside of the ACT border
- funding of projects, activities and any other commitments beyond the maximum funding period
- reimbursement for previously completed activities or any costs incurred outside of the grant period

- on-going running costs of an organisation, including salaries of employees (with the exception of project administration/oversight costs directly related to the administration of the grant project, not exceeding 10% of the grant amount)
- salary components
- insurances (e.g. public liability and volunteer)
- projects proposed by a group or organisation with an overdue acquittal for projects or programs administered by the ACT Government.

Please note: The inclusion of electoral material in publications produced with ACT Community Garden Grants' funding is not permitted.

Merit criteria

Your application must address the following merit criteria.

Merit criterion	Description	Weight (%)
1	Aligns with the Community Garden Grant Round Twelve Project Priorities	40
	i. Benefits the wider community and encourages social inclusion	10
	ii. Promotes the healthy living of people	10
	iii. Promotes a healthy garden environment and use of eco-friendly options	10
	iv. Incorporates principles of the circular economy and zero emissions	10
2	Demonstrates sound project planning (risks, management, achievable milestones, budget breakdown)	30
3	Defines project outcomes and evaluation, and indicates good value for money	15
4	Demonstrates community and stakeholder support	15

To be competitive, applicants must address the merit criteria listed above in their application. The ACT Government will assess eligible applications against each merit criterion, using the weighting indicated above.

The quality of the application, regarding the level of detail and types of supporting documents supplied, should be proportional to the size of the project, its complexity and level of funding requested.

MERIT CRITERION 1: Aligns with the Community Garden Grant Round Twelve project priorities

In assessing this criterion, the ACT Government will consider the extent to which the applicant addresses the program priorities detailed on pages 3-4 of these guidelines.

MERIT CRITERION 2: Demonstrates sound project planning

In assessing this criterion, the ACT Government will consider:

- the relevant skills and experience of the applicant to help deliver project outcomes. This includes demonstrated past performance, and the ability and capacity to undertake the project
- the extent to which the project demonstrates a clear project management approach. This includes risk management, achievable milestones with realistic and defined timeframes, site plans and governance arrangements
- the amount of detail provided in the budget expenditure table, including quotes or other supporting evidence for the associated cost.

MERIT CRITERION 3: Defines project outcomes and evaluation, and indicates good value for money

In assessing this criterion, the ACT Government will consider:

- the project outcomes provided in the application and how the project will be evaluated, including qualitative and quantitative outcomes
- the value for money in terms of direct cash inputs, in-kind contributions, the number of people in the community who will benefit from the project, and prioritises purchasing from small to medium local ACT businesses.

MERIT CRITERION 4: Demonstrates community and stakeholder support

In assessing this criterion, the ACT Government will consider the extent to which volunteer support is provided to complete the project and to maintain the gardens beyond the life of the grant. Letters supporting involvement from community organisations, co-operatives and volunteer groups should be submitted as evidence of this criterion.

Favourable consideration will be given to projects that:

- promote partnerships and/or interactions beyond their community group.

When are funds made available?

Funding will be available to the successful applicants on the completion of:

- the announcement of successful projects
- signing by both parties of a Deed of Grant
- provision of all required documentation to the City and Environment Directorate.

Funding duration

Grant funds must be spent within the project period specified in the Deed of Grant, with a maximum project period of 18 months. Successful applicants will receive funding in one lump sum after the Deed of Grant has been signed by both parties and an invoice has been provided to the ACT Government by the grant recipient.

Applicant contributions

Applicants are encouraged to contribute towards their proposed project through cash and/or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions are non-cash contributions towards eligible project costs and can include donated supplies, materials or services and/or volunteering time such as labour or expert advice.

For in-kind contributions to count towards eligible project costs they must directly relate to the project and eligible activities.

If volunteer labour is included as an in-kind contribution, it can be costed at \$50.40 per hour. In-kind professional or contractor time contributions should be calculated at current average industry rates.

Other funding sources

If applicants are seeking additional funds from other sources, costs need to be clearly defined and show transparent application of project funds to reflect activities (or components of projects) that have been funded through other sources.

Other funding can come from any source including Commonwealth, state, territory and local government grants. However, funding from other sources cannot be used for activities or project components specifically funded under the Community Garden Grants Program.

Insurance

At the time of signing funding deeds with the Territory, successful applicants must provide evidence that they either:

- have a current public liability insurance policy with a minimum of \$20 million in cover, or
- have obtained a quote from an insurance company for that level of cover.

ABN and GST registration

If a successful applicant ('Recipient') has an Australian Business Number (ABN) and is registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST), the project will be funded as a GST exclusive amount based on the budget submitted in the application. The Territory will pay to the Recipient a 10% top-up equal to the GST as part of the total grant monies. The total grant amount received (including GST) must be accounted for as a taxable supply (income) and 1/11th remitted to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) on your next Business Activity Statement as GST payable. The net funding that remains will cover the costs of your project excluding GST. Any GST that you pay on goods and services acquired for your project will be claimable by you as input tax credits.

If the Recipient has an ABN registration but does not have GST registration, the Grant will not include a 10% top-up equal to the GST and the Territory is not liable to pay any further amount in relation to GST to the Recipient. The project will be funded as a GST exclusive amount based on the budget submitted in the application.

Deed of Grant

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Deed of Grant with the Territory. The Deed of Grant identifies certain legal obligations associated with the grant including project activities, requirements concerning the use of grant funds, project evaluation and financial reporting. If recipients wish to change the purpose of the grant or a condition of the Deed, written authorisation from the Territory will be required. A variation to the Deed may also be necessary.

Individual applicants and non-incorporated groups or organisations must apply through an auspicing incorporated not-for-profit organisation. In that case, the Deed of Grant would be between the sponsoring incorporated group and the Territory.

Reporting

Successful applicants are required to have informal meetings with the Program Coordinator to report on progress of the project and discuss any issues that arise. This will help provide assurance that projects remain on track and are being delivered to an acceptable standard.

All organisations that enter into a Deed of Grant will be required to submit a formal report via SmartyGrants within 30 days of the end of the grant period.

The formal report includes:

- an overview of the achievements of the project including photos
- an evaluation of the project, and
- a financial statement, including evidence of grant expenditure i.e. scanned tax receipts.

The types of evidence collected for reporting should be proportional to the size of the project, its complexity and level of funding received. City and Environment Directorate will provide templates to successful applicants for preparing their reports and can provide further guidance on this.

Conflict of interest

It is important that applicants do not have private interests and/or relationships that will create a conflict of interest or can be perceived to create a conflict of interest. Potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed at the time of lodgment of an application or immediately after a potential conflict becomes apparent.

How to apply

Stage 1 – Planning and preparation

1. Read and understand these grant guidelines and land use approval process if applicable. Please note, there is a helpful list of documents and webpages on page 12 for reference purposes.
2. Determine your organisation's eligibility as well as the eligibility of the planned activity. Contact the Program Coordinator on (02) 6205 9033 or at CEDCommunityGrants@act.gov.au if you have a question relating to these guidelines or if you would like to discuss your application.
3. Obtain all relevant approvals and authorisations to undertake activities associated with your application.
4. Go to the Community Garden Grants application webpage and familiarise yourself with the application form <https://actgovt.smartygrants.com.au/CGGrd12>.
5. Set-up a free online account in SmartyGrants. This is the Directorate's online grants management system. If you have an existing account in SmartyGrants, you will be able to use it to apply for Community Garden Grants Round Twelve.
6. Start your application early to ensure you have enough time to gather supporting information such as quotes, letters of support and landholder's approval. Failure to provide relevant supporting documentation may affect the success of your application.
7. Applications must be submitted using the application form. In particular:
 - a. all sections of the application form must be completed
 - b. all additional material requested in the application form must be attached where relevant
 - c. full details of the applicant (including ABN) must be supplied with two contact names, phone numbers and email addresses.

Stage 2 – Submit your application

1. All applications must be submitted via SmartyGrants. Submit your application online via SmartyGrants by Midnight 18 August 2026.
2. If there is a reason why you are unable to submit an online application, please contact the Program Coordinator on (02) 6205 9033 or CEDCommunityGrants@act.gov.au to discuss.
3. No late applications will be accepted.
4. Emailed/posted applications will only be accepted if prior approval has been given.

Stage 3 – Assessment of applications

1. Assessment will be undertaken by Directorate staff and external representatives with relevant expertise.
2. Assessment will be based on the merit criteria identified in these guidelines.
3. Directorate staff involved in assessment will operate under the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct.
4. External representatives will be required to sign a Conflict-of-Interest Declaration and a Deed of Confidentiality.

Note: any liaison with an assessment panel member by an applicant or another person about a specific application may result in immediate disqualification.

Stage 4 – Results of applications

1. The Executive Branch Manager, Climate Change and Energy Programs, City and Environment Directorate, is the decision-maker for all grants recommended for funding by the assessment panel.
2. Following the decision, successful applicants will be listed on the Directorate's website.
3. All applicants will be advised of the outcome of their submission by email.
4. The Directorate will email successful applicants regarding funding and seek further documentation as required.
5. All decisions are final. Applicants not granted funding can request feedback on their application by emailing CEDCommunityGrants@act.gov.au

Need help with your application?

Contact the Program Coordinator on (02) 6205 9033 or via email at CEDCommunityGrants@act.gov.au if you have a question relating to these guidelines or if you would like to discuss your application.

Documents and webpages to assist your application

[ACT Government - Understanding different types of community gardens](#)

[ACT Government - How to apply for a permit or licence for land use approval](#)

[ACT Government - Trees and Plants for the ACT](#)

[ACT Government - Climate-wise Landscape Guide for the ACT](#)

[ACT Government - Guideline to Landscape Municipal Infrastructure Standards \(MIS\)](#)

[ACT Government - Urban Open Space MIS 16](#)

[ACT Government - Plant Species for Urban Landscape Projects MIS 25](#)

[ACT Government - Guide to Community Gardens in the ACT – Policy and Site Selection Criteria*](#)

[Community Gardens Australia](#)

[SmartyGrants - Help Guide for Applicants](#)

[Sustainable Gardening Australia](#)

*please note this guide is currently being reviewed, links and ACT Government departments stated in the guide may be outdated, for clarification on information supplied in the guide please contact CEDCommunityGrants@act.gov.au

How can I find out more?

Additional information relating to the ACT Community Garden Grants can be found on the [Everyday Climate Choices](#) website or by contacting the Program Coordinator at CEDCommunityGrants@act.gov.au or on (02) 6205 9033.

Applications must be received by Midnight 18 August 2026.

Contact us

Phone: (02) 6205 9033 Email: CEDCommunityGrants@act.gov.au



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