



Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) Program—Open Competitive Grant Opportunity—Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

October 2024

We strongly recommend you read the FAQs in combination with the 2025-26 ILA Program Guidelines.

What is the Open Competitive Grant Opportunity?

The Open Competitive Grant Opportunity is one of two funding streams available under the ILA program. This grant opportunity is undertaken on a yearly basis and is open to all eligible organisations wanting to deliver discrete one-off Indigenous languages and/or arts activities for their community.

Projects funded through the Open Competitive Grant Opportunity are for a specific purpose and period.

How do I access information about the Open Competitive Grant Opportunity?

The 2025-26 ILA Open Competitive Grant Opportunity will be launched on the Australian Government's GrantConnect website at <https://www.grants.gov.au/>. All information about the grant opportunity can be accessed here including the ILA program guidelines.

To keep up to date on when the Grant Opportunity is launched, we strongly recommend you register on the GrantConnect website.

How do I apply to the Open Competitive Grant Opportunity?

You must complete an online application form through SmartyGrants ([SmartyGrants | Home](#)).

Who can I contact regarding my application?

Enquiries about the ILA program or questions about the grant opportunity, please contact the ILA Team on email ila@arts.gov.au or phone 1800 006 992.

Enquires about the SmartyGrants program should be directed to the SmartyGrants help desk for assistance (service@smartygrants.com.au or 03 9320 6888).

I am an unincorporated association registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. Am I eligible to apply?

No—An unincorporated association is not a separate legal entity from its members and cannot enter into contracts in its own name.



My organisation is not incorporated. Can I apply through an auspicing funding arrangement?

No—ILA does not support auspicing funding arrangements.

I am an individual/sole trader. Am I eligible to apply?

No—ILA funding is provided for community led projects and, as such, individuals/sole traders are not eligible.

We are a state government school. Are we eligible to apply?

No—State or Territory Governments, including portfolio agencies are not eligible to apply. This includes state departments of education (including schools).

Important

If you are not sure your organisation meets the eligibility criteria, please contact the ILA Team on email ila@arts.gov.au or phone 1800 006 992 **before** starting your application.

What are Tier 1 and Tier 2 Indigenous controlled and/or owned organisations?

Clause 55(a) of the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) commits all governments to increase the proportion of service delivery funding that is provided through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, particularly community-controlled organisations. As such, the ILA program is required to capture the status of Indigenous controlled and/or owned organisations that apply for ILA grant funding.

These ‘preferencing tiers’ provide a framework for granting agencies to preference Indigenous organisations that can demonstrate 51% Indigenous ownership and control (Tier 1 organisations), followed by organisations that can demonstrate at least 50% Indigenous ownership or control (Tier 2 organisations).

Tier 1 organisations – Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations incorporated under Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation which have at least 51% Indigenous ownership and at least 51% Indigenous control via its governing body.

Examples of Tier 1 organisations include:

- Community-controlled organisations, including organisations specifically established for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, where the above Indigenous ownership and control thresholds are mandated by their governing rules or legislation.
- All other organisations meeting the above 51% Indigenous ownership and 51% Indigenous control thresholds.
- Ownership of the organisations within this tier would be majority Indigenous and may include corporate members where the underlying membership base of the corporate entity is majority Indigenous. Controlling body (e.g. Board of Management) would be majority Indigenous and be elected by the members.
- Incorporated joint ventures may be included in this category, where they meet the Indigenous ownership and control thresholds and the deciding/casting vote is held by an Indigenous member.



Tier 2 organisations – Other entities, with at least 50% Indigenous ownership or 50% Indigenous control. Controlling body (e.g. Board of Management) would be majority Indigenous and be elected by the members.

- Incorporated joint ventures may be included in this category, where they meet the Indigenous ownership or control thresholds and the deciding/casting vote is held by an Indigenous member.

Important

If you are not sure your project meets the ILA program criteria, please contact the ILA Team on email ila@arts.gov.au or phone 1800 006 992 **before** starting your application.

What amount of funding can I apply for in the open competitive grant opportunity?

In 2025-26, the grant opportunity has four categories of funding:

Project scale	Grant amount	Project duration
Micro	Up to \$20,000	Up to 12 months
Minor	Up to \$50,000	Up to 12 months
Intermediate	Up to \$150,000 pa	12 months - 24 months
Major	Up to \$200,000 pa	24 months - 36 months

Important

The quality of your application including the workplan and budget must be commensurate with the level of funding sought.

Micro

Example of a 'micro' language project — develop a story book of traditional stories in language as told by Elders and illustrated by young people (total of 12 months for whole project).

Example of a 'micro' arts project — celebrate local Indigenous culture and language by creating storyboards to be displayed in a community (total of 12 months for whole project).

Minor

Example of a 'minor' language project — developing a series of ten podcast episodes to be used as an audio resource for teaching, learning and promoting a traditional language (total of 12 months for whole project).

Example of a 'minor' art project — collaborate with Indigenous Elders and youth from regional communities to produce films that preserve, record and promote dreaming stories that feature traditional languages, culminating in a series of community screening events (total of 12 months for whole project).

Intermediate

The maximum level of funding sought can be up to \$150,000 per annum for a project timeframe, greater than 12 months and up to a maximum of 24 months.



Example of an 'intermediate' language project — an organisation proposes to revive dance and cultural practices by conducting a series of inter-generational workshops over an 18-month period and then documents processes undertaken into an online resource which will require a 6-month period to develop and launch (total of 24 months for whole project).

Example of an 'intermediate' arts project — collaborate with an Indigenous language centre to capture language, arts and cultural practices over 12 months, then design and deliver a program for 100 that combines on-Country learning, language labs and arts workshops.

Major

The maximum level of funding sought can be up to \$200,000 per annum for a project timeframe, greater than 24 months and up to a maximum of 36 months.

Example of a 'major' language project — develop an Indigenous language dictionary and learning guide over 12 months and then use the newly developed resources to deliver training of an Indigenous language to 250 participants over an additional 12 to 24-month period (total of 36 months for whole project).

Example of a 'major' arts project — design and deliver an Indigenous-led development program for 20 Indigenous participants over 12-18 months to support intergenerational knowledge transmission, then develop, produce and perform contemporary or traditional First Nations dance at a number of regional venues over a 12-month period.

Tips for a competitive application

- Ensure your application addresses the selection criteria and program outcomes outlined in the program guidelines.
- Ensure all relevant information is provided in the application.
- Your application should clearly describe the project, responses should be concise and easy to follow.
- Ensure your project is consistently described in the application, workplan and budget.
- The workplan should describe step by step the tasks and activities required to achieve the project.
- The budget should be realistic and self-explanatory whilst demonstrating value for money.
- The workplan and budget should clearly align.
- The workplan and budget should be realistic and achievable. A funding decision is made on the basis of the information you provide in your application. If your application is successful, your project must be delivered in accordance with your application.

How can I demonstrate evidence of community support?

Your project must have the support of the local Indigenous community to undertake the proposed activity. You should consider how the local Indigenous community can be involved in the planning and delivery of the project, as well as participating in the project. We expect to see evidence of community support from community representatives. Support may be shown in the form of letters or videos and should:

- identify the role of the author and/or the organisation they represent in the community
- explain why the project is needed in the community
- outline how the author and/or the organisation they represent will participate in the project, including any contributions of funding or resources (if applicable—this is not a requirement)



If the applicant organisation is a non-Indigenous organisation, your evidence of support should also outline how the author and/or organisation they represent has been consulted in the planning and will continue to be consulted over the life of the project.

Note - If you choose to include video-based evidence of support, please ensure the file is small enough (25MB or under) to be successfully attached to your application. The department's IT system does not support access to file-sharing platforms, such as Dropbox.

When we assess the level of community support for your project, we will consider the scope and scale of the project (micro, minor, intermediate or major). If your project will be delivered in multiple communities, you should provide evidence that all participating communities support the project.

Some examples of organisations you might seek support from include:

- Language Centres
- RNTBC (native title bodies)
- relevant local Aboriginal corporations, cultural arts centres, resource agencies, reference groups
- Empowered Communities Reference Groups
- other non-government agencies such as those working with young people, employment, housing, substance abuse, justice issues
- regional development organisations
- tertiary institutions
- local government organisations.

What do I need to write about accessibility for people with a disability?

The application form will ask you to talk about how your project can be inclusive and accessible to people with a disability. It is not compulsory to answer this question, but you are strongly encouraged to think about how your project can include accessibility.

You can write about accessibility in the box provided, or you can download and complete the accessibility form that is hyperlinked in the application. To find out more about creating accessible arts and cultural activities, visit the [Arts Access Australia](#) website.

The application will also ask you if your project is disability-led, and if anyone in your project team identifies as a person with disability. The department collects this information to understand how people with disability are participating in the arts.

What should I do if my community's language project features a language already supported by an ILA funded Indigenous Language Centre?

The ILA program does not provide funding that supports the duplication of projects currently funded for the revival and maintenance of a language. However, if you consult with the organisation or Indigenous Language Centre delivering the current language activity, and it is determined your project does not duplicate this activity, an application may be submitted for the additional investment in that language. Your application should include evidence of this consultation and confirmation that your project does not duplicate existing ILA-funded activities. A list of Language centres can be found at www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/indigenous-languages-and-arts-program.



Will the Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) of my activity material that contains private and/or secret and sacred Indigenous materials remain my property and/or the property of my community?

Yes—the ILA program does not, and will not, retain any intellectual property rights over any activity materials that applicants identify as private and/or secret and sacred Indigenous materials. This material is and will remain the confidential information of the relevant Indigenous person or Indigenous community.

Can I apply for ILA funding that could support the career development of Indigenous language workers?

Yes—The ILA program objectives, under Section 2.1 of the ILA program guidelines, includes language learning and teaching pathways and opportunities to gain formal qualifications in learning and teaching an Indigenous language.

Can I include administration expenses in my budget?

Yes – The open competitive grant opportunity will allow for up to 12% of the total ILA grant money to be used to meet administration costs. All expenses must directly relate to the project and may include items such as project management, data capture/evaluation, report-writing, book-keeping, audits and financial management.

Do I need to collect participation data on my project or activity?

Yes – The open competitive grant opportunity requires collection of basic information about how the program is accessed, what types of activities are undertaken and some basic de-identified demographic data to help the ILA program determine the impact of funded activities on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Annexure A of the Indigenous Languages and Arts program grant agreement template contains a set of key performance indicators that grant recipients are required to report against.

Can I apply for operational funds for my organisation in the open competitive grant opportunity?

No—Grant monies through the open competitive grant opportunity cannot be used for general organisational costs.

Can I apply for capital items to assist in the delivery of the project?

No— the open competitive grant opportunity does not allow for the purchase of capital items.

Can I apply for funding for training?

Yes – Providing it is essential to the delivery of the project and it relates to Indigenous languages and/or arts.

Can I apply for funding for artist professional development workshops?

No - If your project includes artist professional development workshops that is more related to industry development, you may wish to consider the following Australian Government programs:

- Office for the Arts



- Visit the Office for the Arts website for other funding opportunities at [Funding and support | Office for the Arts](#)
- **Creative Australia—[Arts Projects for Individuals and Groups](#)**
 - Grants available from \$10,000 to \$50,000. These grants support a broad range of activities that deliver benefits to the arts sector and wider public, including national and international audiences and communities.

Can I apply for funding specifically to deliver an Indigenous festival?

No—the ILA program does not provide funding to support projects for the delivery of activities specifically for festival, or a significant one-off community celebration. However, funded activities may be included as part of a festival, or a significant one-off community celebration.

If your primary activity is a single project at a festival, or significant one-off community celebration, throughout regional or remote Australia consider if [Festivals Australia](#) meets your project objectives.

Can I use ILA funding for NAIDOC Week celebrations?

No—the ILA program does not provide funding to support projects for the delivery of activities specifically created for the celebration of NAIDOC week. However, funded activities may be included as part of NAIDOC week celebrations.

Can I apply for media broadcasting project funding?

The ILA program does not provide funding support for activities that fall under the [Indigenous Broadcasting](#) support provided by [National Indigenous Australian Agency](#).

Other competitive grant opportunities providing support include the [Community Broadcasting Foundation Ltd](#).

Does the ILA program support Kriol language activities?

No—the ILA program provides funding to revive and maintain Australia’s traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Kriol is not classified as a traditional language, and is therefore not eligible for funding through the ILA program.

How will my application be assessed?

Applications are assessed against criteria outlined in Section 6 of the 2025-26 ILA Program Guidelines.

Who decides if my application is successful or not?

The Minister for the Arts is the final decision maker on all ILA program funding decisions.

When will I know if my application has been successful?

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application at the time successful applicants are being publicly announced.

How can I find out why my application was not successful?

If your application is not successful you will be formally advised.



What happens if only part of our funding request is approved?

It is possible that the Minister may approve partial funding under certain circumstances. If this happens, we will work with your organisation to revise the project objectives, deliverables and budget before finalising your funding agreement.

When is the next grant opportunity?

The next open competitive grant opportunity will be for the 2026-27 financial year.

