

Autism Works in the Community Grants Program FY 2025-2026

Funding Guidelines



**Government
of South Australia**

Office for Autism

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Foreword



South Australia's government is committed to enhancing outcomes for Autistic individuals and positioning the state as a leader in autism inclusivity.

In 2024, the inaugural Office for Autism Grants Program 'Autism Works in the Community' was launched. This Grants Program has run annually since then.

So far, this Grant Program has funded 34 innovative projects designed to boost knowledge, foster understanding, and cultivate a sense of belonging among Autistic individuals and their communities.

Noteworthy initiatives include supporting sensory spaces at key venues and events, including at Adelaide Oval, Illuminate Adelaide, Schoolies Festival™ and others, helping Autistic individuals and their families further enjoy the major events our great state has to offer.

The Grants Program has also supported projects that support workplace outcomes for Autistic people, including those led by Together We Can International Pty Ltd, Autism SA and Babcock.

If you have a project or idea that promotes awareness, understanding, and inclusion for Autistic individuals and the autism community, we encourage you to apply for funding through the 'Autism Works in the Community Grants Program 2025-2026.'

Hon. Emily Bourke MLC
Minister for Autism

About Autism Works in the Community Grants Program

The Autism Works in the Community Grants Program is administered by the Office for Autism within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC). The SA Autism Strategy 2024-2029 articulates the Government's commitment to addressing the specific barriers experienced by the Autistic and autism communities. The Strategy includes 7 focus areas. The Grants Program aligns with multiple focus areas, including Focus Area 3: Thriving in the workplace and Focus Area 5: Participation in the community.

The grants provide one-off funding to eligible organisations, including community groups, to provide contemporary facilities, equipment and opportunities to meet the needs of Autistic people and promote genuine autism inclusion in South Australia.

The grants aim to support greater inclusion for Autistic South Australians by funding sustainable, inclusive and fit-for-purpose projects and initiatives that meet the current and predicted future needs of the South Australian community.

Autism Works in the Community Grants of between \$5,000 and \$30,000 (ex GST) are available for projects or initiatives to be delivered by 30 June, 2027. Projects can commence when funding is approved, expected to be in the first quarter of 2026.

The Office for Autism will only accept one application per organisation. Organisations with regional offices can submit one application per regional office. Organisations applying with a partner can submit one application per partnership.

Applications open on 1 December 2025 and close at 5 pm on 9 January 2026, Australian Central Daylight Savings Time.

Outcomes and funding focus

The Autism Works in the Community Grants Program offers funding between \$5,000 and \$30,000 (ex GST) to invest in South Australian organisations to deliver projects and initiatives seeking to build knowledge, understanding and belonging. For example, initiatives could:

- Improve opportunities in employment or volunteering for Autistic people
- Improve the level of knowledge and understanding of autism including Autistic strengths and support needs
- Increase the ability of venues and events to support improved inclusion of Autistic people
- Improve connection and belonging for Autistic people

For this funding round, priority will be given to projects that focus on the following areas:

- Improve opportunities in employment or volunteering for Autistic people
- Improve the level of knowledge and understanding of autism including Autistic strengths and support needs

Funding will also be prioritised for projects or initiatives that:

- Are Autistic-led or feature leadership and decision-making structures mostly comprising of Autistic people
- Support people and/or communities experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage with co-occurring vulnerabilities, particularly neurodivergence
- Support Autistic people from minority groups including culturally and linguistically diverse people or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Target and benefit regional and/or remote locations

Matched funding requirements

Applicants for funding of \$20,000 or more must be matched as follows:

- *Metropolitan Adelaide applicants* must contribute at least one dollar for every dollar of South Australian Government funding \$20,001 and up to \$30,000. Metropolitan Adelaide comprises the South Australian Government regions of Eastern Adelaide (including CBD), Western Adelaide, Northern Adelaide and Southern Adelaide.
- *Regional and remote South Australian applicants* must contribute at least one dollar for every two dollars of South Australian Government funding between \$20,001 and up to \$30,000. Regional and remote South Australia comprises Greater Adelaide (Adelaide Hills, Barossa Light and Lower North, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island) and country Regions (Eyre and Western, Far North, Limestone Coast, Murray and Mallee, Yorke and Mid North).
- *Autistic-led organisations* – matched funding requirements are half that of non-Autistic-led organisations, as follows:
 - Metropolitan Adelaide applicants must contribute at least one dollar for every two dollars of South Australian Government funding between \$20,001 and up to \$30,000.
 - Regional and remote South Australian applicants must contribute at least one dollar for every four dollars of South Australian Government funding between \$20,001 and up to \$30,000.
 - Autistic-led organisations are defined as organisations with Autistic leadership and/or a majority of staff at all levels of the organisation are Autistic.

Evidence of available matched funding must be provided by applicants as part of the application (e.g. a recent bank statement or confirmation of partnership contribution).

Eligibility

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for funding, organisations must be:

- Non-government; and incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1985; or the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006,
- An Australian Public or Private Limited Liability Company under the Corporations Act 2001; or
- A Partnership registered under the Partnership Act 1891; or
- Registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission with a comparable legal status; or
- An Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation.

Organisations must additionally:

- Have a registered Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN);
- Have an Australian bank account in the name of the legal entity;
- Agree to the terms and conditions of the grant agreement;
- The applicant and project must be located within South Australia;
- Demonstrate commitment to supporting inclusion of Autistic people and autism communities.

The Office for Autism will accept one application for the Autism Works in the Community Grants Program per organisation. Organisations with regional offices can submit one application per regional office.

Partnered organisations

If your organisation is unincorporated or otherwise ineligible to apply by itself, your organisation can secure an eligible organisation to act as their Partner (auspice) for the project. This arrangement enables an entity that cannot apply for funding on its own to be eligible to request and potentially receive funding for eligible projects or initiatives. The eligible partner's role is to be the Principal Organisation that submits the application and manages the funds in line with the grant agreement. If successful, funding will be received by the eligible partner organisation, which will be legally responsible for all aspects of the management and acquittal of the funding.

Example: a community organisation such as a recreation or hobby group that is not incorporated or otherwise eligible, can partner with an eligible organisation. This eligible organisation may be the owner of a community hall where they use facilities for their regular meetings, a representative body, or another eligible organisation.

In addition to meeting the basic eligibility criteria, Partner Organisations:

- May partner with more than one organisation per round;
- Will be required to provide their own details and information in Sections A and B of the Application Form, and apply for funding as the 'Applicant';
- Will be responsible for the grant monies and project if successful. Any grant monies will be provided to the eligible partner organisation;
- Will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement on behalf of the ineligible organisation;

Eligible partner organisations are advised to read these guidelines to fully understand expectations and responsibility prior to signing the application form.

Organisations that are eligible in their own right cannot apply through a partner arrangement.

If you have any queries regarding partnering (Auspice arrangement), please contact the Office for Autism.

Who is not eligible?

The following organisations are ineligible for funding, including by way of partnership arrangements:

- Organisations that have outstanding obligations for grants previously awarded by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet or other South Australian Government departments
- Primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions
- Individuals and organisations applying on behalf of an individual
- Commonwealth, state or local government departments and agencies
- Non-government institutions which have been named by the Commonwealth as having declined (or failed) to join the National Redress Scheme (per Premier's Direction, in effect from 26 October 2025).

What can be funded?

Funding can be used for eligible expenses that directly relate to the coordination, management and delivery of the project or initiative within South Australia. Examples of eligible projects or initiatives are:

- Delivery of workplace programs that improve inclusion of Autistic people, including during recruitment, induction, and throughout employment
- Part or entire salary to subsidise existing staff to be seconded from their existing position to deliver critical aspects of the funded project
- Appropriate training to promote knowledge and understanding of autism
- Sensory spaces, either permanent or for an event or a series of events
- Programs that build and foster community connection and belonging
- Modifications to existing rooms or buildings to make them more accessible for the Autistic community. For example, soundproofing, dimmable lighting or other environmental adjustments.
- Costs for suitably licensed contractors to carry out required building works.
- Materials and resources for programs that enable, encourage or increase inclusion of Autistic individuals

- Partnering with relevant disability organisations such as The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme to make events and venues more inclusive
- Hire of appropriate equipment for sensory spaces e.g. marquee, temporary buildings
- Equipment hire or purchase, to establish or improve the sensory support provided by spaces. For example, sensory items.

The Office for Autism has two sensory kits which are each available for loan. Contact us if you wish to negotiate incorporating these items in your proposal for one off events.

What applications will not be supported?

The following will not be supported:

- Retrospective funding for work already undertaken
- To supplement recurrent or ongoing costs of an existing organisation, including salaries
- Projects where the primary outcomes are religious or political
- Prizes, competitions, donations or sponsorships
- Volunteer honorariums
- Projects that may be funded by or are the core responsibility of other state or Commonwealth government departments.

How to apply

The Office for Autism seeks to reduce barriers to grant applications for Autistic and autism communities. For assistance with your application, contact the Office for Autism on 08 7133 7900 or email officeforautism@sa.gov.au.

Please carefully read these guidelines to determine whether your organisation and project meets the eligibility criteria. If you are unsure, please contact the Office for Autism. The following steps briefly describe the process to apply:

- Register for the online application process available through the Office for Autism website (www.officeforautism.sa.gov.au).
- Complete the online application and submit before the closing time of the program. You do not need to complete the application in a single session, you can save it and come back to it later (as long as it is submitted before the closing time for the program). If you experience difficulties completing the application, please contact us *before the round closes* for assistance.
- If you require assistance with the online form, contact the Office for Autism.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should notify the Office for Autism immediately via email: officeforautism@sa.gov.au. The Office for Autism may not be able to accept additional information or requests to change your submission after the closing date.

If you need further guidance in the application process, are unable to submit the online application or wish to withdraw a submitted application, please contact the Office for Autism on 08 7133 7900 or officeforautism@sa.gov.au.

- Applications close online at **5 pm on Friday 9 January 2026**, Australian Central Daylight Savings Time.
- Applications sent by post must be addressed to Office for Autism, GPO Box 2343, Adelaide, SA, 5000 and postmarked with a date of, or prior to **Friday 9 January 2026**. The Office for Autism accepts no responsibility for items sent by mail and recommends tracking letters.

Supporting documentation required

Applicants will be required to provide the following information:

- Organisation details, including a contact person
- Information about current and pending grant funding received by your organisation
- An overview of the program, project or initiative
- What your project will achieve
- Your organisation's capabilities to deliver the project
- Any risks associated with delivering your project, and how they will be managed
- Any relevant conflicts of interest, and how they will be managed
- Support letters (at least two is recommended)
- Budget and justification
 - The submitted budget must clearly describe the items the grant will support if the application is successful and include quotes. The budget must also include other sources of income for the project including other grants, government or organisational support, in-kind supports or matched funding, as appropriate. If ineligible items or activities form part of the project, the budget should detail how these will be funded.
 - Evidence of funding source(s) to meet the matched funding requirement, if applicable. For example, a recent bank statement or confirmation of partnership contribution.
 - This will assist the Funding Assessment Committee to understand the size and scope of the project or initiative and how the funds will achieve the positive benefits outlined in the application.
- Copies of relevant organisation documentation:
 - Copy of constitution, signed minutes from last two Annual General Meetings, if applicable
 - Copy of company or partnership registration documents
 - Copies of two most recent end of year financial reports showing assets, annual income and expenditure. These must be audited and/or a letter of verification provided by an accountant.

- Applications for infrastructure must also provide:
 - Evidence of appropriate building compliance and council approvals, if applicable
 - Labelled building floor plans
 - For applications to enhance or build, a satisfactory signed long-term lease agreement (minimum five years remaining at the time of application and a letter of consent from the building owner) or evidence of building ownership.



How are applications assessed?

Eligibility screening

The Office for Autism will conduct a preliminary assessment of all applications to ensure the following criteria are met:

- The applicant organisation is eligible to apply;
- The project or initiative is eligible (identified ineligible costs may be removed from a funding recommendation);
- The application has been completed in full, including supporting documentation;
- The applicant does not have any outstanding obligations for grants previously awarded by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet or other South Australian Government departments.

Funding Assessment Committee

The Director, Office for Autism appoints the members of the Funding Assessment Committee, which will be comprised of officers from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Assessment against criteria

The Funding Assessment Committee will assess all applications which have satisfied preliminary eligibility assessment. Where an application is deemed eligible, the Funding Assessment Committee will assess the application against the relative merit of other projects in meeting the assessment criteria. The Funding Assessment Committee may request additional information. Please note, satisfying the assessment criteria alone does not guarantee receipt of funding.

Additional weighting will be given to projects with outcomes aligned with funding priority areas.

Assessors may also take into consideration the geographic or demand-driven funding distribution to ensure a range of proposals are supported and an equitable distribution of funding throughout South Australia.

It is anticipated that the number of eligible applications and funds sought will exceed the funds available and therefore the Office for Autism does not guarantee projects will be successful, nor that successful projects will receive the full amount of funding requested.

In the event that insufficient high-quality applications are received, the Office for Autism reserves the right to not award all available funding.

Weighting	Assessment Criteria – Does the application:
25%	<p>Community need and purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify the community need - describe how the project or initiative will address this need - describe the project or initiative - detail the activities and timeline of the project or initiative - describe how it will complement (rather than duplicate) existing services
25%	<p>Strategic alignment and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify what people or user groups will benefit from this project or initiative, and how many - demonstrate the strategic importance of the project or initiative to the applicant, user groups and the community - describe how impact or benefit will be measured - detail how access to the project or initiative will be managed - demonstrate alignment with priorities of the Office for Autism and the South Australian Government
25%	<p>Organisational capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate that the organisation has the capacity to carry out the proposed project - demonstrate how the organisation has, or is developing, an inclusive culture and respectful relationships between colleagues, clients and stakeholders, as applicable - does the organisation employ Autistic people? If yes, how many and at what level(s) e.g. employees, managers, board members, volunteer? - demonstrate support from relevant stakeholders - include all the required documents?
25%	<p>Financial need and value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate the project or initiative is costed realistically with valid quotes - demonstrate the cost is proportionate to the number of people who will benefit - demonstrate the project or initiative is sustainable after its completion and/or will not create an ongoing need for funding - describe why alternative funding options are not appropriate - provide evidence of matched funding (if required)

Recommendation

Once the assessment is completed, the Director, Office for Autism, will approve final funding recommendations. Please be aware that the amount of funding recommended may be lower than the amount requested.

Notification

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their grant application.

Successful applications

Funding agreement

Successful applicants (grantees) will be sent a grant offer detailing the terms and conditions of the funding provided.

Applicants will be required to sign the agreement and comply with its conditions, which will include requirements to:

- Undertake Autism Awareness and Understanding training as directed by the Office for Autism
- Report on how you have spent the funds
- Retain and provide receipts for all approved budget expenditure, including evidence of matched funding expenditure if applicable
- Measure and report on outcomes from the project or initiative
- Have appropriate levels of public liability insurance – a minimum of \$1 million or as required in your agreement
- Seek approval through Office for Autism is required before any public announcement relating to any aspect of the grant. Liaise with the Minister for Autism regarding any formal activity associated with commencement or launch of a project. Openings and launches of projects are to be coordinated through the Minister's office.
- Appropriately acknowledge Office for Autism, Department of the Premier and Cabinet as a funding source for the project

Successful applicants may be subject to further specific conditions as required, determined by assessment processes.

Payment will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

If the grantee or partner does not receive all the stated matched funding contributions to the project or initiative as per their application, the grantee will be required to meet the funding shortfall. If the total cost of the project is greater than the grant plus co-contributions, the grantee will be required to meet all such additional costs. If the actual cost of the project comes in under budget, the grantee will be required to repay a portion of the grant as outlined in the grant agreement.

Grant agreement variations and extensions

Grantees must contact the Office for Autism to request approval to vary the terms of the grant agreement, including for any:

- Changes to purchases
- Timeframes
- Business activities that may affect the ability to complete the project or initiative.

Grant acquittal and reporting

At the completion of the project, grantees will be required to:

- Acquit the grant according to the funding agreement
- Certify that the statements made in the acquittal are true and correct
- Provide a report about the project or initiative

Grant acknowledgement

Grantees will be required to acknowledge the Government of South Australia's support, using the following statement at a minimum:

"This project received grant funding from the Government of South Australia through the Office for Autism, Department of the Premier and Cabinet."

When acknowledging a grant or mentioning support from the Office for Autism on your website or in any digital communications, please include a link to officeforautism.sa.gov.au.

Other information

Grants and Goods and Services Tax (GST)

It is recommended that applicants seek independent legal and financial advice to determine all taxation obligations before applying. Please note that if your organisation's annual turnover is greater than \$150,000 (non-profit organisations) then the Australian Taxation Office requires you to be registered for GST (source: www.ato.gov.au). Successful applicants registered for GST will have their grant grossed up by 10 per cent to offset GST payable on the grant. Organisations not registered for GST will not have the grant grossed up. Grantees cannot have the grant agreement transferred to another body based on GST registration.

Child-safe environments

Children and young people have a right to be safe and protected at all times, including when accessing services in the community. Child protection legislation in South Australia requires certain organisations to provide a child-safe environment. All state authorities and persons or bodies who provide a service or undertake an activity that constitutes child-related work under the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 must meet these obligations.

To meet the requirements under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, these organisations must have a child-safe environments policy in place, meet working with children check obligations and lodge a child-safe environments compliance statement. The statement is lodged with the Department for Human Services: dhs.sa.gov.au/how-we-help.

Contact us



For more information, contact the grants team

Website: officeforautism.sa.gov.au

Email: Officeforautism@sa.gov.au

Phone: 08 7133 7900

If you are deaf, or have a hearing, speech or communication impairment, please contact us through:

National Relay Service (Speak and Listen) call 1300 555 727

National Relay Service (TTY users) call 133 677

Internet Relay users can connect to the [National Relay Service](#).

If English is not your [preferred language](#), please contact the Interpreting and Translating Centre on 1800 280 203 and ask to speak with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Please tell us if you would prefer to speak to an Aboriginal person.