

ACT Social Enterprise Grant Program

2026 Grant Guidelines

Second application phase:

Applications open: 8:30AM AEST Monday, 17 August 2026

Applications close: 5:00PM AEDT Sunday, 11 October 2026

The ACT Social Enterprise Grant Program is delivered by The Mill House Ventures
with funding provided by the ACT Government.

Contents

1	DEFINITIONS.....	4
2	ABOUT THE PROGRAM.....	6
3	PRIMARY OBJECTIVE	6
4	OUTCOMES.....	7
5	FUNDING PARAMETERS.....	7
6	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	7
6.1	General eligibility	7
6.2	Ineligible to apply	8
6.3	Grant activities and expenditure	8
7	APPLICATION	9
7.1	Application process	9
7.2	Requesting an extension of the application timeline	9
7.3	Evidence to include in the application	9
8	ASSESSMENT.....	10
8.1	Assessment process	10
8.2	Assessment criteria	11
9	NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION OUTCOME	11
10	ACCEPTING A GRANT.....	11
10.1	Grant requirements and payment process	11
10.2	Conditions of funding.....	12
10.3	Goods and Services Tax (GST)	12
10.4	Publication	12
11	MONITORING AND REPORTING.....	13
11.1	Monitoring.....	13
11.2	Reporting.....	13
11.3	Case studies.....	14
11.4	Funding Agreement reporting.....	14
12	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	14

12.1	Accessibility	14
12.2	Addendum	14
12.3	Conflicts of Interest	15
12.4	Confidentiality	15
12.5	Complaints	15
13	FURTHER INFORMATION	16

1 DEFINITIONS

ACT Social Enterprise Grant Program	The program that is covered by these Grant Guidelines
ASEG EOI	ACT Social Enterprise Grant Expression of Interest. This is your written application. You submit your application by directly entering your information into the online portal. There are no other application forms after you complete the form on the online portal provided via The Mill House Ventures. Applications open: 8:30AM AEST Monday, 17 August 2026 Applications close: 5:00PM AEDT Sunday, 11 October 2026
Funding Agreement	The legal agreement between The Mill House Ventures Limited and the Grant Recipient which specifies: • the Grant Period; • the Grant Amount and how it will be paid; • the Grant Activity; and • the terms and conditions of the grant.
Grant Activity	The activity/activities that the Grant Recipient will use the Grant Amount for.
Grant Administrator	A person in The Mill House Ventures team who is responsible for coordinating all administration activities in the process to deliver the grant program.
Grant Amount	The sum of money provided to a Grant Recipient under the program. Expressed as Australian Dollars.
Grant Period	The timeframe in which to conduct the Grant Activity and where the Grant Amount must be spent. A grant must be fully expended or committed to be expended.
Grant Recipient	A social enterprise entity that has applied, been assessed and awarded a grant.
Independent Assessment Panel	Up to five people who bring a complementary mix of expertise to the assessment process and are independent from the Grant Administrator

Pre-Revenue Start-up	A business that is setting up and is in the process of developing a product (good or service), is not part of an enterprise group, and is working towards a repeatable, scalable and innovative business model or product. The business hasn't generated revenue from customers.
Project	A discreet time-bounded (Grant Period) activity or series of activities (Grant Activity) to be carried out by the Grant Recipient as set out in the Funding Agreement.
Matching Contribution	The cash and/or in-kind contribution that the Grant Recipient will provide from its own resources towards the Grant Activity which matches or exceeds the Grant Amount.
The Mill House Ventures Limited	The organisation delivering the ACT Social Enterprise Grant Program on behalf of the Territory.
Scale-up	A valuable former start-up company or trust that is not part of an enterprise group, has found a repeatable, scalable and innovative business model or product and is expanding rapidly.
Social Enterprise	A business that: • has a defined primary social, cultural or environmental purpose consistent with a public or community benefit; • derives a substantial portion of their income from trade; and • invests efforts and resources into their purpose such that public/community benefit outweighs private benefit.
Start-up	A company or trust that is not part of an enterprise group and is working towards a repeatable, scalable and innovative business model or product.
Territory	As represented by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

2 ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Territory has engaged The Mill House Ventures Limited (The Mill House Ventures) to deliver The ACT Social Enterprise Grant Program (The Program) pilot.

This is a competitive program with all applications assessed on relative merit. It is not possible to approve all requests for assistance, therefore grant funding should not be deemed automatic or anticipated.

Applicants need to declare that they have read and accept these guidelines when submitting a grant application.

3 PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

The Program aims to achieve the following objectives:

- encourage growth and maturation of the local social enterprise ecosystem
- encourage ideation of new social entrepreneurs and attract new social entrepreneurs to the region
- strengthen and enhance the positioning of Canberra as a social innovation and entrepreneurial hub, and
- address systemic gaps in the ACT's social innovation ecosystem.

The Program seeks to complement existing programs and services. The Program is a competitive translational grant program, targeted at start-up social enterprises to address the market gap in funding between pre-revenue (seed) grant programs and the philanthropic, sponsorship and venture capital funding opportunities available to a scale-up social enterprise.

4 OUTCOMES

The intended outcomes of the Program are to:

1. Provide financial support to start-up social enterprises to address the market gap in funding between pre-revenue (seed) grant programs and the philanthropic, sponsorship and venture capital funding opportunities available to a scale-up social enterprise.
2. Encourage growth and maturation of the local social enterprise ecosystem.
3. Encourage ideation of new social entrepreneurs and attract new social entrepreneurs to the region.
4. Strengthen and enhance the positioning of Canberra as a social innovation and entrepreneurial hub.

5 FUNDING PARAMETERS

The ACT Social Enterprise Grant program will deliver up to \$250,000 in grants in the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years. The second phase applies to the 2026/27 financial year and totals \$160,000 in available grant funding.

1. The Grant Amount that can be applied for in any single application are:
 - Minimum: \$10,000.
 - Maximum: \$30,000.
2. Grant Recipients must provide matched funding towards the project (Matching Contribution). This can be in the form of a cash contribution and/or the in-kind contribution of the time that the recipient's team spends working on the project.
3. The Matching Contribution must be a minimum of 50 per cent of the project total. For example, if you receive a grant of \$20,000 you must contribute a minimum of \$20,000 in cash/in-kind towards the project for a total project cost of \$40,000.
4. A social enterprise must be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient cash and/or in-kind support to commence and complete the project.

6 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

6.1 General eligibility

Any social enterprise applying for funding under the Program must:

1. have an Australian Business Number (ABN) prior to application and be registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST) if applicable
2. be pre-revenue or be turning over less than \$500,000 in annual revenue
3. have its registered office and principal place of business in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) or have its business primarily focussed (or operating) in the ACT, and
4. meet the program's definition of a Social Enterprise.

6.2 Ineligible to apply

The following are not eligible to apply:

- Government Business Entities (either Australian or foreign).
- National-level industry associations or groups (membership or non-membership).
- An individual or entity that has already received funding under this program.
- Any organisation that cannot meet the General eligibility criteria listed in **Item 6.1**.

6.3 Grant activities and expenditure

Grant funds can only be used for items listed under **Item 6.3.1** Eligible activities and expenditure.

The Matching Contribution can be used for any activities and expenses but must be directly related to the Project.

All expenditure attributed to the Project (including the Matching Contribution) must occur in the Grant Period and be directly related to the Project.

6.3.1 Eligible activities and expenditure

The Grant can support expenses related to the following activities:

- Business planning.
- Development of marketing plans and strategies (excluding advertising costs).
- Fixtures or fittings, including related installation costs (where the total costs are up to 10 per cent of the Grant Amount).
- Product development.
- Relevant training programs.
- Resources and consumables where they are specific to the Project.
- Website development or upgrades.

6.3.2 Ineligible activities and expenditure

The Grant cannot support expenses related to the following activities:

- Advertising costs.
- Business startup costs such as business registration, domain name registration, licenses and permits.
- Fixtures or fittings including related installation costs (where the total costs exceed 10 per cent of the total Grant Amount).
- Major capital expenditure.
- Major construction or capital works.
- Purchase of large assets like land and/or vehicles.
- Remuneration of executive staff.
- Staff salaries/wages.
- General ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent, insurance and office supplies.
- Any other activities or expenses not listed in **Item 6.3.1**.

For the avoidance of doubt, it is recommended that you ascertain information via The Mill House Ventures to clarify eligibility of your proposed project activities and expenditure prior to applying.

7 APPLICATION

7.1 Application process

There is only one **written application** required in the ACT Social Enterprise Grant application process. This written application must be made through the **ASEG EOI** online portal. A link to the online portal can be found via The Mill House Ventures website.

Applications must be received by the closing date and time, as outlined in these Grant Guidelines.

Late applications will only be accepted if prior approval, via The Mill House Ventures has been sought and received in writing before the closing date and time. The late application must be received by The Mill House Ventures by the adjusted closing date and time provided.

If you do not comply with the above eligibility requirements, your application will not progress to the assessment phase.

Application steps:

1. Seek information via The Mill House Ventures about the grant, guidelines and process.

- Multiple modes are available to gather the information provided by The Mill House Ventures about this grant. The website is the recommended first stop in your information gathering journey. Visit the Grants page on www.millhouseventures.com.au (<https://millhouseventures.com.au/social-enterprise-grant-program>).
- Information that forms specialist advice, for example, taxation, business structures or legal implications, will not be provided by The Mill House Ventures. It is the responsibility of the grant applicant to satisfy their need for information prior to applying.

2. Apply through ASEG EOI online grant portal, including all supporting documentation.

- Should the Independent Assessment Panel require clarification and/or additional information The Grant Administrator may contact you within two weeks following the closing date by email to give you an opportunity to present additional information.

Once submitted you will not have the opportunity to add, remove or edit any part of your application.

7.2 Requesting an extension of the application timeline

Any request for extension should be sent to the Grant Administrator via aseg@millhouseventures.com.au at least five business days prior to the closing date and outline the reasons for seeking an extension. The request will be reviewed, and the requestor will be notified of the outcome. The decision communicated in the outcome notification is final.

7.3 Evidence to include in the application

In an application, all applicants must provide evidence demonstrating that they meet the general eligibility (**Item 6.1**) of this program. Examples of evidence against each criterion are in the table below. Failure to submit this information may jeopardise any offer of funding.

In the grant application each applicant must include:

Criterion	Evidence
1	The Entity name and ABN. This will be used to confirm business registration. Do not submit documentation, the abr.gov.au and ASIC Connect sites will be used to verify your entity.
2	Declaration of annual revenue. Used to verify that the business has less than \$500,000 in annual revenue.
3	For businesses not registered in the ACT, provide proof that its primary operation is in the ACT.
4	Evidence that the applicant meets the program definition of a Social Enterprise. This can be a statement by the founder and/or a form of social enterprise certification.

In addition, all applicants must complete all sections of the ASEG EOI to form a complete application. Partial applications are not accepted.

A template showing all questions can be accessed via the Grants page on The Mill House Ventures website.

8 ASSESSMENT

8.1 Assessment process

When your application is received, it will be checked to ensure eligibility for funding as outlined in **Item 6**.

Following the eligibility check, the applications and attachments are provided to the Independent Assessment Panel to be assessed. At this stage, the Independent Assessment Panel is using the assessment criteria (**Item 8.2**) to decide whether an applicant will progress to the shortlist.

The shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend a Q&A session where applicants can present their project and answer questions about their grant application.

During the Q&A session the Independent Assessment Panel interacts with the applicant to better understand the project and grant funding request.

At the completion of all Q&A sessions, The Independent Assessment Panel meets to listen to the perspectives and expertise of other panel members, to finalise the judgement and outcome of each shortlisted application.

The Independent Assessment Panel is co-chaired by a representative of The Mill House Ventures and an ACT Government representative. The decision of the Chair representing the ACT Government is final.

Even though an application may meet the assessment criteria, approval will depend on the number of applications received, the relative merit of the application and available funds to determine the final funding offer to each applicant.

A Funding Agreement Template can be found at Grants page on The Mill House Ventures website.

8.2 Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria	How will this be assessed - including but not limited to:
General eligibility	• The business has a valid ABN. • The business is registered in the ACT or has demonstrated that the primary operations are in the ACT. • The business has less than \$500,000 in annual revenue (in FY2025-26). • The business meets the program definition of a social enterprise.
Project viability and value for money	• The business can complete the proposed activities within the grant period. • The total cost of the project activity and the potential impact it achieves, relative to other projects. • The relevant experience of the founder and/or team to deliver the project. • The ability to deliver on the social enterprise mission and goals. • The extent of the Matching Contribution and ability to deliver on the contribution.
Project benefits to meet the social enterprise's mission	• Description of the project and how it will contribute to the scalable growth and sustainability of the social enterprise. • How the project aligns to the social enterprise's mission and the project's relevance to the primary operations in the ACT.

9 NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION OUTCOME

The Mill House Ventures will notify applicants of the outcome of their application by email.

10 ACCEPTING A GRANT

10.1 Grant requirements and payment process

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with The Mill House Ventures. This will set out the terms and conditions for which funding will be provided, including:

- the Grant period
- the Grant amount
- the Matching Contribution towards the project
- the project activities
- the acquittal and reporting requirements, and
- any insurance and/or other requirements.

Grants will be paid in instalments following the execution of the Funding Agreement as stipulated in the Funding Agreement.

10.2 Conditions of funding

Conditions of funding include:

1. A declaration on the application form certifying that all information provided in the application is true and correct. Action may be taken for repayment of any grant made where information contained in the application is subsequently found to be false or the Grant is not used for its approved purpose.
2. Grant Recipients must adhere to the conditions and guidelines of this Program.
3. **Acknowledgement:** All Grant Recipients must acknowledge the funding provided under this program in any public statement including publication or website. The acknowledgement is:
"with assistance from the ACT Social Enterprise Grant program delivered by The Mill House Ventures with funding provided by the ACT Government."
4. Grant Recipients must complete all reporting requirements. Refer to **Item 11**.
5. Profile or case study development
6. Informing The Mill House Ventures of:
 - Any changes to:
 - address
 - nominated contact details
 - bank account details
 - viability of the project
 - If the project is likely to experience significant delays.
 - Changes or delays may result in varying or terminating the project. The Mill House Ventures will use its discretion with the information provided to determine the appropriate next steps, including if a variation to the Funding Agreement is required.

10.3 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The grant amount and milestones will be specified as GST exclusive.

GST is payable to organisations that receive funding under this program if they are GST registered with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and the project activities are categorised as GST applicable.

Businesses registered for GST need to provide a Tax Invoice to The Mill House Ventures.

10.4 Publication

At the conclusion of each funding round details of the successful Grant Recipients will be made publicly available on the Mill House Ventures website and via other channels. Information that will be in the public domain includes:

- The Grant Recipient's business name.
- The Grant amount.
- A summary of the social enterprise
- A summary of the project.

Case studies and profiles are only published with the consent of the Grant Recipient (refer to **Item 11.3**).

11 MONITORING AND REPORTING

11.1 Monitoring

Grant Recipients will be required to respond to surveys during the grant period to monitor the progress of the project. These surveys will be sent to recipients six-monthly, or more frequently as documented in the Funding Agreement.

This includes:

- What activities did the funding support during the period?
- What milestone/s have been achieved?
- What are the project's next steps?
- What financial and/or in-kind contribution did the entity provide towards the project?

11.2 Reporting

Each Grant Recipient will be required to complete, at minimum, two surveys which form the mandatory reporting:

- The first survey forms part of the ASEG EOI and is completed at the application stage.
- The second survey will be within three months of the completion of the grant.
 - This provides an update on the information provided in the first survey and is an opportunity to provide additional feedback on the program.

The Territory will use the information collected in the surveys to communicate the impact of the grant program and to inform future policy decisions. Grant Recipients will not be identified when the Territory communicates the impact of the grant program. Individual Grant Recipient information will not be released.

The minimum dataset collected through the survey includes:

	Application stage Survey	After grant completion Survey
Estimated market value (\$) of the social enterprise	☒	☒
Number of employees	☒	☒
Number of customers	☒	☒
Average monthly revenue (\$)	☒	☒
ANZSIC Industry classification	☒	☒
Whether operations support multiculturalism	☒	☒
Female Founder Y/N	☒	☒
Aboriginal and, or Torres Strait Islander business Y/N	☒	☒
Satisfaction with the grant program	☒	☒

The impact and outcomes the grant has had	☒
Areas where the Grant can be improved	☒

11.3 Case studies

Grant Recipients may also be asked during or after the program to be the focus of a case study. Case studies will include:

1. Social Enterprise name.
2. Mission and business model summary.
3. Key personnel (e.g. founder, key team members).
4. Grant impact and outcomes.
5. Promotional photo (if agreed).

The case study will be shared with the Territory. Publication will be discussed with the social enterprise and only proceed with the consent of the Grant Recipient.

11.4 Funding Agreement reporting

The reporting requirements for the Funding Agreement will be documented in the Funding Agreement.

At minimum, the reporting will include all items in 11.1 to 11.3.

In addition, the Grant Recipient must provide evidence that milestones have been achieved. This evidence may include, but is not limited to, reports, prototypes or site visits.

12 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

12.1 Accessibility

The ACT Government and the Mill House Ventures are committed to making these guidelines accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format – such as large print or audio – please telephone Access Canberra Contact Centre – 13 22 81.

If English is not your first language and you require the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) please telephone 131 450.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the National Relay Service, please telephone 131 677 then ask for 133 427.

12.2 Addendum

Any additional information provided by The Mill House Ventures as part of this Program will be posted online at the Grant page on The Mill House Ventures website. www.millhouseventures.com.au and through Social Media via LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/millhouseventures>.

In addition, all applicants that have started or submitted an online application form will be notified via the email registered that additional information has been published. This notification will include a link to the website address.

12.3 Conflicts of Interest

A Conflict of Interest may arise that could impact the program.

This could include any perceived, potential and/or actual Conflicts of Interest with The Mill House Ventures' team and/or the Independent Assessment Panel including the panel's two co-chairs.

Applicants are required to declare any perceived, potential and/or actual Conflicts of Interest in their EOI and any time subsequent. Noting that having participated in a Mill House Ventures program, activity or event does not constitute a conflict of interest for the applicant.

As part of the assessment process, members of the Independent Assessment Panel will be asked to declare any Conflicts of Interest with any of the applicants.

If a panel member declares that they have a Conflict of Interest with a grant applicant, this will be recorded, and a decision will be made on the appropriate management which may include that a panel member may not be able to participate in the assessment of the application.

12.4 Confidentiality

All material submitted by applicants and successful recipients is provided in confidence. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without permission.

Grant Applications will be provided to the Independent Assessment Panel, including officials from the Territory and The Mill House Ventures as co-chairs.

The Mill House Ventures is required to:

- Publish a list of successful applicants as outlined in **Item 10.4**.
- Provide reporting on the progress of payment of grant funding to the Territory.
- Provide information collected in the grant surveys to the Territory.

The Territory will use this information to communicate the impact of the program and inform future policy and program development. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without permission. However, applicants should be aware that the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* apply to documents in the Territory's possession.

12.5 Complaints

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the application process and/or an unsuccessful application for a Grant.

You or your representatives have the right to raise your concerns. The first step is to email aseg@millhouseventures.com.au. This information supports us to improve services and supports your right to ask questions about the Grant application process as well as decisions made in relation to an unsuccessful application.

You can expect to:

- be treated respectfully, fairly and in-confidence
- have your concerns dealt with as soon as possible
- be informed of progress, and
- be told of the outcome.

13 FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the Grant Guidelines, eligibility requirements or to lodge a complaint, please contact the Grant Administrator at The Mill House Ventures.

Name: Rebecca Woods

Website: <https://millhouseventures.com.au/>

Email: aseg@millhouseventures.com.au

Phone: (02) 6103 0401