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ACT EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

FUNDING FOR

NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOL PARENT ENGAGEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

PROGRAM PROCEDURES v.1.

To submit an application or if you require assistance,
please contact the ACTBGA office on
(02) 6285 1808 or admin@actbga.org.au

APPLICATIONS CLOSE
12:00pm on Thursday, 29 August 2024

Timeline for the Non-Government School Parent Engagement Grants Program (PEP)

4 July 2024	Applications open.
29 August 2024	Applications close at 12:00pm on Thursday, 29 August 2024.
17 September 2024	PEP Assessment Committee meet to review initial applications and identify any further questions to be raised.
22 October 2024	PEP Assessment Committee meet to review any additional information submitted and finalise project funding recommendations to be put to the ACTBGA Board.
19 November 2024	ACTBGA Board reviews recommendations from the PEP Assessment Committee, to be put to the ACT Government.
22 November 2024	Grant approvals are submitted to the ACT Government by this date. Project proponents are notified if applications are not being recommended and 14-day appeal period starts two business days after project proponents are notified.
January-February 2025	Estimated timing of announcement of grants. ACTBGA office facilitates execution of funding agreements between the ACT Government and parent association (or school).

Please note that the dates above are subject to change.

The ACT Block Grant Authority

INTRODUCTION

The ACT Block Grant Authority Incorporated (ACTBGA) is an incorporated, not-for-profit association set up by non-government school organisations in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Its core purpose is to administer funding from the Australian and ACT Governments for non-government schools in the ACT.

The ACTBGA has been commissioned by the ACT Government to administer, on its behalf, the *Non-Government School Parent Engagement Grants Program*. This program provides grants to strengthen parent associations (also known as P & C or P & F associations) and improve school partnerships with parents and families. Where a school does not have an affiliated parent association or its parent association is not a separate legal entity, a school may apply for a grant in its place.

The ACTBGA will assess and distribute funding to parent associations or schools within the ACT, in accordance with agreed criteria set by the ACT Education Directorate under the program.

STRUCTURE OF THE ACT BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY

The ACT Block Grant Authority Inc. Constitution sets out the structure of the ACTBGA. The structure is as follows:

Board of Directors

The board of directors (ACTBGA Board) manages the business of the ACTBGA and consists of four directors.

1. Association of Independent Schools of the ACT (AISACT) appoints one director.
2. Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) appoints one director.
3. AISACT & CECG jointly appoint a parent representative.
4. AISACT & CECG jointly appoint the chair of the board of directors (ACTBGA Board Chair).

PEP Assessment Committee

The PEP Assessment Committee is chaired by an independent person jointly appointed by AISACT and CECG, and includes one nominee from each AISACT and CECG. The PEP Assessment Committee undertakes the assessment of applications for grant funding and makes recommendations to the ACTBGA Board on the allocation of grant funds.

The ACTBGA Executive Officer provides a secretariat function to the ACTBGA Board and the PEP Assessment Committee.

Non-Government School Parent Engagement Grants Program

GRANT PROGRAM

The ACT Government's Non-Government School Parent Engagement Grants Program (PEP) provides funding to assist non-government school parent associations to increase parental engagement within school communities. The program recognises parents and families are children's first educators and that family-based partnerships have significant and long-lasting impacts across communities.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the program is to foster and enhance parent engagement in children's learning, through building strong parent associations and partnerships with parents and families.

The program aims to:

- Increase business acumen and enterprise skills of parent associations.
- Build efficacy of parent associations to strengthen family-school partnerships and embed effective parent engagement strategies as 'business as usual'.
- Develop and promote practical tools and resources to strengthen parent engagement.
- Support sustainable and innovative initiatives to foster greater parent engagement and improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people.
- Better promote parent associations to increase involvement of all parts of the school community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

FUNDING

Total funding of **\$500,000** (GST exclusive) is available for the program and approximately **\$131,661** remains for allocation in this third and final round of the program.

Where a school does not have an affiliated parent association or its parent association is not a separate legal entity, a school may apply for a grant in its place.

There is no maximum grant threshold applicable for the final round; however, as funds are limited, it is expected that applicants will aim to contribute towards the cost of the proposed project to their maximum financial capacity.

The previous maximum grant of \$10,638 remains a good indicator of a reasonable grant request, with higher grant requests considered depending on the number of applications received in the round.

Eligible applicants may apply in partnership with other parent associations or other non-government schools, and submit a joint application that reflects these arrangements. Where joint applications are submitted, the primary applicant should ensure each parent association or school that forms part of the larger group has formally agreed to the joint process by completing the **Joint Parent Association or School Details** and the **Certification** section of the application.

Project examples are attached at **Appendix 1**. Grants are one-off for the specified purpose and are not intended as a recurring funding source. Applicants should be aware that funding is not guaranteed.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

To be eligible to apply for funding the applicant must:

- Be a bona fide non-government school parent association. Where a school does not have an affiliated parent association or its parent association is not a separate legal entity, the school may apply for a grant in place of the parent association.
- Be a registered not-for-profit or charitable organisation.
- Have a current public liability insurance policy with a minimum of \$10 million in cover.
- Not be a political party, defined as a political party registered under Part XI of the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

Proposed initiatives must:

- Align with the aims of the program, as described in these guidelines.
- Be delivered in the ACT for ACT non-government school students and/or parents and carers.

Funds are not available for:

- Projects that do not contribute to the aim of the program.
- Ongoing/recurrent funding.
- Projects that are a duplication of an existing service, program, project or event.
- Retrospective costs – projects or purchases which have already taken place.
- Salaries where the salary forms part of the parent association's usual responsibility.
- Recurrent operating or maintenance costs for day to day operations of the parent association.
- Prize money.
- Projects which are deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must include a project that will address the importance of parent engagement in realising the ACT Government's commitment to deliver the best schools and best education of all children and young people in the ACT.

Eligible applicants will be assessed against the following:

Grant Intent – Project demonstrates a recognised need within the organisation.

Objectives – Project demonstrates an innovative and sustainable way to increase parent association business acumen and/or enhance parent engagement, and incorporates an evidence informed approach.

Action Plan – Applicant demonstrates capacity to deliver the project within budget and timeframes, identifying key milestones.

Evaluation – Applicant demonstrates consideration of quantitative and qualitative evidence of improved business acumen and/or parent engagement.

Previous grant recipients under this program are also eligible and encouraged to apply in the round, noting that if the round is over-subscribed then priority will be given to new applicants that have not received funding in past rounds.

Assessment Process

Applications opened on 4 July 2024 and will close 29 August 2024 (an eight-week period).

As the term of this grant program is limited, this application round is the **final opportunity** to apply for grant funding under this program.

Eligible applications received by the closing date will be assessed by the PEP Assessment Committee against the assessment criteria set out following. Committee members are required to sign confidentiality agreements and declare any conflict of interest before assessing applications.

The PEP Assessment Committee will make its recommendations based on the information provided in the application. These recommendations go before the ACTBGA Board, who will make the final decision on the allocation of funding to be recommended for endorsement by the ACT Government.

Should an application be unsuccessful, there is an appeal period of 14 days commencing 2 days after notification of an unsuccessful outcome.

Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Indicators and supporting evidence
Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the application support a recognised need within the organisation? • Does the project strengthen parent engagement?
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the goals of the project meet any specified aims of the grant program? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase parent association business acumen and enterprise skills ○ Establish a parent association ○ Strengthen family-school partnerships and embed effective parent engagement strategies ○ Support a sustainable and innovative initiative to foster parent engagement ○ Increase involvement in the parent association of all parts of the school community, including Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking families • How does the intended impact of the project align with the goals and objectives? • How sustainable is the project?
Feasibility of Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How feasible is the project, in terms of the submitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action Plan; ○ Budget; and, ○ Justification of Expenses?
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project include a thorough evaluation that demonstrates consideration of quantitative and qualitative evidence of improved business acumen and/or parent engagement?

Application Forms

APPLICATION FORMS

The application form is designed to collect all the information needed to fairly assess eligibility and evaluate applications for funding. Where possible, please put information in all spaces indicated on the application form. In cases where the space provided is inadequate, supplementary information is to be submitted with the application form. Prior to commencing the completion of the application form, applicants should familiarise themselves with the information that is being requested within the application and any attachments that will need to be submitted.

It is **strongly encouraged** that applicants do not leave data entry and the submission of applications to the last minute. ACTBGA staff are available to assist with the familiarisation of the application form or any other questions applicants may have.

It is important that applicants pay close attention to the need for preparing an application that is complete and accurate, particularly in relation to project description, need, action plan and estimated costs.

The application form must be submitted by no later than **12:00pm on 29 August 2024**.

Applications for retrospective assistance cannot be accepted or considered. An application is considered to be retrospective if a parent association or school, enters into a commitment (e.g., sign a contract), purchases goods or services, or commences any works prior to executing a Grant Acceptance Agreement with the ACT Education Directorate.

The following documents must be current and included with your application:

- Certification signed by both the Authorised Officer of Legal Entity and the School Principal to accept the terms and conditions, and endorse the project initiative and application.
- Joint Parent Association or School Details section completed and Certification signed by all legal entities and schools agreeing to be part of a joint initiative (if applicable)
- Public liability insurance policy Certificate of Currency (minimum of \$10 million cover)
- Not-for-profit or charitable organisation registration evidence (e.g., copy of ACNC registration page for registered charities, or business registration for NFP)
- Project budget and any relevant quotes or evidence to support the estimated costs
- Evidence of project scope, for example:
 - > If you are engaging the services of a facilitator/presenter, provide their name, company and registered training organisation (RTO) number, session topic (in detail) and duration.
 - > External business proposals received for services to be provided (e.g., email from provider).
 - > Site plans and/or construction drawings, if applicable.

** ALL plans/drawings should be prepared by a suitably qualified professional.*

** Site plan should show existing buildings and the location of the proposed works. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide a clear distinction in drawings between what exists and what is being proposed.*

** Plans/drawings should normally be on A3-sized paper.*

Approved Projects

AWARDING OF GRANTS

Successful grant applicants will be notified in writing by the ACTBGA and will be provided with a Grant Acceptance Agreement, which is an agreement between the parent association or school and the ACT Education Directorate.

APPEALS

Where applications are not recommended for approval, the ACTBGA will afford applicants the opportunity to have their applications reviewed by a process independent of the original assessment process. The ACTBGA Appeals Policy and Procedures are available [here](#).

PAYMENT OF GRANTS

Projects should **not** commence and no grant payments will be made until the successful applicant has entered into a Grant Acceptance Agreement with the ACT Education Directorate that binds the parent association or school to the conditions upon which the grant was approved. Unless otherwise agreed by the ACTBGA, grant payments will be made based on the following requirements being met:

Payment	Milestone	Grant Payment	Documentation to be provided
1	Signing of Grant Acceptance Form	100%	Signed Grant Acceptance

ACCOUNTABILITY

All successful applicants must expend the funds within the timeframes nominated in the Grant Acceptance Agreement, this is normally 12 months from receipt of funds or at the completion of the activity, whichever is sooner.

An acquittal of the grant must be provided within 30 days of the completion of the grant activity, or by the date specified in the Grant Acceptance Agreement. Any unexpended funds are to be returned at the time of acquitting the grant.

A *Project Acquittal Form* will be supplied to grant recipients. Grant recipients are required to keep ALL receipts and submit them with the acquittal form.

Grant recipients must also provide evidence of successful completion of the project (e.g., certificates of any course/s funded under the project, certificates or pictures of physical structures, etc.).

PROJECT VARIATIONS

Written permission must be first obtained from the ACTBGA to adjust approved projects prior to grant funding being expended.

RECOGNITION OF ACT GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Grant recipients must ensure that the assistance provided by the ACT Government is appropriately acknowledged in any promotional or other materials.

Appendix 1: EXAMPLES of Activities/Projects

What activities/projects may be funded by the program (examples only, not an inclusive list):

- Develop marketing and stakeholder engagement skills of the parent association.
- Review and/or implement a social media strategy, to provide more opportunities for parents and carers to engage with the parent association.
- Support development of spaces for community gatherings, e.g., furniture or a garden space.
- Student wellbeing: teacher and parent education programs.
- Student education: parent engagement sessions (e.g. math games, reading strategies, etc.)
- Develop event management skills of parent association members to enhance their ability to coordinate fundraising activities such as school fetes.
- Technical upgrades to IT equipment to assist with committee meetings.
- Translate materials to assist communication with culturally diverse families.
- Undertake bookkeeping training to strengthen capability to manage parent association accounts and run businesses.
- Undertake a Human Resource Management course to support parent association members with the recruitment, selection and induction of staff, completing performance appraisals and leading effective workplace relationships.
- Engage a consultant to assist the parent association to lead cultural integrity within their organisation and the wider school community.
- Engage a not for profit accounting specialist for support with managing the accounting processes and meeting the compliance obligations of parent association run businesses.

Examples of projects that have been approved under the ACT Government program for public schools in the ACT:

- Rebuilding of a functional P & C through upgrade of a community meeting space, development of marketing materials, staged community events and engagement of a community partner.
- Review of the school's social media and implementation of a social media strategy including training package for P & C members. Funds are to support increase in P & C presence in social media world and providing more opportunities to engage with the P & C Association.
- Support the development of a garden space for community gatherings and events. The grant will fund the purchase of furniture, seating and an opening ceremony.
- Support the creation of an inviting spaces for families and increase the business acumen of the P & C run canteen through purchase of furniture, promotional banners, and a Survey Monkey subscription.
- Support the translation of materials and signage to strengthen the communication and connection with the school's culturally diverse families.
- Support the inclusion of parents and carers through a technical upgrade to IT equipment to allow virtual P & C meetings to be held.
- Develop a strategy for parent engagement designed for modern times in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant will support a research study into understanding the current challenges, barriers and opportunities to re-engage the school community in today's climate and implement the strategy.