



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts

Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) Program Frequently Asked Questions

February 2023

The Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) grant program invests around \$27 million per annum to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to express, preserve and maintain their cultures through languages and arts activities around Australia. The \$27 million per annum includes additional investment of \$22.8 million over four years commencing in 2021-22 for the existing ILA program to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages through the Commonwealth's first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

The ILA program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to preserve, revitalise and sustain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages including operational funding support to a network of Indigenous Language Centres around the country. The ILA program also supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop, produce, present, exhibit or perform Indigenous arts projects that showcase Australia's traditional and contemporary Indigenous cultural and artistic expressions.

Tips for a competitive application

- Take the time to carefully read the program guidelines to ensure your application clearly describes the project, answers the questions, and addresses the selection criteria and program outcomes outlined in the program guidelines.
- Make your responses concise—don't provide answers with unnecessary words that do not address the criteria. Word limits are maximums only—if you can answer a question in fewer words that still provides us with the necessary details, that's great!
- Don't assume the assessors know anything about your organisation or your project. Ensure all relevant information is provided in your application.
- Make sure your project has clear Indigenous languages and/or arts outcomes that primarily benefit the targeted Indigenous group or community.
- With the demand for grant funding consistently and significantly more than what is available, it is very important that applications must be accompanied by a realistic and robust budget submission that demonstrates value-for-money. This demonstration is especially important for applicants applying for the maximum level of funding for the maximum project period.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We strongly recommend you read the FAQs in combination with the current *ILA Program Guidelines* and the SmartyGrants online application form. ILA program guidelines are released at the commencement of a grant funding round.

1. When is the next grant opportunity?

Applications for the 2023-24 open competitive grant opportunity opened on 8 February 2023 and will close on 22 March 2023. Grant funding will be released to successful applicants early in the 2023-24 financial year. It is anticipated that applications for the 2024-25 ILA grant opportunities will open during the first quarter of 2024.

2. Where can I apply for funding?

The Australian Government advertises grant opportunities and access to program guidelines via <https://www.grants.gov.au/>. The ILA program guidelines have links back to the [ILA program](#) website and importantly, to the [SmartyGrants](#) website where you will be able to lodge an online application. We recommend you monitor the ILA program website regularly for updates about upcoming open competitive grant opportunities.

3. What is an open competitive grant opportunity?

Participation in the annual open competitive grant opportunity is open to all eligible community-based organisations wanting to deliver discrete one-off Indigenous languages and/or arts activities for their community.

4. What is a targeted competitive grant opportunity?

Participation in the targeted competitive grant opportunity is by **invitation only** from the ILA program.

When the ILA program commenced in 2015-16, a policy decision was enacted to invite established community-based Indigenous Language Centres to apply for a targeted competitive grant opportunity. The approach to this stream of grant funding is strategic in nature and affords Indigenous Language Centres the time needed to implement longer term strategic planning and delivery of language services to their communities. In recent years a limited number of arts organisations have also been invited to apply for a targeted competitive grant opportunity. The department can only invite organisations that meet the eligibility criteria in **Section 4.1** and **Section 4.2** of the ILA program guidelines, which includes:

- having previously received funding from the ILA program
- having a demonstrated capacity to deliver quality Indigenous language or arts projects
- having a demonstrated history of good governance, good financial management over an extended period, effective business planning and high-quality performance against funding objectives

Any organisations invited to apply to a targeted competitive grant opportunity are still required to address the standard assessment criteria and applications are assessed using the same principles as the open competitive grant opportunity.

5. 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.

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

Available grant funding will depend on a range of factors including the complexity, size, scale and duration of your project. This means a complex, large-scale project that runs for two years would be considered a ‘major’ project and therefore eligible for a larger amount of funding compared to a small-scale project that runs for 6 months (a ‘minor’ project). The Minister is the final decision maker in all ILA program funding decisions.

Example of a ‘major’ project — an organisation proposes to develop an Indigenous language dictionary and learning guide over 12 months and then uses the newly developed resources to deliver training of an Indigenous language to 250 participants over another 12-month period.

Example of a ‘intermediate’ project – an organisation proposes to revive dance and cultural practices by conducting a series of inter-generational workshops over a 12-month period and then documents processes undertaken into an online resource which will require a 6-month period to develop and launch.

Example of a ‘minor’ project — To develop a series of ten podcast episodes to be used as an audio resource for teaching, learning and promoting a traditional language.

See **Section 7.1** of the ILA program guidelines for indicative funding amounts.

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

No—For projects funded through the open competitive grant opportunity, grant money cannot be used for operational funds for general organisational costs. A maximum of 20 per cent of the total ILA grant money may be used for project administration. Project administration may include items such as project management, data capture/evaluation, report-writing, book-keeping, audits and financial management.

Project administration may also include a contribution to wages for staff critical to the project. This might include a project officer, marketing or finance staff. For further information on eligible and ineligible grant activities see Section 5 ‘What the grant money can be used for’ and Section 6 ‘What grant funding cannot be used for’ of the program guidelines

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

The ILA program objectives under **Section 3.1** of the ILA program guidelines includes language learning and teaching pathways and opportunities to gain formal qualifications in learning and teaching an Indigenous language.

If your project’s primary focus relates to Indigenous employment and/or career development opportunities more broadly, you may wish to consider the following Australian Government programs:

- **National Indigenous Australians Agency—[Indigenous Advancement Strategy](#)**
 - The Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) is the way the Australian Government funds and delivers a range of programs for Indigenous Australians. Through the IAS, the Australian Government is working to improve the way the Government does business with Indigenous Australians to ensure funding achieves outcomes. The structure of the IAS supports working with Indigenous Australians, communities, industries, business and service providers. Currently under the IAS, grant opportunities are available under the Culture and Capability program.
- **Australia Council—[Career Development Grants](#)**
 - Grants available from \$5,000 to \$25,000. These grants can support a broad range of activities such as skills and professional development, mentorships, showcases, residencies and other projects directly related to your career development.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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](#). Funding support is provided for Indigenous community radio broadcasting and to address the broadcasting needs of Indigenous people living in remote, regional and urban areas of Australia.

Other competitive grant opportunities providing support include the [Community Broadcasting Foundation Ltd](#). More than \$20.5 million is provided annually to help 232 community media organisations communicate, connect and share knowledge through independent radio, television and digital media. Grants are allocated twice per year, with the majority of funding allocated in the first round.

12. 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.

13. Why is the exhibition of traditional Indigenous arts and crafts production funded but not when it comes to the conservation, exhibition or interpretation of museum artefacts?

The ILA program does not provide funding to support the conservation, exhibition or interpretation of existing artefacts in museums. However, an objective of the ILA program is to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' engagement in artistic activities that may include the teaching of skills to fashion, make or produce implements or tools and the knowledge of materials linked to tradition. These are eligible activities and may include the exhibition of materials that were produced.

14. What types of organisations are not eligible for an ILA program grant?

The following organisations are not eligible to apply:

- a Commonwealth, State or Territory government portfolio agency (including government business enterprises) established through specific Commonwealth or State or Territory legislation. Further information available on the [Department of Finance](#) website
- an individual and/or sole trader
- unincorporated association
- overseas resident/organisation
- any organisation not included in Section 4.1 of the ILA program guidelines

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

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

Under section 4.2 of the program guidelines you are not eligible to apply for Open Competitive or Targeted Competitive grant funding if you are an unincorporated association.

16. I am a sole trader/individual. Am I eligible to apply for an ILA grant?

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

17. How can I demonstrate evidence of community support?

All projects 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 permit access to file-sharing platforms, such as Dropbox.

When we assess the level of community support for your project, we will take into account the scope and scale of the project (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.

18. 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](https://www.arts.gov.au) 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.

19. What should I do if my community has a language project where revival and/or maintenance of the language is already being funded through an 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.

20. Can Kriol language workshops form part of the language activities funded?

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 program. If you are unsure if your language is eligible for funding, please contact us at ila@arts.gov.au.

21. How will my application be assessed?

Applications are assessed against criteria outlined in Section 9 of the 2023-24 ILA Program Guidelines. All applications are given two independent assessments and scored against each of the assessment criteria. Applications are rated based on the weighting given to each criterion outlined below and then ranked in order of merit. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested.

Take the time to carefully read the program guidelines to ensure your application clearly describes the project, answers the questions, and addresses the selection criteria and program outcomes outlined in the program guidelines. The four assessment criteria are as follows:

- The degree to which the activity will contribute to achieving Program outcomes and objectives – see **Section 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3** of the 2023-24 ILA Program Guidelines
- The degree to which the activity demonstrates community engagement and support, and the benefit to the community
- The degree to which the grant applicant can demonstrate its capability and capacity to undertake all aspects of managing the delivery of the project

22. How do I submit a grant application and who can I contact for help regarding my application?

You submit your application using the [SmartyGrants](https://smartygrants.gov.au) online portal.

In the first instance you should email ila@arts.gov.au or phone 1800 006 992 for any advice about the ILA program or if you have questions about submitting a grant application. If your enquiry is a technical IT

SmartyGrants system issue that we are unable to assist with, then your issue will be escalated to the SmartyGrants help desk for assistance.

23. When will I know if my application has been successful?

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email at the time successful applicants are being publicly announced. Estimated timeframes for the assessment of applications is included in the ILA program guidelines.

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

If your application is not successful you will be formally advised and at the same time you will be invited to seek more detailed feedback.

25. 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.