

COVID-19 SURVEY RESULTS

What Grant Seekers Need





The Grants Hub is Australia's leading grant search directory.

We've been connecting grant seekers and providers since 2013. We're constantly innovating to be the easiest way to find grants in Australia.

If you are a grant provider and can confirm your funding for 2020 or would like us to profile your grant, please email support@thegrantshub.com.au

If you are a grant seeker: Search for grants now at thegrantshub.com.au. We have a two-week free trial and flexible, affordable membership plans.

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Executive Summary



As COVID-19 hit, grant funders and seekers were grappling with immense change and uncertainty. Funders asked us how they could best help. Grant seekers were sharing with us the challenges they faced, how they were adapting and what they needed.

The Grants Hub conducted a survey in April 2020 to capture this information and offer funders and grant seekers insights into organisations' needs.

The survey asked grant seekers' needs across three key areas: funding, resource savings and pro bono or voluntary support. We also asked respondents if they had any messages for funders. We received 98 comments and have shared many of them in this report. I encourage you to read them to hear directly from grant seekers. These messages were consistent with those regularly shared with The Grants Hub team.

You will see in both the survey answers and messages for funders, a resounding call for assistance with operational and salary costs. Additionally, grant seekers have detailed their need for flexibility in funding. While some respondents have shared that the impacts of COVID-19 heightened these needs, some of the comments we received referenced the need for salaries and/or organisational capacity in general.

Grant seekers identified verification of funding intentions as one of the most helpful ways grant providers can help organisations save resources.

We weren't surprised by this. The Grants Hub team made an unprecedented number of updates to our grants database during March and April 2020. Between 25 March and 20 April alone, 93 of these updates were the result of COVID-19. It would be difficult for any organisation grappling with multiple challenges to stay on top of these changes.

Respondents to the survey also identified adjusting to working online and delivering programs through digital channels as an area where they require urgent assistance. At a time when cash funding may be reduced for some funders, this could be an opportunity to provide important pro bono support, or tap into staff volunteering programs. Funding, however, is also clearly needed to help organisations make digital innovations. For many grant seekers, this investment would help now and into the future by enabling innovation and improving efficiencies – a great example of how funders can deliver impact by extending their support outside of project-based grants and into capacity building.

I hope this survey report offers some valuable insights. Thank you to everyone who contributed and from all at The Grants Hub: we're here for you and will continue to do all we can to support grant seekers and funders at this time.

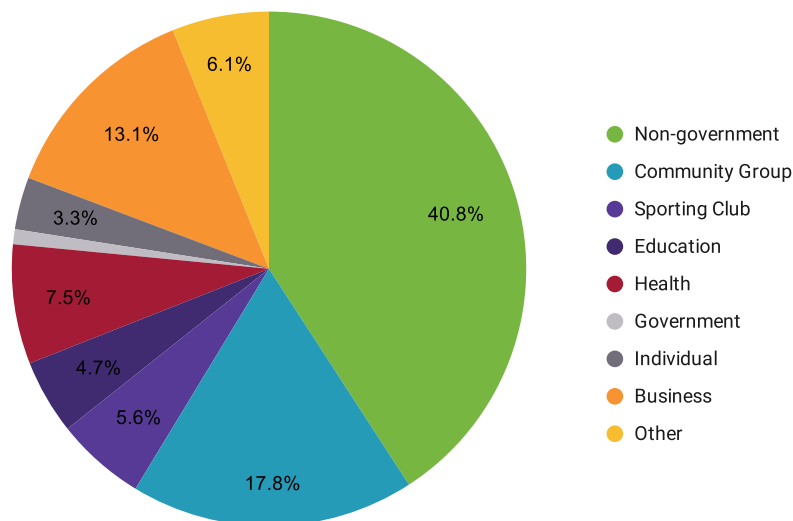
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessie Ballantyne'.

Jessie Ballantyne
Founder & CEO
The Grants Hub

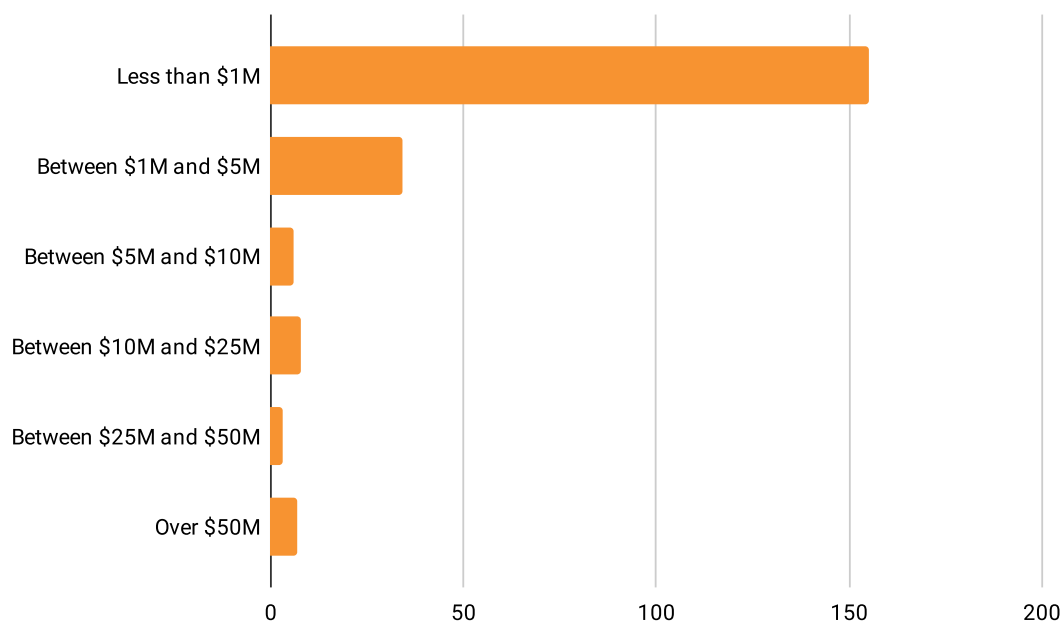
Survey Respondents Overview

This survey was conducted between 14 April and 28 April 2020. 213 people completed the survey.

What kind of organisation are you?



What is your organisation's approximate overall income revenue?



Most Critical Funding Needs

Answers

One in three respondents identified funding for operational costs as their most critical need. Funding operational costs was ranked as more critically needed than increased or quick response funding.

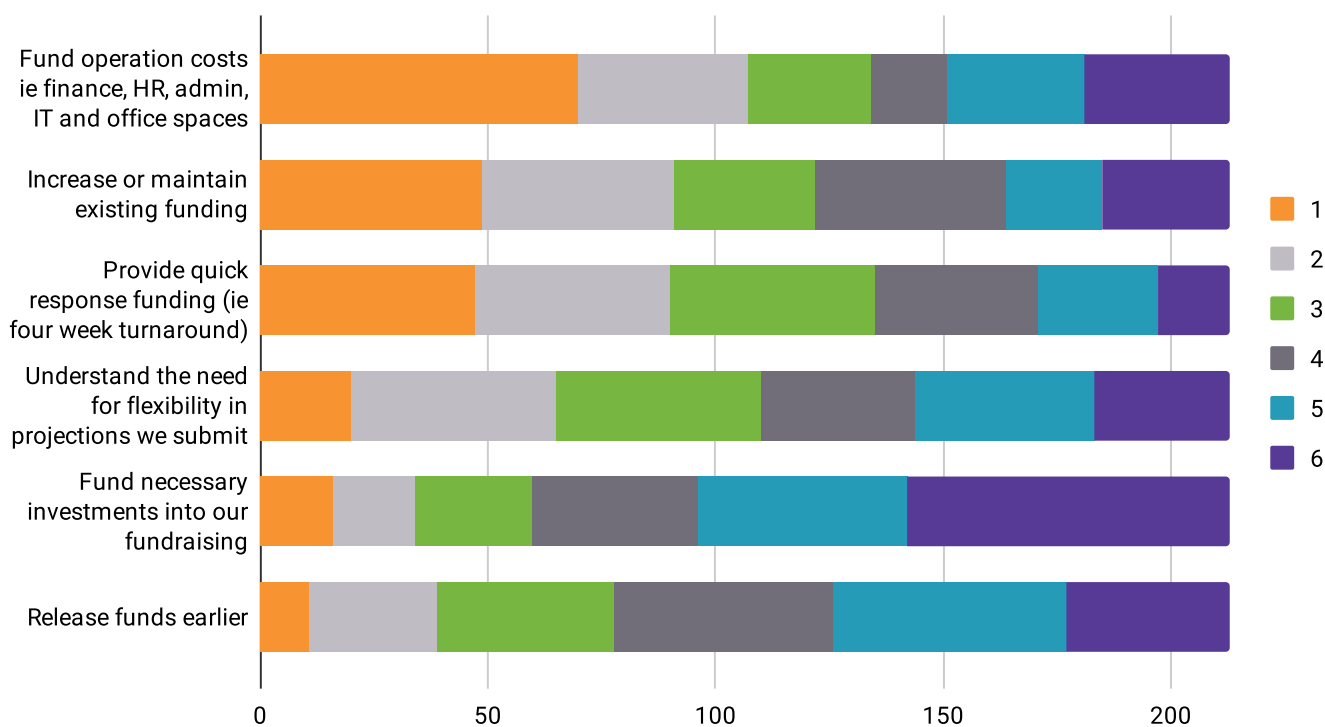
Comments on funding operational costs included those identifying this as an immediate need, while others focused on the benefits of

funding capacity-building in general.

Other themes identified in comments included the need for funding to:

- Cover salaries
- Help organisations survive COVID-19
- Deliver services to support communities through COVID-19
- Be more flexible.

How can grant providers best support you at this time? (Please rank options in order of need where 1 is your most critical need and 6 is your least needed option)



Most Critical Funding Needs

Messages For Funders



We need grants to cover operational costs

"Need help with everyday running costs. Rates, insurance, telephone, internet, water. We have NO money coming in but the bills are all there! We will go under at this rate!"

"We need help with the rent for 6 to 12 months so that we can survive. We pay \$300 per week rent and now closed and can't bring any income in. Will be insolvent in 5 months."

"While everything is semi-chaotic, funding organisations to do coordination and capacity building, rather than just direct service delivery, would be excellent."

"We desperately need funding for infrastructure improvements but sense that it will be re-directed to bushfires and COVID recovery making our applications pointless. Knowing if we will be honestly considered is vital."

"We need help with the back room stuff – not just the good story stuff."



Most Critical Funding Needs

Messages For Funders

Please be willing to fund salaries

"When we have moved through this most challenging of times, it will be more important than ever for funding to acknowledge the overwhelming need of programs/projects to have the staff required to run them. Too often, funders are not willing to fund salaries so projects put forward are often undertaken on top of the roles persons have been employed to do. Better outcomes come with staff having the time and head-space to work and develop effective relationships with the people and communities they serve."

"...some NFPs operate in knowledge provision: which is not possible without experienced staff. Currently in our 2-person NFP, it is the donor base which funds the services our staff provide: such as counselling & support, our Helpline and updating our core information on the condition we focus on. Too many funders focus on projects, and tangibles – not on the core day to day value proposition of the provision of niche knowledge and support which is created and delivered by people (digitally or face-to-face)."

"Many volunteers are vulnerable and unable to continue at the moment, so extra reliance on paid staff to continue work. Short-term funding for wages would be helpful."



Most Critical Funding Needs

Messages For Funders

We need help to survive COVID-19

"The engines cannae take nae more Cap'n."

"We need help as some of us won't survive and have to close our doors and/or relocate."

"Funding has never been more desperately needed for the survival of many operations."

"For the multiple groups I am a member of the biggest impacts we have had are fundraising. Our organisations have ongoing fees that continue to need payment, however our ways of generating funds have gone. We have been able to cut expenditure to the bone, however small grants of up to \$20,000 would see these groups be able to stay afloat over the next 6 months."

"Some not-for-profit organisations are completely managed and ran by volunteers, this can eliminate us from most funding that's available during this coronavirus period. We still have bills even though we are not hosting sporting events to make some money to cover these costs."

Most Critical Funding Needs

Messages For Funders



We need help to support communities through COVID-19

"We simply just desperately need funding to address the massive wellbeing needs."

"As a crisis support centre we remain open, it would be ideal to have grants focused on services that remain open during this very chaotic time. We are providing all of our emergency relief services but have changed how we deliver them. We need extra resources to assist the many people who need a hand up at this time, especially staff. We are funded poorly and rely (*sic*) grants to remain viable and help all the communities we work in."

"Help to fund short-term practical support for those suffering during this crisis eg to provide meals, help with housing issues."

Most Critical Funding Needs

Messages For Funders

Funding flexibility is needed at this time

"Understand that our needs have changed in line with the needs of our clients. Our requests may be a bit different from what we usually need and that they are temporary."

"Funding flexibility at this time is crucial as many traditional revenue streams and funding sources have completely dried up."

"There is a need for flexibility in time frames for deliverables in order to be impactful and for the provision of a COVID-19 additional amount to be used flexibly with grants."

"As an organisation we are predominantly project funded which means that we can (*sic*) draw down income unless we are delivering on the project the funds were intended for – we need grant makers to be responsive and flexible in planning ways to move forward with programs to help our community."

"Funders extending project completion dates to allow for delays due to COVID-19 restrictions is helpful, but it still means we have to somehow implement the project with the same money stretched over a longer time. Delays in projects cost us money, not just time, as we've already invested in planning and organising tasks. Hence we really need some additional funding to allow for extra costs of project delivery from delays."

How To Save Grant Seekers' Resources

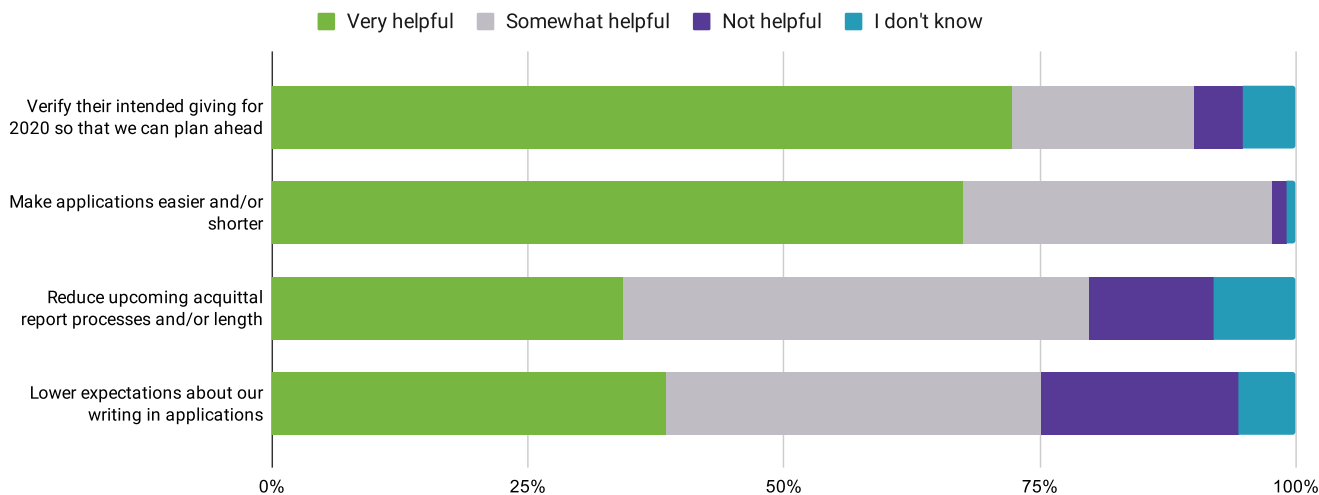
Answers

72% of respondents said it would be very helpful if grant providers verified their intended giving in 2020. This was hardly surprising given the number of grant changes made in response to COVID-19. The Grants Hub recorded 93 of these changes between March 25 and April 20 2020. It was encouraging that many of these changes were new grants being made available to help organisations manage. A significant proportion, however, were changes that would impact organisations' plans and budgets.

98% of respondents said it would be helpful if applications were made shorter and/or easier.

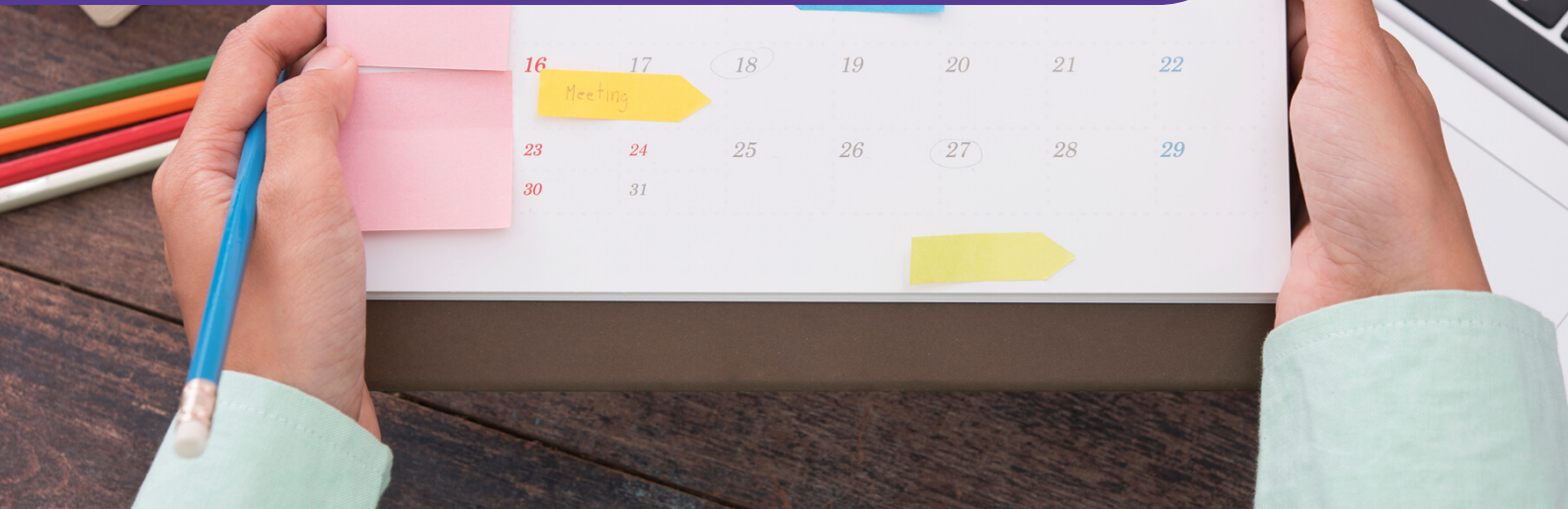
Messages to funders on resource savings largely centred on these two areas: verifying funding intentions and making applications shorter and/or easier. Some shared ideas on how the latter could be achieved.

How can grant providers best help you save resources at this time?



How to Save Grant Seekers' Resources

Messages For Funders



Please verify your funding intentions

"It is an extremely stressful period at NFPs (as it is elsewhere), but cannot overstate how useful it would be for funders to open grant rounds soon, and/or to indicate their funding plans for the rest of the year."

"Uncertainty is one of the biggest challenges. Ask grant providers to provide some certainty about the grants that they will continue to offer, when the funding rounds will be open and what the quantum of funds on offer will be per project or application."

"Our work is primarily environmental on-ground work. We accept that it is not going to happen this year. But what is important if those grants are still assessed and we know that we have them for next year. It is critical that we know so we can plan."



How to Save Grant Seekers' Resources

Messages For Funders

Easier applications would help us

"Flexibility to speak to applications, have virtual meetings to describe the project/need would be welcomed."

"A 'common application' would be incredible for small non-profits with limited grant writing resources."

"Make the process quick and easy."

"Clear instructions as current business conditions mean that paying for help to complete applications might be not possible."

How Funders Can Help With Gifts in Kind, Pro Bono Help, or Voluntary Support

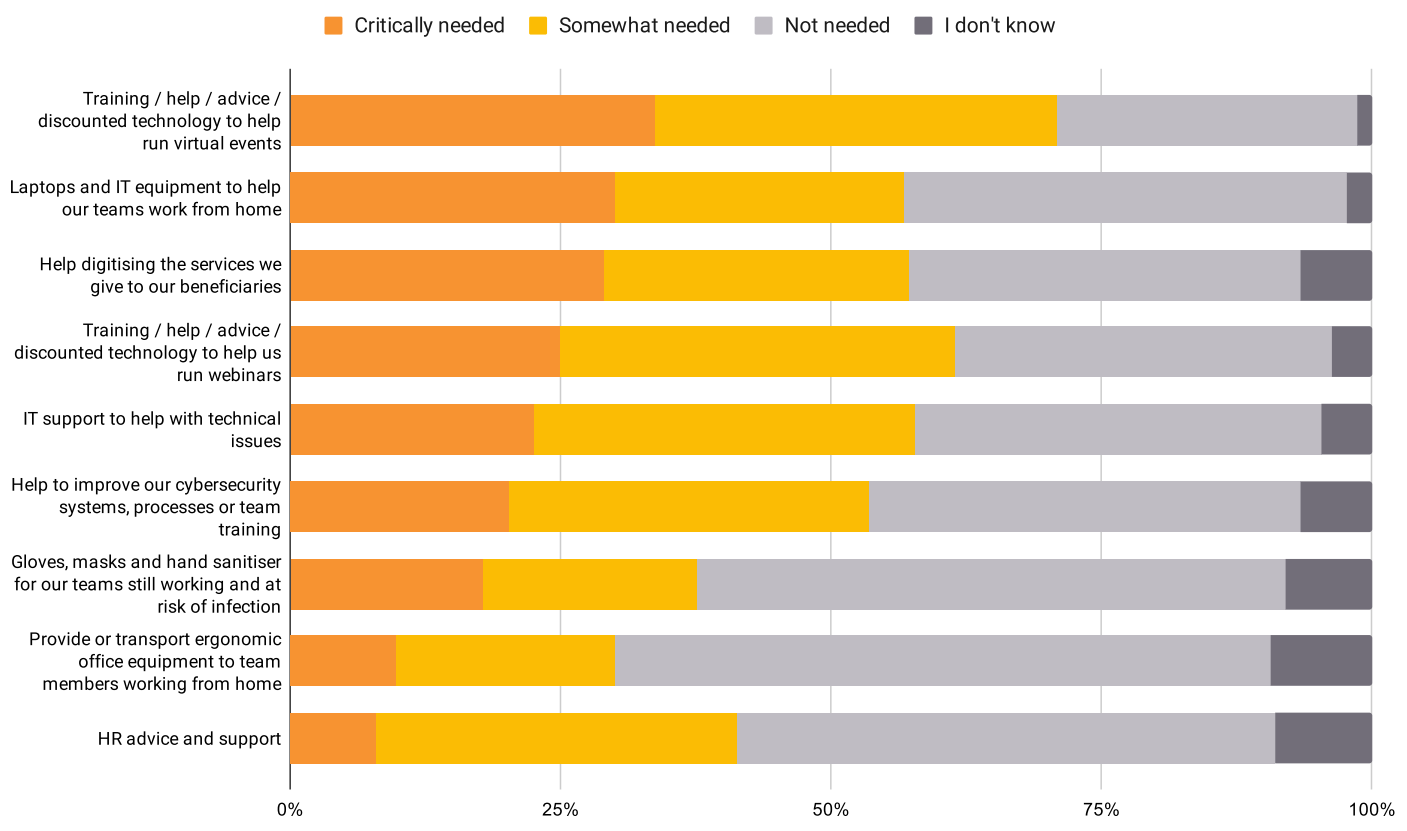
Answers

One in three respondents identified help to run virtual events (training, help, advice, discounted technology) as a critical need and a total of 71% said this support was critically or somewhat needed. 30% of respondents identified laptops and IT equipment to help their teams work at

at home a critical need, while 29% of respondents critically need help digitising services they give to beneficiaries.

Some comments indicated a need for new expertise to make digital adaptations.

What, if any, gifts in kind, pro bono or voluntary support could grant providers potentially give to meet your organisation's needs at this time?



How Funders Can Help With Gifts in Kind, Pro Bono Help or Voluntary Support

Messages For Funders



We need help with digital adaptations, skills and equipment

"During this time we are scrambling to plan and adapt programs and operations. We welcome all support but can not always know what support funders are able to give. If volunteering/pro-bono is available letting us know how much or what is on offer would be greatly helpful."

Respondents said they need help with:

- "Website development, it is suddenly the face of our service and doesn't meet the new need."
- "Moving to more online content and connection. It is a skill set we don't have within our team and need help to do."
- "We desperately need funding to support digitisation but, if we are successful, we also need help to source high quality service providers."
- "Hardware for stay at home workers."
- "Many of our students are affected by lack of screens in their house and/or lack of internet access."

More Messages For Grant Providers



Please don't forget smaller organisations and the Arts

"Please support smaller, growing charities that offer critical services to communities."

"It would be helpful if funders would consider medium sized not for profits that may not have the brand awareness of larger NFPs, but may still be requiring significant funding amounts. Shorter grant application processes and flexibility with budgets/expenditure is key."

"Grassroots NGOs that are local and making real time impact on the ground need to have equal access to opportunities as those with grant writing teams to secure funding."

"Not for profit arts organisations are affected badly by CV19 and would need investment in arts and culture at this time, especially around disability arts."

"Any support in easing the application process and also encouraging funders to look outside the traditional organisations that receive grants each year, might help smaller organisations become more successful in their creative pursuits."



More Messages For Grant Providers

Thank you! Everything you do is appreciated

"I would like to thank the funders for their contributions to society and reassure them that their generosity is greatly appreciated."

"Every bit of assistance helps, however small or otherwise."

"Thank you for providing opportunities for emerging businesses."

"Any support is appreciated."

"We appreciate this is an unusual situation we find ourselves in and appreciate any and all support to continue our programs and adapt quickly to the new environment in which we operate."

"We are determined to continue operating but we are only able to do so by modifying the way we help families. Our income has been impacted and quick decision making and of course, generosity, is appreciated at this time."

