

VICTORIAN LEGAL SERVICES BOARD GRANTS PROGRAM

Advancing Housing Justice Change Grants Round

GUIDELINES

Closing date: Friday 23 August 2024

Applications now open

The **Advancing Housing Justice** grants round aims to help more people in Victoria access and retain secure, safe housing. It will do this by supporting partnerships to lead systemic reforms that improve housing outcomes.

More and more Victorians are feeling the impacts of the state's growing housing crisis. That's why we are interested in addressing the associated legal problems.

This new grants round is a key recommendation from our 2024 report, [Advancing housing justice: The opportunity for legal services to improve access to housing](#).

Authored by consumer rights advocate and lawyer Gerard Brody, the report explores:

- + how legal services might work together to improve the housing crisis in Victoria
- + the potential for legal organisations to influence reform or systemic change
- + the gaps and opportunities to enhance existing legal work in the housing sector
- + the value the VLSB+C's [Grants Program](#) can add to this work.

By providing these targeted grants, we're enabling the justice and housing sectors to work together to effect real change.

Victorian Legal Services
 BOARD + COMMISSIONER

Advancing housing justice:
 The opportunity for legal
 services to improve access
 to housing

Prepared by Gerard Brody for the Victorian Legal Services Board
 and Commissioner's Grants Program

FINAL REPORT



JUNE 2024

What's on offer?

Successful applicants will receive tailored funding and support. Multi-year funding is possible. Funding is time limited.

We know:



Victorians are increasingly experiencing housing stress and insecurity.



The legal assistance sector is uniquely placed to identify, lead and implement systemic reform that can improve housing outcomes.

Advancing Housing Justice Grant Round Goals

We are looking for applications that will work towards achieving these goals:

Renters	Providers	Support	Resolution	Laws
Renters are treated equitably & without discrimination.	Increased housing provider accountability & improved regulation.	People experiencing housing insecurity have timely access to quality support services.	Statewide mechanisms efficiently & effectively resolve housing disputes.	Fairer laws & processes improve housing affordability and security.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles are prioritised:

- + **Prevention:** preventative approaches that seek to address underlying issues.
- + **Early intervention:** effective approaches to building capacity of individuals and communities to prevent negative interaction with the legal system.
- + **Valuing lived experience:** prioritising, elevating and empowering people who have had experience with the justice system and/or are experiencing vulnerability.
- + **Systems-focused:** undertaking policy and law reform work to address systemic issues identified through evidence and case work.
- + **Partnerships:** between legal and non-legal services to address how clusters of complex social issues such as health, family violence intersect with housing security and the law.
- + **Collaboration:** organisations working with community and collaborating with the sector.

Eligibility

This grants round seeks to support the legal assistance sector to work in partnership to improve housing outcomes for Victorians.

Consequently, we are seeking applications from collaborations with a strategic justice focus aiming to achieve long-term change.

Applicant organisations must be not-for-profit, non-government organisations (incorporated under the *Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001*, as applied in Victoria) that:

- + are based in Victoria and whose activities take place in Victoria
- + have satisfactorily acquitted all previous grants
- + submit applications in accordance with specified timelines and processes.

How to Apply



1. Read the [Advancing Housing Justice Report](#).
2. Attend our [Advancing Housing Justice workshop on 17 July 2024](#)
3. Complete your application via our [Online Portal](#).
4. Submit your completed application via the portal by **5pm, Friday 23 August 2024**.

Only one (1) application per organisation will be accepted.

Requirements

Applications should:

- + align with the goals of the Advancing Housing Justice Grants Round
- + be based on evidence and practice experience
- + present clear strategies to implement
- + provide evidence for why these strategies will deliver the desired outcomes
- + provide reasons for why these strategies are appropriate to the issue you are trying to address
- + include evidence of strong partnerships
- + involve multiple sectors and/or be collaborative
- + be sustainable and have a long-term vision
- + integrate rigorous evaluation methods that will demonstrate the outcomes of the project
- + benefit those who are currently disadvantaged in the justice system.

Your organisation should:

- + have a strong pre-existing relationship with the people you are seeking to work with
- + have a long-term commitment to your initiative
- + have established, relevant networks within the justice and/or community sector
- + be financially and operationally sustainable
- + have a proven track record of successfully achieving your strategic outcomes
- + be committed to monitoring and evaluating your work to support project success and to inform best practice approaches to improving access to justice

Budget

The level of funding available for individual projects will vary depending on the nature of the initiative. Your budget should be realistic and suit the scale and complexity of the initiative being proposed.

Grants are only available for projects that will start after funding is approved – they cannot be backdated and applied to work already undertaken. Grants are also not subject to GST. This should be reflected in your budget.

We have a GST private binding ruling from the Australian Tax Office which confirms that payment of grants will not be subject to GST.

Reporting and Evaluation

Evaluation needs to be built into your project plan. You may also be required to participate in evaluation workshops.

For successful grantees, monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements will be included in the Letter of Offer.

All grantees will be required to provide interim reports and an evaluation of completed projects.

Letters of Commitment

Your application must include Letters of Commitment from key partner organisations. These letters, signed by the CEO, should detail the scale and nature of the partnership.

The following will not be funded:

- + activities not relevant to Victoria
- + studies to obtain a degree or diploma
- + litigation costs
- + government organisations/statutory authorities (unless for exceptional work that is not part of their primary responsibility)
- + the delivery of practical legal training courses
- + school and TAFE-based educational programs that are normally part of the curriculum
- + recurrent costs or core operational costs
- + commercial or fundraising activities
- + international travel costs
- + prizes, awards, competitions or conferences

Conditions of applying

Successful applicants must adhere to all State and Commonwealth regulations, statutes and policies regarding equal opportunity, employment laws, standards of conduct, health and safety requirements, privacy, and freedom of information.

We may require that reports, research and other work enabled by grants be published and made publicly available. Our support should be acknowledged in all published material.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will there be a general grants round in financial year 24/25?

No, this priority themed round replaces our general grants round for the financial year.

Will you accept any applications on issues other than housing?

No. This grants round is specifically focussed on advancing housing justice.

Is funding limited to a specific time frame?

Yes. Grants are limited to projects ranging between 1-4 years. Our funding is not ongoing. Please specify project duration in your application.

Are there any preferential beneficiary groups or priority funding themes?

Yes, funding will only be provided to applications that are aligned to the goals of the Advancing Housing Justice grants round.

How often do you run themed grant rounds?

Themed rounds usually happen every two or three years. The themes emerge from the work of funded projects or developments in the broader community.

I was unable to attend the workshop on 17 July. Can I still apply to the grants round?

If you were unable to attend the applicant workshop on 17 July and would like to apply for funding, please contact our grants team via funding@lsbc.vic.gov.au to discuss your eligibility.

Can funding be backdated on a project that begins before grants are approved?

Funding is not available for activities that start before the approval of funding date.

Do you accept late applications?

No, we only accept applications submitted by the closing time and date.

Can I change my application after the closing date?

No, you cannot change your application after the closing date.

What is the process of assessing and approving the grants?

Applications will be assessed against selection criteria by an assessment panel. Our Board will make funding recommendations to the Attorney-General for approval.

When will I find out the outcome of my application?

You will be notified of the outcome of your application after all applications have been assessed and those recommended for funding have been approved by both the Victorian Legal Services Board and the Attorney-General of Victoria. This is likely to be early 2025.

How will I be notified of my application outcome?

We will notify you by email.

If successful, will I get all the funding I requested?

The amount of funding you receive may be less than requested due to budget constraints and/or a willingness to only provide part funding.

What is likely to be the earliest start date of my project?

Early 2025.