

# COURT FUND

GUIDELINES

## About the Magistrates' Court of Victoria (MCV)

The Magistrates' Court is the first level of the Victorian court system and sits in 51 locations across the state. More than 93 percent of criminal and civil matters begin and end in our Court.

For further information on MCV, our programs and our Strategic Plan, please visit [our website](#).

## What is the Court Fund?

A court may attach a condition as part of an adjourned undertaking or diversion plan<sup>1</sup>. One condition that can be included is a requirement for the individual to make a payment to the court for distribution to organisations that provide a charitable or community service. The collection of those payments is referred to as the Court Fund. MCV's Court Fund supports the work of hundreds of community organisations for the benefit of Victorians.

## What funding is available?

MCV provides funding in line with the available Court Fund balance each financial quarter. The amount available depends on incoming court-ordered payments, which fluctuates throughout the year. As such, a specific funding amount cannot be guaranteed.

Court Funds are distributed through two payment arrangements:

Funding type	Description
<b>One-off</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Funding provided in one lump sum</li><li>Amount (\$) allocated will depend on the intended funding use and available Court Fund balance.</li></ul>
<b>Fixed-term arrangements (up to two years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Funding provided quarterly</li><li>Up to two years</li><li>Amount (\$) allocated will depend on the intended funding use and available Court Fund balance.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic)

## Who can apply for Court Funds?

An organisation is **eligible** to apply for Court Fund if they:

1. provide services of benefit to Victorian community members, meeting at least one of the Key Impact Areas (see below); and
2. are not seeking to use Court Funds for administrative costs including, but not limited to, ongoing, operational or overhead expenses associated with the day-to-day running of organisations, wages of any kind, rent, stationery, electricity, utilities, monthly accounts, debts and costs associated with general-use/pool vehicles; and
3. are not seeking funding to cover prior expenses; and
4. meet **at least one** of the following:
  - are registered as a charity with the [Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission \(ACNC\)](#); or
  - are a not-for-profit group with a committee of management or similar, a governing document and its own legal identity (e.g. incorporated); or
  - are supported under an auspice arrangement with another not-for-profit organisation with its own legal identity; or
  - are a public agency (school or health service) with Court Funds intended to be used to address critical social issues.

MCV values the unique backgrounds, experiences, and contributions that each person brings to our community and encourage and celebrate diversity. First Nations people, those from the LGBTQIA+ community, women, people of all ages, with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse people, and those who are neurodiverse, or groups supporting these communities, are encouraged to apply.

MCV acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to Elders, knowledge holders and leaders – past, present and emerging – and we extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



## How to apply

Court Fund applications can be submitted via the online form on the [MCV Court Fund webpage](#). You can also request a PDF application form by emailing: [courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au](mailto:courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au)

When submitting your application, please:

- Confirm your organisation's commitment to adhere to the MCV Court Fund Guidelines (this document). This includes an agreement to meet requirements for reporting and to spend Court Funds to directly benefit communities and not to cover administrative costs (see section below 'What funding cannot be used for').
- Attach at least one supporting document or quote. If seeking funds for equipment or repairs, attach a quote that appears to indicate a reasonable market price. If \$3,000 or more is requested, please attach more than one quote.
- Attach your organisation's most recent Annual Report (including Financial Report) – if you are seeking a fixed-term regular funding arrangement.

## What is the assessment process?

Applications will be considered **once a quarter** after the application closing date (see '**Expected timeframe**' section below).

1. Eligible applications are sorted according to the region where funding is intended to be used.
2. Applications are then reviewed by a committee at the respective region. These Regional Committees consider applications against the assessment criteria.
3. The Regional Committee then makes recommendations to the MCV Court Fund Central Committee (CFCC). The CFCC is comprised of senior and executive staff from across MCV.
4. The CFCC will make a final decision on which applications will receive funds and confirm funding amounts.
5. Applicants will be notified of the outcome via email from the Court Fund Team following the CFCC decision.

## Expected timeframe

Applications can be submitted throughout the year but will be considered by MCV once a quarter in line with the below timeframes.

Financial quarter when funds would be used	Applications close	Decisions made by MCV	Notification / payment to applicants	Report due from recipients
Q1 (Jul – Sep)	30 April	Mid-June	July	N/A
Q2 (Oct – Dec)	31 July	Mid-September	October	21 January
Q3 (Jan – Mar)	31 October	Mid-December	January	N/A
Q4 (Apr – Jun)	31 January	Mid-March	April	21 July

Mural workshop for at-risk youth



## What is the assessment criteria?

Applications are assessed according to criteria by the funding type:

Funding type	Assessment criteria
<b>One-off</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Victorian community members will directly and/or significantly benefit; and</li><li>• Addresses a need not met by other government/private funding; and</li><li>• At least one supporting document is attached. If seeking funds for equipment or repairs, a quote is attached that appears to indicate a reasonable market price. If \$3,000 or more is requested, more than one quote is attached; and</li><li>• Addresses <u>at least one</u> <b>Key Impact Area</b> related to MCV court users and service areas:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cultural diversity</li><li>2. Disability inclusion</li><li>3. Drug and/or alcohol dependency</li><li>4. Economic disadvantage</li><li>5. Family violence</li><li>6. Homelessness / housing</li><li>7. Koori community / self-determination</li><li>8. LGBTIQA+ communities</li><li>9. Mental health</li><li>10. Physical environment</li><li>11. Social inclusion</li><li>12. Youth</li></ol></li></ul>
<b>Fixed-term arrangements (two years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Victorian community members will directly and/or significantly benefit; and</li><li>• Addresses a need not met by other government/private funding; and</li><li>• An Annual Report, including Financial Report, is provided and indicates capacity to manage funds; and</li><li>• If seeking funds for equipment or repairs, a quote is attached that appears to indicate a reasonable market price. If \$3,000 or more is requested, more than one quote is attached; and</li><li>• Addresses <u>at least one</u> <b>Key Impact Area</b> related to MCV court users and service areas:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cultural diversity</li><li>2. Disability inclusion</li><li>3. Drug and / or alcohol dependency</li><li>4. Economic disadvantage</li><li>5. Family violence</li><li>6. Homelessness / housing</li><li>7. Koori community / self-determination</li><li>8. LGBTIQA+ communities</li><li>9. Mental health</li><li>10. Physical environment</li><li>11. Social inclusion</li><li>12. Youth</li></ol></li></ul>

## What can funding be used for?

Court Funds can be used to support many types of initiatives that benefit Victorians, such as:

- Promoting social participation and connection and improving quality of life for people experiencing or at risk of marginalisation.
- Targeting underlying causes and/or responding to issues associated with family violence, mental illness, homelessness, drug/alcohol dependency and other social problems.
- Providing practical support to people facing hardship or crisis.
- Raising community awareness and engagement to promote social inclusion, celebrate diversity and address discrimination.
- Reducing barriers to education, health, psychosocial and other essential services or equipment for families, adults and young people who are experiencing or at risk of disadvantage.
- Paid participation and engagement of people with lived experience/expertise (who are not employees of the organisation), such as for public speaking or consultation on projects or materials to support community initiatives addressing social issues.

Please also refer to [Appendix 1 – Examples of previous funding use](#).

## What funding cannot be used for

Court Fund cannot be used to cover:

- Administrative costs including, but not limited to, ongoing, operational or overhead expenses associated with the day-to-day running of organisations, wages of any kind, rent, stationery, electricity, utilities, monthly accounts, debts and costs associated with general-use/pool vehicles. This list is not exhaustive and provides examples only.
- Retrospective expenses (such as purchases already made or programs delivered.)
- Costs that will continue beyond the funded period. The MCV Court Fund balance fluctuates as it depends on incoming court-ordered payments. This means funding cannot be guaranteed beyond the funding arrangement.

## How are payments made?

Funding will be paid by electronic funds transfer (EFT) to recipient organisations or their auspice organisation if applicable. Any organisation that receives a payment from the Court Fund is required to provide a receipt confirming the funds have been received. All payments are exempt from GST.

## Reporting

Recipients of Court Funds are required to submit the following reports to MCV:

Funding type	Description
<b>One-off</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A receipt for the funds received</li><li>• a written statement on funding use, once funds are spent and within 12 months of funding</li></ul>
<b>Fixed-term arrangements (up to two years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A receipt for the funds received</li><li>• six-monthly report (a written statement on funding use and how much has been spent/unspent), due:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>21 January</b> – regarding funding use over financial quarters 1 and 2 (July to Dec)</li><li>• <b>21 July</b> – regarding funding use over financial quarters 3 and 4 (January to June)</li></ul></li></ul>

MCV will provide reporting templates to all recipients and to applicants upon request.

Completed reports are to be emailed by the due date to the Court Fund Team: [courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au](mailto:courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au)

MCV will be in contact with recipients if reporting requirements are not met and may pause or end regular payments to recipients on fixed-term arrangements if:

- reporting is not submitted as required;
- reporting indicates significant unspent funds; or
- reporting indicates funds have been used to cover administrative costs.

## Court Fund support

We're here to help at any stage of the process.

If you have any questions, complaints or feedback regarding Court Fund, including the application and reporting process, please email MCV's Court Fund team at [courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au](mailto:courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au)

Formal complaints can be lodged via the general [MCV Feedback and Complaints process](#), which is managed by MCV's Feedback and Complaints Officer. Please also see the [MCV Managing Feedback and Complaints Policy](#),

For further assistance with writing an application, please see the Victorian Government's online resources for community groups: [How to write a grant application](#)

## Promotion of funded initiatives

MCV values its connection with organisations receiving Court Funds and the benefit to communities that we are part of. MCV may contact recipient organisations to promote the work that is supported by the Court Fund. We'd love to hear from organisations that are interested in being involved in promotional work via [courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au](mailto:courtfund@courts.vic.gov.au)

## Information privacy

As per the [MCV Privacy Policy](#), MCV collects information from Court Fund applicants and recipients for the purpose of administering the Court Fund. The information may only be used for the purpose of administering Court Fund, such as to send associated information to funding recipients and applicants and to seek feedback. Information collected by MCV will not to be disclosed except as required by law. In particular, the information will not be disclosed to third parties for marketing or other purposes without permission.

## Appendix 1 – Examples of previous funding use

Funding type	Examples of previous funding use
One-off	<p>Contribution toward specific community events or projects that directly benefit community members, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education resource packs and webinar to support teachers to have conversations with primary school children about body safety, consent and respectful relationships.</li><li>• Purchase of sports equipment to support programs for young people at risk of offending.</li><li>• Art materials and food for an Indigenous community celebration.</li></ul>
Fixed-term arrangements	<p>Contribution toward a community service, program, new initiative, trial or project, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical costs, emergency housing, food and other materials to support people experiencing financial hardship and/or homelessness.</li><li>• Teaching materials, including certificates and frames, for English language classes for asylum-seekers and newly-arrived groups.</li><li>• Financial counselling and mental health support for women impacted by family violence.</li><li>• Enabling skill development in young people exiting the justice system, including forklift, rail labourers and construction courses.</li><li>• Subsidisation for adults to attend a therapeutic alcohol and other drug recovery program.</li></ul>