



# National Multicultural Festival

## Business Activation Grant Guideines

**Winner of the  
Australian Event  
Awards 2023**  
Best Community Event





# Welcome to the 2026 National Multicultural Festival

Held annually on Ngunnawal Country in the heart of Canberra, the National Multicultural Festival is Australia's largest and most inclusive celebration of cultural diversity. For over 25 years, this beloved event has brought communities together through the vibrant exchange of food, music, dance, art and storytelling – honouring the traditions that shape our multicultural nation.

Each year, more than 170 multicultural communities showcase their heritage across three unforgettable days, with over 300 performances, roving acts, workshops, and more than 280 food and information stalls. With up to 400,000 attendees, the festival is a joyful reflection of who we are and the values that unite us – inclusion, respect, equality, participation and belonging.

This year, businesses in the City Centre Marketing and Improvement Levy (CCMIL) area have a unique opportunity to be part of the celebration through the National Multicultural Festival Business Activation Micro Grants, proudly supported by the City Renewal Authority and Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR). These grants are designed to help local businesses bring multicultural flair into their storefronts, menus, services or spaces – whether it's a special dish inspired by heritage, an in-store performance, a cultural art installation, or a themed event.

Your activation will be promoted as part of the official festival program, giving your business visibility and helping shape a more inclusive, colourful Canberra.

**Welcome, and thank you for your interest in activating your business as part of the National Multicultural Festival – Australia's premier celebration of cultural diversity!**

## 2026 festival dates

- > Friday, 6 February: 5pm - 11pm
- > Saturday, 7 February: 10am - 11pm
- > Sunday, 8 February: 10am - 5pm

## Application timeline

- > Applications open: 1 October 2025
- > Applications close: 5 November 2025
- > Notification of outcome: Early December 2025
- > Activation delivery period: 27 January - 10 February 2026







## Program overview

The City Renewal Authority, in collaboration with the National Multicultural Festival and iCBR, is offering micro grants to support City Centre businesses in delivering multicultural-themed activations.

### These grants aim to:

- > Celebrate Canberra's rich multicultural diversity
- > Enhance the festival experience for attendees
- > Activate the City Centre with vibrant, public-facing events

All funded activities will be promoted as part of the official festival program, and must align with its branding, marketing guidelines and campaign timeline. See the [2026 National Multicultural Festival Brand Guidelines](#).

## Program objectives

### 1. Celebrate cultural diversity

Support activations that reflect Canberra's rich multicultural community, fostering inclusion and cultural exchange.

### 2. Enhance the festival experience

Deliver engaging, high-quality activities that complement the festival and enrich the experience for attendees.

### 3. Activate the City Centre

Drive foot traffic and vibrancy through creative events and installations that showcase multicultural talent and traditions.

### 4. Support local businesses

Provide financial assistance to help City Centre businesses participate in the festival through culturally relevant activations.

### 5. Promote Canberra as a multicultural destination

Boost the visibility of Canberra's multicultural offerings through integrated marketing efforts, including promotion via the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

### 6. Ensure accessibility and inclusion

Encourage activations that are inclusive and accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.



## What we're looking for

We're seeking creative, multicultural-themed activations that engage the public and bring life to the City Centre. Examples include:

- > Multicultural performances: Music, dance, storytelling or visual arts
- > Cultural experiences: Cooking classes, themed menus, cultural retail offerings or curated displays.
- > Decorative installations: Traditional displays, cultural heritage sharing or curated multicultural installations.
- > Accessible initiatives: Auslan-interpreted performances, captioned screenings, sensory-friendly experiences, or mobility-accessible activations.

Note: Standard business operations or discounts on regular products or services are not eligible for funding.

## Delivery timeline

All funded activities must be delivered between 27 January – 10 February 2026.

## Funding details

- > Businesses may apply for up to \$1,000 (+ GST if applicable).
- > A total of \$25,000 is available.
- > Successful applicants will receive 100% of the funds upfront within 20 days of invoice submission.
- > Grant recipients will be supported by the festival team to coordinate activations and connect with external stakeholders (including artists where relevant). All funded activities must be uploaded to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse for promotional purposes.

## Eligibility criteria

To apply, businesses must:

- > Be a registered business located within the [CCMIL area](#).
- > Hold a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).
- > Propose and deliver an activation that aligns with the festival values:
  - Collaboration
  - Diversity
  - Spirit of Celebration
  - Inclusion & Respect
  - Integrity

More details about the festival's values are available on the National Multicultural Festival [website](#).





## Eligibility criteria continued

- > Deliver the activation between 27 January – 10 February 2026. Businesses may choose to activate during the lead-up or exclusively during the festival dates: 6 – 8 February 2026.
- > Manage any assets or materials purchased with grant funds.
- > Upload activity details to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.
- > Provide a budget for proposed activities and complete a financial acquittal after delivery.

**Tip:** When budgeting, consider the minimum award rates for artists (e.g. [Live Performance Award](#), [NAVA Code of Practice](#)). Activations should also be designed with accessibility in mind.

## How to apply

Interested in activating your business as part of the 2026 National Multicultural Festival? We'd love to have you involved!

To apply, simply complete the online application form with the following details:

- > Full name and business name
- > Valid email address and business address
- > ABN and mobile number
- > Clear description of the proposed activation
- > Funding amount requested (up to \$1,000 + GST)
- > Budget breakdown and proposed delivery dates

**Please note:** Applicants are responsible for securing any relevant permits or licenses (e.g. OneMusic or liquor licensing) required for their activation.

Head to [multiculturalfestival.com.au/get-involved/business-grants](https://multiculturalfestival.com.au/get-involved/business-grants) to get started.

If you have any questions or need help with the application, feel free to reach out to our team at [inbox@multiculturalfestivalact.gov.au](mailto:inbox@multiculturalfestivalact.gov.au) or call 6207 8698.

## Assessment criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- > Alignment with program goals
- > Ability to attract visitation
- > Value for money



## Additional support

Businesses awarded funding through the Business Activation Grant Program may also be eligible for additional provisions under the Special Events Declaration, administered by [Access Canberra](#).

Eligible licensed venues are encouraged to explore the following opportunities:

### 1. Temporary floor plan extension

Licensed venues can apply for a free authorisation to temporarily extend their licensed floor plan to accommodate special events or activations. [Apply to extend your floor plan](#).

### 2. Licence fee reduction for hosting performances

Licensed venues with a capacity of up to 350 patrons may be eligible for a reduction in their annual liquor licence fee when hosting live performances or events. [Apply for a licence fee reduction](#).

### Important notes:

- > These provisions are assessed and approved by the Regulator via Access Canberra
- > Businesses must apply directly to Access Canberra once their microgrant-funded performances or activations are confirmed.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I'm unsure if my idea fits the grant criteria. Can I get advice?**

Yes! Email us at [inbox@multiculturalfestival.act.gov.au](mailto:inbox@multiculturalfestival.act.gov.au) to discuss your idea.

### **Can I apply for less than \$1,000?**

Absolutely. Request only what you need - overestimating may affect your application's success.

### **Do I own the items purchases with the grant?**

Yes. You are responsible for managing any assets acquired through the grant.

### **Do I need event insurance to apply?**

A: Not at the application stage. If insurance is required, outline your understanding and ability to obtain it.

### **How are applications assessed?**

Applications are assessed by the City Renewal Authority and National Multicultural Festival teams based on alignment with program goals, value for money, and overall impact. Outcomes may include approval, rejection, or suggested changes.

