

Strategic Partnerships Program (SPP)

2026-2027 Funding Round Frequently Asked Questions

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is designed to provide clear and concise answers to common questions about the SPP grants program. Whether you're a first-time applicant or a returning grantee, you'll find helpful information on eligibility, application processes, guidelines, reporting requirements, and more. We encourage you to read this document before reaching out with questions, as many of your questions may be addressed here.

What does my organisation need to consider in deciding whether to apply for SPP funding?

- Is my organisation eligible?
- Does my program meet each of the selection criteria?
- Does the intent and purpose of my proposed program align with the aim of the SPP, Education State priorities and the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 and VCE Study Designs?
- Does my organisation have the capacity to maintain a funded program over the two -year funding period?
- Is my organisation able to meet the accountability and reporting requirements?

Does a proposed program have to target a priority cohort?

- Yes, to align with the SPP selection criteria, a proposed program must intentionally target one or more of the identified priority cohorts and articulate what practical steps would be taken to engage the priority cohort(s) during implementation.

What specific assistance can DE provide to organisations in relation to requests for advice about the content and structure of applications?

- As the SPP is a competitive process, DE is limited in the advice it can provide to organisations in relation to program content and structure.
- Organisations should prepare responses according to selection criteria and the key concepts to inform your application as outlined in page 6 and page 7 of the SPP Funding Guidelines.
- DE also encourages organisations to use their networks or consult with a critical friend in preparing responses.

If funded, when does a program have to commence?

- It is expected that some or all activities for an SPP program will start to be delivered to students or teachers in Term 1 2026. Some programs may include one or more

components that require more time to develop (e.g. new teacher resources, digital tool), and these may be implemented later in the funding period. However, such programs are expected to include complementary activities that can be implemented from Term 1 2026.

Do proposed programs have to be entirely new, or can funding be requested for extensions of existing programs?

- Both new and existing programs are funded through the SPP. The SPP supports the delivery of a diverse range of programs, which include programs that are custom -designed to meet SPP objectives as well as programs that are delivered through an organisation's existing education programs. An SPP program can be standalone or be part of a larger series of interconnected initiatives.

Can an organisation submit more than one application?

- Yes, an organisation can submit more than one application. It should be noted, however, that very few organisations are funded for more than one program.

What should I do if the activities of my proposed program are for both students and teachers?

- A proposed program should fit within one of the two SPP Categories: Student Learning OR Teacher Professional Learning. If you wish to apply for funding for programs that deliver activities to both students and teachers, you must submit two separate applications – one for student learning and one for teacher professional learning.

Can SPP fully fund programs? Or will my organisation be expected to provide in-kind or other financial contributions to the overall budget and/or secure other funding sources, like charging schools to participate?

- You can apply for SPP funding for part of your program (and add funding from your organisation or other sources) or apply for the full cost of your proposed program. However it will be viewed favourably for organisations to provide at least in-kind support for the program that they are applying for (e.g. curriculum expertise, network support, etc.).
- It is preferable that Government schools (and particularly high SFOE schools) be able to access SPP funded programs at subsidised or no cost for entry or participation fees.
- In order to maximise equity and access, you are permitted to develop the Budget that is part of the application to accommodate related costs for Government schools and priority cohorts to participate.

How much funding should my organisation apply for? Is there a limited budget for SPP?

- A set amount of SPP funding is allocated for the 2026–2027 funding period.

- Applicants have flexibility to apply for the amount needed to operate their program, however, for context, the average grant amount awarded for programs in the past two rounds has been approx. \$100,000 over two years (i.e., \$50,000 per annum).
- The SPP is a competitive program and demand for funding is high. You should carefully consider the budget requirements of your proposed program/s and how your organisation and/or partner organisations can provide in-kind or financial support to the program as well.

If my organisation submits an application which is viewed favourably but is deemed to be requesting too much funding, would you come back to us to discuss reducing the amount?

- As with any competitive funding round, no organisation is guaranteed to be successful, and even those that are successful often do not receive their full requested amount. Section 6.2 of the SPP application asks whether your proposed program can be scaled down and delivered with less funding. This is an opportunity to advise DE of the minimum funding amount that would be required to deliver a smaller version of your proposed program.
- If your application is successful, as part of the process of negotiating and drawing up a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) we would discuss your proposal in full, including in relation to the funding amount.

Can funding cover infrastructure costs (e.g. a purpose built workshop space) or transport costs?

- SPP will not fund infrastructure. Funding must be used for the program itself, not the building or physical space (infrastructure) where the program will be run.
- Part of the funding can be used for student transport costs or costs associated with running an outreach program. Where funding for transport or outreach costs are requested, DE expects these to be targeted to priority cohorts.

Should a program go state-wide, or would we be better placed to limit to several LGAs only, for example. Is there any preference for specific geographical areas?

- The SPP funds state-wide programs as well as programs that are based in a local or specific geographic area. You would need to look at your program and at your organisation's capability and capacity to successfully roll out and manage a state-wide program. Small or medium sized organisations may prefer to use a more localised approach, but if your organisation can demonstrate capacity and capability then you are welcome to put forward a state-wide approach in your application.

Would a program be eligible if it is to be delivered through a partnership between two or more organisations?

- Yes, DE is supportive of partnerships for programs. However, all parties to the partnership must be not-for-profit and otherwise eligible as defined by the SPP Funding Guidelines.

Can insurance requirements related to Betrayal of Trust requirements be budgeted for through SPP funding?

- Yes, a portion of the requested SPP funding for your proposed program may be budgeted for insurance coverage that complies with Betrayal of Trust requirements.

Can the funding be used to develop tools/platforms to deliver digital programs?

- Yes, it can. However, DE expects that a substantial pilot or actual implementation would make up a significant part of the proposed program and that this would be rolled out during the two-year funding period. The SPP would not fund the building of a platform/tools that benefits teachers and/or students with no implementation aspect.
- Also, DE prefers that funded programs fully or partly commence delivery of activities to students or teachers in Term 1 2026. If the development of tools/platforms will take an extended period, your program should include one or more components that will be ready to commence in Term 1 2026.

What happens after I submit an application?

- You will receive email confirmation via the SmartyGrants system that your application has been received.
- Advisory panels comprised of subject-matter specialists from DE and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will assess and rank each application against the program aims and selection criteria.
- After the panel assessment process has concluded, the SPP team will consolidate the panel recommendations to develop a final list of applications for approval by the Minister for Education.
- You will be notified of outcomes once DE has concluded its assessment and approvals process, which is expected to be completed before the end of the year.
- If successful, to receive funding you will be required to enter into a Victorian Common Funding Agreement with DE.

Who should I contact if I need assistance and/or advice when writing my application?

- General questions about the application process, eligibility, etc. should be directed to DE at strategic.partnerships@education.vic.gov.au.

- Please note that DE cannot advise on the quality and content of a proposed program during the application process.