





BUILDING BLOCKS GRANTS 2020 CAPACITY BUILDING STREAM FAQ'S









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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is Building Blocks?

Building Blocks is a planning and funding program run by the Victorian Government to help deliver the early childhood infrastructure Victoria needs over this decade.

Building Blocks grants simplifies and replaces previous grant schemes - the Children's Facilities Capital Program and the Inclusive Kindergartens Facilities Program – used to fund new and upgrade existing kindergartens to make them more inclusive.

Those programs funded upgrades to buildings and playgrounds and invested in equipment that made a big difference to how Victorian kindergartens meet the educational and social needs of children with disabilities.

Building Blocks grants will still achieve those goals, while being better equipped to create the extra kindergarten places we need for the future.

What about the Children's Facilities Capital Program (CFCP) grants?

Building Blocks will replace the Children's Facilities Capital Program bringing together key features from the program under one enhanced grants program.

Who runs the grant program?

Building Blocks is administered by the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA).

The VSBA is a division of the Department of Education and Training (DET) established in 2016 to oversee the design and construction of new schools and early childhood centres, as well as the modernisation and upgrade of existing ones. For more information on the VSBA visit <u>www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au</u>

Successful grant applications are formally approved by the Minister for Education.

How do I apply for a Building Blocks grant?

The VSBA uses an online application system to accept grant applications for Building Blocks.

You can create and submit your application at <u>vsba.smartygrants.com.au</u>

Applicants must register to use the online system, if they are not already registered.

The application form is easy to complete, and a help guide and FAQs for using the online application system are available at <u>applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au</u>.

When do applications for Building Blocks capacity grants open?

Applications are now open all year round, from 12 March 2020.

When do grants for Building Blocks capacity grants close?

15 May 2020 at midnight (Australian Eastern Standard Time) for an early August 2020 announcement.

31 July 2020 at midnight (Australian Eastern Standard Time) for a November 2020 announcement.

DEFINITIONS

What do we mean by Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten?

All projects submitted for Building Blocks, capacity grant stream, must provide or intend to provide a kindergarten program for three and four-year-old children.

Funded kindergarten programs must:

• be planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher (who is registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching).







- align with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, available at www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx
- for four-year-old kindergarten programs, offer at least:
 - 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or
 - 600 hours per year.
- for three-year-old kindergarten programs, provide or intend to provide up to 15 hours per week.

For more information on kindergarten funding, please consult the Kindergarten Funding Guide at <u>www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx</u>

What are approved places, and how are they different to kindergarten places?

Approved places are the maximum number of children that a service can educate and care for at any one time.

Kindergarten places (and long day care places) refer to how you will use the approved places at your facility to deliver particular programs.

For existing services, approved places will be listed on the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority register at <u>www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-registers</u> and will be shown on your service approval certificate. For services operating under the *Children's Services Act* 1996 this is referred to as 'licence capacity' and is listed on the register at <u>www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcs.aspx</u>.

Previous guidelines and application forms for the CFCP grants used the term licensed capacity in reference to approved places.

Depending on how program delivery is structured for the service, kindergarten places could be higher than the approved places. For example

- If two separate three or four-year-old kindergarten programs are scheduled for different times of the day or week then the number of three and four-year-old kindergarten places may be up to twice the number of approved places for the service.
- If all approved places at the facility will be used for long day care and an integrated kindergarten program will be offered for a portion of the long day care places, then the number of kindergarten places will be less than the approved places.

Building Blocks applications must state the approved places proposed for the service, as well as the number of places that you propose to offer for three and four-year-old kindergarten, and long day care.

Approved places are subject to provision of sufficient indoor and outdoor space, with a minimum of 3.25m² of unencumbered indoor space and 7m² of unencumbered outdoor space (open to the sky) required per child. More information on what counts as 'unencumbered' space can be found at

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/indooroutdoor.aspx.

The approved places will be confirmed at the completion of the project as part of your registration as a kindergarten service provider. Please contact the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division at DET if you have specific questions about this process:

Email: <u>licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au</u>

Phone: 1300 307 415

Keep in mind that a ratio of one educator to 11 children applies for children aged 36 months and above, in accordance with the National Quality Framework. For further information, please see www.acecqa.gov.au/naf/educator-to-child-ratios







What is a schematic design drawing?

A schematic design drawing is a sketch plan giving a general view of the proposed design. These drawings generally include a site plan and floor plans, and larger projects often involve the production of elevations, illustrative sketches and computer renderings.

Detailed drawings help to explain what you propose to do, demonstrate that your project is ready to commence, and support the number of places proposed in your application (for example, by showing the area in square meters for indoor learning areas and outdoor space to be created through the project).

Drawings submitted with your application should clearly show each component of the proposed works and match the scope of works described in your application.

Who is a licensed quantity surveyor?

Quantity surveyors are specialised building professionals that estimate and manage the cost of construction projects.

Having your costings prepared by a licensed quantity surveyor helps to demonstrate that your project is ready to commence.

The Victorian Building Authority maintains a register of licensed quantity surveyors that you can search online at <u>consumer.etoolbox.buildingcommission.com.au/Pages/Search.aspx</u>

What do we mean by an experienced project manager?

It is a requirement to appoint a project manager that has suitable experience in delivering similar types of projects. A project manager will develop project plans, monitor the project to ensure milestones are met, coordinate contractors and oversee budgets. This may be someone in your organisation or an industry professional.

ELIGIBILITY

Can I apply if I am a private provider?

Yes, provided that you can demonstrate that you are a not-for-profit organisation. You can find information on not-for-profit status at www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/ and https://www.acnc.gov.au/

Businesses and for-profit organisations cannot apply for any type of major grant.

Can I apply this year if my project was unsuccessful in previous years?

Yes. Organisations that are still seeking support for projects that were unsuccessful in previous CFCP grant rounds are strongly encouraged to submit an application in the current round.

We strongly encourage organisations who are resubmitting projects to contact us for feedback on their previous application, and to carefully address the program requirements, eligibility and assessment criteria described in the Building Blocks Capacity Stream Guidelines.

Can I apply if I have previously received a CFCP grant for the same facility?

Yes, if you can demonstrate that:

- demand has increased in the local area since your original successful application
- the new proposal will further increase the capacity of the service to meet demand for kindergarten places.

Can I apply for more than one Building Blocks capacity stream grant for my facility?

No, only one Building Blocks capacity stream application can be submitted for any one facility.







Can I apply for projects at more than one location?

Yes, you can apply for more than one project but you must indicate the relative priority of each project in your applications. We will take this priority into account when considering the distribution of approved projects across applicants, local government areas and different regions of the state.

Can I apply for a Building Blocks capacity stream grant as well as funding from another grant program?

Yes, your project can include funding from grant programs administered by organisations other than the VSBA. You must list these in your budget and advise whether the funding has been confirmed or what date it is expected to be confirmed.

Can I apply for funding from more than one program administered by the VSBA?

Yes, you can apply for funding through Building Blocks as well as other programs administered by the VSBA provided that there is no overlap in the scope of works proposed to be funded through each program. For example, if you propose to deliver a multi-purpose community facility on a school site and you submit a grant application through Building Blocks for the early learning component of that facility, then any funding requests through other programs administered by the VSBA cannot include funding for the early learning component.

Please visit <u>www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/Pages/About-Us.aspx</u> for a listing of the VSBA's funding and grant programs.

Can I apply if my organisation is incorporated but isn't registered for GST?

Yes. All incorporated not-for-profit organisations (including organisations that aren't registered for GST) are able to apply for a grant under Building Blocks so long as their project meets the program requirements.

If your organisation is not registered for GST, you will need to include GST in your budget and cost estimates. Any grant payment you receive will not add or include an allowance for GST.

Different payment arrangements are required for organisations that are not registered for GST, and these will be discussed with successful applicants where required.

How do I show that our non-government organisation meets the requirements to be an incorporated separate legal entity and appropriately insured against child abuse?

If your organisation already receives funding from the Department, it is likely to already be required to comply with the Betrayal of Trust requirements and so you wouldn't need to do anything to meet this requirement.

If you are unsure whether your non-government organisation meets the requirements or not, you can contact the Early Childhood Grants team at the VSBA (Email: <u>building.blocks@edumail.vic.gov.au</u> or phone: (03) 7022 2652.

If you are advised that you are required to provide evidence that your non-government organisation meets the requirements, you can provide an insurance certificate to meet the insurance requirement and DET will be able to determine if your organisation is incorporated or not.

Can I apply if I have already entered into a building contract for the project?

No, funds are not available from Building Blocks for retrospective assistance.

To remain eligible for funding, applicants must not enter into a contract for any works proposed in their application prior to being informed of the application outcome.

Can I apply if my organisation doesn't currently offer a funded kindergarten program?

Yes, if you meet eligibility requirements you can apply on the basis that you will deliver a funded kindergarten program for at least ten years once the project is complete.







Can I apply if I own an existing building and want to start a funded kindergarten program?

Yes, if you meet eligibility requirements you can apply for an Expansion Grant on the basis that you will deliver a funded kindergarten program for at least ten years once the project is complete.

FUNDING

How much funding is available for each grant type?

-	
Grant type	Maximum grant amount
Integrated Children's Centre Grant	up to \$2 million (ex GST) (for projects seeking a smaller increase to licenced places, the maximum grant allocation may be reduced)
New Early Learning Facility Grant	up to \$1.5million (ex GST) (for projects seeking a smaller increase to licenced places, the maximum grant allocation may be reduced)
Modular Kindergarten Facility	One-room up to \$750,000 (ex GST)
	Two-room up to \$1.5million (ex GST)
Expansion Grant	up to \$600,000 (ex GST) (For projects seeking a smaller increase to licenced places, the maximum grant allocation may be reduced)

What are scalable funding options?

Maximum funding levels are based on proposed services containing a specified number of kindergarten rooms (33 places). Larger services (i.e providing additional 33 place kindergarten rooms) may be eligible for additional State funding beyond the specified amounts. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering a range of relevant factors including, but not limited to, demonstrated local demand, the proposed benefits of a larger service, and service accessibility.

What are the benefits of a modular kindergarten facility?

Modular Kindergarten Facilities can be used to rapidly deliver high-quality kindergarten infrastructure in partnership with local governments or other providers. Modular kindergartens are architect-designed facilities, which can be produced off-site, and delivered on-site in a matter of months. It can reduce timeline and risks associated with traditional design and construction processes.

What is the average project cost for a modular kindergarten facility?

Like New Early Learning Facilities, there are a range of costs involved in delivering a modular kindergarten facility project that applicants should consider before applying for a grant. These include but are not limited to:

- manufacturing the modular kindergarten facility
- building permits and other planning requirements
- delivery and installation of the facility
- landscaping, including playground and equipment.

With all these factors in mind, experience has shown that the average cost for modular kindergarten facilities are as follows:

- approximately \$1.2 million for a one-room (33 licenced places) modular
- approximately \$1.8 million for a two-room (66 licenced places) modular.







It should be noted that costs will vary for each modular kindergarten facility project.

If applicants are seeking larger services (i.e. providing additional 33 place kindergarten rooms), please speak to the VSBA Early Childhood Grants team to discuss your options prior to submitting your application. Larger services will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the Building Blocks Guidelines for additional information.

It should be noted that applicants will be responsible for the balance of project costs (i.e. furnishing and car parking).

What does a typical modular kindergarten facility floor plan look like?

Please contact the VSBA Early Childhood Grants team for template floors plans for one (33 licenced places) and two-room (66 licenced places) modular kindergarten.

If applicants are seeking larger services (i.e. providing additional 33 place kindergarten rooms), please speak to the VSBA Early Childhood Grants team to discuss your options prior to submitting your application. Larger services will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the Building Blocks Guidelines for additional information.

Will the VSBA assist in delivering a modular kindergarten facility project?

Modular kindergarten facilities will be delivered in partnership between the applicant and the Department of Education and Training. Modular kindergarten facilities can be located on Council-owned or Department of Education and Training owned land.

If an applicant proposes to deliver a modular kindergarten facility on Department of Education and Training owned land, they must contact the VSBA Early Childhood team as soon as possible during the development of their proposal to discuss the approach to land and project delivery.

Do I have to contribute funds?

Yes, you will be expected to provide a co-contribution. In previous grant rounds applicants have been asked to co-contribute a set percentage amount of the total project cost. For Building Blocks, applicants are still expected to provide a contribution towards the project, however the percentage contribution is not specified. If you have any concerns about your co-contribution, please contact the Early Childhood Grants team.

Can I receive a partial grant if there are more applications than funds available, or there aren't enough funds to cover my entire request?

No, in order to support the financial viability of proposed projects, proposals will not be partially funded.

Can I receive more funding if the project cost or funding from other sources changes?

No, the Department does not hold additional funding to meet cost overruns for capital works projects. If for some reason the project runs over budget or funding contributions change, the grant recipient must meet the additional costs.

APPLICATION WRITING TIPS

Do you have any tips for preparing the project budget?

The budget needs to include all financial contributions (including the grant you are requesting) and key expenditure items related to the project.

The total project expenditure must match the total project income, including the grant amount sought, your organisation's contribution and any other contributions.

Be <u>accurate</u> in your costings – you cannot ask for additional funds later because the project was not accurately costed at the start.







Only include income or expenditure items relevant to the project. If the cost is not directly associated with your project, it should not be in the project budget.

Ensure that the grant amount requested and financial contributions stated in your application match the supporting evidence provided.

Please ensure that your budget reflects your GST registration status:

- If you **are** registered for GST, **don't** include GST in your estimates. If your application is successful, any grant payment you receive will add and include GST.
- If you are **not** registered for GST, **include** GST in your estimates. If your application is successful, any grant payment you receive will not add or include GST.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Why are some questions on my form greyed out?

Some parts of the application form may not be relevant to your organisation or project. Depending on your answers to some questions, other parts of the online form may be greyed out – if that happens, you won't need to answer those questions.

What do I do if I need help with the online application form?

Please contact SmartyGrants Support Desk via email: <u>service@smartygrants.com.au</u> or phone: (03) 9320 6888. This service is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (Eastern Standard Time).

You can also find a help guide and FAQs at <u>applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au</u>

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

If my application meets all of the criteria will my project receive funding?

Not necessarily. Building Blocks is a highly competitive funding program and the level of demand for eligible and highly rated projects is likely to exceed the total available funding.

All applications received will be assessed against the assessment criteria.

Do I need to include any information from the service provider in my application?

Yes, you should develop your application in consultation with the service provider. Applications need to include information about the licensed service capacity, enrolments and demonstrate collaboration and evidence of established partnerships. You must also include a letter of support as evidence that you have consulted with the service provider(s) affected by the project.

GRANT APPLICATION OUTCOMES

When will we find out if our application is successful?

It is anticipated that applications submitted by 15 May 2020 will be announced in August. Applications submitted by 31 July 2020 will be announced in October.

All applicants will be advised of the outcome for their application.

Will we be given feedback if our application is unsuccessful?

Unsuccessful applicants can contact the Early Childhood Grants team at the VSBA if they would like detailed feedback on their application.

When and how will grant funding be paid to successful applicants?

Funding cannot be released until DET and the applicant have executed a funding agreement.

Grants will be paid in instalments, subject to completion of the following milestones:







PROJECT MILESTONE	PERCENTAGE OF GRANT PAID
Funding Agreement Executed	10%
Construction commences	40%
Construction is complete (practical completion)	40%
Grant acquittal approved by the VSBA	10%

You will need to supply evidence to demonstrate that these milestones have been met before payment is made. Evidence requirements are described in the Common Funding Agreement schedule template, available at:

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/capitalprogram.aspx

Payments will be made within approximately thirty business days of the organisation providing accepted evidence that the milestone has been met. This evidence is submitted as part of online fortnightly reporting.

The VSBA reserve the right to cancel grants and recoup payments where there are unreasonable delays in executing grant agreements or completing proposed works, or where applicants make substantive changes to the scope of the project after we have approved funding.

PROJECT DELIVERY

What are the reporting requirements for my project?

Grant recipients are required to submit monthly project progress reports through an online reporting system to give a brief update on progress, update proposed, forecast and actual dates for project milestones, flagging risks and issues and providing required evidence when payment milestones have been met.

How long will I have to complete my project?

You should plan to complete your projects and acquit the grant within the following timeframes:

GRANT TYPE	EXPECTED TIMEFRAME
Integrated Children's Centre	Project completed and grant acquitted within 24 months of executing the funding agreement
New Early Learning Facility	Project completed and grant acquitted within 18 months of executing the funding agreement
Modular Kindergarten Facility	Given that modular kindergarten facilities will be delivered in partnership between the applicant and the Department of Education and Training project completion timelines will be agreed on a case by case basis, but are expected to be on average within 12 months of the funding being announced by the Minister for Education
Expansion Grant	Project completed and grant acquitted within 12 months of executing the funding agreement

What happens if the project runs over time?

Building Blocks grant recipients <u>must</u> submit a variation form via the online reporting system if they require a project extension. Applicants will be required to provide evidence regarding the reason for the delay and to demonstrate that the project will be completed within the additional time requested.

The VSBA reserve the right to cancel the grant and recoup payments where there are unreasonable delays in the execution of grant agreements or completion of the proposed works, or where substantive changes to scope are made after funding has been approved.







What happens if the project runs over budget?

Grant recipients must meet any additional costs if their project runs over budget. We do not hold additional funding to meet cost overruns for capital works projects.

What are the acquittal requirements?

All successful applicants are required to complete the following requirements and upload the following information into the Department reporting system to complete their acquittal:

- Certificate of Final Completion
- Certificate of Occupancy
- Certified project expenditure list on letterhead and signed by an authorised registered accountant
- the Department's acquittal document, completed, signed and dated by two authorised representatives
- letter of service approval including licensed capacity/approved places
- photos of completed project.

OPERATION OF THE FACILITY

Will I need to change the license for my facility once my project is complete?

For new facilities and expansions that increase the number of approved places, you will need to obtain approval for the service before completing the project acquittal. Notifications and applications may be submitted via the National Quality Agenda IT system at <u>public.ngaits.acecga.gov.au</u>. Applications may take some time to consider and approve.

Further information is available from the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority at <u>www.acecqa.gov.au</u> or by contacting DET's Quality Assessment and Regulation Division on 1300 307 415 or by emailing <u>licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au</u>.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Who can I contact for further information about the grant program?

Please contact, the Early Childhood Grants team at the VSBA:

Email: building.blocks@edumail.vic.gov.au

Phone: (03) 7022 2652

What do I do if I am having technical difficulties with the online application form?

Please contact SmartyGrants Support Desk:

Email: <u>service@smartygrants.com.au</u> Phone: (03) 9320 6888

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Who do I contact about children's service licensing and regulation?

Please contact the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division at DET:

Email: <u>licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au</u>

Phone: 1300 307 415

