

Age-friendly Fund Guidance

2026

Age-friendly communities are places where older people are valued, respected, included, and able to take part in community life.

They support social connection, digital confidence, intergenerational relationships, and recognise older people's contributions. In doing so, age-friendly communities become better places for people of all ages and abilities to live, work, and belong.

The Age-friendly Fund is one way the Office for Seniors invests in community-led and innovative initiatives to support older people. The Fund supports projects that help older people participate in, contribute to, and stay connected with communities.

Grants are available from **\$5,000 to \$20,000 excluding GST**, depending on the scope of a project. One funding round is held each year.

Key dates

- **Applications open:** Monday 3 August 2026.
- **Applications close:** Wednesday 30 September 2026.
- **Outcome decisions:** Applicants will be notified in writing after applications have been assessed (within 8 weeks of applications closing).
- **Project period:** Funded projects may start after the initial grant payment has been made (around early December 2026) and must be completed by 31 December 2027.

Who can apply

You can apply if your organisation is a legal entity in New Zealand and is one of the following:

- a council
- a community organisation
- a registered non-profit organisation.

Businesses and individuals cannot apply.

If your organisation has previously received an Age-friendly Fund grant, you must wait two full funding rounds before applying again.

Your organisation must not have any outstanding financial accountability, service delivery, or performance issues for funding previously provided by the Ministry of Social Development.

What we fund

We fund new age-friendly projects, including projects that adapt successful approaches and tailor them for a different community, population group, or local need. Projects must respond to a clear community need and support communities to become more age-friendly.

You can apply for funding for one of two purposes:

- 1. to develop a plan to become an age-friendly community**
- 2. to implement an age-friendly community initiative.**

Your application should demonstrate the community need your project will address, and how older people, community groups, and your local council support the project.

A list of projects we have funded since 2018 is available on the [Office for Seniors website](#).

Note: In 2026, \$40,000 is set aside to support councils to develop age-friendly policies, strategies, or action plans. Council applications will be assessed against the evaluation criteria.

If funding requests from eligible council projects exceed \$40,000, additional projects may be funded from the main funding pool. If less than \$40,000 is allocated, the remaining funds will be returned to the main pool for community projects.

What we do not fund

The Age-friendly Fund does not fund:

- projects that are already underway or completed
- existing community programmes or services
- projects that are considered standard provision by local councils
- projects that do not show clear benefits for older people and their participation in the community
- projects that duplicate existing community or government services
- health-related projects that are the responsibility of, or would normally be funded by, Health New Zealand.

We also do not fund:

- capital works, infrastructure upgrades, or construction costs
- ongoing operational or maintenance costs for existing programmes or facilities
- salaries or wages for existing staff
- professional development activities
- commercial ventures for personal gain
- fundraising activities
- purchasing or leasing major assets, such as vehicles, furniture, appliances, or other durable equipment. Small electronic devices may be considered where they are necessary for project delivery.
- projects that are only focused on concept, design, or planning stages
- one-off events, trips, meetings, or excursions
- international travel
- costs incurred before grant approval.

Council support requirement

If your organisation is not a council, you must provide a letter of support from your local council. This letter may be signed by any council staff member that knows about your proposed project and relevant council priorities.

The letter should confirm that the council supports your project and that the project aligns with local age-friendly strategies, plans, priorities, or other relevant council priorities.

Age-friendly projects have greater potential for impact when local environments and services support older people to contribute and stay connected. A letter of support is important to demonstrate the local environment your project is operating in.

A template letter to send to your local council is provided on the [Office for Seniors website](#).

Before you apply

Before applying, you should check that:

- your organisation is eligible to apply
- your project is a new age-friendly project or adapts a successful approach for a different community, population group, or local need
- your project can be completed during the 2027 calendar year
- your project clearly benefits older people
- your project has community support
- you have council support (if your organisation is not a council)
- your budget only includes eligible costs.

If you would like to discuss the eligibility of your project proposal, contact the Office for Seniors before completing your application. This also gives us an opportunity to provide feedback that may help strengthen your application.

Email: agefriendly@msd.govt.nz

How to apply

To apply:

1. Read this guidance document.
2. Complete the Age-friendly Fund application form, available on the [Office for Seniors website](#).
3. Attach the letter of support from your local council (for non-council applicants).
4. Email your application and attachments to agefriendly@msd.govt.nz. In your cover email, include a list of all documents attached to your application.

Applications close on **Wednesday 30 September 2026**.

Applicants will be notified in writing about the outcome of their application within 8 weeks of applications closing.

How applications will be assessed

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation panel. The panel will consider how well your application explains the need for your project, how older people and community partners are involved, how the project will be delivered, and how you will understand its impact.

The panel will use the information provided in your application form to assess four criteria:

1. Project need and benefits – 35%

How clearly the project responds to a community need, supports older people, and offers something new, different, or locally important.

2. Community involvement and support – 20%

How well older people, community groups, and partners have been or will be involved in shaping and supporting the project.

3. Project planning and budget – 25%

How realistic and well planned the project is, including activities, timeframes, responsibilities, deliverables, risks, and budget.

4. Project impact and lasting value – 20%

How the applicant will understand what the project achieved, use lessons learned, and support project benefits to continue or inform future work.

If your application is successful

Successful applications will be subject to due diligence checks. These may include:

- confirming your organisation's legal entity status
- checking for any outstanding approvals, remedial actions, or other areas of concern, if your organisation is already contracted to MSD
- considering past performance, where relevant
- seeking reference checks, where the project is being delivered by an organisation not known to MSD.

Successful applicants will receive notice of the grant terms and conditions by early December 2026.

The Office for Seniors may award full or part funding, depending on the panel's assessment of the application and the funding available.

For grants over \$10,000, funding is usually paid in two instalments:

- the first payment, up to a maximum of \$10,000, is paid after the required paperwork has been received and MSD financial processes are completed
- the second payment is paid after the Office for Seniors has received the required interim progress report and financial summary.

Your responsibilities if funded

If your project is funded, your organisation will be responsible for:

- delivering the project described in your application
- managing the funding appropriately
- keeping accurate financial records
- providing project updates when requested
- completing an interim progress report by 31 May 2027
- completing a final report by 15 December 2027.

The Office for Seniors will provide reporting templates.

Information from reports may be used to evaluate the Age-friendly Fund, meet the Office for Senior's reporting requirements, and promote funded projects.

The Office for Seniors may also showcase funded projects on its website and through other communication channels.

Personal information

Any personal information provided will be managed according to the Privacy Act 2020. You can request your personal information from the Office for Seniors.