



Pathways to Employment Grant Program

2026 Grant Guidelines

The Inner North Community Foundation acknowledges the custodians of the land where we work, live, study, and volunteer, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and give thanks to other first nations people in our community, especially Elders.

March 2026

Grant Guidelines may be changed from time to time. Prior to applying please ensure you have the most recent version of Pathways to Employment Guidelines which can be found on the 'Apply for Funding' section of the [website](#).

Purpose

The Pathways to Employment Fund is a flagship grants program of the Foundation with a focus on employment pathways for local people disadvantaged in their access to employment. This focus is shaped by our relationship with our founding and key ongoing sponsor, IntoWork, and a strong theory of change demonstrating the ample benefits to community members that come through workforce participation. The Foundation aims to be adaptive to the evolving needs of the community.

In 2026, the Foundation will grant successful organisations up to \$20,000 for single year projects. The Foundation will look to support a balance of both known and new partners for single year funding.

Target audiences for funding

Grants are available to support projects which assist the removal of barriers impacting vulnerable people on their journey to work, in Darebin, Merri-bek and Yarra. Priority will be given to projects which demonstrate:

- Participation by people facing the most significant barriers to employment
- Building people's capabilities and skills
- Strong geographic focus on either or all of Darebin, Merri-bek and Yarra
- Leverage of partnerships and collaboration
- Clear demonstration of impact and links to employment pathways
- Ability to leverage other funds and resources where appropriate

In assessing grant applications, the Foundation considers a range of factors such as:

- > how the project will improve people's ability to connect to employment or education pathways
- > whether government funding is already available to support this kind of project and
- > whether the organisation applying for the grant is appropriately equipped to deliver the project.

Eligibility for funding

Single year funding applicants must be organisations that:

- Are located in the municipalities of Darebin, Merri-bek or Yarra or most participants live in these areas.
- Are not-for-profit organisations endorsed as a Charitable Institution, Public Benevolent Institution, or Health Promotion Charity by the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission. Organisations are not required to have DGR status.
- Participate in and support coordination and collaboration of activity between local partners to remove the barriers people face on their journey to work.

What will not be funded

- Projects that do not meet the Pathways to Employment fund purpose (projects that are not linked in some way to employment and employability)
- Projects that will take place outside Darebin, Merri-bek or Yarra
- Individuals, 'for profit' organisations, sports clubs, government bodies, political parties, or their candidates
- Capital works (such as buildings), car, and conference expenses
- Personal expenses (such as living, educational, travel expenses etc.)
- Funding for projects that have already been completed.

How to apply

In previous grant rounds, applications have exceeded available funding. We expect this to continue and encourage interested organisations to discuss their project idea with Bianca Maciel Pizzorno, Grants Manager on 0478 174 116 before applying to ensure eligibility.

Follow these three steps to apply:

1. Read these Granting Guidelines in detail
2. Register your organisation with our grants management software using this link: <https://www.grantinterface.com.au/Home/Logon?urlkey=incf>
3. Once your organisation profile is complete, please fill in the application process titled 'Pathways to Employment 2026' and submit **by 5pm on Friday 24 April 2026**.

Below are step by step guides on how to apply for funds using our grants management software, Foundant:

- [Video Tutorial 1: Site Access & Account Creation](#)
- [Video Tutorial 2: Applying for Funding](#)
- [Video Tutorial 3: Your Applicant Dashboard](#)
- [Apply for a Grant - Applicant Overview Video](#) - This video covers the content above in an overview format.

Please contact Bianca Maciel Pizzorno, Grants Manager, on 0478 174 116 Bianca.macielpizzorno@innernorthfoundation.org.au should you have any queries.

Note: We aim to notify applicants successful or otherwise by Monday 17 August 2026.

Who we are

The Inner North Community Foundation (the Foundation) is a unique model of social investment and partnership. In the early 1980s, the Cities of Merri-bek, Darebin and Yarra established a not-for-profit training group, now known as IntoWork Australia, to deliver greater employment and economic opportunities across the inner northern region of Melbourne.

In 2007, IntoWork established the Inner North Community Foundation in perpetuity, with a financial commitment of \$5 million and operating costs. In 2021, IntoWork Australia re-affirmed this partnership, with a commitment to provide more than \$200,000 annually, in addition to core operation costs.

The Foundation's mission is to increase economic participation, strengthen people's networks, and promote social inclusion through partnerships and philanthropy. It achieves this by:

- Funding community projects that support local community members to develop the work and life skills necessary to gain access to employment
- Expanding community leadership through partnerships which increase the effectiveness of philanthropic outcomes for our community
- Growing philanthropy through linking donors and grantees.

Since starting, the Foundation has granted over \$6.7 million in the Yarra, Darebin and Merri-bek. From Fitzroy to Fawkner, Richmond to Reservoir, and Brunswick to Bundoora, we have given grants across 30 different suburbs to more than 300 organisations running innovative and creative programs for local people facing disadvantage.