Strength in Community Grant Program
Organisational Capacity Building Grants

Program Overview

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the Anthony Costa Foundation is proud to launch the Strength in Community Grant Program, designed to strengthen and sustain the not-for-profit sector.

This initiative, underpinned by an additional $1 million allocation, reflects the Foundation's commitment to building resilience and capability among community leaders, organisations, and the broader not for profit sector.

Developed in close consultation with current grantees through feedback sessions and individual discussions, the Grant Round framework addresses capacity building needs across three streams: individual, organisational, and sector.

These guidelines relate specifically to the Organisational Capacity Building Grants, which form part of the organisational stream. Organisations seeking support through these grants are required to complete the Springboard Organisational Capability Diagnostic and then submit an Expression of Interest (EOI).

By supporting targeted training, leadership development, operational infrastructure, and collaborative changemaking, the Foundation aims to empower organisations and their leaders to deliver on their mission and drive lasting impact across the community.

Organisational Capacity Building Grants
The purpose of the Organisational Capacity Building Grants is to strengthen the structures, systems, processes and capabilities that help not-for-profit organisations operate effectively, remain resilient and deliver on their missions over time.

Feedback from grantees has consistently highlighted the need for organisational development support in areas such as strategy and governance, leadership and culture, financial sustainability, operating models and systems, risk management, data and impact measurement, and organisational change.

Many not-for-profit organisations face significant time, resource and capability constraints, making it challenging to clearly identify their organisational development needs, access the right expertise and manage improvement work alongside day-to-day service delivery. Through the Organisational Capacity Building Grants, the Foundation aims to provide tailored professional support matched to each organisation's priorities, readiness and circumstances.

To deliver this support, the Anthony Costa Foundation is partnering with Benefolk, a specialist social-sector capacity-building organisation. Benefolk will work alongside the Foundation throughout the process, helping organisations understand their capability needs, supporting the assessment process, and coordinating tailored professional support for selected organisations.

Through this partnership, the Foundation aims to provide a structured and supportive pathway that leads to practical and lasting improvements in organisational effectiveness, resilience and sustainability. This will help organisations deliver their missions more effectively and respond to evolving community needs.

Purpose & Strategic Alignment

The primary goal of the Organisational Capacity Building Grants is to help not-for-profit organisations identify and address important capability needs that affect their effectiveness, resilience and long-term sustainability.

Organisational capacity building can be complex and resource intensive. It requires organisations to clearly identify their needs, access the right expertise, manage organisational development work alongside day-to-day delivery, and ensure that progress and learning are captured.

Strength in Community Grant Program
Organisational Capacity Building Grants

Through its partnership with Benefolk, the Foundation will deliver a structured process that includes an organisational diagnostic, an Expression of Interest, assessment and tailored support. Benefolk will help selected organisations further define their needs and connect them with specialist expertise matched to their priorities, readiness and circumstances.

Through this targeted support, the Foundation aims to see stronger organisational systems and capabilities, improved effectiveness and greater organisational resilience. Ultimately, the intended impact is to help not-for-profit organisations deliver on their missions, adapt to changing needs and create lasting impact in the communities they serve.

Target Applicant & Eligibility

The EOI is intended for not-for-profit organisations that have completed the Springboard Organisational Capability Diagnostic and are ready to undertake organisational development work. To be eligible to complete an EOI, an organisation must:

- be a not-for-profit or charitable organisation with an organisational purpose aligned with one or more Anthony Costa Foundation Focus Areas
- work in, or deliver services to, communities in the Geelong/G21 region
- have completed the Springboard Organisational Capability Diagnostic
- identify a capability priority supported by the organisation's diagnostic results
- demonstrate that its leadership and Board support the proposed organisational development work
- have the willingness and capacity to participate actively in the support process, implementation, learning and evaluation activities.

Submitting an EOI does not guarantee selection or a particular type or value of support. The Foundation may seek further information before making a decision.

How to Apply for an Organisational Capacity Building Grant

The Anthony Costa Foundation is partnering with Benefolk to deliver the Organisational Capacity Building Grants through a structured and supported process. The process is designed to help organisations understand their capability needs, identify their highest priorities and access appropriately matched specialist support.

The Foundation will provide funding, strategic oversight and final approval of participating organisations. Benefolk will contribute specialist capacity-building expertise, support the assessment and triage process, and coordinate the delivery of professional support to selected organisations.

Step 1: Complete the Springboard Organisational Capability Diagnostic
Completion of the Springboard Organisational Capability Diagnostic is required before an organisation can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for Organisational Capacity Building support. The Springboard Diagnostic forms part of the process being delivered by the Foundation in partnership with Benefolk.

The diagnostic provides an opportunity for organisations to reflect on their strengths and identify areas where greater organisational capability could improve effectiveness, resilience and sustainability. Each participating organisation receives its own diagnostic report to support this reflection and inform its EOI.

The Foundation has already held an in-person session and an online session to introduce organisations to the diagnostic and support them through the process. Organisations that did not participate in either session and wish to access the diagnostic must contact the Anthony Costa Foundation at foundation@costafamilyoffice.com.au.

Step 2: Review the Results and Identify Priorities
Organisations should review their diagnostic results with relevant members of their leadership team and Board and identify the one or two organisational effectiveness areas that are most important to strengthen over the next two to three years.

Step 3: Submit an Expression of Interest
Eligible organisations can then submit an EOI outlining the key insights from their diagnostic, the organisational challenge or opportunity they want to address, the difference addressing it could make, and their readiness and commitment to undertake the work.

Applicants must attach the relevant summary page or pages from their Springboard report that support the capability priority identified in their EOI. Organisations do not need to identify a consultant, prepare a detailed scope of work or provide a budget at this stage.

Step 4: Assessment and Selection
EOIs will be assessed by Foundation and Benefolk staff, who will make recommendations to the Anthony Costa Foundation Board. The Board will make the final decisions about which organisations are selected to participate. Assessment will consider the EOI as a whole, including the identified need, potential impact, organisational readiness and leadership commitment.

Step 5: Triage and Tailored Support
Following selection, Benefolk will work directly with each participating organisation to further clarify its needs, determine the most appropriate level and type of support, and identify suitable specialist expertise. Benefolk will then coordinate the delivery of the agreed professional support, which may range from shorter, targeted advisory assistance to more in-depth organisational development work.

Types of Support Available

Following selection, Benefolk will work with each participating organisation to determine the most appropriate type and level of support. Depending on the organisation's needs, readiness and the potential impact, support may involve light advisory assistance or a deeper advisory engagement. Organisations are not required to nominate a preferred support category or identify a provider through the EOI.

Light Advisory Support
Short, targeted access to specialist expertise for a focused issue, question or immediate need. This may be delivered through Benefolk's Expert Bar or another suitable short-form advisory approach.

Deep Advisory Support
A tailored, multi-disciplinary engagement for more complex or strategic organisational challenges. This may involve diagnostic work, specialist advice, planning and structured implementation support.

Support may relate to one or more of the following organisational effectiveness areas:

- Strategy, Direction & Governance
- Growth, Revenue & Sustainability
- Positioning, Brand & External Influence
- Operating Model, Systems & Delivery
- Leadership, Workforce & Culture
- Transformation, Change & Renewal
- Risk, Resilience & Organisational Stability
- Performance, Data & Insight.

Examples include strategic planning, governance reviews, financial sustainability, fundraising strategy, organisational design, systems and process improvement, leadership and workforce planning, change management, risk, evaluation, data and impact measurement. The final scope and provider will be determined after selection through Benefolk's triage and matching process.

Support Size and Structure
The Foundation has established a pooled investment for the Organisational Capacity Building Grants and has engaged Benefolk to coordinate the delivery of support to participating organisations. Support will be provided as professional services arranged and managed through Benefolk, not as a cash grant paid directly to participating organisations.

- The type and depth of support will vary according to organisational need and readiness.
- Deep advisory engagements may represent approximately $20,000 to $50,000 in professional services.
- Light advisory support will be shorter and more targeted.
- Benefolk will work with selected organisations to clarify the need, determine the most appropriate pathway, identify suitable specialists, coordinate service agreements and milestones, and monitor delivery.
- Final decisions about participating organisations and the level of support remain with the Anthony Costa Foundation Board.

Completing your Expression of Interest (EOI)

The EOI is the application process for organisations seeking support through the Organisational Capacity Building Grants.

To submit an EOI you must be registered as an Organisation in the Anthony Costa Foundation's grant portal. EOIs will only be accepted via the portal. If you are not already registered in the portal please contact foundation@costafamilyoffice.com.au.

The EOI is designed to help the Foundation understand what an organisation learned from the Springboard Diagnostic, the organisational capability it most wants to strengthen, and its readiness to undertake the work.

Information requested in the EOI

- organisation details and key contacts
- the most important insights or findings from the diagnostic results
- the one or two organisational effectiveness areas the organisation most wants to strengthen
- the key organisational challenge or opportunity to be addressed
- the potential difference for the organisation, the people or communities it serves, and its long-term sustainability
- why this is an important time for the organisation to undertake the work
- who will participate in and champion the work
- how the Board and leadership team support the work
- the organisation's willingness to contribute to shared learning and evaluation.

Applicants **must** attach the relevant summary page or pages from their Springboard Diagnostic report that support the capability priority identified in the EOI.

A word version of the EOI questions are available to download from the Foundation's website.

Applications will be accepted until 11:59pmon Friday 23 October. EOIs will be reviewed at the Foundation's December 2026 Board meeting. Organisations will be advised about the outcomes before 24 December 2026. Benefolk triage, planning and provider matching will begin from January 2027.

Assessment & Decision Making

Foundation and Benefolk staff will assess the EOIs together. Benefolk will contribute specialist organisational capacity-building expertise, while the Foundation will consider alignment with the purpose and priorities of the Organisational Capacity Building Grants. Recommendations will then

be presented to the Anthony Costa Foundation Board, which will make the final decisions about participating organisations.

EOIs will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Alignment between diagnostic findings and identified priority
- Significance of the challenge or opportunity
- Potential for impact
- Organisational readiness and commitment
- Commitment to shared learning

Assessment will consider the EOI as a whole. A higher diagnostic need score alone will not determine selection. The Foundation will also consider the organisation's clarity, readiness, leadership commitment, potential impact and ability to engage meaningfully in the work.

Participation, Reporting & Evaluation

Successful organisations will be expected to:

- participate in Benefolk's triage and planning process
- nominate an internal champion and ensure appropriate leadership and Board involvement
- work constructively with matched advisers or service providers
- commit the time and organisational resources needed to participate and implement agreed actions
- take part in appropriate check-ins, pre- and post-support evaluation and reporting
- share learning with other participants and the broader community sector where appropriate

Evaluation and learning requirements are intended to help participating organisations, Benefolk and the Foundation understand what changed, what contributed to progress and what can inform future capacity-building support.

Privacy & Use of Diagnostic Information

Each organisation receives its own Springboard report. Individual responses within that report are de-identified. The Anthony Costa Foundation receives an aggregated view of Springboard diagnostic results, rather than individual respondent-level data.

Organisations are asked to attach only the relevant summary page or pages from their own Springboard report to support their EOI. Information provided through the EOI will be used by the Foundation and Benefolk to assess the request, plan appropriate support and evaluate the Organisational Capacity Building Grants and associated support.

Additional Information & Questions

Questions, including requests to access the Springboard Diagnostic or the Foundation's funding portal can be directed to the Anthony Costa Foundation at foundation@costafamilyoffice.com.au.

Potential applicants should also read/review all information provided on the Foundation's website.