

Community Learning Partnerships

Guidelines for Project Funding 2007



Adult Education
in the Community

Applications close Tuesday August 7, 2007

Applications are to be forwarded to your Regional Council

Introduction

The Community Learning Partnerships (CLPs) initiative was outlined in the Ministerial Statement on ACE, *Future Directions for Adult Community Education in Victoria (2004)*. It is a key initiative under *Strategy 1 – Broadening the role of ACE*. The initiative focuses on expanding the range of existing relationships, and building new ones, between ACE organisations, government and community.

Growing Victoria Together: A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and Beyond (2005) and *A Fairer Victoria: Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage (2005)* demonstrate the State Government's commitment and willingness to listen and respond to matters raised by the community. These two key documents provide a framework to address community issues into the future and facilitate community building and strengthening. Both promote the principle of a joined up approach to building the economy and access to government resources, and the need for relationships between the private and community sectors.

Through CLPs, ACE provides a connection between community and government, thereby aligning with the Government's commitment to supporting communities to take the initiative in addressing local issues.

The CLP initiative provides an opportunity for ACE organisations to extend their use of alternative learning approaches (i.e. other than traditional delivery strategies) to address community needs in partnership with other stakeholders.

What are Community Learning Partnerships?

C ommunity:	the setting and the participants (where and who)
L earning:	the activities and the outcome (what)
P artnership:	the process (how)

CLPs are working arrangements between existing organisations; they are NOT entities in their own right. They are collaborative arrangements that bring together organisations to achieve learning outcomes for adults.

CLPs acknowledge and build on the achievements, and teaching and learning approaches, of ACE organisations. They also build on the experiences of Learning Towns and Community Building Hubs. They use community based learning approaches to provide learners with skills in community strengthening activities. The learning that results is part of the solution to local issues.

For many years, the Government has largely been involved in ACE by funding organisations to deliver to individual learners. Broadening the role of ACE through community learning partnerships means:

1. ACE organisations, as partners with other organisations in the community, can harness a range of community resources and groups to meet community and individual learning needs;
2. The 'whole-person' approach currently used by ACE organisations is extended. CLPs draw on current research in social learning, learning communities and community strengthening to implement government objectives for communities and learners;
3. Social capital (networks, communications, civic society) is built through a participative and community-based approach to learning;
4. A framework is provided for the Government to enhance its responsiveness to the different social, economic and regional concerns across Victoria;
5. Government can become more deeply involved with Victorian communities. As a result, local community networks are enhanced, communications and social learning outcomes improved, and learning opportunities increased.

In 2007 the ACFE Board will allocate funds to support an increased number of Community Learning Partnership projects. Projects will be funded in diverse locations and contribute to addressing a wide range of community needs and issues. It is the Board's intention to support at least one CLP project in each ACFE region.

What is the ‘Community’ in a CLP?

Community: the **setting** and the **participants**
(**where** and **who**)

At the most basic level a community is a set of people who have something in common. That could be a location (street, suburb, town), or a situation (farmers, refugees), or an interest (museums, IT) or a characteristic (age, gender, culture). As a result of being a community, they may share resources, opportunities, issues, needs and consequences. The range of ‘communities’ that have been participated in CLPs funded in previous years include:

- people from the same neighbourhood in larger towns and cities;
- people in small rural towns;
- people with disability;
- people who share a common ethnic background;
- people involved in an industry sector across a region;
- young people in a town or local government area;
- koori people; and
- people with a need to develop particular skills.

In your application you will need to clearly describe the community that is the setting for your CLP and the things that the people who are participating have in common that will be important in the activities of your project.

What is the ‘Learning’ (and who are the learners) in a CLP?

Learning: the **activities** and the **outcome**
(**what**)

The learning in CLPs most often occurs when people and organisations take part in activities. It is flexible and informal learning, and is not usually classroom or lesson-plan based. The learning occurs both within and because of the CLP.

The learners in a CLP can include any or all of:

- the CLP partners who learn through the experience of partnering;
- the participants involved in the activities developed by the CLP who learn through the activity;
- the community, that learns to build new capacity through partnership.

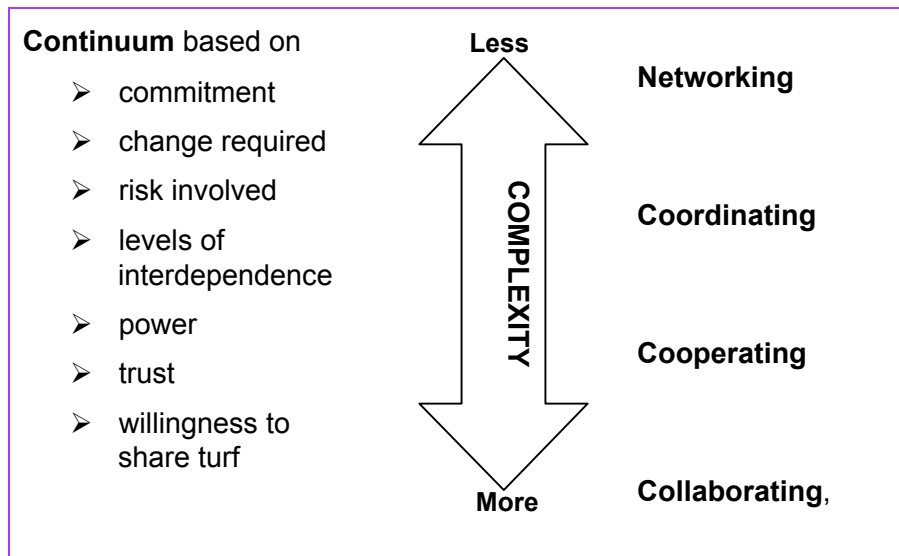
The learning encourages and assists the individuals, organisations and communities involved to develop or improve their skills and knowledge and to pool resources and expertise to address issues or needs within communities.

In your application you will need to outline the sort of learning activities that you envisage your project supporting and the learning for people, organisations and the whole community that will result.

What is the 'Partnership' in a CLP?

Partnership: the process
(how)

Partnerships can be formed on a range of levels (see below). While successful CLPs will often be working at the higher levels of those indicated below (cooperation and collaboration), networking and coordination may be important initial stages in partnering relationships, or the extent of the relationship for some partners.



Hierarchy of partnerships (after VicHealth Partnership Analysis Tool)

Networking involves the exchange of information for mutual benefit.

Coordinating involves exchanging information and altering activities for a common purpose.

Cooperating involves exchanging information, altering activities and sharing resources

Collaborating, in addition to the other activities described, includes enhancing the capacity of the other partner for mutual benefit and an agreed purpose

Forming a partnership

Building an effective and appropriate partnership to tackle an issue is a key task. The CLP provides an opportunity for an ACE organisation to develop a partnership to respond to and address a community need or issue.

Meeting with and speaking to the range of locally based agencies is often a good place to start. ACE Regional Councils, local and state government, community groups, sporting clubs, libraries, service clubs, etc. all have knowledge of local needs/issues, and may be willing to work with ACE organisations and other community partners to address these needs and issues.

Every partnership is unique, but your partnership is most likely to succeed if:

- each partner has clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities;
- the partners complement each other and have some shared goals and values, as well as a mutual respect;
- the role each takes builds on their achievements and strengths;
- the way each partner benefits from sharing ability, expertise, resources, etc is clear to all;
- each partner is clear and realistic about what the partnership can achieve in responding to the community need/issue;
- partners share in decisions about the use of partnership resources, including the funds allocated by the ACFE Board;
- there is an equitable contribution to and benefit from the partnership for all partners.

You need to include details of the organisations you propose as partners in your application. You also need to demonstrate that they are committed to being involved (eg letters of support). If your application is successful you'll need to supply evidence of more formal agreements.

All partners must be legal entities (eg incorporated association, company limited by guarantee) and have appropriate levels of public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

How might partners contribute?

Partner contributions may include in-kind support, financial contributions, technical expertise, labour, etc. The total value of contributions (cash and in-kind) made by the partners is expected to be at least equal to the CLP grant accessed by the ACE organisation.

What are the outcomes and benefits of a CLP?

CLPs can have outcomes and benefits for all stakeholders. *Learning is the desired outcome of a community learning partnership.*

For **ACE organisations** a CLP can:

- broaden the range of ways they provide learning opportunities and outcomes to the community;
- position them as a focal point for community, business and government seeking a community based approach to responding to local needs and issues;
- increase their linkages and partnerships with the wider community, business, industry and government;
- increase the range and effectiveness of their responses (including learning strategies) to community needs and issues.

For **partnering organisations** being a member of a CLP can:

- build their awareness of learning as a key to addressing needs and issues;
- be an opportunity for learning that enhances their capacity to establish long-term and sustainable relationships;
- increase sharing of resources, knowledge and skills;
- increase their community responsiveness.

For **the community** and its members the presence and activities of a CLP can:

- increase their awareness of the role of learning as an activity and outcome of community strengthening activities;
- build and strengthen the community through networking, decision making, advocacy, leadership and community based activities;
- develop capability and responsiveness to identify and address local needs and issues;
- improve and increase skills, knowledge and capacity of community and individuals to actively participate in social and civic learning and leadership;
- be a way to move individuals from observing to participating, partnering or leading.

ACFE Board funds to support a CLP

What amounts are available?

In 2007, amounts between \$10,000 and \$50,000 are available to support CLPs. The level of funding will depend on the size, complexity and duration of the project. It is up to you to decide the level of funds you wish to apply for to support your project – there are no pre-determined levels. Funds will be paid to the ACE organisation to support its contribution to the partnership.

Who applies?

Applications must come from an eligible ACE organisation. This does not mean that the ACE organisation must be the lead organisation in the CLP.

If the ACFE Board funds the project, the ACE organisation which applied is accountable for them. Grants will be made via an addendum to the Funding and Service Agreement between the ACE organisation and Regional Council.

What sort of projects will be funded?

CLP funding will **only** be allocated to projects that demonstrate that they

- have learning as an outcome; **and**
- are addressing needs that are widely recognised as having broad community impact; **and**
- require the skills and resources of an ACE organisation to support learning; **and**
- require the skills and resources of more than one organisation.

As part of the selection process, your application will be ranked on the basis of evidence that it meets the following key criteria:

- The partner organisations will work together in ways that are appropriate to the needs of the project.
- The partner organisations are committed to the project.
- The project includes a diverse range of learning strategies and outcomes.
- The project includes activities and strategies that offer learning opportunities to stakeholders.
- The outcomes/activities of the project can be sustained beyond the formal duration of the project.
- The ACE organisation applying for funding has a proven capacity to meet its funding obligations (Note: This information will be provided by the Regional Council)

Demonstrating one or more of the following characteristics will also strengthen your application.

- The project and partnership are creative and innovative for the community.
- The project adds strength, depth or a different dimension to existing partnership projects (including existing CLPs).
- The project extends or complements (but does not duplicate) existing services in the community.

How long can a project run?

The 2006 evaluation of the CLP initiative identified that 12 months was not long enough for more complex CLP projects to achieve their outcomes. In this round, projects can run for up to 18 months. However, smaller or less complex projects may be more successful if they operate over a shorter timeframe. You will need to nominate the duration you intend the project to operate for in your application.

Exemplar projects

The ACFE Board is keen to promote and improve the profile of CLPs and ACE. One of the mechanisms for achieving this aim is to promote successful partnerships, their processes and learning outcomes.

In 2007 *up to 5* CLP projects will receive additional funding to enable them to document and promote their project and its processes and outcomes across the state to assist in raising the profile and quality of CLPs.

These will be projects which:

- model best practice in the three elements of a CLP (community, learning and partnership);
- improve and promote the profile of ACE and the ACE sector; and
- could be replicated in other parts of the state.

The additional funding will be made available only for the additional promotion or documentation of the project, and there will be specific mention of these activities in the funding agreements for exemplar projects. The Minister for Skills, Education Services and Employment will be invited to launch exemplar projects.

You will be asked to indicate on your application whether you want your project to be one of the 5 considered for additional funding as an exemplar project in 2007.

Making an application

Note: This application process is NOT the same as for previous years

Timelines

Date	Activity
18 June	Guidelines and applications process released.
18 June – 7 August	Development of funding applications.
7 August	Applications close with Regional Council.
7 – 13 August	Regional CLP Application Evaluation process undertaken.
13 August	Regional recommendations finalised and forwarded to ACFE.
20 August	Statewide moderation conducted and recommendations to the ACFE Board finalised.
30 August	ACFE Board decision.
3 – 5 September	Notification of ACFE Board decision to all applicants by Regional Councils
September 2007 – March 2009	CLPs funded and monitored.

Completing your application

In response to feedback in the evaluation of the 2006 CLP process, there is only one application involved in 2007.

Applications must be made on the form provided. Please observe the suggested word limits.

In addition to completing the application form you must supply the following as part of your application:

- letters of support from proposed partners; and
- a full budget including contributions from each partner.

Assessment of applications

Your Regional Council will establish a Regional CLP Application Evaluation Panel to consider all applications. Each application will be assessed in terms of the evidence that is supplied in relation to the criteria outlined on page 5, following the procedures outlined in the Application Evaluation Sheet (attached). The outcomes of this process will be taken to a statewide process that makes recommendation to the ACFE Board for projects to be funded.

The role of Regional Councils of ACFE

Regional Councils of ACFE have a critical and ongoing role in relation to CLPs.

ACFE regional staff will:

- conduct a briefing session for stakeholders;
- be available to assist in developing an application for funding, including
 - identifying community issues and needs;
 - identifying potential partners and supporting the development of partnerships;
 - providing information about policy and planning contexts relevant to projects;
- assist in the support and monitoring of successful projects.

Each Regional Council will convene a Regional CLP Application Evaluation Panel made up of regional councillors, representatives of other government departments and other people with relevant expertise. This group will consider all applications and make recommendations to the statewide selection process.

What is the payment process?

CLPs will receive 80% of allocated funds when the offer of funds for the project is accepted and a Funding Agreement is signed. Payment of the final 20% will occur on acceptance by ACFE of the final report on the project.

What is the reporting process?

CLPs will report on their activities and achievements to the Regional Council using the *Measuring Impact* project evaluation tool and in line with other reporting and financial acquittal requirements of the Funding and Service Agreement.

CLPs may be requested to contribute to state-wide documentation of their activities and outcomes to inform the expansion of the program and to assist other ACE organisations considering CLP participation in future funding rounds.

NOTE: Training and support in the use of the *Measuring Impact* project evaluation tool will be provided to all projects funded under the 2007 CLP Initiative.

SAMPLE APPLICATION EVALUATION SHEET

Name of project			
ACE organisation			
Lead organisation <i>(if not ACE organisation)</i>			
Funds requested		Project duration	
Is there evidence in the application that the project:		Yes/No	Comment
• has learning as an outcome;			
• addresses needs that are widely recognised as having broad community impact;			
• requires the skills and resources of an ACE organisation to support learning;			
• requires the skills and resources of more than one organisation.			
Projects that do not meet the four conditions above will not be funded			
Please rank the information in the application against the following criteria:			
	Clearly evident	Some evidence	Not evident
<i>Key criteria (rank information against all of the following)</i>			
Partner organisations will work together in ways that are appropriate to the needs of the project.			
Partner organisations are committed to the project.			
Project diversifies the learning strategies within an ACE organisation.			
Project includes activities and strategies that offer learning opportunities to stakeholders.			
The outcomes/activities of the project that can be sustained beyond the formal duration of the project are identified.			
<i>Additional criteria (information provided to be ranked against at least one of the following).</i>			
Project and partnership are creative and innovative for this community.			
Project adds strength, depth or a different dimension to existing partnership projects (including existing CLPs).			
Project extends or complements (but does not duplicate) existing services in the community.			