Relationships Australia
Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS)
Small Grants and Bursaries Program Guidelines for Applicants
February 2026 Round

The Small Grants and Bursaries (SGB) Program is a component of the national Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS) provided by Relationships Australia organisations led by Relationships Australia South Australia (RASA). ICAFSS was redesigned in 2021, and now includes three components: Therapeutic Care, Community Capacity Building and Small Grants and Bursaries (SGB). ICAFSS is funded by the Department of Social Services, and the SGB budget allocation is $50,000 (nationally) per financial year. The SGB program is overseen by the SGB Reference Group.

Applications for this grant round must be received by the 6 March 2026. Please send applications to icafss@rasa.org.au.

How much SGB Program funding can I apply for?
The maximum amount payable for Grants will be $5,000 per application and the maximum amount payable for Bursaries will be $500 per application. However, the SGB Reference Group acknowledges that there may be exceptional circumstances that warrant the funding of Small Grants and Bursaries outside of these limits. We invite anyone who requires funds that are in excess of these amounts, to contact us prior to submitting an application to discuss this.

Purpose
The purpose of the SGB Program is to support and address the needs of the intercountry adoption community in ways that may not be possible through the Therapeutic Care or Community Capacity Building components of the service.

The SGB Program is intended to support adoptees and adoptive families to connect with others with shared experiences, support the development of community based initiatives and to support adoptees through small contributions to costs associated with their adoption (bursaries).

The primary focus of the SGB Program is to fund Grants directed to projects and activities that enable peer groups or intercountry adoptee and family support community organisations to build connection and support. Bursaries are a secondary element that are approved in   exceptional circumstances to assist individual adoptees *only* with a small contribution toward the cost of practical items.

From November 2021 to March 2022, the SGB Reference Group conducted a community and stakeholder consultation to identify the primary needs, gaps and priorities that could be addressed

by the SGB Program. Through that consultation, the following broad categories of activities were identified as priorities for small grants:

- · Activities, events, workshops and projects for and by the intercountry adoption community including networking, peer support and mentorship activities.
- · Development of resources authored by those with lived experience of intercountry adoption.
- · supporting adoptive parents as well as adoptees (and adoptees across all stages of the life course).
- · Promoting cultural connection (language, culture, cooking, etc) through workshops, etc.

SGB Assessment Panel

An SGB Assessment Panel approved by the SGB Reference Group will assess SGB applications and make recommendations to RASA for decision on the awarding of SGB funds.

The SGB Assessment Panel will comprise representatives of the SGB Reference Group, state and territory ICAFSS providers and Networks of InterCountry Adoption Lived Experience (NICALE) members as appropriate.

Principles in Awarding Small Grants

Please read the following information carefully to ensure your ideas/ application meets the requirements of the grant objectives.

The following principles will guide the selection of successful applications under the program:

- The project for which a grant is sought is requested/endorsed by, and of benefit to, the intercountry adoption community
- Use of current evidence and accurate information in resource development activities including provision of referral information on available community and support services
- Priority will be given to high quality regional and remote small grants or bursary applications
- The applicant (and where relevant their auspice organisation) demonstrates capacity to administer the grant, and is capable and financially viable to achieve the outcome sought
- The application will meet the objectives and principles of the ICAFSS program and these SGB Program Guidelines
- Fairness and impartiality
- Consistency and transparency of process

Tips for Applicants for Small Grants:

- · Achievable activities and goals.
- · Alignment with the objectives and principles of the ICAFSS and SGB.
- · Clearly identified need and community interest.
- · Clear benefits for the target group – those affected by intercountry adoption.
- · Realistic timeframe.

- Clear budget and appropriate value for money.
- Relevant knowledge, skills and experience to deliver the activity,
- Access to necessary resources to deliver the activity.

Applications for travel/accommodation support.
If your Small Grant application includes a component of travel and/or accommodation support for attendees, please note that there is a maximum available of $500 per person.

COVID Management Plans
All applications must include a COVID Management Place relevant to the state/area the activity is being held in, and adhere to lockdown and /or social distancing rules at the time.

Principles in Awarding Bursaries

- Available significant funding exists for practical items that are the subject of Bursary application
- Funding sought is directly related to inter-country adoption matters
- Funding for practical items sought is not available from other sources
- Applicants cannot reasonably afford the full or partial cost of practical items sought
- Practical items sought are priority needs and time-critical for the applicant

Tips for Bursary Applicants:
- Evidence of cost for practical items is substantially available
- Evidence of other funding sources sought and confirmation that they are unavailable
- Bursary applicants cannot reasonably afford the full or partial cost of practical items sought
- Evidence the practical items sought will have significant therapeutic benefits and meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances.

Examples of eligible Small Grants activities and Bursaries

Small Grants funding may be used for a range of intercountry adoption related activities including but not limited to:
- Activities, events, workshops and projects for and by the intercountry adoption community, to assist with connecting with others with a shared experience. This can include peer support and mentorship activities (noting that applications must demonstrate how groups will be appropriately set up and run).
- Developing or expanding intercountry adoption specific community based initiatives
- Facilitation costs of retreats, including materials, activities and accommodation for the participants and facilitators.
- Group facilitation costs, including the cost to engage a facilitator.

- Development of resources authored by those with lived experience of intercountry adoption and inclusive of stakeholder and support service information where relevant.
- Small research projects, including multiyear projects, to be made available to ICAFSS and the Department of Social Services, and where appropriate, to the wider adoption community.

Bursary funding may be made available specifically for intercountry adoptees *only*, as a contribution to costs of practical items associated with such items as:

- Accessing or translation of birth documentation.
- Visa applications for search for origin or reunion purposes.
- Applying for country of origin citizenship.
- Access to intercountry adoption related activities for those who live in regional and remote areas.
- Brokerage for individual counselling and other services that are not already provided under the ICAFSS and are related to intercountry adoption, where the individual or family cannot reasonably afford these services.

What won't be funded by the Small Grants and Bursaries Program?

- Activities normally delivered as part of ICAFSS.
- Overseas travel.
- Expenditure outside of Australia, unless expressly approved by the Department of Social Services.
- Any activities not specifically with, or targeted for, the intercountry adoptee community.
- Any activity where there is a reasonable likelihood of causing offence, particularly to those who have experienced intercountry adoption.
- Any costs incurred in the preparation of the grant application
- Equipment and assets, including IT/computer hardware, business software and systems, telephones, vehicles, office equipment (e.g. printers, furniture, office supplies, stationery).
- Ongoing or recurrent organisation and administration costs such as advertising, rent, electricity, telephone, insurance, security systems, accounting and auditing, legal and membership fees, ongoing website costs, printing (except SGB administration costs).
- Financial and legal work or advice.
- Advocacy or any activities that would be considered as part of a political campaign, lobbying or promoting views contrary to existing Australian Government or Australian Law.
- Activities that will result in profit.
- Employment of ongoing staff and associated staff costs.

Who can apply?

Individuals, organisations and peer groups who are providing or seeking support in relation to intercountry adoption lived experience.

Priority will be given to applications where there is no other funding source and/or applications for community needs that have not previously received funding. Applications from organisations which already receive some funding may only be eligible for partial funding.

Groups that are not incorporated may apply for funding and will need to provide a nominated incorporated agency to receive funds and report on expenditure under acceptable auspice arrangements.

Applications developed in partnership with other groups or organisations will be considered.

How many rounds of funding will there be each year?
It is anticipated there will be two (2) grant rounds in each financial year. The amount available in round 2 is dependent on how much was allocated in round 1.

How often can an individual or group/organisation apply for an SGB Program funding?
More than one application can be made per grant round, providing applicants do not hold an existing open grant agreement i.e. one in which the activity, its reporting requirements or financial reconciliation have not been finalised.

Assessment of your application
The SGB Assessment Panel reviews all applications based on the criteria and weighting below. Applicants are encouraged to include all relevant information for the Panel to consider.

Description & Delivery of the Activity	70%	1. Overview of the Activity–description of how the Grant or Bursary addresses the grant objectives and criteria, including details on identified gaps and priorities the Activity plans to address, dates and people involved 2. Budget clearly identified and realistic 3. Benefit clearly identified, clear and achievable outcomes aligned to the Grant Objectives.
Activity Management	10%	4. The Group/organisation complies with relevant legislation and insurance requirements for the activity 5. Demonstrated ability and capacity to deliver the Activity including potential risks identified and management strategies are in place 6. Bursary applications have no management costs or obligations
Impact and Evaluation	10%	7. How many people will benefit from the Grant activity or in the case of Bursary funding, how will a contribution to costs of practical items make a significant impact for individual recipients? 8. Feedback or evaluation systems in are place?
Value for Money	10%	9. Does the Grant Activity or Bursary represent appropriate value for money?

Supporting documentation for Budget items

Applicants need to supply supporting evidence (quotes) for all items listed on the budget. All grant amounts are inclusive of GST. Invoices and / or reimbursements can only be made for items and amounts specified in the budget application, (or less) so please ensure these are accurate prior to submitting your application. Any additional expenses incurred will not be covered unless by prior agreement and approval from the Grants Assessment Panel.

Note: details of all expenses must be itemised including where relevant, financial and in-kind contributions obtained from other sources to deliver the Activity.

Any additional expenses cannot be paid/reimbursed unless you have prior approval from the grant assessment panel. Please also ensure that when seeking reimbursements for approved expenses, the receipts must be in the name of the person seeking reimbursement. Should your expenses and /or activity need to change, please contact us before proceeding with your activity, as this will need to be approved by the grants assessment panel.

When will applicants be notified?

ICAFSS will notify all applicants about the outcome of their application within six weeks of the Grant Round closing.

Successful Applications

Each SGB Recipient will receive a grant recipient pack which contains important information about your rights and responsibilities in respect to the grant. Grant recipient packs will include:

- A letter of offer detailing the grant amount
- Instructions on how to accept the grant
- Instructions on how to access grant funding
- Terms and conditions of the grant

Period of Funding

The terms of the grant and expenditure of the grant funding will be strictly 12 months so that activities are delivered to the intercountry adoption community in a timely manner. If the activity is not able to be completed in this timeframe, you must notify ICAFSS in writing as to the reason why and to request an extension.

Acknowledgement of funding source

All activities funded by the Small Grants program will acknowledge funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services and received through Relationships Australia South Australia Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service.

Completion of the SGB Activity

Grant recipients are required to lodge a Final Report at the completion of their activity, and a template for this will be provided to successful applicants. This report will include:

- Explanation about how grant funding was used during the activity

- Details of the outcomes of the activity against the objectives
- Collated evaluation data, if relevant
- A copy of invoices covering the grant funds

The Final Report must be lodged within 6 weeks from the conclusion of the Activity.

Recipients who do not complete and return a Final Report will be ineligible for any future applications and funding.

The Small Grants Assessment Panel may require Interim Grant Reports and/or formal audited financial statements to be provided.

Beneficiaries of Bursaries are required to provide receipts of payment for practical items approved for funding.

Unspent Funds
Any unspent funds at the completion of the Activity must be returned to Relationships Australia South Australia no later than lodgement of Final Grant Report or 6 weeks after completion (whichever comes first).

Confidentiality
The collection, use and disclosure of information provided by SGB Program applicants will be managed by RASA in accordance with the National Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act 1988. Information regarding successful applications and funded activities will be publicly available.

Keeping the Community Up To Date
As the purpose of the SGB Grants is to enhance community participation, recipients are required to provide ICAFSS with a promotional flyer and other information about their activity that can be circulated to those on the ICAFSS database.

Accountability
The Small Grant funds are public monies and in order to be accountable we will need to make available information regarding:
- The Organisation funded
- The Activity Description
- The Grant amount
- Number of participants

Thank you for expressing interest in the Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service Small Grants and Bursaries program. Please contact us if you have any further questions on 1800 ICAFSS.