**Social Justice Small Grants Criteria 2023**

The Mercy Foundation’s Social Justice Small Grants Program provides seed funding to assist communities and organisations to build capacity that will help create structural change and bring about greater social justice in Australia.

1. **Area of focus: Respect - Confronting Violence and Abuse**

Priority will be given to projects that address the growing epidemic of family and domestic violence, particularly where it concerns women and girls, and/or groups in the community that experience inequality, discrimination or marginalisation.

The area of focus for the 2023 Social Justice Small Grants program is *Respect: confronting violence and abuse.* The theme is based on the [Social Justice Statement](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ywUe8vTK1m4wMKNG9cEdCTDcfEgSwuTN/view) released by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in 2022[[1]](#endnote-1).

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reports that family, domestic and sexual violence is a major national health and welfare issue that can have lifelong impacts for victims and perpetrators. It affects people of all ages and from all backgrounds, but predominantly affects women and children.[[2]](#endnote-2)

According to the National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2022 – 2032, violence against women and children is a problem of epidemic proportions in Australia. [[3]](#endnote-3)

One in 3 women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15

one in 5 has experienced sexual violence

On average, a woman is killed by an intimate partner every 10 days

Rates of violence are even higher for certain groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

The Social Justice Statement 2022-2023 notes that some groups are more vulnerable than others to domestic and family violence:

Women and girls with disabilities experience all forms of violence at higher rates than men with disabilities, or people without disabilities.

Young women aged 18 – 34 years were 2.7 times more likely to experience intimate partner violence than women over 35 years

People who identify as LGBTQI+, people living outside major cities, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are also more vulnerable to violence than other groups.

Family and domestic violence is overrepresented in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, impacted by colonization and ongoing racism.

Additionally, 1 in 6 older Australians experience some form of abuse, being psychological, neglect, financial, physical and sexual.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, financial or spiritual, the roots are abuse of power and the control of one person over another.

The National Action Plan identifies four domains for action:

**Prevention** – working to change the underlying social drivers of violence by addressing the attitudes and systems that drive violence against women and children to stop it before it starts.

**Early intervention** – identifying and supporting individuals who are at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence and prevent it from reoccurring.

**Response** – providing services and supports to address existing violence and support victim-survivors experiencing violence, such as crisis support and police intervention, and a trauma-informed justice system that will hold people who use violence to account.

**Recovery and healing** – helping to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation and supporting victim-survivors to be safe and healthy to be able to recover from trauma and the physical, mental, emotional, and economic impacts of violence.

**Projects that address one or more of the four domains will be well regarded.**

1. **General Criteria**

The following criteria will be used to assess Social Justice Small Grant applications:

* Innovative projects that require seed funding to increase social equity and inclusion and challenge unjust structures and systems will be prioritised.
* The Mercy Foundation prioritises projects that target disadvantaged women and/or women with children, regardless of the annual social justice focus issue.
* Applications are accepted for projects that are run wholly within Australia, by community-based groups or organisations based in Australia.
* Organisations applying for funds must be a legal entity (or auspiced by a legal entity), not-for-profit and therefore exempt from income tax, but are not required to have Deductible Gift Recipient status.
* Small to medium organisations with a turnover of less than $3,000,000 with limited access to other funding sources are prioritised.
* Social Justice Small Grants are **not available** to fund:
	1. Core (normal) operating costs of applicant organisations
	2. Vehicles
	3. For-profit organisations
	4. Private individuals
	5. Projects that require recurrent funding
	6. General fundraising appeals
	7. Research
	8. Deficit funding
	9. Duplication of existing services
	10. Organisations that have, or have access to, significant government or other funding
	11. Government entities
	12. Projects that do not meet the identified goals and priorities of the Mercy Foundation.
1. **Other considerations:**
2. Organisations **must** have a safeguarding policy in place prior to funding (refer to the ACNC website for more information).
3. The objectives of the project must be clear and measurable.
4. Organisations must demonstrate capacity to implement and manage the project.
5. Organisations need to explain how a project will continue if the key person (who might be a board member, staff member or volunteer organiser) leaves the project while it is still being implemented.
6. The application should include how the project will be evaluated and what developments or future actions will come from the project.
7. Applications require the completion of the appropriate application form and a brief description of the organisation and an annual report or similar document to substantiate the organisation’s status.
8. Applicants must provide referees who can vouch for the organisation’s competencies and the project’s viability.

The applications will be assessed and prioritised for funding according to the above criteria, with consideration given to ensuring there is a fair representation of projects from different states across Australia.

Please contact the Mercy Foundation on 02 9911 7390 or email office@mercyfoundation.com.au if you have any questions about grant eligibility guidelines.

1. Social Justice Statement 2022-2023, available at <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia: Continuing the National Story 2019 (Canberra, Act: AIHW, 2019) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2022 – 2032 <https://www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. [https://aifs.gov.au/projects/elder-abuse-research December 2021](https://aifs.gov.au/projects/elder-abuse-research%20December%202021)

**Resources:**

Social Justice Statement 2022-2023, available at <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2022 – 2032 <https://www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence>

NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022 – 2027 <https://bit.ly/3PQdSvq>

1800 RESPECT <https://www.1800respect.org.au> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)