

# Community Improvement District (CID) Pilot Program

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

November 2023

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### What is a Community Improvement District?

Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) are an internationally recognised tool for businesses and the community to work together to contribute to great neighbourhoods. CIDs are business-led, place-based partnerships that bring businesses together to support and grow local economies, high streets, and centres. They help enhance the local trading environment, encourage economic growth and deliver civic pride. They are a way to give businesses and communities the autonomy and liberty to create thriving local places.

A CID is specific to a defined local area. Once established, government, business, and the community work collaboratively to determine what the CID will set out to deliver, and how it will do so.

The purpose of a CID is to complement and supplement, not replace, the responsibilities and efforts of other entities i.e. local councils.

For more information download:

- White Paper – [‘Enabling Local Business Improvement Districts’](#)
- Policy Paper – [‘Next Steps for Business Improvement Districts: What we’ve heard and principles for future policy’](#)

### Who is eligible for funding?

The CID Pilot Program is open to applicants that identify as one of the following and meet eligibility requirements as outlined in [CID Pilot Program Guidelines](#):

- Local council within NSW who can provide evidence of place-based collaboration and partnership with local business/property owners.
- Incorporated association within NSW with core functions in place management, economic development, town improvement, tourism, or similar (e.g. chamber of commerce, high street/main street association or business association).
- Company limited by guarantee within NSW with core functions in place management, economic development, town improvement, tourism, or similar (e.g. chamber of commerce, high street/main street association or business association).

### Who do we contact if we have any questions?

Contact the team via email: [communityimprovementdistricts@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communityimprovementdistricts@transport.nsw.gov.au)

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## How to apply and when do applications close?

Complete and submit your Preliminary Application via the SmartyGrants portal available at [place.smartygrants.com.au](https://place.smartygrants.com.au) by **4pm, Tuesday 28 November 2023**. If shortlisted, the department will invite shortlisted applicants to submit a final application. Final applications will be due for submission by **4pm, Tuesday 27 February 2024**.

Acknowledgement of receipt of application will be via return email.

The assessment process is competitive and applications with insufficient detail will be disadvantaged during the assessment process. Applicants should ensure they provide as much relevant information as possible with their application.

## When will successful applicants be announced?

Successful applicants for the CID Pilot Program are due to be announced in April 2024.

## What are the benefits of a CID?

The key benefits include:

- Stimulate local economies and create vibrant urban centres
- Encourage well-managed and maintained public spaces
- Promote connected and resilient communities
- Improve safety and access at all times of day

## Why are CIDs being proposed in NSW?

According to the 'public spaces during COVID-19 survey' (NSW Government, 2021), the most common reasons for visiting local high streets were to shop or access services (87%) and visit cafés and restaurants (61%).

CIDs can help enhance the local trading environment, encourage economic growth, and deliver civic pride. The partnerships created can enable collective action from businesses to address issues impacting the local economy and form a powerful tool for involving local businesses in local activities.

There are a small number of CID-like entities already in place in NSW, however, the process for establishing new CIDs is difficult and time-consuming.

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Therefore, the NSW Government is currently exploring new policy to make it easier for CIDs to be set up in places where local businesses and the community think they would be useful. The outcomes of this CID Pilot Program will help to build an evidence base to inform the future enabling environment of CIDs in NSW.

## Why are we doing a CID Pilot Program?

In September 2022 and February 2023 Transport for NSW released two papers, the White Paper [Enabling Local Business Improvement Districts](#) and a Policy Paper [Next steps for Business Improvement Districts: What we've heard and principles for future policy](#) respectively.

These documents explored why NSW does not currently have Improvement Districts, and what can be done to make it easier for Improvement Districts to contribute to neighbourhood place making. It was identified that there was a need for a pilot program to test Improvement District principles to both harness the strong stakeholder support and enthusiasm for Improvement Districts in NSW, and help generate insights on appropriate CID policy in NSW.

## What is the CID Pilot Program?

The CID Pilot Program is a \$2.75 million grant program that will provide successful applicants with funding ranging from \$150,000 up to \$400,000. The program will fund the delivery of trial CID models that test the viability of diverse governance models in place to strengthen the local place economy which will inform a consistent state-wide approach to CID policy.

It is a two-stage pilot program:

- **Stage One 'Registration of Interest'** – Organisations expressed their interest to participate in the Stage Two 'Funding Round'. This stage is now closed but it was not a prerequisite to partake in Stage Two.
- **Stage Two 'Funding Round'** – Formal applications for funding by eligible parties to undergo a two-stage assessment process (Preliminary Application and Final Application) by the NSW Government.

The requirements for Stage Two 'Funding Round' have been determined following a review of information from Stage One 'Registration of Interest'.

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### What are the two-stages of application in the ‘Funding Round’?

The application process will involve a Preliminary Application stage followed by an invitation to shortlisted applicants to submit a Final Application to apply for funding.

The two-stage application process:

1. **Preliminary Application** – A high level application to confirm eligibility.
  - Applicants will be advised if they have been shortlisted and only shortlisted applicants will be able to apply for funding through submission of a Final Application.
2. **Final Application** – A detailed application for shortlisted applicants.

This approach seeks to minimise the resourcing impact required to prepare an application.

### Why should my organisation participate in the CID Pilot Program?

The CID Pilot Program will be an Australian-first in its scope and intent. This is a unique opportunity to receive government funding to support long-term business architecture, partnership, and simultaneously boost the place and economic vitality of a project location.

Some of the benefits of councils, businesses, and organisations participating include, but are not limited to:

- CID networking and support
- Increased marketing and brand awareness, unique positioning of your town centre and place to attract people and create a sense of community
- Customer attraction and business networking opportunities
- Physical upgrades and improvements to a high street or town centre through place activations
- Further opportunities for businesses to become involved in place governance conversations in NSW

Participating councils, businesses, and organisations will also serve as key stakeholders in informing the future policy of CIDs in NSW.

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### What are some examples of projects that will be delivered under the CID Pilot Program?

It will be the responsibility of councils, companies limited by guarantee, or incorporated associations to propose what they would like to trial with the funding for their district in Stage Two of the CID Pilot Program.

The Stage Two 'Funding Round' will prescribe trialling a mix of CID governance, strategy, planning, and on-the-ground activities. Examples of interventions to undertake in pilot projects include, but are not limited to:

#### Non-physical interventions:

- Governance Models (e.g. location, size and structure, operational models)
- Strategic Planning (e.g. business plan, engagement survey/ polling, financial strategy)
- Partnerships and Collaboration (e.g. District Charter, Memorandum of Understanding)
- District Brand and Vision (e.g. place identity and vision, district branding strategy, activation framework)
- Smart technology (e.g. data analysis, floorspace audit, trad area analysis, economic profiling)

#### Physical interventions:

- Creative placemaking interventions (e.g. public art, shade, landscaping, seating, lighting, and outdoor dining)
- Well-managed and maintained public spaces (e.g. security services, cleaning services, and/or making environmental and amenity improvements)
- Activities and projects to improve economic vitality within an area (e.g. campaigns to encourage people to shop locally and programs to turn vacant shopfronts into creative/ pop-up retail spaces)

#### International and Local CID model examples:

- [Newcastle Business Improvement Associations](#) – Newcastle, NSW Australia
- [New West End Company](#) – London, United Kingdom
- [Times Square Alliance](#) – New York City, United States of America
- [Cape Town City Centre Improvement District](#) – Cape Town, South Africa

### My organisation applied for a Registration of Interest for Stage One, do we need to apply again for Stage Two?

By completing a Stage One Registration of Interest, parties have assisted in shaping the development of the Stage Two 'Funding Round'.

If you completed a Registration of Interest in Stage One, you will still be required to apply for the Stage Two 'Funding Round'.

Stage One is not a prerequisite or requirement to participate in Stage Two.

### Is the CID Pilot Program open to all areas of NSW?

Yes, the CID Pilot Program is open to all regional and metropolitan areas in NSW.

Eligible projects must be located within one district location, which can span more than one Local Government Area (LGA) within NSW.

### Are existing CID-like entities eligible?

Yes, provided they meet the eligibility criteria set out in the [CID Pilot Program Guidelines](#).

### Can organisations apply more than once?

Applicants applying for funding can only submit one application for one district proposal.

### How much funding is available for Stage Two of the CID Pilot Program?

NSW Government has a funding pool of \$2.75 million available, providing successful applicants with funding ranging from \$150,000 up to \$400,000.

Award of funding to projects and pilot locations will be subject to the assessment process.

### Will businesses be required to contribute additional funds to a CID pilot in their area?

As part of the CID Pilot Program, co-funding is not mandatory but may contribute to a higher score as part of the assessment process.



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### Who is administering the CID Pilot Program?

The CID Pilot Program is being delivered by the Cities and Active Transport Division within Transport for NSW. It will be financially administered by Place Management NSW.

### What support will be available to groups who participate in the CID Pilot Program?

The CID Program Team within Transport for NSW will work collaboratively with successful applicants to deliver each project. Support will be provided to share ideas, resources, mentoring and to troubleshoot any issues.

### What happens at the end of the CID Pilot Program?

The CID Pilot Program will create an evidence base (through insights, evaluation and testing of a range of models) to inform the development of policy for CIDs in NSW. This will support the development of policy options that, when in place, will make it easier for entities to operate, be sustainable, and successful.

We also hope groups of collaborating businesses, councils, and town centre partners will continue a place-based approach to managing and supporting economic development in their area.

### What evidence of support is required for a CID Pilot Program proposal?

The two-stage application process will involve a preliminary application stage followed by an invitation to shortlisted applicants to submit a final application. The two-stage process has been designed in recognition of the significant resourcing required to prepare an application. Implicit in this two-stage process is a requirement for two separate eligibility checks.

While early engagement among prospective partners is welcomed, the requirement for evidence of support for the project proposal is only required at the final application stage as outlined in Appendix B: Application Submission Requirements in the Program Guidelines.

In this regard, final applications will not be considered unless there is sufficient evidence provided by an applicant that demonstrates support or non-objection of the project proposal.

### What are the key dates for the CID Pilot Program?

The approximate timeframes for the CID Pilot Program are outlined in Timeframes (page 12) within the Program Guidelines.

### Who determines a CID Pilot Program boundary?

Under the CID Pilot Program, the applicant is to determine the boundary. Projects must be located within one district location which can span more than one Local Government Area (LGA) within NSW.

### How big or small can a CID Pilot Program boundary be?

As defined in the Glossary within the Program Guidelines, a “District is a geographically distinct micro-area (e.g., a high street or block of streets) that has a unique identity and diverse cultural and entertainment offerings across multiple venues within short walking or biking distance. A district is not an entire suburb.”

### Does everyone in the CID Pilot Program boundary need to support the application?

As outlined in Appendix B: Application Submission Requirements in the Program Guidelines, the final application stage requires:

- Evidence of support for the project proposal such as:
  - memorandum of understanding (or similar) with partnering entities,
  - letters of support or letter of no objection from at least five (5) participating entities,
  - letter of support or no objection from relevant General Manager/s, CEO/s or equivalent and where relevant public authority/s for the project,
  - evidence of consultation (e.g. detailed plans or processes that demonstrate how community support for projects has been captured, recent consultation carried out as part of a planning process, community consultation committees or surveys)

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This reflects a key objective of the program which is to drive collaboration and partnerships to support and strengthen place economy.

### Are incorporated associations or companies limited by guarantee still eligible to apply for the CID Pilot Program if they are funded via a special rate levy?

As outlined in the Eligibility Criteria (page 13) in the Program Guidelines, “Applicants are not eligible for funding where... They have received funding for the purpose of a CID or a Business Improvement District in the past five years...”

This refers to receiving State Government grant funding for the purpose of a CID or a BID. This does not apply to entities who are funded through a special rate levy.

### What is the role of councils in the application process?

The CID Pilot Program is open to all local councils within NSW who can provide evidence of place-based collaboration and partnership with local business/property owners.

An eligible incorporated association or company limited by guarantee may also ask their local council to provide evidence of support for their CID Pilot Program proposal (refer to Appendix B: Application Submission Requirements in the Program Guidelines).

### Can funding be used to support a new role or team to deliver CID Pilot Program interventions?

As outlined in the Eligibility Criteria (page 14) in the Program Guidelines, “Engaging or paying permanent employees” and “Costs related to internal human resources used on the project, including job advertising, recruiting, contract negotiations, and salaries” are considered ineligible costs under this Program.

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## How can potential partners get involved who aren't eligible to be a CID Pilot Program applicant?

As outlined in the Overview of Program (page 6) in the Program Guidelines, one of the objectives is to "Drive collaboration and partnerships between local government, property owners, and businesses to support and strengthen place economy." In the same way that "eligible applicants are encouraged to work with councils, other public authorities (where applicable), private operators and industry organisations to identify potential partnership projects" (page 13 in the Program Guidelines), so too are ineligible applicants encouraged to form partnerships with those eligible to apply.

## How is the CID Pilot Program relevant to regional NSW?

As outlined in the Overview of Program (page 6) in the Program Guidelines, one of the objectives is to "Advance the recognition, operation and regulation of CID entities in NSW."

The CID Pilot Program is open to all regional and metropolitan areas in NSW. Eligible projects must be located within one district location, which can span more than one Local Government Area (LGA) within NSW.

## Will there be a levy as part of participating in the CID Pilot Program?

No, a levy is not part of the CID Pilot Program.