

Q&A – frequently asked questions

Government grants to the wellbeing services counties and the City of Helsinki for the development of health and social services organisation activities

What is this fixed-term government grant from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health all about?

These discretionary government grants are awarded to the wellbeing services counties and the City of Helsinki to be allocated to development projects carried out by organisations. Organisations cannot apply for a government grant directly. The wellbeing services counties and the City of Helsinki will compile project proposals that they receive from organisations into a project package, for which they will then apply for a government grant from the Ministry.

The government grants are intended for developing regional health and social services organisation activities and the efforts by such organisations to promote health and wellbeing. The government grants to be allocated in 2027 total EUR 25 million. The Ministry aims to make the decisions on the government grants in early 2027.

[For further information, please visit the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health website.](#)

How will the City of Helsinki compile development projects?

The City of Helsinki will be accepting project proposals from organisations for 2027 **from 22 September to 4 October 2026**. Based on the project proposals, the City will prepare a government grant application for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, which will decide on the grants to be awarded in early 2027 at the latest. Following the Ministry's decision, the City of Helsinki will decide on the further allocation of the government grant to organisations.

Who is eligible to submit project proposals?

Only health and social services organisations may submit project proposals. The organisation must have sufficient experience and expertise in project management and expertise relevant to the proposed project. Applicants are expected to be willing to cooperate with the City of Helsinki and other stakeholders and operators.

What are the City of Helsinki's criteria and priorities for project proposals?

The criteria for project proposals submitted by organisations are based on the City of Helsinki Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division's criteria for grants for organisations, taking into account the conditions set by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health for the government grant.

The organisation activities supported with the government grant must support the objectives and priorities set out in the Helsinki City Strategy and the City's Welfare Plan and Service Strategy for the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division. The organisation activities must complement health and social services and strengthen wellbeing, health and participation, particularly among vulnerable residents of Helsinki. The activities must be based on low-threshold interactive work with the target groups and cooperation with the service system.

In the call for project proposals, the City of Helsinki's priorities are as follows:

Strengthening mental wellbeing and developing mental health and substance abuse work, with priority given to activities that:

- strengthen mental health and psychological wellbeing in everyday life
- provide low-threshold support and help at an early stage
- prevent the accumulation of mental health and substance abuse issues
- reach people who are excluded from services
- support recovery, peer activities and a sense of community
- make use of cooperation models between organisations and services.

Strengthening participation and preventing loneliness, with priority given to activities that:

- increase opportunities to participate in communities and society
- strengthen agency, equality and opportunities to make a difference
- help prevent loneliness among different age groups
- support the participation of disadvantaged people in particular

- strengthen local communities and communal environments.

Targeted interactive work to support vulnerable groups, with priority given to activities that:

- reach people who are excluded from services or who are difficult to reach
- offer low-threshold interaction, advice, peer support and guidance
- support various target groups, such as families with children, young people, people with an immigrant background, people living with a long-term illness, people with disabilities, older people, people experiencing a crisis, people experiencing mental health and substance abuse issues, and other specific groups.

Reducing inequalities in wellbeing and health, with priority given to activities that:

- reduce inequality and social exclusion
- support functional capacity and healthy lifestyles.

Developing effective cooperation models, with priority given to development work that:

- is built on cooperation between organisations; the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division; and other operators
- strengthens service coordination, client guidance and the accessibility of services
- strengthens equal access to support and activities.

Questions and answers presented at the information event on 22 September

When will decisions be made on project proposals and grants?
Will the organisations be informed about which proposals are included in the City's application before the application is submitted to the Ministry?

The City of Helsinki will accept project proposals from 22 September to 4 October 2026. Based on the proposals received, the City will prepare a government grant application and submit it to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health by 26 October. The City of

Helsinki will contact the contact persons for the projects selected for the grant application before submitting the application.

If necessary, the City may request supplementary information from the organisations that have submitted project proposals. The Ministry aims to make its grant decisions in early 2027. Following the Ministry's decision, the City of Helsinki will decide on the further allocation of the government grant to organisations.

How large of a grant and project may organisations propose? Is there an upper limit for a project's budget or are there predefined grant categories? How much funding is Helsinki seeking to obtain?

There is no information available regarding the amount to be allocated to Helsinki. You can consider the scale and budget of your project in comparison to the total national appropriation (EUR 25 million) and how it may be distributed among the wellbeing services counties and Helsinki. The Ministry will make its decision based on an overall assessment.

The aim is to support the projects of the highest quality. Helsinki will seek to draw up a comprehensive application based on the project proposals submitted by organisations. If all regions submit great applications, this will be reflected in the regional distribution of funding.

How long may the project period be? May the project be a multi-year project or a one-off event? For what period may costs be budgeted?

As a general rule, the City is looking for partnership projects in which the organisation will act as a co-implementer of activities carried out in 2027. This call for proposals will determine how the appropriation reserved in the 2027 national budget will be used.

The City of Helsinki is applying for a grant for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2027. The period during which the government grant must be spent is the year in which it is awarded and the following two years. As far as the period of use is concerned, there is nothing preventing organisations from planning activities that will span several years. However, the application must clearly explain what will be achieved with this funding provided from the 2027 national budget. A one-off event is not suitable as a project. Organisations may budget costs for 2027.

How should applicants apply for a collaborative project involving several organisations? Do they need to decide on the main applicant and draw up a joint application and letters of intent or cooperation agreements in the proposal phase?

The City of Helsinki will set up a partnership project in which organisations will act as co-implementers. The City will complete the government grant application form and bear legal responsibility for the application. The City of Helsinki must identify all co-implementers in its own government grant application and state on the budget form the amount of the grant to be further delegated to them. An organisation acting as a co-implementer may not share the grant it has received with a partner organisation.

Organisations may submit a joint project proposal to the City of Helsinki's own call for proposals, and this is recommended. It is a good idea to agree on the cooperation with representatives of the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division before submitting an application. A letter of intent is recommended. The City of Helsinki will agree on letters of intent with the organisations selected for the project before submitting its government grant application.

Do applicants need to identify their partner organisations and cities and agree on their cooperation in the proposal phase? What should applicants do if they are unable to confirm a partner by the deadline?

Applicants are expected to be willing to cooperate with the City of Helsinki and other stakeholders and operators. The City of Helsinki must identify all co-implementers in its own government grant application. Therefore, project proposals must describe the partners involved and the division of labour in the project. If the applicant is unable to confirm a partner in the proposal phase, their project proposal must state so.

Will Helsinki support or facilitate networking by applicants and their search for partners before submitting the application to the Ministry?

Applicants may propose projects and agree on cooperation with representatives of the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division. Due to the timetable for the call for proposals, it is not possible to facilitate wider networking or a wider search for

partners. The City of Helsinki will contact the selected projects before submitting its application.

Who is eligible to submit a project proposal? May parties such as national organisations or operators that have not previously received a grant from the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA), or any other grant, participate?

Only health and social services organisations may submit project proposals. The organisation must have sufficient experience and expertise in project management and expertise relevant to the proposed project. National organisations may participate as long as the activities are targeted at Helsinki residents and fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City. Organisations that have not previously received a STEA grant or any other grant may also submit a project proposal.

May organisations submit more than one project proposal or propose activities that fall under their core activities?

Projects must take into account any other ongoing development projects, the development of new solutions, best practice and the effectiveness of the activities. If the activities outlined in the organisation's project proposals fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City of Helsinki, the organisation may submit more than one project proposal. If the outlined core activities of the organisation fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City of Helsinki, the organisation may submit a project proposal relating to such activities.

The grant being applied for may not be used for activities that are either required by law or for which other funding is available. If the applicant has previously been awarded another grant for the same purpose, the project plan must clearly describe which part of the activities the applicant has carried out or will carry out using the previously awarded grant, and which measures the applicant is planning to carry out using the new government grant.

Are applicants also allowed to apply for or receive funding from other sources for the same or similar activities, apply for additional or continued funding, or use the grant as the self-financing share in another project?

Organisations may also apply for funding from other sources. Organisations may apply for additional or continued funding for the same or similar activities. If the activities outlined in the organisation's project proposal fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City of Helsinki, the organisation may submit a project proposal related to such activities. If the applicant has previously been awarded another grant for the same purpose, the project plan must clearly describe which part of the activities the applicant has carried out or will carry out using the previously awarded grant, and which measures the applicant is planning to carry out using the new government grant. The grant being applied for may not be used for activities for which other funding is available.

Applicants must declare any other grants that they have applied for and received on the project proposal form.

The City of Helsinki cannot comment on the requirements set by other financiers regarding the self-financing share or what it may consist of.

How should project proposals describe other uncertain sources of funding and alternative implementation methods if their other funding changes or comes to an end?

On the project proposal form, applicants can provide a breakdown of things such as grants previously awarded to them and grants applied for by the organisation for which a decision is still pending.

How new or innovative does the project need to be? May a proposal be based on applying a model that has proven to be effective elsewhere or on supplementing a service provided by the City?

The activities to be carried out may be either new activities, a pilot project, existing activities, or a combination of these. If the activities outlined in the organisation's project proposal fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City of Helsinki, the organisation may submit a project proposal related to such activities.

May the activities take place outside Helsinki if they are aimed at Helsinki residents?

The activities must be such that they fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City of Helsinki. The activities supported by the grant must be aimed at Helsinki residents. The City will assess the suitability of the proposed activities for its application by considering the project package as a whole.

Should the project focus on a single priority or may it combine several themes? Is Helsinki looking for a project package covering all the priorities?

The organisation's project proposal may focus on more than one priority, and the priorities may be combined. If the activities outlined in the organisation's project proposals fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City of Helsinki, the organisation may submit more than one project proposal. If the outlined core activities fit the priorities and criteria defined by the City of Helsinki, the organisation may submit a project proposal relating to such activities.

What sort of administrative, reporting and coordination obligations do the projects involve? What is the acceptable share of administrative costs? May the project make use of purchased services or subcontracting?

The forthcoming decision on the government grant will set out the procedures and schedule for reporting on the use of the grant. Organisations must submit a final report

on their project, covering the results and impacts of the activities, as well as relevant financial information, such as the allocation of income and expenses recorded under the grant, and the legality, eligibility, appropriateness, reasonableness and necessity of the expenses.

A reasonable and adequate share of the grant may be used for project management. The assessment of reasonableness compares the expenses to the scale of the project and the content of the activities, among other things. Applicants must be able to explain the basis for the administrative costs. The cost estimate included in the project application covers all costs included in the project in question.

Eligible costs are those that are necessary for the achievement of the project's objective and that are of a reasonable amount: 1. administrative costs; 2. personnel costs; 3. travel and accommodation costs; and 4. costs other than those covered by points 1 to 3 that are necessary for the achievement of the specified objective.

The City will gather the necessary information from the implementers of the organisations' development projects and report it to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

How will the equal participation and language rights of Finnish and Swedish-speaking operators be taken into account in the preparations and the selection of applicants?

When awarding grants, the City will take into account both people's right to use their own language and their right to be heard and to receive services in their own language. The aim is to support the projects of the highest quality. Helsinki will seek to draw up a comprehensive application based on the project proposals submitted by organisations.

What information will the Ministry receive about the operators put forward by the City?

The City of Helsinki will set up a partnership project in which organisations will act as co-implementers. The City of Helsinki must identify all co-implementers and state the amount of the grant to be further delegated to them in its own government grant application.