

20 July 2026



s9(2)(a)

Our ref: OIA2526-1382

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Response to your Official Information Act request

I refer to your email of 15 June 2026 to the Office of Hon Minister Mitchell. On 23 June 2026, your request was transferred to the Ministry for Ethnic Communities (the Ministry) requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Specifically, I request:

- A list of all Iranian community organisations that have received funding from the Ministry for Ethnic Communities or any related government programme since 1 January 2019*
- The amount of funding allocated to each organisation*
- The purpose for which each grant was approved*
- The dates of funding decisions*
- Any conditions, reporting requirements, or compliance expectations attached to the funding*
- Any assessments, reviews, or concerns recorded by the Ministry regarding whether funded activities align with the relevant funding guidelines*

This request includes, but is not limited to, organisations such as the Iranian Community Social Workers (ICSW) and Iranian Solidarity.

I am requesting this information to understand the scope of public funding provided and to ensure that funded activities are consistent with the guidelines and objectives of the Ministry.

In response to your request, please refer to the table in [Appendix A](#) which is attached to the response. Please note, prior to the establishment of the Ministry in 2021, the Ethnic Communities Development Fund (ECDF) was administered by the Department of Internal Affairs. Responsibility for administering the ECDF was transferred to the Ministry on 1 July 2023. As you have requested for information from 1 January 2019, we have also included that information in our response to you. The Ministry is not aware of any other related government programmes that have provided funding to Iranian community organisations.

The standard funding conditions are publicly available at: [Ethnic Communities Development Fund Make an Application](#). There were no additional conditions, reporting requirements or compliance expectations imposed beyond the standard conditions that applied to all successful applicants provided in Appendix A.

The result reports provide the Ministry with the confirmation of project completion, including information on outcomes achieved and delivery against the approved funding objectives. A summary of the assessment of the results report for each project funded is included within Appendix A. There

are two pending results reports from *Iranian Cultural Society of Wellington Incorporated* and *Welcome Academy Trust* that the Ministry has not yet received, as these reports are provided once the funded projects are complete.

Under section 28 of the OIA, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my response relating to this request. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note, due to the public interest in our work, the Ministry may publish responses to requests for official information on our website, shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team:

Ministerial@ethniccommunities.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi



Edward Firth

Director of Ministerial Services

Proactively released by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities

Appendix A – Details of the Iranian Community Organisations with fundings granted by the Ministry since 1 January 2019

Decision Date	Organisation	Funding Allocated	Purpose	Conditions	Assessment/Review
27 November 2019	Iranian Cultural Society of Wellington Incorporated	\$8,000.00	Funding towards the Nowruz festival	None	Obligations completed, no comments
6 May 2021	Al Murtaza Association (NZ) Incorporated	\$5,000.00	Funding towards a community picnic for children	None	Obligations completed, no comments
1 November 2021	Iranian Women in NZ (IWIN)	\$10,000.00	Cover costs of delivering a series of workshops and activities	None	Obligations completed, no comments
1 November 2021	Welcome Academy Trust	\$19,250.00	Funding towards a series of podcasts	None	The results report was not submitted on time due to family obligations. When the report was received, the expenditure report did not specify how the grant funds were spent. Following the Ministry's request for additional information, the recipient provided an updated report.
28 February 2022	Iranian Friendship Group East Auckland	\$7,650.00	Funding towards a programme of community activities	None	Obligations completed, no comments
31 March 2022	Iranian Women in NZ (IWIN)	\$15,000.00	Funding towards a women and art project	None	Obligations completed, no comments
27 May 2022	Welcome Academy Trust	\$19,040.00	Funding towards hosting a weekly radio programme and one year of Farsi/Persian language, dance and art classes for children and youth from the Iranian and Afghan communities	None	The expenditure report did not indicate how the grant funds had been spent. Following the Ministry's guidance and request for further information, the recipient was able to provide the required expenditure details and submit a complete report.
15 December 2022	Iranian Cultural Society of Wellington Incorporated	\$5,000.00	Funding towards the Art Event project	None	Obligations completed, no comments
7 February 2023	Al Murtaza Association (NZ) Incorporated	\$5,000.00	Funding towards a community kids picnic	None	Obligations completed, no comments
7 February 2023	Iranian Friendship Group East Auckland	\$10,000.00	Funding towards hosting several cultural events for the Iranian community in East and South Auckland areas	None	Obligations completed, no comments
6 March 2023	Iranian Women in NZ (IWIN)	\$15,000.00	Funding towards their women and welling Project	None	Obligations completed, no comments
11 December 2023	Iranian Cultural Society of Wellington Incorporated	\$4,500.00	Empowering connections: Building a vibrant Iranian Community in Wellington	None	The organisation initially submitted an expenditure report that did not provide an adequate breakdown of how the grant funds were spent. Following guidance and support, a revised expenditure report was submitted, which accurately detailed the expenditure of the grant.
1 May 2024	Welcome Academy Trust	\$5,000.00	Contributions towards Nowruz-Afghan New Year Celebration in Christchurch	None	The original event could not proceed as planned because it had already taken place before the grant was received. The recipient subsequently requested approval to use the funding for a different event with the same budget, which was approved by the assessing advisor. The expenditure report was initially omitted from the results report; however, following our request for further information, the recipient submitted the expenditure report.

Decision Date	Organisation	Funding Allocated	Purpose	Conditions	Assessment/Review
27 February 2024	Welcome Academy Trust	\$15,000.00	Support Farsi/Persian dance and art classes for children and youth of the Iranian and Afghan community	None	Due to similarities between a new funding application and an existing grant for the same project, the Ministry requested additional information about project delivery, budget costs, and community contributions. The Ministry also requested the applicant to complete the results report for the current grant before assessment of the new application could proceed. The results report was submitted but initially did not include the required expenditure report. After a follow up, the applicant provided the expenditure report. During assessment, we identified that \$795 had been spent on items that were outside the approved funding criteria. The applicant requested to reallocate this amount to administration and accounting costs, but this was declined as these are also excluded costs. The applicant was advised to either allocate the amount to an approved budget item (Farsi school tuition) or refund the funds. Following discussions, \$795 was refunded.
23 February 2024	Iranian Friendship Group East Auckland	\$10,000.00	Organizing a community and wellbeing initiative	None	Obligations completed, no comments
3 February 2026	Iranian Cultural Society of Wellington Incorporated	\$5,000.00	Funding for the Nowruz celebration	None	None – report pending
7 April 2026	Welcome Academy Trust	\$5,000.00	Funding for the “Support Farsi Speaker’s Kids and Youth” programme	None	None – report pending
15 April 2025	Iranian Friendship Group East Auckland	\$10,000.00	Funding for major Iranian festivals such as Nowruz, Mehregan Yalda Night and Sizdah Bedar	None	The applicant requested a fast-tracked decision despite repeatedly not allowing the recommended 12-week processing timeframe. There were concerns about variable application quality, limited reporting detail, and incomplete project information. Following advice, the applicant provided updated accounts and a detailed event budget. The request aligned with ECDF priorities, and despite some assessment concerns, the organisation demonstrated experience delivering similar events.
15 April 2025	Iranian Women in NZ (IWIN)	\$15,000.00	Funding for their Art and Culture project	None	The expenditure report initially submitted was inaccurate. The Ministry clarified the requirements and provided guidance with the applicant, after which an accurate report was submitted.
14 January 2025	Iranian Cultural Society of Wellington Incorporated	\$10,000.00	Funding for the Nowruz festival, Chaharshanbe Souri and Sizdah Bedar	None	The grant results report was submitted five months after the due date. Review of the expenditure report identified that \$2,300 of the \$10,000 grant had been spent on items that were outside the approved funding criteria. An updated expenditure report was requested, as the original report provided was inaccurate. Following guidance and clarification from the Ministry, the recipient submitted a revised expenditure report that accurately reflected the grant expenditure.
6 March 2025	Welcome Academy Trust	\$8,610.00	Funding for Farsi/Persian dance and art classes for children and youth from the Iranian and Afghan communities	None	Concerns were raised about the alignment of several budget items and the lack of other income identified in the budget. It was also noted that the current application could not proceed until the results report for their previous grant was completed. As the expenditure report was inaccurate, the Ministry has requested for a revised version, which has not been received. In response, the applicant advised that \$11,000 of the budget would be paid to Auckland Farsi School for delivery of language lessons and clarified that art and dance activities support the programme’s broader cultural and educational objectives. The applicant also confirmed that classes are free for participants and supported by volunteers, parents and the wider community. The results report for the previous grant remained outstanding.
12 December 2024	Al Murtaza Association (NZ) Incorporate	\$14,000.00	To support the Multi-Ethnic Community Cohesion Series	None	Obligations completed, no comments