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Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Economic Participation of People with Disability Grant Round 2019-20

General Feedback for applicants

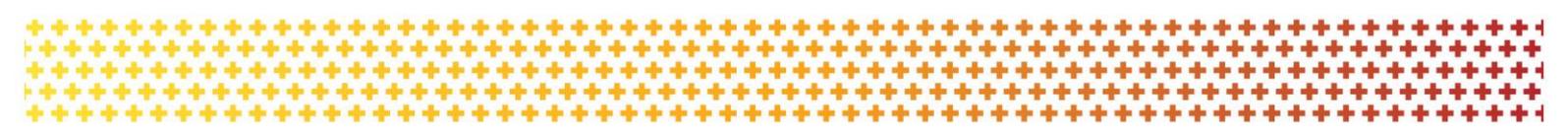
Overview

As part of our commitment to sharing information with the sector to help inform future applications, and as an acknowledgement of the time and effort that applicants have put into developing applications, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is pleased to share this feedback.

The vision of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is to empower people with disability to choose and achieve their goals within an inclusive community, leading to their increased independence and social and economic participation. The NDIS achieves this through two components:

- Individual Funding Packages (or NDIS participant plans)
- Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC).

The *ILC Economic Participation of People with Disability Grant Round 2019-20* will build capacity to improve economic participation, including employment opportunities for people with disability across Australia.



This grant opportunity contributes to the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program which funds innovative ways to increase the independence, social and community participation of people with disability.

The application period opened on 15 February 2019 and closed on 13 March 2019. A total of \$18.09 million (GST exclusive) was available to Applicants over the funding period. A total of 467 applications were received, of which 437 were eligible, making the selection of successful grant recipients highly competitive. The Selection Advisory Panel considered whether the application provided value with relevant money¹, in making their recommendations. After assessment, 65 applications were selected for funding, totalling just over \$18 million (GST excl.). Successful applicants may have received less funding than requested.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised stronger and weaker responses to the assessment criteria for this grant round, and how to strengthen future applications.

Future grant opportunities may be available for this program including an Economic and Community Participation Program. You can find out about new grant opportunities on [Grant Connect](#).

Selection Process

An open competitive selection process was undertaken, allowing a range of organisations that met the eligibility criteria to apply.

Applications were screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, including the provision of all the required attachments. The following attachments were requested:

- Project Indicative Budget
- The two most recent sets of year-end, and preferably audited financial statements inclusive of Profit and Loss Statements and Balance Sheets
- Completed Auspice Declaration (only applicable to organisations using an auspicing arrangement to authorise another organisation to apply on their behalf), and
- Signed trust deed and any subsequent variations, if applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust.

All eligible and compliant applications were assessed and moderated by the Hub against the two equally-weighted assessment criteria.

¹ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

Criterion 1

Demonstrate the need, suitability of the proposed activity.

Criterion 2

Demonstrated organisational capacity and capability to successfully deliver the project.

A Selection Advisory Panel (the Panel) with a mix of relevant policy, program and delivery expertise, then made funding recommendations to the NDIA decision maker. The Selection Advisory Panel considered:

- whether the project, or any of its elements did not align with the program objectives
- value for money
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- types of organisations
- distribution of projects across all locations
- how the project will be delivered
- existing and/or potential market failure(if known) minimising possible duplication with other Commonwealth/State/Territory Government programs/service delivery.

The NDIA decision maker approved the funding to the successful grant recipients.

General feedback

The successful applicants proposed activities that were eligible, appropriate and considered to be effective for achieving the program objectives. They demonstrated their suitability for public funding, value for money and met the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines included strong responses to the selection criteria.

Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is discussed below, as well as feedback on how future applicants can strengthen applications. Key themes in the feedback include:

- Demonstrating the need – strong applications provided specific details of the need their project would address, including evidence that the need exists.
- Demonstrating that the proposed approach would be effective and would contribute to the ILC outcomes - strong applications explained in detail how specific activities would address the identified need and how they would contribute to the ILC outcomes.
- Ensuring that ILC is responsible for funding the proposed project – many applications could not be funded because:

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- the activity they proposed is the responsibility of other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies.
 - the activity they proposed overlapped with the responsibilities of governments, businesses and organisations to be accessible and inclusive, and to meet the needs of people of people with disability, which are outlined in the National Disability Strategy and Disability Discrimination Act 1992
 - Ensuring the proposed activity does not overlap with other areas of the NDIS - a range of applications submitted proposals that would be eligible to be funded under an NDIS Participant Plan or are the responsibility of NDIS Partners in the Community (Local Area Coordination and/or Early Childhood Early Intervention).
 - Clearly outlining proposed stakeholder engagement – strong applications clearly explained:
 - a) roles for people with disability in the design and implementation of an activity
 - b) how the potential or actual involvement of other organisations would contribute to the delivery of the proposed activity.
 - Measuring outcomes – strong applications outlined a robust process for measuring progress toward the ILC Outcomes and some projects applied funding towards engaging independent evaluation.

Applicants could have also generally strengthened their application by:

- ensuring all aspects of the assessment criteria were addressed, including using the character count available to provide sufficient detail when responding.
- supporting claims with relevant, reliable and current evidence e.g. providing evidence down to the region being targeted if possible
- linking claims made back to the policy objectives and the project description/ services to be delivered
- not proposing services that duplicated services already offered through State/Commonwealth Government programs
- not proposing an activity that they are currently funded for through another source.
- clearly demonstrating the need for the activity in the specific geographic area being targeted
- providing evidence that the relevant skills and expertise would be available to ensure successful project delivery.



Criterion 1: Need, Suitability and Innovation

Demonstrate the need, suitability of the proposed activity.

When addressing the criterion strong applicants will:

- Describe the need or issue that the proposed activity will address, why this is important
- Explain how the proposed activity will effectively address the need or issue among the particular group/community
- Describe how the proposal design and delivery will provide an innovative solution within the 12 month grant timeframe.

In your answer we are looking for evidence of why this project is important and how it will provide an innovative solution to economic participation of people with disability. You may wish to refer to relevant data or research to support your explanation. Your answer could include:

- Specific evidence of need (e.g. research, reports, studies) and if that evidence has been tested to the local situation.
- A clear description of the link between how the proposed activity will create a change in the need/issue.
- A description of your method to implement the project

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applications clearly described the need or issue that the proposed activity will address and why it is important.</p> <p>Strong applications clearly explained how the proposed activity will effectively address the need or issue among the particular group/community.</p> <p>Strong applications clearly described how the proposal design and delivery will provide an innovative solution within the 12 month grant timeframe.</p>	<p>Strong responses clearly described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting information, data or research that provided evidence of the need for the proposed activity, especially in the geographic area being targeted.• Specific needs or gaps in capacity that would be addressed by the activity, and how the proposed activity was targeted to effectively address those gaps.• The number, type, location, duration and frequency of the activity to be delivered.• The proposed outcomes of the activity including the direct benefits the activity would provide for people with a disability.

Areas for improvement

Generally, applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 1 by:

- Sourcing and quoting strong, publically recognised evidence that clearly explains and justifies the need/s for the proposed activity in the target location and its relevance to ILC. This includes surveys or feedback from people with disability about the need to be addressed.
- Demonstrating the need for the activity in the target location. Applications that were submitted in multiple jurisdictions needed to demonstrate the need in each of the relevant jurisdictions.
- Describing in detail how the processes to deliver the activities to target groups or individuals, use existing processes and technologies or professional standards, or involve innovation and performance improvement and how the activities are a creative approach to leveraging resources and building on learnings.
- Providing a clear description of the link between how the proposed activity will create a change in the need/issue.
- Explaining how the proposed activity would not replace the responsibilities of governments, businesses and organisations to be accessible and inclusive and meet the needs of people with disability, which are outlined in the National Disability Strategy and Disability Discrimination Act 1992. A number of applications proposed activities that would be a “reasonable adjustment” expected to be delivered by an employer or could be the responsibility of another mainstream or government funded service.
- Explaining how the proposed activity does not overlap with other areas of the NDIS. A range of applications submitted proposals that would be eligible under an NDIS Participant Plan or are the responsibility for NDIS Partners in the Community (Local Area Coordination).
- Ensuring that the proposed activity did not duplicate or overlap a function or program currently being delivered or funded by the Australian Government or a state/territory government such as by Disability Employment Service providers.



Criterion 2: Organisational Capacity and Capability

Demonstrated organisational capacity and capability to successfully deliver the project.

When addressing the criterion strong applicants will:

- Demonstrate appropriate project management approach including outline how your organisation will manage: resources; governance; finances; risk; monitoring, evaluation. This should include mechanisms for monitoring of activities commensurate with scale.
- Demonstrate the organisational structure including appropriate governance, resource allocation and availability of key staff to effectively develop, deliver, manage and monitor the activity(ies).

Applicant's response could:

- Use examples to describe your organisation's experience with developing and implementing the proposed (or similar) activity.
- Explain the relevant experience and qualifications held by key personnel and their role in managing the proposed activity.

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applications clearly demonstrated an appropriate project management approach.</p> <p>Strong applications clearly demonstrated an appropriate organisational structure to support delivery of the project.</p>	<p>Strong responses clearly described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A detailed project management approach including finances, timeframes, and identifying and mitigating risks, such as project plan and methodology to be used and risk registers.• How the project would be managed including resource allocation of key staff, their skills, and experience.• Mechanisms for monitoring the activities commensurate with scale and clear outcomes of the project. For example engaging independent evaluation.• The types of governance systems used to ensure the effective delivery of the project.• Previous experience managing similar projects including the outcomes achieved.• Evaluations strategies and resources, including the proposed method for measuring the project results. For example post peer program surveys.

Areas for improvement

Generally, applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 2 by:

- Providing more specific details about the organisation's successful delivery of the proposed activity in the past, its history or relationship with the target audience and describing outcomes that were achieved.
- Providing more specific details about the successful delivery of other relevant activities including the achieved outcomes and how they are relevant to the ILC Policy.
- By describing how the project activities lead to the outcome (cause and effect pathways).
- Better describing the approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the activity. Applications may be enhanced by the inclusion of an independent evaluation. This is particularly relevant when a proposal includes the potential for scale up and implementation in other locations.
- If the project was seeking extension of funding for an existing organisational activity, quoting independent research that demonstrated the effectiveness of the approach in providing outcomes for people with disability.
- Explaining how their proposed activity is designed to ensure that knowledge and skills are embedded at an individual, organisational and/or community level, for example, how the activity will continue to provide relevant employment services for people with a disability beyond the life of the grant.
- Clearly outlining the organisation's project management and governance approach for the proposed activity, including project planning.

Further Information

[What the NDIS funds - Employment](#)

[Disability Employment Services](#)

[Job Access](#)