



Feedback for Applicants

National Disability Conference Initiative 2020-21

Overview

The National Disability Conference Initiative (NDCI) is delivered as part of the Department of Social Services Disability and Carer Support component, under Outcome 3.1 Disability, Mental Health and Carers Program.

The Disability, Mental Health and Carers Program provides support and community-based initiatives for people with disability or mental illness and for carers so they can develop their capabilities and actively participate in community and economic life.

NDCI 2020-21 provides grants to conference organisers to help people with disability participate in nationally-focused, disability-related conferences held in Australia. Grants support eligible conference organisers to provide accessibility measures that will maximise the inclusion and participation of people with disability at their conference.

The expected outcomes of the NDCI are:

- Enabling people with disability greater opportunities to participate in all areas of Australian life by assisting them and their carers with the costs of attending disability related conferences that might otherwise be inaccessible to them.
- Greater participation and inclusion of people with disability at nationally-focused, disability-related conferences in Australia.

The application period opened on 19 November 2019 and closed on 7 January 2020. Up to \$315,000 (GST exclusive) over one year is available for this grant opportunity, starting from 1 July 2020 and finishing in 30 June 2021. A total of 64 applications were received, of which 59 were eligible, making the selection of successful grant recipients competitive. After assessment, 32 applications were selected for funding, totalling just over \$314,000 (GST exclusive).

The feedback provided below on behalf of the Department of Social Services is to help grant applicants understand what generally comprised stronger and weaker responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity, and how to strengthen future applications.

You can find out about new grant opportunities on [GrantConnect](#).

Selection Process

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

Applications were first screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. As per section 4.1, to be eligible applicants were required to be:

- the conference organiser
- holding the conference in the 2020-21 financial year, and
- one of the following entity types:
 - ◆ Indigenous Corporation
 - ◆ Company
 - ◆ Cooperative
 - ◆ Incorporated Association
 - ◆ Partnership
 - ◆ Statutory Entity
 - ◆ Trustee on behalf of a Trust
 - ◆ Unincorporated Association.

All eligible and compliant applications were then assessed and moderated by the Department of Social Services against the three assessment criteria.

A Department of Social Services Selection Advisory Panel, with a mix of relevant policy, program and delivery expertise, then made funding recommendations to the Department of Social Services' Decision Maker. The recommendations were based on the strength of responses to the assessment criteria and the applicant's ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The Selection Advisory Panel considered all applications and their assessment results and made recommendations on applications having regard to:

- whether the project, or any of its elements did not align with the program objectives
- value for money
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- how the services and/or project will be delivered.

The Department of Social Services' Decision Maker approved funding to the successful grant recipients.

The successful applicants proposed activities that were eligible, appropriate and considered effective for achieving the program objectives. They demonstrated their suitability for public funding, value for money and met all of the eligibility requirements in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

General feedback

Applicants could have generally strengthened their application by:

- ensuring they thoroughly read the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- ensuring all aspects of the criteria were addressed
- demonstrating their consideration of the Grant Program’s objectives
- only including relevant information that is not ambiguous
- supporting claims with relevant, reliable and current evidence linking claims back to the policy objectives and the activity to be delivered.

Criterion 1

Demonstrate the need for assistance for people with disability to participate in your conference.

Successful applications clearly:

- Demonstrated how the conference is disability-related.
- Explained the benefit of the conference to the disability cohort (e.g. rare disability type with limited opportunities to share knowledge and experience).
- Demonstrated how the conference has a national focus.

Stronger responses clearly described how:

- At least half of the schedule will focus on people with disability and issues that affect the lifetime wellbeing and social participation of people with disability.
- The conference will focus on disability issues that impact people with disability across the country and will help progress the rights and opportunities of people with disability in Australia.
- Interest will be sought from across Australia from people with disability interested in participating in the conference.

Weaker responses did not:

- Provide details/evidence of how the conference will attract participants from across Australia (rather than being restricted to participants in a particular region, state or territory).
- Clearly demonstrate the conference will focus on disability issues that impact people with disability nationally, rather than impacting those only in a particular region, state or territory.

Criterion 2

Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capability to deliver the NDCI objectives.

Successful applications clearly:

- Demonstrated the organisation's experience in administering grants including appropriate governance structure and skilled staff.
- Demonstrated the relevant experience, qualifications and skills of the members of the organisation in delivering the project including experience in developing and delivering conferences and consulting with stakeholders.

Stronger responses clearly:

- Described the organisation's experience in managing grants, explaining the type of grants delivered and how the contractual requirements were successfully handled.
- Described relevant skills, qualifications and experience of individuals who have a key role in organising the conference.

Weaker responses did not clearly:

- Provide examples of previous experience at delivering grants, or similar/related types of activities.
- Describe the relevant skills and expertise that would be available to ensure successful delivery of the conference.

Criterion 3

Demonstrate how grant funding will be used to provide value for money.

Successful applications clearly:

- Detailed complementary sources of funding or assistance.
- Demonstrated how conference learnings will be disseminated more broadly and provide benefits to the target group.
- Detailed the specific ways grant funds will be used to assist people with disability to participate in the conference (for example travel, accommodation, live captioning, accessible materials).

Demonstrate how grant funding will be used to provide value for money.

Stronger responses clearly:

- Explained complementary sources of funding or assistance and how it will be used to conduct the conference.
- Detailed specific ways conference learnings will be disseminated more broadly and the benefits to the target group, for example through organisation websites, audio/visual recordings of conference proceedings to assist people unable to attend conferences in person, newsletters, articles etc.
- Detailed the specific ways grant funds will be used, for example through providing a proposed budget showing the breakdown of costs of the assistance to be provided.

Weaker responses did not clearly:

- Explain how the conference learnings will be shared with the broader target group.
- Detail specific ways grant funds will be used to assist people with disability to attend or participate in the conference.