Australian Government

Community Grants Hub
Improving your grant experience

# Information, Linkages and Capacity Building – National Readiness Grants (Round 2)

Feedback for applicants

## Overview

The Department of Social Services Community Grants Hub (the Hub), in partnership with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), recently completed the second round of Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) National Readiness Grants. 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 Hub and the NDIA are pleased to share this feedback with you.

ILC is an important component of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), implemented through the Community Inclusion and Capacity Development (CICD) Program. The objective of the CICD Program is to build innovative ways to increase the independence, social and community participation of people with a disability. ILC focuses on inclusion of people with disability, and creating connections between people with disability and their communities.

The objective of ILC National Readiness Grants is to fund projects that are aligned to the ILC Policy and the ILC Commissioning Framework that will:

- build the capacity and readiness of organisations and the community to operate within a nationally-consistent approach to ILC; and
- build the foundations required to deliver ILC activities on a national scale.

The NDIA will achieve this objective by funding activities that:

- reduce duplication of effort and/or demonstrate effective and efficient outcomes for people with disability, with opportunity to scale or transfer to other areas; and/or
- inform the development of models of good practice, including at the national level, to deliver ILC outcomes.

This ILC grant opportunity targeted the following activity area from the ILC Policy:

- Information, Linkages and Referrals – which is targeted towards activities that provide people with disability and their families and carers with access to up-to-date, relevant and quality information and/or make sure they are linked into services and supports in the community that meet their needs.

# Selection Process

This funding round used an open competitive selection process, which was open to all eligible organisations. The Hub administered the selection process on behalf of the NDIA.

The Hub received 396 applications for ILC National Readiness Round 2. Each compliant and eligible application was assessed against the following four equally-weighted selection criteria:

Criterion 1 – Demonstrate needs, approach and outcomes that contribute to increasing social and community participation for people with disability.

Criterion 2 – Project management.

Criterion 3 – Demonstrated organisational capability.

Criterion 4 – Sustainability.

The NDIA convened an Expert Panel to review the top scored projects assessed by the Hub. The Expert Panel included key NDIA staff, a representative from the Department of Social Services and an independent panel member who has a deep understanding of the disability sector and a lived experience of disability. Recommendations from the Expert Panel were provided to the NDIA delegate, the Chairman of the NDIA Board.

# Selection Results

The NDIA Delegate approved 43 activities to receive ILC National Readiness Grants Round 2 funding. A total of just over $28.6 million worth of grants were awarded through this round.

The successful applications included strong responses to the selection criteria. The proposed activities represented value for money and demonstrated the organisation's potential to meet the grant requirements as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

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 – applications could have been strengthened by providing more specific details of the need their project would address. This includes providing evidence that the need exists.
- Demonstrating that the proposed approach would be effective and would contribute to the ILC outcomes - applications could have been enhanced by explaining how specific activities would address the identified need and how they would contribute to the ILC outcomes.
- Alignment to the ILC Activity Area of Information, Linkages and Referrals – some applications did not align with the Information, Linkages and Referrals area of the ILC Policy. Whilst these activities may have had merit, they could not be funded in this grant round. To avoid this happening in future applicants are encouraged to closely read the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and to take up any future opportunities offered by the NDIA

such as the 'Try an ILC Idea' process which are likely to be available before a grant round opens.

- Ensuring that ILC is responsible for funding your proposed project – many applications could not be funded because 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).
- Evaluation - Applications may be enhanced by the inclusion of an independent evaluation. This is particularly relevant when a proposal includes the potential for scale and implementation in other locations.
- Sustainability - Applications should demonstrate the sustainability of the proposed activity by showing how the activity will continue to contribute to outcomes for people with disability and/or make a difference to community after the funding has finished.

## Criterion 1

**Demonstrate needs, approach and outcomes that contribute to increasing social and community participation for people with disability.**

- Describe the need that this project will address and provide evidence of the need.
- Explain how the project will address the need, and detail specific activities to be delivered.
- Demonstrate the project is consistent with the Information, Linkages and Referrals activity defined as making sure that people with disability, their families and carers:
  - have access to up-to-date, relevant and quality information;
  - are linked into services and supports in the community that meet their needs; and
- Explain how you will measure your contribution to ILC outcomes.

Strong responses to Criterion 1 demonstrated the following:

| Strength | Example |
|---|---|
| Preferred applicants provided a clear explanation of the need that their project will address and provided strong evidence of that need. | Responses described:<br>• a detailed understanding of the target group's need/s and how the need/s align with the ILC Policy;<br>• recognised statistics, studies and/or the results of surveys that demonstrate the target group's need/s;<br>• relevant service gaps and/or barriers that affect the target group, and how the activity will address these; and<br>• evidence of value for money. |

| Strength | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Preferred applicants explained how the proposed activity will effectively address the identified need/s, and detailed the specific activities to be delivered. | Responses described:<br>• how the activity will address the needs of the target group;<br>• specific details of the activities that will be delivered to the target group.<br>• if relevant, evidence-based research or independent evaluations of similar projects or pilot projects that demonstrate the proposal's potential effectiveness to address the need/s of the target group. |
| Preferred applicants demonstrated how their proposals are consistent with the following Activity Area in the ILC Policy:<br>• Information, Linkages and Referrals | Responses described:<br>• A clear link between their project and the Information, Linkages and Referrals activity area. This includes explaining why the project fits within the Information, Linkages and Referrals activity area (which involves providing people with disability and their families and carers with access to up-to-date, relevant and quality information and/or make sure they are linked into services and support in the community that meet their needs). |
| Preferred applicants explained how they intend to measure progress towards the ILC outcomes. | Responses described:<br>• a demonstrated understanding of ILC outcomes and the measurement approach outlined in the ILC Outcomes Framework Discussion Starter (i.e., how much is being done, how well it is being done and the difference made for the target group, which may be measured at an individual, organisational and/or community level);<br>• how the implementation of the proposed activity will deliver an outcome or multiple outcomes that contribute to the relevant ILC outcome; and<br>• robust processes to collect qualitative and quantitative data to monitor the progress towards ILC outcomes over the period of the grant. |

**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 and its relevance to ILC. This includes surveys or feedback from people with disability about the need to be addressed.
- 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.
- Demonstrating a clear understanding of how the proposal aligns with the ILC Activity Area Information, Linkages and Referrals. A range of applications aligned with other ILC Activity Areas that were not in-scope for this particular grant round.
- Explaining how the proposed activity does 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 (such as staff training, workplace adjustments) 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 and/or Early Childhood Early Intervention).
- Outlining 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.

## Criterion 2

### Project management

- Describe how you will undertake the following in delivering your project:
  - Involving people with disability including roles at a governance, staff or volunteer level;
  - Project management including how any risks will be identified and managed;
  - Project governance;
  - Stakeholder engagement; and
  - Budget management.

Strong responses to Criterion 2 demonstrated the following:

| Strength | Example |
|---|---|
| Preferred applicants explained how the activity will involve people with disability, including roles at a governance, staff or volunteer level. Demonstrating that people with disability will be involved significantly strengthened applications. | Responses described:<br>• collaboration and involvement of people with disability in all aspects of the activity, including design, implementation, and evaluation;<br>• ongoing involvement of people with disability in the delivery of the proposed activity; and<br>• ongoing involvement of people with disability in governance, staff and/or volunteer roles. |
| Preferred applicants outlined their project management including how any risks will be identified and managed. | Responses described:<br>• organisational policies, processes and/or systems to manage risk, monitor progress, evaluate service delivery and continuously improve service delivery; and<br>• why the organisation's approach is appropriate given the scale of the proposed activity. |
| Preferred applicants outlined the development and implementation of effective governance structures. | Responses described:<br>• the development and implementation of governance structures such as steering committees, advisory boards or project reference groups that consist of relevant stakeholders who will guide and oversee the delivery of the proposed activity. |
| Preferred applicants explained how the activity will involve stakeholder engagement. | Responses described:<br>• a strong understanding of who the relevant stakeholders are for the proposed activity;<br>• consultation, or a plan for engaging with relevant stakeholders to inform the design and/or delivery of the proposed activity; and<br>• support from relevant stakeholders. |
| Preferred applicants explained how they will undertake budget management. | Responses described:<br>• organisational policies, processes and/or systems that enable the organisation to manage resources and effectively deliver projects on time, within budget and in accordance with audit and compliance requirements. |

| Areas for improvement |
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| Generally, applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 2 by:<br>• Clearly explaining the role of people with disability in the proposed activity, and demonstrating an understanding of the importance of the contribution of people with disability to the design, implementation and evaluation of activities.<br>• Clearly explaining how stakeholders will be involved in the activity including providing specific details of their role in the project.<br>• Clearly explaining how stakeholders have been consulted and what their contribution will be to ensure the successful implementation of the proposed activity.<br>• Clearly outlining the organisation's project management and governance approach for the proposed activity. |

## Criterion 3

### Demonstrated Organisational Capability

- Outline your organisation's history of successful delivery of activities similar to this application.

Strong responses to Criterion 3 demonstrated the following:

| Strength | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Preferred applicants clearly demonstrated the organisation's history of successful delivery of activities similar to their application. | Responses described:<br>• examples of successful delivery of the proposed activity in the past, including specific details of the outcomes achieved and how these outcomes are consistent with ILC;<br>• examples of successful delivery of another activity in the past, including specific details of the outcomes achieved, and an explanation of how the activity is comparable to the organisation's proposed activity for ILC and/or how the experience of delivering the activity is relevant to ILC; and<br>• other organisational expertise and/or experience that is relevant to ILC and delivery of the proposed activity. |

| Areas for improvement |
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| Generally, applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 3 by:<br>• Providing more specific details about the organisation's successful delivery of the proposed activity in the past including the outcomes that were achieved.<br>• 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. |

## Criterion 4

### Sustainability

- Demonstrate how the proposal will ensure knowledge and skills transfer are embedded at an individual, organisational and/or community level.

Strong responses to Criterion 4 demonstrated the following:

| Strength | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Preferred applicants explained how their proposal will ensure that impact, knowledge, skills and processes will be embedded at an individual, organisational and/or community level. | Responses described:<br>• how the design, methodology, implementation and intended outcomes of the proposed activity will create positive and lasting changes to individuals *and/or* organisations delivering activities *and/or* communities by delivering knowledge, skills and processes that can be utilised over time. |

| Areas for improvement |
| --- |
| Generally, applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criterion 4 by:<br>• Explaining how their proposed activity will ensure the impact of knowledge and skills transfer to be embedded at an individual, organisational and/or community level, for example, how the activity will continue to provide relevant information, linkages and/or referral services for people with a disability beyond the life of the grant.<br>• Describing a clear cause and effect pathway between the activity and the ILC outcome. |