Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service

Questions and Answers

1. What is the closing time and date for applications?

The application form must be submitted by **11.00pm AEDT on Friday, 13 November 2020.** It is recommended that you submit your application well before the closing time and date.

2. If I am not able to submit my application by the due date and time, can I be granted an extension?

No, we will not be granting extensions.

We may accept late applications if an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevented the submission of the application by the due date and time.

Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:
- reasonably unforeseeable
- beyond the applicant's control
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits and in accordance with probity principles.

If an application is late or the Community Grants Hub is requested to approve a lodgement after the closing date the late application policy available on the Community Grants Hub website will apply.

Further information on late applications, including how to lodge a late application, is available in section 7.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

3. What process is this grant opportunity?

This grant opportunity is an open, competitive selection process. This means that the grant opportunity is open to all organisations which meet the eligibility criteria outlined in section 4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines*.*

The grant opportunity will be administered in accordance with the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs). Further information on the grant opportunity process, including how applications will be assessed, is outlined in section 8 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

4. What is intercountry adoption?

Intercountry adoption is defined using the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare definition. Under this definition, intercountry adoption is considered an adoption of a child/children from countries other than Australia, with which Australia has an official adoption program, who may legally be placed for adoption, but who generally have had no previous contact with the adoptive parent(s). Further information is available on the Intercountry Adoption Australia [website](#).

The Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS) is available to those who have lived experience of intercountry adoption, whether conducted under the *[Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption](#)* or through expatriate adoption by Australians while living overseas.

Expatriate adoption is defined using the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare definition. Under this definition, expatriate adoption is considered an adoption by Australian citizens or permanent residents living abroad for 12 months or more that occur through an overseas agency or government authority.

5. How much funding is available for this program?

The total funding available for this grant opportunity is $4,750,000 (GST exclusive) over the life of the grant, between 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026. Over this period, $950,000 (GST exclusive) is available per annum.

Further information on the total funding available, including the funding available under the three components of the ICAFSS, is available in section 3.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

In addition, funding of up to $50,000 (GST exclusive) is available in the 2020-21 financial year to allow for a transition period prior to the grant activity start date of 1 July 2021.

Applicants that request funding in excess of the total funding available may not progress to assessment.

6. Is the funding ongoing?

The total funding for this grant opportunity is available for five years from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026.

7. When will I know the outcome of my application?

You will be notified of the outcome of your application at the end of the selection process around March 2021. For probity reasons, to treat all applicants fairly and equally, it is not possible to provide information about the status of individual applications during the assessment process.

8. What feedback will be available on the outcomes of the grant opportunity?

A Feedback Summary will be published on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website to provide all organisations with easy access to information about the grant selection process and the main strengths and areas for improving applications.

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.

9. Is my organisation eligible to apply?

Eligibility for this grant opportunity is outlined in section 4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

10. Do I have to submit evidence of my entity type?

The application form allows you to submit evidence to support your entity type if you choose to do so. If you do not provide evidence, the Department of Social Services (the department) may later request the evidence from you if required.

11. How do I submit the application form?

The application form is online and must be submitted electronically. The Community Grants Hub will not provide application forms or accept application forms for this grant opportunity by fax or mail, as stated in the grant opportunity documents.

If you are unable to submit the application form online, please contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or support@communitygrants.gov.au to discuss.

12. How do I respond to the 'short project title' and 'brief description of your project' questions under the application form Project/Activity Details section?

'Short project title' question
You can simply answer this question by using 'Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS)' as your project title.

If your organisation wishes to propose a different public brand name/trading name for the delivery of the ICAFSS you may wish to include this here. The department will consider the proposed name during grant agreement negotiations.

'Brief description of your project' question
You are required to provide a brief summary of your proposed delivery of the ICAFSS. Your brief description should include a summary of what your service will deliver and the outcomes/benefits the project aims to achieve.

This brief description should only be a high-level summary of your proposal. Your response to the assessment criteria in section 6 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines should provide greater detail about your project activities.

We may use the project description you provide as part of our assessment of your application. It may also be published for reporting or grant agreement purposes, including on the [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

13. Do character limits apply to my application?

Yes, the application form includes character limits for each field. Please refer to the help text at each field to determine the character limit. The application form will not accept characters beyond the limits specified.

For the assessment criteria, you can submit up to 6,000 characters (approximately 900 words) per assessment criterion. Please note spaces are included in the character limit.

14. What assessment criteria must be addressed?

There are five equally weighted assessment criteria that must all be addressed. These are outlined in section 6 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

15. What is the transition period referred to in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines?

A grant agreement with the successful applicant will be offered in April 2021. This will allow continuity of service for existing clients of the Intercountry Adoption and Family Support Service, particularly where transition to a new delivery structure or service provider is required. The new structure or service provider must be established and operationally ready by the activity start date of 1 July 2021.

Over this period, funding of up to $50,000 (GST exclusive) will be available in the 2020-21 financial year to fund expenses related to transition and/or set up costs.

16. My organisation has experience relating to Australian domestic adoption, but limited experience with intercountry adoption. Can we apply for this grant opportunity?

Yes, provided you are eligible to apply. Eligibility for this grant opportunity is outlined in section 4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

17. Do personnel working on the ICAFSS have to have lived experience of intercountry adoption?

No, however it is highly desirable for personnel working on the ICAFSS to have lived experience of intercountry adoption, or have similar experiences or cultural background of those with lived experience of intercountry adoption.

18. What if COVID-19 has an impact on the delivery of the grant activity?

We acknowledge that COVID-19 and the restrictions imposed by it may have an impact on the delivery of services. Where COVID-19 has impact on the delivery of the ICAFSS, the

department will work with the successful applicant to determine how such issues can be reasonably addressed.

19. What do you mean when you refer to the target group in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines?

The target group refers to the clients you assist or target the services towards. The target group for the ICAFSS are those with lived experience of intercountry adoption, including, but not limited to prospective adoptive parents, adoptive parents, young adoptees and adult adoptees. The service may also support partners and children of adoptees where their need for support relates to the adoptee's experience of intercountry adoption.

20. Do you have any data on the target cohort, including a breakdown of clients seeking counselling services across the various adoption stages?

The ICAFSS has assisted around 2,000 clients since it was established in 2015-16. Key outcomes from the ICAFSS Consultation held across February and March 2020 suggest that the number of people interested in accessing the ICAFSS service should increase once the service is further promoted.

Current figures suggest that the number of intercountry adoptions finalised in Australia are over 10,000. Please note that while this estimate represents the number of intercountry adoptees in Australia, it does not account for other client types including prospective adoptive parents, adoptive families and adoptees of expatriate Australian families.

Information on the annual numbers of intercountry adoptions finalised in Australia can be found in the annual Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) *Adoptions Australia* report. The latest *Adoptions Australia* report 2018-19 can be found on the AIHW website.

21. Can my organisation form part of a consortium of organisations to deliver the grant activity?

Yes, consortia applications are accepted for this grant opportunity. Further information on this can be found in section 7.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group.

Your responses to the assessment criteria should also reflect the roles that all organisations under the consortium arrangement will play in the delivery of the grant activity, including relevant skills, experience and capacity.

22. Can my organisation subcontract services to other organisations with relevant experience?

Yes, subcontracting arrangements are accepted for this grant opportunity.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group.

Your responses to the assessment criteria should also reflect the role that subcontractors will play in the delivery of the grant activity, including relevant skills, experience and capacity.

23. Our consortia/subcontracting arrangements have changed. Is our application still eligible?

Any changes to consortium memberships or subcontracting arrangements will need to be mutually agreed with the department prior to a grant agreement being finalised.

The department will not accept changes to consortium or subcontracting arrangements that, in the opinion of the department, represent a material change to the application. Further evidence of arrangements may be sought from the successful applicant prior to the signing of the grant agreement.

If your application indicates a significant portion of the grant activity will be conducted by specific members of the consortia or specific subcontractors, the department reserves the right to not accept changes to these arrangements when the agreement negotiations occur. This is due to your application being assessed on the information provided within the application. Changing this information during or after the assessment period could negate the assessment and may jeopardise your application. Changes to subcontractors or consortia members could be seen as a risk to your capacity to deliver the ICAFSS.

24. Can we select specific states and territories in which to exclusively deliver the ICAFSS?

No, the ICAFSS must be delivered as a nationally accessible service. It can be delivered via a range of methods, but must include face-to-face availability across all states and territories.

While your organisation may have specific locations across states and territories in which offices are established, the service must be available beyond these areas.

Organisations can propose to deliver nationally via a consortia or subcontracting arrangement that guarantees that the same high-quality service will be available nationally.

25. Is there an indicative funding breakdown on a state and territory basis?

No, there is no specific funding breakdown determined by the department on a state and territory level. This funding breakdown will be determined by the successful applicant, ensuring that services are equally available and accessible across Australia.
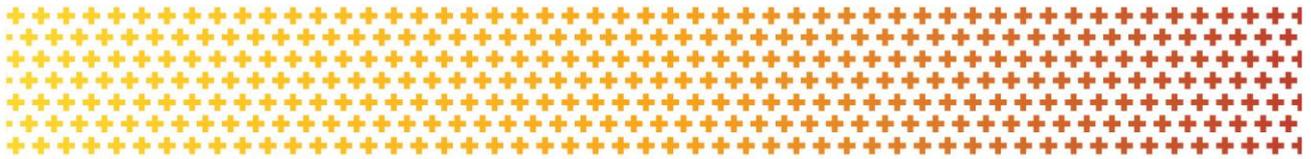
26. Do we need to have current staff with relevant skills, qualifications and experience to deliver this service or can we recruit appropriate staff once becoming the successful applicant?

Applicants need to demonstrate that they are able to deliver the services and expectations required for the full term of the grant, 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026, as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Organisations can recruit suitable staff once deemed successful in the grant opportunity. Staff skills, qualifications and checks must be maintained as per section 4.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

27. What attachments can be included in the application and how should they be attached?

Only one attachment is required for this grant opportunity, which is the project plan. The project plan must be completed and attached using the Project Plan Template available on the GrantConnect and the Community Grants Hub websites.

The attachment must be uploaded to the application form, as instructed within the application form itself.

You may be prompted in the application form to upload documentation to support your entity type (within the 'Eligibility Requirements' section), if appropriate. The department may also ask you to submit documents to support your application following the submission of the application. This may include financial statements, financial policies and procedures, organisational business/strategic plan and a risk management plan.

Any additional documents uploaded or not requested by the application form or department will not form part of the assessment.

28. Can we use non-traditional service delivery and education methods such as e-learning modules and/or video-conferencing in our service model?

Yes, the department expects applicants to outline through criterion 2 in section 6 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines the range of methods and approaches that will be used to deliver the ICAFSS.

The department will consider proposals for non-traditional approaches to delivering the ICAFSS, so long as a range of service methods are available to clients, including face-to-face, and services are accessible nationally, including to regional and remote areas of Australia.

29. Will the successful applicant be required to use interpreting services in the delivering of the ICAFSS?

Yes, the successful applicant will be required to offer, use and pay for interpreting services where required for clients. Clients of the ICAFSS may be from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and may require interpreting services to enable equal access to the services available.
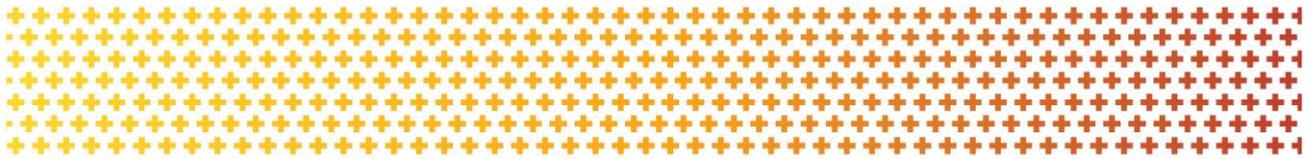
Interpreting services and costs can be paid for using grant funding. These costs should be considered when developing the simple budget, which is within the Project Plan Template. Please see sections 3.1 and 7.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelinesfor more information.

The successful applicant can access any interpreting service, so long as it is appropriately qualified and certified. This can include the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#), managed by the Department of Home Affairs.

When considering costs for interpreting, applicants can use the Translating and Interpreting Services costing tool, included as a supporting document to the grant opportunity documents.

30. What is Intercountry Adoption Australia?

Intercountry Adoption Australia (IAA) is an information and referral service to help guide people through the [adoption process](#). IAA is managed by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and is separate to the ICAFSS. You can find more information on the [IAA website](#).

31. What if I can only produce one financial statement?

The department will accept the provision of only one financial statement in some circumstances. For example, if an organisation has been operating for a short period of time and therefore only has one entire financial year's worth of statements to provide.

If you have concerns about your ability to produce the required documents and information, you can contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or support@communitygrants.gov.au.

32. Can organisations that already provide services to people involved in intercountry adoption apply for Small Grants and Bursaries Funding (i.e. state/territory funded organisations)?

This will be the decision of the successful applicant in consultation with their reference group (or similar), where practicable.

Small Grants and Bursaries funding is intended to complement, not replace, state and territory government funding. Groups and organisations should not access Small Grants and Bursaries funding to deliver services, projects or activities they already receive government funding to provide. Organisations could however, use the Small Grants and Bursaries funding to build on and enhance, an existing project or activity.

Further information about the delivery of the Small Grants and Bursaries component of the ICAFSS is available in Appendix A of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.
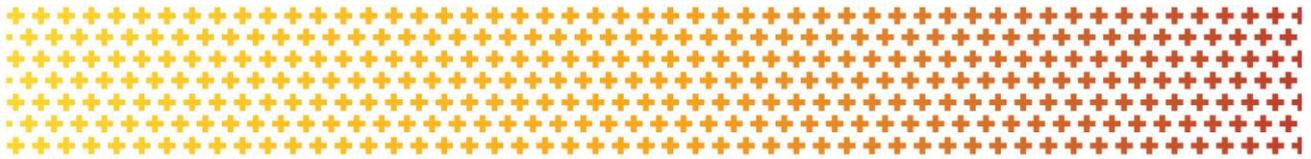
33. How should conflicts of interest and complaints be managed when delivering the Small Grants and Bursaries program?

Issues around conflict of interest and complaints must be managed through the successful applicant's own processes, for consortia this would be the lead applicant's processes. It is a requirement of the ICAFSS that the successful applicant have an appropriate organisational complaints management process, as per section 2.4 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

To avoid conflicts of interest and other conflicts between stakeholders, the final decision on funding allocation must be made by the successful applicant, in consultation with the reference group (or similar), or an external selection committee appointed by the successful applicant.

34. How should unspent Small Grants and Bursaries program funding be managed by the successful applicant?

Requirements for the management of the Small Grants and Bursaries program will be negotiated in the grant agreement. This will include requiring Small Grants and Bursaries recipients to keep written records to account for how the funding has been spent, including evidence of expenditure. This information will be collected by the successful applicant including the collection of any unexpended funds at the completion of the project.

Generally, when managing grants, unspent grant funding is returned to the funder. In some cases, unspent grant funding may be used for further delivery of eligible activities, within a specified timeframe, if agreed by the grant funder.

Further information about the delivery of the Small Grants and Bursaries component of the ICAFSS is available in Appendix A of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

35. Where should I go for further information?

Enquiries should be directed to the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days. Answers to questions are posted on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites.

The question period will close at 5:00PM AEDT on 6 November 2020. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

Question and Answer added on 28 October 2020

36. Can the department provide data on the average number of one-to-one counselling sessions, types of engagements and number of engagements per client being delivered under the current grant?

The department is unable to provide detailed historical data for the current Intercountry Adoption and Family Support Service.
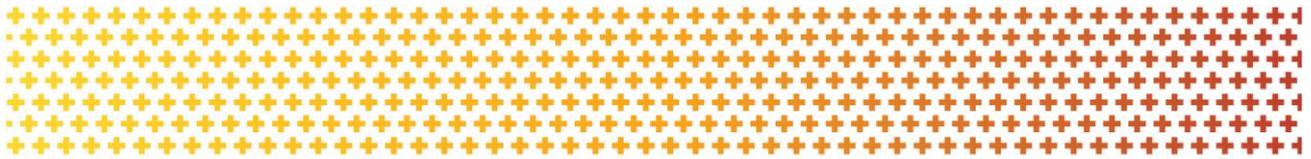
The consultation process in February and March 2020 highlighted that further promotion and awareness of the service would result in increased client numbers. As such, historic client numbers should not be used by applicants to determine their proposed approach to service delivery.

Applicants are instead encouraged to demonstrate the service type, access and reach that the organisation can provide within the available funding, including details of any costing assumptions or caveats made by the applicant. Costing can take into consideration the current figures on intercountry adoptions finalised in Australia, and existing Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data, as referenced above in question 20.

It is for applicants to present proposed delivery models, acknowledging that the short-to-medium term COVID-19 environment may impact on both the service delivery model and availability of services.

Question and Answer added on 6 November 2020

37. What level of detail is required for the simplified budget, as required in the Project Plan Template?

Applicants are required to complete the Project Plan Template and include a breakdown of the funding requested, per annum and per component (*Therapeutic Care, Capacity Building and Small Grants and Bursaries Program*), for the life of the five-year grant. Total available funding amounts per component can be found in section 3.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Applicants must not request funding that exceeds the total available funding for each component.

The total grant funding, as described above, is all that is required for the table titled 'Annual funding requested for the period of 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2026'. Applicants can choose to provide a more detailed breakdown of expenditure if desired, however this information will not be included in the assessment process.

A detailed budget will be negotiated between the department and the successful applicant prior to commencing delivery of the ICAFSS.