Australian Government

Community Grants Hub
Improving your grant experience

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Economic and Community Participation Program Economic Participation Stream

Feedback for applicants

Overview

The Economic Participation Stream aims to improve the economic participation of people with disability, particularly in light of the impact of COVID-19. Priority cohorts for this grant opportunity are:

- rural and remote based people with disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability
- young people with disability
- people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

This grant round seeks to address a number of challenges and opportunities such as improving work readiness of people with disability, increasing employment support networks and improving willingness and capability of employers and organisations to employ people with disability.

Up to $39.9 million (GST exclusive) over 12 months is available for this grant opportunity, starting from 10 June 2021 and ceasing on 9 June 2022.

The application period opened on 28 October 2020 and closed on 8 December 2020. Applicants could apply for grants between the minimum grant amount of $250,000 (GST exclusive) and the maximum grant amount of $1.2 million (GST exclusive). Successful organisations may have received less funding than requested.

Selection Process

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

Applications were first screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

All eligible and compliant applications were then assessed against the assessment criteria. Information on what made a strong response to each criterion is provided below.

Following the assessment process, a Selection Advisory Panel (the panel) with a mix of expertise from disability sector representatives, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the National

Disability Insurance Agency and relevant policy, program and delivery expertise from the Department of Social Services, made final funding recommendations.

There were 396 applications received, making the selection process of successful grant recipients competitive.

Selection Results

The panel recommended applicants based on the strength of their responses to the selection criteria and their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Specifically, the panel recommended applicants that best:

- aligned with the objectives of the Economic Participation grant
- demonstrated the need for services in their area
- demonstrated the applicant's experience and expertise necessary to deliver the program objectives
- addressed known gaps in the disability sector.

The panel recommended 36 organisations to the delegate for funding. The delegate made the final decision to approve the grant, including the grant funding amount to be awarded.

General Feedback

The following feedback is provided to help grant applicants understand what made a strong application for this grant round and how to strengthen future applications.

This general feedback is relevant to all applications.

- Applications identified if the activities were targeted towards NDIS participants, non-NDIS people with disability or both, while also demonstrating consultation in activity design, delivery and evaluation of impact through co-design.
- Demonstrating the need – the case for funding would have been strengthened if applicants had provided more specific details of the need their project would address, including providing supporting evidence of the need and how activity deliverables linked to addressing the need.
- Demonstrating the need exists because there is a gap in service delivery. The case for funding would have been strengthened if applications avoided:
  - duplication of existing services, funded from another source for the same purpose, in the same location for the same target group
  - replication of 'business as usual' activities already funded by the Commonwealth or state or territory governments.

- Demonstrating effectiveness – the case for funding would have been strengthened if the applicant had provided evidence the proposed approach would be effective and contribute to improved social connectedness and program outcomes as set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.
- Alignment to the grant objectives – the activities proposed in some applications did not align with the grant objectives as set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and/or were not eligible activities. To avoid this happening in future, applicants are encouraged to closely read the Grant Opportunity Guidelines to determine if the proposed activity is eligible for funding.
- Capacity to deliver within the grant period – the grant period was for 12 months across 2 financial years. The applicants needed to establish their ability to deliver the outcomes within 12 months by demonstrating that their proposal was clear, well planned and involved (or had the ability to garner) strong partnerships with key stakeholders for their proposed activities.
- National coverage proposals would have benefitted from demonstrating their prior consultations and support from key stakeholders in each state and territory for the proposed activities.
- Where applicants were proposing new or novel activities with a specific cohort, consultations and support from key stakeholders (or partnerships for consortia applications) would have strengthened claims. This may have addressed factors like cultural competency, reach etc.
- Applications checked alignment with and impact on 2 or more outcomes.
- Research elements of the project activities (exclusive of project evaluation) were out of scope and not eligible for funding.
- Several applicants appeared to have applied for funding under another Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) stream, meaning their responses did not align with the relevant criteria.
- The case for funding may have been strengthened if the applicant had addressed all sub-criteria in their responses and utilised the allowable word count.
- Value for relevant money may have been better addressed and supported with relevant evidence.
- Major capital works applications were not eligible for funding. However, the applications seeking to modify existing equipment or infrastructure for the benefit of people with disability were considered on merit within the grant opportunity.

Criteria Specific Feedback

The following feedback outlines how individual responses to specific assessment criteria could have been strengthened:

Criterion 1

Describe the proposed activities and identify the 2 or more Economic Participation outcomes they are designed to address.

The response is to demonstrate this through identifying:

- and summarising activities that will be delivered against at least 2 of the outcomes (describe what will be done)
- the people the activities are expected to support (who will it assist?)
- what approach (geographic, industry or both) is being used by this activity
- how these activities will address the nominated outcomes, where the activities will take place and why.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated the activities to be delivered	Strong responses clearly: ▪ described what the activity to be delivered was, in a clear and logical manner ▪ described timeframes and milestones for when the activity will be completed within the 12 month duration.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated the people that the activities are expected to support	Strong responses clearly: ▪ identified who the activity will assist, benefiting people with disability ▪ indicated how the activity will support priority cohort/s.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated the approach used by their described activities (geographic, industry or both)	Strong responses clearly: ▪ identified a geographic or industry approach and provided a relevant rationale behind their approach ▪ identified a gap/need in the market and linked it to the proposed activities.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated how these activities will address the nominated outcomes, where the activities will take place and why	Strong responses clearly: ▪ identified the location/s where the activities will be delivered ▪ identified a direct need for this activity in this location ▪ identified a clear linkage between the proposed activities and identified needs and program outcomes.

Criterion 2

Describe how the proposed activity will support a priority cohort/s.

The response is to demonstrate this through identifying:

- which priority cohort/s the proposed activities will support OR justify why the proposed activity does not support a priority cohort
- how the activities will directly support the chosen target group/s
- evidence of the organisation's ability to engage with and support the needs of the chosen target group/s.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated how the proposed activities will support their target group/s	Strong responses clearly: ▪ identified their priority cohorts or justified why they did not support a priority cohort ▪ described how the activities will benefit the target group/s ▪ identified the target group's recruitment/inclusion strategy.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated evidence of organisation's ability to engage with and support the needs of the chosen target group/s	Strong responses clearly: ▪ indicated an understanding of the target group/s and an understanding of their strengths and limitations in terms of employability ▪ described how the proposed activity will create a change for the target group ▪ provided strong evidence of established relationships with the target group/s and intersectional partnerships with the relevant organisations ▪ identified measures of maintaining cultural safety in the relevant communities.

Criterion 3

Describe the organisation and provide evidence of the organisation's ability to deliver the proposed activities.

The response is to demonstrate this through identifying:

- and summarising the history and purpose of the organisation and how this demonstrates the organisation's ability to deliver the activities
- how the organisation will engage people with disability in the planning and delivery of the activity and how people with disability will be employed in the delivery
- the relevant skills, qualifications and experience of key project management and specialist staff and how these will contribute to effective oversight and governance of the activities.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated the involvement and collaboration of people with disability in the project	Strong responses clearly: ▪ described how people with disability will be involved in the planning, designing, delivery and oversight of project.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated their plan to ensure meaningful employment for people with disability	Strong responses clearly: ▪ identified the number of people with disability who will be employed because of this grant ▪ described how the participants will secure long term sustainable employment ▪ ensured good value for money and demonstrated good outcomes were likely to be achieved in a reasonable budget
Strong applications clearly demonstrated the role of the organisation's management (such as board or committee members) in oversight of the activities, as well as the governance and management/implementation of the activities	Strong responses clearly: ▪ described the organisation's management structure for governance and oversight, including relevant skill sets of staff and members ▪ provided evidence of planning and detailed project management ▪ described partnerships and collaborations of the project, how the organisation would use its existing networks to improve the outcomes of the proposal. If on behalf of a consortium, demonstrated the consortium's collective ability to deliver the proposed activities.

Criterion 4

Describe how the organisation will maintain quality control of the activities, ensure effective reporting and evaluate the success of the activities.

The response is to demonstrate this through identifying:

- how the organisation will manage any risks associated with the activities, including any risk and mitigation plans
- the strengths of the proposed activities and what benefits, beyond the identified outcomes, the activities may bring, including how the project outcomes will be made sustainable beyond the life of the grant agreement
- how the organisation will monitor and evaluate the activities, including what the organisation would consider success for the priority cohort/s and how this will be evaluated.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated their risk management, evaluation and quality control strategies	Strong responses clearly: ▪ identified their project specific risks and elaborated on their risk management and mitigation plans/strategies ▪ described their evaluation plans/strategies and provided strong evidence to establish the credibility of their evaluation tools ▪ described strategies to ensure the sustainability of the program outcomes beyond the 12 months of the grant ▪ described the project's monitoring and quality control plans/strategies.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated the strengths of the proposed activities	Strong responses clearly: ▪ described the strengths and benefits of the proposed activities, beyond the identified outcomes ▪ identified the program's goals and success measures.

Please note: individual feedback will not be provided.