

# Disability Employment Services Program National Panel of Assessors Guidelines

Opening date:	11 September 2017
Closing date and time:	2:00pm AEDT on 24 October 2017
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Social Services
Co-Sponsoring Entities	N/A
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please contact Community Grants Hub, ph: 1800 020 283 or email: <a href="mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au">support@communitygrants.gov.au</a>
	Questions should be sent no later than 17 October 2017
Date guidelines released:	11 September 2017
Type of grant opportunity:	Open non-competitive

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# 1. Disability Employment Services: National Panel of Assessors Grant Opportunity Processes

## **The Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives**

This grant opportunity is part of the above Disability Employment Services which contributes to the Department of Social Services' Outcome 3 Disability and Carers Program. The Department of Social Services works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*.



## **The opportunity opens**

We publish the grant guidelines and advertise on GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites.



## **You complete and submit an application**

You must read these grant guidelines before you submit your application. These guidelines can be found on [GrantConnect](#), the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system. Note: Any addenda for this grant opportunity will be published on GrantConnect, and by registering on this website you will be automatically notified on any changes



## **We assess all applications**

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. We then assess your application against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value for money.



## **We make recommendations**

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



## **Decisions are made**

The decision maker decides which grant applications are successful.



### **We notify you of the outcome**

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



### **We enter into a grant agreement**

We will enter into a grant agreement or letter of agreement with successful applicants. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and is proportional to the risks involved.



### **Delivery of Assessment Services**

You undertake the Assessment Services as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.

## 1.1 Role of the Community Grants Hub

This grant opportunity will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Social Services under a Whole of Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.

## 1.2 About the grant program

This grant opportunity is for membership to the Disability Employment Services (DES) National Panel of Assessors (NPA). The Department of Social Services will establish the Government's panel of independent Assessment Service providers to assist with the needs of people with disability in the workplace under the Disability Employment Services program. The DES-NPA is an ancillary program of the DES program, announced as part of the Department of Social Services Portfolio Outcome 3: Disability and Carers.

DES is an essential part of the Australian Government's commitment to improving the social and economic participation of people with disability. DES is the Australian Government's specialised employment service for people whose disability, injury or health condition is assessed as the main impediment to them gaining employment. The program is complemented by the Australian Government's broader disability reforms, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This Grant Program will be undertaken according to the [\*Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)\*](#) 2017.

## 1.3 About the Grant Opportunity

These guidelines contain information for the NPA grants. This grant opportunity was announced as part of the DES program. The process for establishing the NPA for the initial period from 2018 to 2023 has changed from the previous DES-NPA 2010-2012 Request for Tender round. Payments to NPA Providers will be paid as funding under a Commonwealth Grant Program on a per-assessment basis. Grant applicants may nominate the type of Assessment Services they are interested in providing as set out in section 1.4.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are monitored and evaluated, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

The DES-NPA will run concurrently with the DES Program over five years from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2023, which may be extended for a period of no more than five years. The grant application process for DES NPA will be an open non-competitive application process.

You must read this document before filling out an application.

## 1.4 National Panel of Assessors

The NPA will provide a range of Assessment Services to assist with the needs of people with disability in the workplace.

The outcomes of the DES-NPA 2018 program are:

- to ensure that DES Participants, Providers and Employers are supported by independent assessors trained and qualified in providing disability employment Assessment Services
- to provide sufficient and timely delivery of three types of Assessment Services across all ESA locations:
  - Ongoing Support Arrangements (OSA)
  - Supported Wage Scheme (SWS)
  - Workplace Modifications Scheme (WMS)
- to supplement the DES program by providing assessment services for the benefit of people with disability in the workplace, employers, DES Participants and DES Providers.

These outcomes achieve value for money by:

- ensuring that workplace modifications are effective and provide value for money
- ensuring the appropriate level of ongoing support is provided to DES participants to maintain their employment

- avoiding conflicts of interest by ensuring Assessment Services are performed by an independent Assessor not the DES Provider, and
- providing funding to NPA Providers on a per-assessment basis.

The delivery of Assessment Services is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- employment participation by people with a disability
- support services which are provided to people with disability in the workplace
- access to employment by people with disability, and
- provision of fair and accurate assessments of workplace productivity.

A workplace assessor carries out an evaluation of a workplace and a person's individual job requirements or needs. This evaluation can include an assessment of the physical environment, analysis of the specific work tasks in a job, review of injury-prevention strategies and recommendations for workplace modifications.

The Australian Government aims to ensure a diverse range of suitably qualified and experienced applicants have the opportunity to become NPA Providers. NPA Providers must have an understanding of employment support requirements for people with disability and mental illness, including workplace barriers. NPA Providers must also have the skills required to conduct assessments. NPA Providers must exercise sound judgement in making assessments that are appropriate and accurate. NPA Providers will be required to possess or engage suitably qualified and experienced staff to provide Assessment Services before entering into and during the term of the Grant Agreement.

The National Panel of Assessors will run initially over **five** years from **1 July 2018 to 30 June 2023**.

Entities that are successful in these rounds will enter into Grant Agreements for the remaining length of the initial term of the Panel to 30 June 2023.

These grant rounds will be published on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

The DES-NPA program was announced as part of the Australian Government's commitment to improving employment outcomes for people with disability and getting more people with disability into jobs.

Applicants may submit an application to provide either or both of the following combinations of assessments:

- Ongoing Support Assessments and Supported Wage System Assessments together, and/or
- Workplace Modifications Assessments, including any specialist Workplace Modifications Assessments nominated by the grant applicant.

The assessments are described in more detail in Section 4 Eligible grant activities

Service gaps may occur where there is an insufficient availability of NPA providers to deliver Assessment Services in an ESA. Successful applicants may be invited to provide gap filling services in these areas. This is explained in more detail in section 7.6.

## 1.5 Allocation of Assessment Services

SWS assessments and OSAs will be allocated to NPA Providers by the Department of Social Services using the Department of Employment IT systems, which allocate assessments on an equal basis to the NPA Providers in the assessment location. NPA Providers will be required to acknowledge acceptance or rejection of the allocated assessments using the Department of Employment IT Systems.

Where feasible, if OSAs and SWS assessments for a participant are due at a similar time, the assessments will be allocated to the same NPA Provider. This arrangement will support a streamlined assessment process for the participant, employer and DES provider.

Workplace Modification Assessments will be allocated to NPA Providers who must then acknowledge either acceptance or rejection of the allocated assessments. Workplace Modification Assessments are allocated on an equal basis to the NPA Provider in the assessment location. Where a specialist Workplace Modification Assessment is required, a specialist assessment may be allocated to the closest available assessor.

Where an NPA Provider rejects an allocated assessment, the NPA Provider will be required to give reasons for that rejection. The Department of Social Services will monitor the number of rejections by NPA Providers and reasons for those rejections, which the Department of Social Services may take into account in relation to decisions whether to provide future assessment allocations to an NPA Provider.

Allocation of assessments will take into account factors such as NPA Provider availability and any conflict of interest that have been declared to the Department of Social Services. NPA Providers must not conduct an assessment if doing so would present a conflict of interest for the NPA Provider. Each NPA Provider will be required to declare any instance where it has been allocated an assessment that, if undertaken, would amount to a conflict of interest. The Grant Agreement will preclude an NPA Provider from conducting an assessment of a participant of its own organisation or a related entity.

NPA Providers will be precluded from providing Assessment Services in respect of any DES Participant who is employed by their own organisation or a related entity.

## 2. Grant amount

This Grant Opportunity is for membership of the National Panel of Assessors. Approved NPA Providers will receive a grant for providing a range of Assessment Services to assist with the needs of people with disability in the workplace. No funding is provided to NPA Providers on appointment to the National Panel of Assessors. Those successful applicants subsequently invited to become NPA Providers on the National Panel of Assessors will be



required to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Department of Social Services. Assessment Services will be allocated to NPA Providers as required by the Department of Social Services. There is no guarantee on the amount of Assessment Services will allocated to the successful applicants. The NPA is a non-exclusive arrangement.

**Table 1 Total amount of NPA program and cost over the Budget and forward estimates**

<b>Assessment type</b>	<b>2018-19 (\$'000)</b>	<b>2019-20 (\$'000)</b>	<b>2020-21 (\$'000)</b>	<b>2021-22 (\$'000)</b>	<b>2022-23 (\$'000)</b>	<b>TOTAL (\$'000)</b>
OSA	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	15,000
SWS	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	17,500
WMS	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Total	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	37,500

### **Grant funding for the National Panel of Assessors**

Table 1 indicates the grant arrangements for each of the assessment types applicable to the National Panel of Assessors. Table 2 indicates the grant arrangements for assessments in Remote Areas, and assessments requiring travel grants.

The Grants for the National Panel of Assessors will be indexed annually on 1 July, with the first indexation point on 1 July 2019.

Where an OSA and SWS Assessment are undertaken concurrently, the NPA Provider may be eligible for both an OSA fee and an SWS fee.

**Table 2 Grants for National Panel of Assessors**

<b>Assessment Types</b>	<b>Assessment Grant</b>	<b>Additional Assessment Grant</b>
Ongoing Support Assessment	\$420	Nil
Supported Wage System Assessment	\$600	\$120 per hour (up to \$480)
Workplace Modifications Assessment	\$120 per hour (up to \$600)	\$120 per hour (up to \$480)

**Table 2.1 Remote Loading\* and travel grants for National Panel of Assessors**

<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>Assessment Grant with 1.7 loading</b>	<b>Additional Assessment Grant with 1.7 loading</b>	<b>Travel Grant</b>
Ongoing Support Assessment	Nil	Nil	Nil
Supported Wage	\$1,020	\$204 per hour (up	Nil

Assessment Type	Assessment Grant with 1.7 loading	Additional Assessment Grant with 1.7 loading	Travel Grant
System Assessment		to \$816)	
Workplace Modifications Assessment	Nil	Nil	\$50 per hour and other reimbursements as applicable (for travel in excess of 200 km)

### Ongoing Support Assessment Grants

The Assessment Grant of \$420 (including GST) is payable to NPA Providers on completion and acceptance of an OSA report by the Department of Social Services.

### Supported Wage System Grants

The Assessment Grant of \$600 (including GST) is payable on completion of an SWS Assessment and SWS *Wage Assessment Agreement*. If an Assessment will take more than five hours to complete, the Department of Social Services may approve payment for up to an additional four hours at an hourly rate of \$120 (including GST).

### \*Remote Loading

A loading of 70 per cent will be applied to the Assessment Grant where the assessment is completed in a Community Development Programme (CDP) Region.

### Workplace Modifications Grants

The hourly rate of \$120 (including GST) will be payable to NPA Providers on completion of a Workplace Modifications Assessment. If an assessment will take more than five hours to complete, the Department of Social Services may approve payment for up to an additional four hours at an hourly rate of \$120 (including GST).

NPA Providers who complete Workplace Modifications Assessments that require them to travel in excess of 200 kilometres for a return trip, may claim kilometre allowance and travel time at the rate of \$50 (including GST) an hour, for a maximum of eight hours per day. Travel time is not part of the time allocated for Assessment Services. For travel that includes an essential overnight stay, costs for meals and accommodation may also be claimed. These are payable on a reimbursement basis on receipt of a Tax Invoice and evidence of travel expenditure, up to the then in force Australian Taxation Office schedule on *Reasonable daily allowance amounts* (published annually), calculated at the rate of an employee with an annual salary of \$117,450 or below.

Ongoing Support Assessment, Supported Wage System and Workplace Modifications Grant payments, and their relevant requirements are outlined in detail in Section 6 of the Draft Grant Agreement.

## 3. Grant eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

### 3.1 Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible you must:

- be one of the following entity types:
  - Aboriginal Corporation
  - Australian Government (Corporate Commonwealth Entities only)
  - Private Company
  - Public Company
  - Incorporated Cooperative
  - Trustee on behalf of Trust
  - Incorporated Association
  - Organisation established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation
  - Individual/Sole Trader
  - Local Government
  - Non-Entity Joint Venture
  - Partnership
  - State/Territory Government
  - Other Incorporated Entity
- have legal personality, and
- have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).

An individual or organisation will have legal personality if it has the right and obligations of a legal person. These include, but are not limited to, the right to buy, sell, assign or lease any property; enter into contracts; and sue and be sued in their own name.

Applications from consortia are acceptable, provided you have a lead applicant who is the main driver of the project and all members of the consortia are eligible as per the list above.

## 3.2 What qualifications or skills are required?

All successful NPA Provider assessors must be accredited by the Department before they can undertake Assessment Services. To achieve accreditation, NPA providers will request accreditation of assessors who will be approved to conduct OSA, SWS and Workplace modification assessments in accordance with the Grant Agreement. The Department will provide successful applicants with application forms to nominate assessors, and add or remove assessors over the grant agreement period.

The Department recognises that a combination of skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications are required to successfully conduct assessments.

Skills may be demonstrated by having:

- high level communication skills with the ability to consult and provide advice in a sensitive and appropriate manner
- ability to complete assessments to a high standard
- ability to produce detailed written reports on completion of assessment
- ability to assess barriers and negotiate appropriate solutions to meet the needs people with disability, and
- technical skills related to the relevant process of assessment.

Each nominated assessor will have a minimum of two years practical experience in disability employment or related sectors.

Each nominated assessor will have an understanding of:

- Industry building and access codes (Workplace Modification assessors only)
- duty of care and professional ethics
- employment assistance option available to people with disability seeking employment, and
- relevant work health and safety, industrial relations and anti-discrimination legislation

It is required that all OSA/SWS assessors performing Assessment Services under the Grant Agreement possess a minimum of a diploma or higher-level qualification in one or more of the following fields:

- psychology
- rehabilitation counsellor
- vocational training or
- other diploma or higher-level qualification which the Department of Social Services considers is relevant to providing the required Assessment Services.

If nominated assessors possess a qualification in another relevant area, successful applicants will need to provide evidence prior to being approved to undertake assessments

that this diploma or higher-level qualification is relevant to conducting the Assessment Services. This may include a transcript of relevant subjects completed and a written explanation of their relevance to the Assessment Services. Based on this information, and any other information available to it, the Department of Social Services, at its absolute discretion, will determine whether the qualifications submitted are relevant to the Assessment Services, and thus whether the nominated assessor meets the mandatory qualification requirements.

All Workplace Modification Assessment assessors performing Assessment Services under the Grant Agreement must possess a minimum of a diploma or higher level qualification in one or more of the following fields:

- occupational therapy
- physiotherapy
- exercise physiologist
- medical practitioner.

All assessors must have a full (non-provisional or restricted) qualification that is registered with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or a qualification recognised or accredited with one of the following associations before they can undertake assessments:

- Occupational therapist (registered)
- Physiotherapist (registered)
- Exercise physiologist (accredited with Exercise and Sports Science Australia)
- Medical practitioner (registered)
- Rehabilitation counsellor (recognised with Australia Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors or Rehabilitation Counselling Association of Australasia)
- Nurse (registered).

NPA Assessors must provide evidence of the qualifications and experience of any assessor prior to that assessor undertaking Assessment Services for the purposes of the DES-NPA program.

The Department will recognise any previously approved NPA accreditation applied during the current 2010-2018 NPA Deed of Standing Offer.

More details on Provider's Personnel is provided in Section 2 of the Draft Grant Agreement.

## 4. Eligible grant activities

### 4.1 What can the grant money be used for?

#### 4.1.1 Supported Wage System Assessments

The National Panel of Assessors will include suitably qualified Supported Wage System (SWS) assessment assessors.

If a person with disability is not able to work at the same productivity levels as their co-workers due to the effects of their disability, and the person with disability meets the impairment criteria for receipt of the Disability Support Pension (DSP) from the Department of Human Services (DHS), the person may be eligible to participate in the SWS. For example, if a worker involved in the SWS is assessed as having a productivity level of 70 per cent compared to co-workers performing the same duties, the worker and the employer can agree to ongoing employment at a pay rate of 70 per cent of the normal rate.

An SWS assessor will conduct an initial productivity assessment after a DES Participant has applied for SWS. The assessor will work within the Federal and State industrial relations systems to facilitate an SWS wage assessment agreement between the employer and DES Participant, and submission of the agreement to the relevant industrial relations authority if required. A review of the DES Participant's productivity must be undertaken every 12 months, or when a substantial change has occurred in the DES Participant's productivity level or duties, whichever is sooner.

Applicants wishing to deliver SWS assessments must also apply to deliver Ongoing Support Assessments (described below).

SWS assessments must be completed using Department of Employment IT Systems.

#### **SWS in supported employment**

Currently SWS is used for Open Employment and the supported employment sector (Australian Disability Enterprises). The Department is currently working with relevant stakeholders in the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to develop a new wage assessment tool for use in supported employment, which may include modifications to SWS. The final details of these modifications are not available at the time of publishing of this document or the commencement of the DES NPA grant application process. At the time of drafting, the Department of Social Services is in the process of determining SWS assessment modifications for people with disability employed under the Supported Employment Services Award. If these modifications are approved by the Fair Work Commission, these assessments will form part of the required SWS assessment services.

Applicants should note that any changes to the SWS as advised by the Fair Work Commission and the Department of Social Services will be reflected as variations to the Grant Agreement and NPA Providers must comply with such SWS changes.

## 4.1.2 Ongoing Support Assessments

Ongoing Support assistance is available to DES Participants who have achieved 25 weeks of employment, are currently employed, and require the ongoing services of a DES provider to retain and/or maintain their employment. Ongoing Support Assessments (OSAs) assessors will independently assess the Ongoing Support needs of DES Participants in employment. An OSA will be completed where a DES Provider determines that a DES Participant is likely to need ongoing support in the workplace to retain their job and where:

- the DES Participant has achieved 26-weeks of employment and requires Ongoing Support
- the DES Participant has reached the maximum number of instances in Flexible Ongoing Support over a six-month period
- the DES Participant receives Work Assist and has achieved 26-weeks of employment and requires Ongoing Support
- it has been 52 weeks since the DES Participant's last OSA
- a change in circumstances means that the DES Participant may need a higher level of Ongoing Support than identified in the DES Participant's last OSA, or
- the DES Participant has received:
  - two or more consecutive OSAs, or
  - a change of circumstances reassessment and then one or more consecutive OSAs, and
  - each of those assessments has recommended that the DES Participant continue to receive the same level of Ongoing Support, and it has been 78 weeks since their most recent OSA.

The OSA assessment will determine the level of support appropriate for a DES Participant. The levels of support are: none – where the Participant will be exited from Ongoing Support, or Flexible, Moderate, or High Ongoing Support Levels.

The OSA will normally consist of:

- an interview with the DES Participant's DES Provider
- a file assessment of support provided in the period since Job Placement or since the last OSA
- a DES Participant interview, and
- a workplace assessment which should include an interview with the DES Participant's employer.

DES participants may decide not to disclose their disability to their employer. Where non-disclosure or privacy issues are identified or where a DES Participant or their employer is reluctant to include a workplace assessment, an OSA assessor may exclude this aspect of the assessment, with the agreement of the DES Participant.

The different elements of the OSA will not be weighted. The OSA will be considered as a whole in determining the Ongoing Support needs of a DES Participant. Results of the OSA

will be documented in a report that will be maintained on Department of Employment IT Systems.

Where possible, OSAs will be undertaken concurrently with SWS assessments if the DES Participant is also accessing SWS.

Applicants wishing to deliver OSAs must also apply to deliver SWS assessments.

OSAs must be completed using the Department of Employment IT Systems.

### 4.1.3 Workplace Modifications Assessments

The Department of Social Services will appoint qualified Workplace Modification Assessors (WMA) who will be required to conduct assessments for people with disability to identify barriers to accessing or performing their work. WMA assessments will recommend equipment, modifications and other support, funded through the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF), to remove the identified barriers.

Applications for assistance under the EAF will be submitted to the JobAccess service. Some applications may require a Workplace Modification Assessment to determine the right modifications or adjustments required for the employee or job seeker. In these instances, the JobAccess Provider will allocate a WMA NPA Provider to conduct the assessment.

Workplace Modification Assessments must be completed by the NPA Provider using the Workplace Modification Assessment Report pro forma provided by the Department of Social Services. Reports and supporting documentation must be submitted to the JobAccess service.

Successful applicants may also be expected to provide other specialist Workplace Modification Assessment-related services that may be agreed with the Department of Social Services. Applicants will be expected to provide details of nominated assessors with suitable qualifications and experience to conduct the Assessment Services.

## 4.2 What the grant money cannot be used for?

Successful applicants will only be paid for delivering Assessment Services under the Grant Agreement. The services do not include assessment or reporting on issues regarding industrial relations determinations, income support arrangements, medical, health, legal or other related Commonwealth, State or Territory programs including those purchased by the Department. More details are included in the Grant Agreement in section 2 Performing the Services, and section 3 Financial Matters provides guidance on what are permitted activities for grant money.



## 5. The grant selection process

First we will assess your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. Eligible applications will be considered through an **open non-competitive** grant process.

We will then assess your application against the assessment criteria set out below. These criteria represent the requirements for NPA providers in delivering efficient and effective Assessment Services.

We will assess your application on your ability to clearly and concisely outline your organisation's understanding of barriers to employment participation experienced by people with disability, and your organisation's experience, capability and capacity to deliver assessment services.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate value with relevant money through their ability to provide effective Assessment Services in a cost-effective manner. Successful NPA providers will be required to demonstrate value for relevant money through on-going evaluation and management of performance. Details of the evaluation and performance arrangements are provided in the draft grant agreement at section 3C.

All assessment criteria are considered threshold assessment criteria. This means that each criterion will be assessed using a pass/fail concept, whereby an application that fails to achieve a pass requirement will not proceed for further assessment.

You must answer all the questions in the form correctly to ensure that you are prompted to complete the assessment criteria relevant to your situation. If you do not provide a response against all the relevant criteria and upload the required attachments, your application may be considered non-compliant and will not progress.

Further details about completing the application form can be found at section 7.3.

## 6. The assessment criteria

### **Applying to be on the National Panel of Assessors**

Applicants may apply for inclusion on the National Panel of Assessors.

Applicants may apply to provide:

- Ongoing Support Assessment (OSA) and Supported Wage System (SWS) Assessment Services\*
- Workplace Modifications (WMS) Assessment Services, or
- all three types of Assessment Services.

**\*Note:** Successful Applicants for OSA and SWS Assessment Services must provide both services.

All applicants **must** address the assessment criteria one, two, three and four. Only applicants interested in delivering Specialist WMS Assessment Services will be required to address criterion five.

Applicants not applying to deliver Specialist WMS Assessment Services will need to respond to criterion five as 'not applicable' in their application.

All assessment criteria must achieve a 'Pass' for your application to be considered for the NPA. This is a non-competitive process. Value for money will be achieved by selecting assessors that can demonstrate they can provide services at the performance levels required in the locations required. The application form has set word limits for each assessment criteria response at 900 words and will not allow you to exceed that specified word limit.

**Criterion 1: Describe your understanding of the barriers to employment participation experienced by people with disability, and the available disability employment services and other program supports.**

Your response should describe your understanding of:

- the key barriers to employment participation for people with disability; and
- the ways these barriers can be resolved, with reference to the assistance available from disability employment services and other program supports.

**Criterion 2: Describe your organisation's capability to deliver OSA/SWS and/or WMS (as applicable) Assessment Services or similar services.**

Your response should describe:

- your organisation's experience and performance in delivering services that are consistent with those required for the delivery of OSA/SWS and/or WMS (as applicable) Assessment Services or similar services, and
- how you propose to develop and maintain cooperative relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders, including people with disability and mental illness, employment service providers, health professionals, employers and union representatives.

**Criterion 3: Describe how your organisation will deliver OSA/SWS and/or WMS (as applicable) Assessment Services or similar services.**

Your response should describe:

- how you will deliver OSA/SWS and/or WMS (as applicable) Assessment Services or similar services
- how your Assessment Services will be independent and not unduly influenced by relationships with other agencies, including where your organisation or a related organisation is providing Disability Employment Services, and
- the governance arrangements, communication strategies, organisational management and accountability structures that your organisation has in place to ensure it can comply with the Grant Agreement.

**Criterion 4: Describe how your organisation will recruit and retain suitably qualified assessors.**

Your response should describe:

- how you propose to recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff to ensure you maintain accredited assessors in your nominated ESA's, including attracting experienced local staff who have held positions with outgoing providers, and
- how your organisation ensures staff remain qualified and trained to deliver high quality Assessment Services.

**Criterion 5: Describe the need for and your organisation's capability to deliver Specialist WMS Assessment Services or similar services.** [Only applicants interested in delivering Specialist WMS Assessment Services will be required to address criterion five. Applicants not applying to deliver Specialist WMS Assessment Services must respond to criterion five and enter 'not applicable' in the application form.]

Your response should describe:

- the specialist cohort you will provide WMS Assessment Services or similar services to
- the need for the specialised Assessment Services, and
- your experience and performance in delivering specialised WMS assessments or similar services.

The application form includes a 900-word limit for responses to all criteria.

**Attachments**

The following two templates **must** be completed and uploaded onto the application form where instructed.

The attachments are available with all the grant opportunity documentation on both the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites:

- **Coverage of Service:** you must indicate on the spread sheet provided if you are applying to deliver Assessment Services nationally, or at the ESA level (including which ESA's you will be delivering in and those ESA's you will partially cover). You must also indicate on this spread sheet whether you are applying for Specialist Workplace Modification Assessment Services (at **Attachment A**).
- **Assessor details:** you must provide on the Assessor Qualifications template details of each nominated assessor's qualifications and status, experience and location they will operate in (at **Attachment B**).

## 7. The grant application process

### 7.1 Overview of application process

You must read these grant guidelines, the application form, the ESA maps and the standard grant agreement terms and conditions before you submit an application.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information will exclude your application from further consideration.

You must meet all of the eligibility requirements, address all assessment criteria and complete and attach all relevant attachments to be considered for a grant. Please complete each section of the application form and make sure you provide the information we have requested. Financial viability information may be requested for assessment at a later date if required.

If more than one application per organisation is received, the latest eligible application will be progressed.

Please keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers.

### 7.2 Application process timing

Submit your application by the closing time and date below.

Late applications will be dealt with in accordance with the Community Grants Hub's [late application policy](#).

If an application is late or the Community Grants Hub is requested to approve a lodgement after the closing date, the Community Grants Hub may determine that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control that meant they could not meet the deadline.

Examples of exceptional circumstances could include, but may not be limited to:

- Community Grants Hub infrastructure failures
- natural disasters
- power outages affecting the ability of the applicant to submit their application by the deadline, and
- death or disability of key personnel.

Information on the Community Grants Hub's [late application policy](#) is available on the [Community Grants Hub website/GrantConnect](#).

The expected start date for the Assessment Services is 1 July 2018 and the expected end date is 30 June 2023, unless the Department of Social Services extends the Grant Agreement at its discretion.

**Table 3: Expected timing for this grant opportunity**

Activity	Timeframe
Application period	Open: 11/09/2017 Close: 2.00pm AEDT 24/10/2017
Assessment of applications	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	1-3 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Assessment Services commence	01/07/2018

End of table

## 7.3 Completing the grant application

You must submit your grant application on the application form, which can be downloaded at [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub websites](#). The application form includes help information.

This is an online application form that you must submit electronically. If you have any technical difficulties please contact 1800 020 283 or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au).

Applicants are required to indicate in the Coverage of Service template (at **Attachment A**) whether they are applying to deliver the nominated Assessment Services nationally or by Employment Service Area (ESA). Applicants that wish to deliver services by ESA must select which ESAs they wish to deliver Assessment Services in. A list of ESA's is in the Coverage of Service template and the ESA maps – both available from the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

Applicants should indicate in their application if they do not intend to cover all of an ESA. If Applicants are applying to service part of an ESA, they will be required to provide, when requested, a detailed description of that part of the ESA. The description must be able to be understood by people not familiar with the location, and should preferably refer to identifiable geographical features that the Department of Social Services can identify on a map of the area.

The Department of Social Services does not, and will not, guarantee to any party, including successful applicants for membership of the National Panel of Assessors, the allocation of a specified or minimum level of Assessment Services. Successful applicants must be ready to commence delivering Assessment Services from 1 July 2018.

Applicants applying to provide Workplace Modification Assessments may apply to provide Assessment Services for a specialist type of assessment—for example, assessments involving adaptive technology or assessments involving building modifications. The allocation

of Workplace Modification Assessments to specialist assessors will vary. Not all specialist assessments will necessarily be referred to an assessor who specialises in a specific area. Further, WMAs may be asked to deliver services that do not fall within the specific area of expertise. WMAs will be able to choose whether or not they agree to undertake these assessments.

Any application form that does not present each attachment on the mandatory template provided in the Application Pack will be deemed non-compliant and will be excluded from assessment.

Applicants must use the on line application form and downloadable attachment templates provided. Applications will be deemed non-compliant if the online application form and attachment templates are not used. Applications will also be deemed non-compliant if they are ineligible entity type or do not meet mandatory compliance checks.

Only attach the documents you have been asked to include.

If duplicate applications are submitted, the latest application submitted will be used.

During the submission period if an applicant contacts the Community Grants Hub and identifies they have made an error they would be allowed to reapply with a new application for. However, once the submission period is closed, applicants will not be able to reapply.

The Department of Social Services/Community Grants Hub will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

You must make sure that your application is complete and accurate and submitted in accordance with these Guidelines.

You cannot change your application after the closing time and date.

If you find a mistake in your application after it has been submitted, you should contact the Community Grants Hub by phone on 1800 020 283 or by email at [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au) straight away. The Community Grants Hub may ask you for more information, as long as it does not change the substance of your application. The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from applicants to correct applications after the closing time.

## 7.4 Applications from consortia

Some organisations may apply as a consortium to deliver grant activities. A consortium is two or more businesses who are working together to combine their capabilities when developing and delivering a grant activity.

If you are submitting a grant application on behalf of a consortium, a member organisation or a newly created organisation must be appointed as the 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation will enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth and will be responsible for the grant. The lead organisation must complete the application form and identify all other members of the proposed consortium in the application.

Although the Department of Social Services will enter in a grant agreement with the lead organisation, members of proposed consortium organisations must meet Assessor Qualification requirements. The Department of Social Services will undertake accreditation on all assessors of a consortium.

*Note: Previous Request for Tenders detailed different types of groups, including consortium, partnerships, joint venture and other alliances. The term consortium in this document is intended to cover all types of group arrangements with the meaning described above.*

## 7.5 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or email to [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au). The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

Answers to questions may be posted on the [GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites](#).

The question and answer period will close at 5.00pm AEDT on 17 October 2017. Following this time, only questions relating to using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

## 7.6 Further grant opportunities

Successful applicants may be requested to provide additional gap-filling services as and when determined by the Department of Social Services from time to time. The expert panel may make recommendations in the application assessment report noting future negotiations that could be undertaken to ensure assessment coverage across ESA's under a variation to an existing agreement with a current provider or one-off grant under these guidelines to another successful provider, if required.

## 7.7 Who will assess applications?

An assessment team will assess all eligible and compliant applications based on their merits. The assessment team will be comprised of Departmental of Social Services and Community Grants Hub staff. The assessment team will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications.

Vendor checks will be carried out by the assessment team to determine the applicant's legal entity status. The applicant may be asked to provide additional financial viability information if required.

If the assessment process identifies unintentional errors in your application, you may be contacted to correct or explain the information.

The assessment team may seek information about you or your application. They may request information from other Commonwealth agencies, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The assessment team may also consider information about

you or your application that is available publicly or known by the Department of Social Services.

An expert panel comprised of Department of Social Services staff representing each state/territory and national office will then review all suitable applications to inform the final recommendations for funding.

The expert panel will review the application assessments having regards to:

- conformance with eligibility criteria
- distribution of NPA Providers across all ESA locations
- existing and/or potential market failure
- (if known) minimising possible duplication with other Commonwealth/State/Territory government programs/service delivery.

## 7.8 Who will approve grants?

The expert panel will make recommendations to the Policy Delegate who will be the Group Manager of the Disability, Employment and Carers Group within the Department of Social Services. The Policy Delegate will make the final decision to approve a grant.

The Policy Delegate decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant, and
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

## 8. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcomes of your application in writing, following a decision by the Policy Delegate. If you are successful, you will also be advised about any specific conditions attached to the grant.

If you are unsuccessful, we will notify you in writing.

### 8.1 Feedback on your application

A Feedback Summary will provide general round-specific information and will include main strengths and areas of improvement for the applications received in this round.

The feedback summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website when the grant round has been completed



## 9. Successful grant applications

### 9.1 The grant agreement

If you are successful, you must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth represented by the Department of Social Services. Any additional conditions attached to the grant will be identified in the grant offer or during the grant agreement negotiations.

The Department of Social Services will negotiate agreements with successful applicants before 30 June 2018. If there are unreasonable delays in finalising a grant agreement, the grant offer may be withdrawn and the grant may be awarded to a different applicant.

Where a grantee fails to meet the obligations of the grant agreement, the Department of Social Services may terminate their Agreement.

You should not make financial commitments until a grant agreement has been executed by the Commonwealth.

### 9.2 How the grant will be paid

The draft grant agreement provides details on the mechanism for the payment of grants as follows:

- Section 6 - types of payments available for NPA Providers
- Section 6 - amount of payments payable to NPA Providers
- Section 3 and 6 - when the payments will be paid, and
- Section 3 - conditions of payment (e.g. documentary evidence).

### 9.3 Grant agreement variations

You can request variations to the grant agreement for things including, but not limited to:

- changing site details
- changing subcontractors
- changes to consortium arrangements
- organisational details.

The Department can seek to vary the Grant Agreement at any time in accordance with the terms of the agreement, including, but not limited to:

- extensions to the term of the agreement
- updating the fee structure based on recalibration process
- the introduction of new employment programs
- general administrative changes.

The Department can vary guidelines and policies at any time, including but not limited to:

- changes to agency-wide policy such as the Australian Privacy Principles

- changes to policies specifically relating to the provision of disability employment services
- changes in policies relating to other relevant programs or services.

## 10. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the Department of Social Services' website or [GrantConnect](#), 21 days after the date of effect<sup>1</sup> as required by Section 5.3 of the *CGRGs*.

## 11. Delivery of grant activities

### 11.1 Your responsibilities

Your responsibilities are outlined in the grant agreement, including but not limited to:

- General requirements in performing the Assessment Services
- Financial matters
- Code of Practice and Service guarantee
- Information management and control of information
- Intellectual property rights
- Information technology
- Administration
- Maintain nominated personnel qualifications
- Indemnity and insurance
- Corporate governance and external administration, and
- Resolving problems.

You will be responsible for:

- Meeting the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and managing the activity efficiently and effectively
- Complying with record keeping, reporting and performance requirements as set out in the grant agreement.

### 11.2 Department of Social Services' responsibilities

The Department of Social Services will:

- meet the terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement
- provide timely administration of the grant

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<sup>1</sup> See glossary

- evaluate the grantee's performance.

The Department of Social Services will monitor your performance and may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

## 11.3 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement. Payments will be GST Inclusive.

Before any payments are made, you must provide:

- a tax invoice for the amount of the payment (the Australian Government's default invoice process is Recipient Created Tax Invoices for the purposes of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*)
- any conditions of payment including evidence to support claims for payment.

If you receive a grant, you should consider speaking to a tax advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement. You can also visit the Australian Taxation Office website at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) for more information.

## 11.4 Evaluation

The Australian Government is committed to working in partnership with the National Panel of Assessors to drive performance and continuous improvement in the delivery of quality services. The performance of NPA Providers will be measured throughout the life of the agreement against the grant agreement requirements.

The Department of Social Services will measure performance using methods including but not limited to stakeholder satisfaction surveys, checking assessment reports, evaluations and monitoring feedback, complaints and timeframes for completion of assessments.

The Department of Social Services will work closely with NPA Providers on the detailed implementation and ongoing operation of the proposed performance management framework.

NPA Provider performance in this agreement, including providing value for money, may be taken into consideration for any future grant agreement extensions.

The Department of Social Services will evaluate the NPA to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

## 11.5 Acknowledgement

The Program logo is designed to be used on all materials related to grants under the Program. Whenever the logo is used the publication must also acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

'This activity received grant funding from the Australian Government.'

## 12. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the program process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

### 12.1 Complaints process

The Department of Social Services [Complaints Procedures](#) apply to complaints about the Program. All complaints about a process must be lodged in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for the Program should be sent to [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au)

If you do not agree with the way the Department of Social Services has handled your complaint, you may complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Department of Social Services.

Applicants can contact the complaints service with complaints about Community Grants Hub's service(s) or the application process.

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can lodge complaints through the following channels:

Telephone: 1800 634 035  
Fax: (02) 6204 4587

Mail: Community Grants Hub Complaints  
GPO Box 9820  
Canberra ACT 2601

Applicants can also lodge a complaint about the Departments service(s) using the complaints form on the Departments [website](#).

Alternatively, a complaint can be made over the phone on 1800 634 035.

If an Applicant is at any time dissatisfied with the Department or the Community Grant Hub's handling of a complaint, they can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

## 12.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if Department of Social Services and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer
- has a relationship with an organisation relationship with, or in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives funding under the Program.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to a grant application, you must inform the Department of Social Services and the Community Grants Hub in writing immediately. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

The chair of the Expert Panel will be made aware of any conflicts of interest and will handle them as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (Section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. We publish our conflict of interest policy available on the [Community Grant Hub](#) website.

## 12.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

### **Personal information**

We treat your personal information according to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

You are required, as part of your application, to declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors you engage to assist with the activity.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else in compliance with the Privacy Act, including; if you are given reasonable notice of the disclosure; where disclosure

is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if you have consented to the disclosure.

### **Confidential information**

The Commonwealth may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under the Program in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

You must receive the Commonwealth's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

We may reveal confidential information to:

- the committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes including government administration, research or service delivery and according to Australian laws, including the:

- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Public Service Regulations 1999*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Crimes Act 1914*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995*

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the four conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive

3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
4. you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

The grant agreement will include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

## 12.4 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail:           Freedom of Information Coordinator  
                      Department of Social Services  
                      Government and Executive Services Branch  
                      GPO Box 9820  
                      Canberra ACT 2601

By email:         [foi@dss.gov.au](mailto:foi@dss.gov.au)

## 13. Consultation

Stakeholders have been consulted throughout the policy development process to reform DES. DSS (including through the Disability Employment Taskforce) undertook three consultation rounds; issued two discussion papers and one issues paper; established a Disability Employment Reference Group; undertook an employer engagement forum; and participated in many sector conferences and forums to engage with participants, providers and employers to lay the groundwork for change.

## 14. Glossary

Capitalised terms referred to in this document are either explained below, or are defined in the Draft Grant Agreement.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Assessment Criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be assessed as set out in section 6.
Assessment Services	The assessment services to be performed by NPA providers for the purposes of the Disability Employment Services: National Panel of Assessors grant program.
Australian Disability Enterprise	A Department funded network of business service outlets across Australia which provide supported employment assistance to people with moderate to severe disability who need substantial ongoing support to maintain their employment.
Decision Maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
Department or DSS	Department of Social Services.
Department IT Systems	The IT computer system accessible by an NPA Provider through which information is exchanged between the NPA Provider, the Department of Social Services, and other relevant third parties in relation to the Assessment Services.
Eligibility Criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant. Eligibility Criteria may apply in addition to assessment criteria.
Community Development Programme Region	Community Development Programme (CDP) regions are those regions in which CDP is delivered as set out at <a href="https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/community-development-programme-regions">https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/community-development-programme-regions</a> . The CDP regions may be updated from time to time as defined by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
DES Provider	A provider of DES services to DES participants.
DES Participant	A participant in the DES program receiving disability employment services from a DES provider.



<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Employment Assistance Fund (EAF)	Financial assistance provided by the Australian Government to eligible people with disability and mental health condition and employers to buy work related modifications and services.
Grant Agreement	The grant agreement to be entered into between the Department and successful grant applicants under this DES NPA Grant Program.
Grant Opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.
Grant Program	May be advertised within the 'Forecast Opportunity' (FO) section of GrantConnect to provide a consolidated view of associated grant opportunities and provide strategic context for specific grant opportunities
Grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant.
JobAccess Provider	Provider contracted by the Department of Social Services to deliver JobAccess services, including the administration of the Employment Assistance Fund, and allocation of Workplace Modifications Assessments.
Ongoing Support	Services provided by a DES provider to a DES participant, who has achieved 26 weeks of employment, is currently employed and require support from a DES provider to retain and/or maintain their employment. Ongoing Support is provided in different levels, namely Flexible, Moderate and High. These levels are set out in the DES Ongoing Support Guidelines: <a href="https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09_2016/des_on_going_support_guidelines.pdf">https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09_2016/des_on_going_support_guidelines.pdf</a>
Open Employment	Employment where an employee with a disability is engaged in the mainstream workforce, alongside employees without disability, at relevant minimum wages or above.
Selection Criteria	Comprise Eligibility Criteria and assessment criteria.
Selection Process	The method used to select potential Grantees against the Selection Criteria as set out in section 5.
Work Assist	The DES program formally known as 'Job in Jeopardy'