

# The Try, Test and Learn Fund: Skills for Micro-enterprise Project Guidelines

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# Contents

<b>1. Grant opportunity and project overview</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 About the grant process	4
1.2 Role of the Community Grants Hub	5
1.3 About the grant program	5
1.4 Background to the grant opportunity	6
1.4.1 Overview	6
1.4.2 The Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare and the Try, Test and Learn Fund	6
1.4.3 Tranche 1 priority groups	8
1.4.4 Tranche 1 project development and selection	8
1.4.5 Tranche 1 project funding (August 2017 onwards)	10
1.5 Grant opportunity objectives and outcomes	10
<b>2. Grant amount</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3. Grant eligibility criteria</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Who is eligible to apply for this grant?	13
3.1.1 Eligible applicants	13
<b>4. Eligible grant activities</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 What can the grant money be used for?	15
4.2 What can the grant money not be used for?	16
<b>5. The project development and grant selection processes</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1 Project development	16
5.2 Grant selection process	17
<b>6. The assessment criteria</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7. The grant application process</b>	<b>18</b>
7.1 Overview of application process	18
7.2 Application process timing	18
7.3 Completing the grant application	19
7.4 Attachments to the application	20
7.5 Applications from consortia	20
7.6 Questions during the application process	20

7.7 Further grant opportunities	20
<b>8. Assessment of grant applications</b>	<b>20</b>
8.1 Who will assess applications?	20
8.2 Who will approve grants?	21
<b>9. Notification of application outcomes</b>	<b>21</b>
9.1 Feedback on your application	22
<b>10. Successful grant applications</b>	<b>22</b>
10.1 The grant agreement	22
10.2 How the grant will be paid	22
<b>11. Announcement of grants</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>12. Delivery of grant activities</b>	<b>23</b>
12.1 Your responsibilities	23
12.2 The Department's responsibilities	24
12.3 Grant payments and GST	24
12.4 Reporting	25
12.5 Evaluation	25
12.6 Acknowledgement	25
12.7 Probity	26
12.8 Complaints process	26
12.9 Conflict of interest	27
12.10 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information	27
12.11 Freedom of information	29
12.12 Consultation	29
<b>13. Glossary</b>	<b>30</b>

# 1. Grant opportunity and project overview

## 1.1 About the grant process



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

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



### **Delivery of grant**

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



### **Evaluation of the program**

We evaluate the specific grant activity and program as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

## 1.2 Role of the Community Grants Hub

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

## 1.3 About the grant program

These guidelines contain information about a restricted competitive grant opportunity for the Skills for Micro-enterprise project. The project was one of those developed during Tranche 1 of the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Information about this and other Try, Test and Learn Fund grant opportunities will be released on the GrantConnect website.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund was announced in the 2016-17 Federal Budget as an initial response to the Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare under Outcome 1.10 Working Age Payments. It will develop and fund new or innovative policy responses aimed at improving workforce participation or capacity to work for groups at risk of long-term welfare dependence.

Detailed information about the Try, Test and Learn Fund is publicly available in the Try, Test and Learn Fund Tranche 1 Handbook and the Co-development Supplementary Information document. These documents are available on the [Department of Social Services website](#).

The Try, Test and Learn Fund forms part of Outcome 1.10 Working Age Payments. It will be undertaken according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)*.

This document sets out:

- the background and goals of the Try, Test and Learn Fund

- how the Try, Test and Learn Fund works, including information on the public consultation activities that have defined the project to be funded through this grant opportunity (ideas generation and co-development)
- the assessment criteria for the grant opportunity
- how grant applications will be evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

You must read this document before completing an application.

## 1.4 Background to the grant opportunity

### 1.4.1 Overview

These guidelines relate to the Skills for Micro-enterprise project, which is one of the projects to be funded by Tranche 1 of the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Funding for Try, Test and Learn Fund projects will be released in multiple tranches over several years.

Tranche 1 commenced in December 2016 with a public call for ideas. Promising ideas were co-designed with stakeholders and developed into refined project proposals. From these proposals the Minister for Social Services, in consultation with the Prime Minister, Treasurer and Minister for Finance, selected a number for funding including the project which will be funded through the restricted competitive opportunity outlined in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The following sections provide more detail on Tranche 1 and the consultation activities that defined the project being funded.

### 1.4.2 The Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare and the Try, Test and Learn Fund

The Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare was a recommendation of the 2015 review of Australia's welfare system, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, led by Patrick McClure. It was established by the Australian Department of Social Services in 2015 and is underpinned by annual actuarial valuations of welfare payment data. The valuations estimate the future lifetime cost of welfare payments to the Australian population and groups within it.

The objectives of the Priority Investment Approach are to improve lifetime wellbeing by:

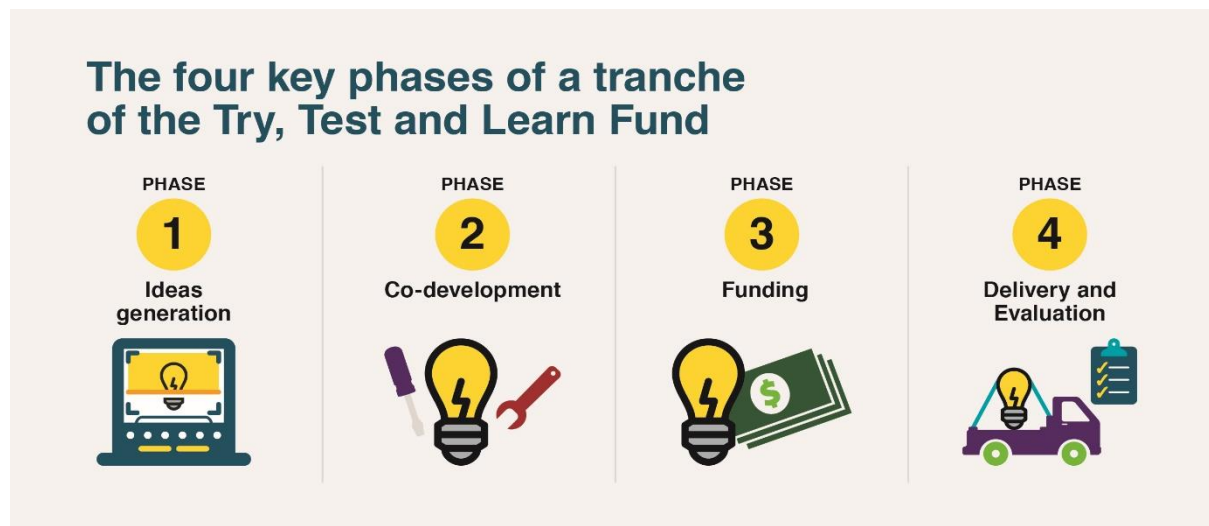
- increasing the capacity of individuals to participate in social and economic life and to live independently of welfare
- reducing the risk of welfare dependence

- reducing long-term social security costs in the interests of maintaining a sustainable support system for vulnerable Australians.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will support groups identified by the government, based on analysis of Priority Investment Approach valuations, as being at high risk of long-term welfare dependence and whose risk could be reduced with new or innovative policy responses.

Policy responses arising from the Fund are developed through an open and collaborative approach. This approach is focused on seeking new ideas from and collaborating with a diverse range of stakeholders including the social sector, business, academia and the general public in order to develop new ways of tackling complex social challenges.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund entails multiple stages of consultation (see diagram below). It seeks new ideas and then co-designs promising ideas with relevant stakeholders including potential service users. After co-design, selected projects are funded, delivered and evaluated. An overview of each phase as it occurred in Tranche 1 is provided in section 2.2.



The approach to ideas generation and co-development aligns with the principles of robust planning and design, and collaboration and partnership. It ensures that officials can work closely with potential grant recipients and beneficiaries on designing activities that will achieve the outcomes of the Try, Test and Learn Fund in alignment with public needs.

Another central feature of the Try, Test and Learn Fund is the generation of new insights and empirical evidence into ‘what works’ to reduce long-term welfare dependence. Projects will be robustly evaluated to produce high quality policy evidence regarding whether the interventions are effective, for whom and under what circumstances. In this way, the Fund will allow Government to identify what approaches work and use this evidence to transform our investment in existing programs or make the case for new investments.

### 1.4.3 Tranche 1 priority groups

The priority groups for Tranche 1 of the Try, Test and Learn Fund were informed by the 2015 Priority Investment Approach Baseline Valuation Report and additional analysis of Priority Investment Approach data. These initial priority groups are:

- young people aged under 25 who started receiving Parenting Payment at age 18 or under and who are still receiving an income support payment
- young people aged under 25 who are in receipt of Carer Payment or at immediate risk of going onto the payment
- young people aged under 25 who have moved, or are at risk of moving, from study (post-secondary or tertiary and been in receipt or receiving a student payment) to an extended period on an unemployment payment.

The initial priority groups were chosen by the Minister of Social Services based on advice provided by the Department of Social Services and the Priority Investment Approach Inter-departmental Committee.

These priority groups are among a number identified in the Priority Investment Approach Baseline Valuation Report as groups of interest who have relatively high lifetime costs but for whom there is potential to reduce these likely costs and improve likely lifetime outcomes.

### 1.4.4 Tranche 1 project development and selection

The process for the development and selection of Tranche 1 projects entailed:

- **Ideas generation (9 December 2016 to 24 February 2017)** – In the initial ideas generation phase, ideas were broadly sought from community groups, government, academics, business, other groups and the general public through an open forum on the Department of Social Services consultation platform, DSS Engage.
- **Idea shortlisting (late February to March 2017)** – After idea submissions closed, eligible ideas were assessed against the following criteria: effectiveness and impact of the idea; a new or innovative approach; and appropriateness for trial and evaluation. More detail on selection criteria used at the ideas generation stage is available in the Try, Test and Learn Fund Tranche 1 Handbook.<sup>1</sup> Each submission was assessed and moderated before being scored. Senior departmental officials undertook additional research on high scoring ideas before selecting an initial shortlist. Additional ideas that were similar or complementary to key ideas were also selected to include different stakeholders with diverse perspectives and foster a collaborative co-development process.

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<sup>1</sup> [DSS Engage](#)



- **Co-development (March to May 2017)** – Shortlisted ideas entered a co-development phase, in which stakeholders collaboratively developed and refined the shortlisted ideas from initial concepts into detailed project proposals. This co-development stage was an important step in seeking new and innovative solutions, and focused on fostering:
  - genuine collaboration with a meaningful impact on program design, including a focus on collaboration with representatives of the priority groups
  - more creative and innovative program design
  - new opportunities for collaboration between the Commonwealth, the community sector, business and other stakeholders, and the chance to learn from each other.

Co-development involved a series of workshops led by independent design facilitators. In some cases single ideas were workshoped; in others a group of ideas that were complementary or similar were workshoped together. Key co-development stakeholders included proponents of the idea or ideas and potential services users (priority group members). Other stakeholders included members of the Try, Test and Learn Fund Expert Advisory Panel,<sup>2</sup> relevant Commonwealth government representatives and peak body representatives.

At the end of the co-development phase, design facilitators prepared proposals for each project with some input from co-development participants. More information on the co-development process is available in the Co-development Supplementary Information document.<sup>3</sup>

- **Project recommendation and selection (May to August 2017)** – At the conclusion of the co-development phase, project proposals were considered to determine which projects should proceed to funding and delivery. Each project was considered independently against a range of parameters by the Department of Social Services in consultation with the Priority Investment Approach Inter-departmental Committee.<sup>4</sup> Considerations included how likely the project was to achieve intended outcomes, any major risks or challenges in delivering the project and whether the project had a viable approach for delivery and evaluation. Following these considerations, recommendations were put forward to the Minister for Social Services who made final project selections in consultation with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Finance and the Treasurer.

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<sup>2</sup> The Expert Advisory Panel is a group of academics and research leaders with expertise across various fields including labour market economics, inequality and disadvantage, intergenerational welfare dependency, social research methods and service delivery and implementation. Panel members are called upon for advice to assist with the implementation of the Investment Approach and the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

<sup>3</sup> [DSS Engage](#)

<sup>4</sup> Members include the Departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Employment, Education and Training, Finance, Health, Human Services, and Social Services; the Treasury; the Australian Bureau of Statistics; and the Australian Government Actuary.

### 1.4.5 Tranche 1 project funding (August 2017 onwards)

These Grant Opportunity Guidelines cover the Skills for Micro-enterprise project for which a restricted competitive grant process has been determined to be the appropriate funding approach.

Where a restricted competitive grant process has been selected, several organisations are considered to be in a special position to deliver the project due to their experience, capabilities or content knowledge, and have therefore been selected as the eligible applicants. Where idea proponents have not demonstrated specialised expertise or are not in a position to deliver projects, open competitive grant processes will be pursued.

## 1.5 Grant opportunity objectives and outcomes

The objective of the Skills for Micro-enterprise project is to increase young carers' readiness for participation in employment through developing skills and experience for creating and running small businesses which are also relevant and transferrable skills for formal employment. The project is an innovative initiative that will help young carers to develop the capabilities required for employment, while giving them access to appropriate support services and a peer network.

This project is a small, time limited, trial project in one location. This project will be accessible to all young carers in Melbourne. Melbourne has been chosen because of the high number of young carers living in Melbourne relative to other areas of Australia, adequate youth or carer specific service providers to provide referrals to the project and access to sufficient potential self-employment and employment opportunities.

The project will be accessible to all young carers in this location who are aged 18-25 and receiving the Carer Payment, or Carer Allowance in addition to some other form of income support. The trial will enrol a minimum of 90 participants. The cohort to be supported contribute significantly to the wellbeing of their loved ones and our communities. Due to these caring roles, they are at increased risk of long-term welfare dependence. This risk needs to be addressed in order for young carers to live a fulfilled life and achieve their aspirations. The combination of risk factors that young carers experience includes:

- caring responsibilities that can prevent them from seeking and engaging with traditional employment and educational pathways
- limited time that they can spend improving their employability without compromising or changing their caring responsibilities
- a self-perpetuating cycle, where their lack of previous engagement with employment and education becomes an ongoing barrier to future opportunities
- reduced wellbeing over their lifetimes due to limited economic opportunity and poor social participation

- complex personal situations that require new and flexible solutions, as traditional offerings in the job services and carer support spaces are not meeting all of their needs

The Skills for Micro-enterprise project is a trial program that will respond to the above challenges by assisting young carers in Melbourne to develop the skills and capabilities that they need to progress their business ideas or to gain employment, while giving them access to appropriate support services and a peer network. The project will be completed in a safe and encouraging environment with wrap-around support to be provided by the project team and local service partners to enable young carers to achieve their goals.

Young carers who participate in the trial will continue to be eligible for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance and other support services such as respite care. Young carers who do start up their own businesses may be eligible for a micro-enterprise loan. If this is the case they will apply via the standard loan application processes.

The trial will test different processes to find out what works and what doesn't. The pilot will not involve a control group as it would be difficult to recruit young carers who do not want to participate in the pilot for whatever reason to be in a control group. The recruitment process will identify young carers in the trial site who did not wish to participate and, wherever possible, determine reasons for non-participation and their employment situation and aspirations. The evaluation will also analyse social security data for the cohort in the location and compare the participants' outcomes to the general group.

It will use coaching, mentorship and peer support; an incubator program; multi-channel delivery modes and an industry showcase event to help young carers to:

- set goals for gaining employment and / or developing a business idea and understand what support is required to pursue those goals
- develop skills and experience for creating and running small businesses, which are also relevant and transferrable skills to formal employment
- access wrap-around support in pursuit of their goals, including support services and employer contacts and industry exposure.

Skills for Micro-enterprise will have a number of innovative features that distinguish it from existing mainstream programs, including:

- combining services tailored to young carers such as counselling and respite care and for developing business skills such as developing and presenting their ideas, creating a business plan, developing an understanding of relevant industries and building networks. This is a niche that is not currently serviced by traditional carer services or employment services. Existing programs in Australia are the Encouraging Entrepreneurship and Self Employment Initiative (ESEI), which currently only operates in Cairns Queensland, the Hunter region of NSW and northern Tasmania is also not tailored to young carers' needs. The New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) is Australia-wide however requires the business to be the person's primary,

full time activity which does not meet the needs of young carers.. This special combination will be necessary and effective for supporting transitions out of caring roles where appropriate

- multi-channel delivery modes that provide young carers with the flexibility to accommodate their specific needs. For example, it will accommodate those who are unable to leave their caring roles for sufficient time to attend face-to-face activities. Participants will be supported to balance their caring responsibilities and program activities through flexible timing of training, as well as interactive online and phone options for some project activities
- the establishment of multiple pathways and opportunities for young carers to pursue their life aspirations, including for example formal employment, self-employment, partnerships and the like. The delivery of training to support flexible or self-employment is likely to be particularly relevant for young carers as it would accommodate caring responsibilities
- a highly scalable technology platform which may enable a broader rollout of the project if successful. For example, the online delivery modules would be easily accessible by young carers in rural and remote areas. The three month implementation period will focus on identifying in detail what young carers want from a digital platform and building the platform to specifically meet their needs.
- the opportunity to test multiple hypotheses around the effectiveness of flexible, tailored training for young carers with a focus on business and other employment skills, and exposure to industry. Robust evaluation will be critical to the project and will contribute to the evidence-gathering policy intent of the Try, Test and Learn Fund
- links to employers and industry to support the translation of employment skills into employment for participants. Rather than focussing on employee- or employer-side interventions alone, this project will bring young carers into the sphere of potential employers, industry organisations, mentors within business and so on.

The project will run for 27 months and entail a three month implementation phase and a 24 month operational phase. It will be evaluated to assess its success in achieving the specified outcomes and the appropriateness of the approach for a broader rollout. The project will be evaluated against a number of outcomes, including the following:

#### *Short to Medium Term*

- improved employability of young carers, as evidenced by data such as qualitative reporting from participants and coaches as well as participation rates
- an increase in young carers accessing appropriate education and training pathways, as evidenced by data such as enrolment rates, type and duration of study, and qualitative reporting from participants and educational organisations

- improved wellbeing of young carers, as evidenced by data such as qualitative reporting from participants and their buddies and peers.

#### *Long-term*

- sustained improvements in the employability and education of young carers, as evidenced by data such as qualitative reporting from participants and employers, participation rates and type and duration of employment
- an increased proportion of young carers in long-term employment, either through their micro-enterprises or formal employment, as evidenced by data such as participation rates, type and duration of employment, and social security administrative data
- sustained improved wellbeing for young carers, as evidenced by data such as qualitative reporting from participants and their buddies.

## 2. Grant amount

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$79.6 million to projects supported by the Fund over four years for the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Individual grant amounts will be guided by project design and budgeting conducted during the co-development process and captured in project proposals.

The approximate budget for the Skills for Micro-enterprise project is \$0.8 million. The project will run for 27 months and entail a three month implementation phase and a 24 month operational phase.

## 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 for this grant?

To be eligible to apply you must be one of the listed organisations and have received an invitation to apply through GrantConnect.

#### 3.1.1 Eligible applicants

To be eligible for this grant you must be one of the listed organisations:

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>Rationale for Invitation</b>
Spark Strategy	See rationale below
Good Shepherd Microfinance	See rationale below

The Skills for Micro-enterprise project was co-developed from several ideas submitted to the Try, Test and Learn Fund by Good Shepherd Microfinance; a consortium led by Spark

Strategy comprising Little Dreamers, Coder Academy and Young Change Agents; and a selection of representatives from the Tranche 1 Policy Hack.<sup>5</sup>

Spark Strategy and Good Shepherd Microfinance are each invited to apply for this single grant opportunity as lead partners of consortia. The two eligible applicants have unique expertise, experience, and understanding that is necessary for the successful delivery of the project. The listed organisations have been invited to submit an application as they have been assessed to have:

- capability to deliver the project activities in the project location including expertise in financial management and micro-enterprise management
- existing infrastructure to support the project activities
- knowledge of and capability to deliver to the project objectives and outcomes efficiently and effectively with good value for money
- capability to provide a multi-channel model including a digital platform for delivering elements of the project
- specific expertise and relationships in the micro-enterprise and social entrepreneurship industries.

These capabilities are enhanced through the eligible applicants' participation in the co-development phase which was integral to the development of this new and innovative policy approach. Co-development is a central feature of the Try, Test and Learn Fund that has led to genuinely collaborative development of innovative ideas to support young carers and members of the other priority groups for Tranche 1. The involvement the eligible applicants and others in co-development allowed for in-depth, meaningful collaboration to improve project design. The capabilities and knowledge of all co-development partners has created an innovative project that will benefit from the continued input of the successful consortium.

Moreover, the co-development process means that the eligible applicants have intricate knowledge of the intent and design of the project and are best placed to deliver it efficiently and effectively. The specific consortia arrangements proposed by the listed organisations will be necessary to this innovative trial in support of the particular defined young carer cohort. Each consortium brings valuable capabilities but neither consortium could be replicated by other organisations due to the special combinations that they afford. These combinations of skills, networks and existing infrastructure would provide value for money that is greater than the sum of their parts.

The project is located in Melbourne to ensure there are sufficient numbers of young carers in this location to effectively trial this idea. Melbourne has been selected because there is potential for other young carer TTL projects to be trialled in other locations and it is necessary to avoid any potential overlap of projects and participants and ensure sufficient numbers of eligible participants in each project.

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<sup>5</sup> More information on the Policy Hack can be found on the Try, Test and Learn Fund and in the Handbook: [DSS Engage](#).

The project entails skills development for young carers with a focus on micro-enterprises. Expertise in providing such support to young people will also be key to the successful delivery of this project. The combination of expertise with young carers and micro-enterprises is not readily available as this is a new approach for this cohort. The identified eligible applicants and their consortium members deliver relevant but disconnected services to those that will be provided under this project. They have experience and understanding of the delivery of services to support young carers, especially relating to skills for flexible or self-employment. Their experience in supporting vulnerable young people with the purpose of increasing their capacity for economic participation will be vital to the delivery of this project.

Both of the consortia have existing service footprints that would leave them well positioned to commence the delivery of services to participants in the trial locations. As job readiness and the scope for small businesses will be important for this activity, the consortium's extensive networks and knowledge of the local market will be integral in achieving project outcomes.

In addition, both consortia led by the eligible applicants would bring established partnerships to the delivery of the project. These partnerships are valuable for combining the different capabilities of the consortium members to bear to deliver a connected suite of services and training. These pre-existing relationships could not easily be replicated by the Department of Social Services and will be important for pursuing the project's objectives.

Finally, the Skills for Micro-enterprise project will operate as a trial with constrained financial and time parameters. The most effective method of delivering a trial of this nature is to utilise the skills and knowledge of the participants involved in the co-development process. This arrangement will provide the best value for money for conducting the initial, limited trial stage of the project and to collect policymaking evidence under the auspices of the evaluation-driven policy intent of the Try, Test and Learn Fund. There is no guarantee of continued funding for the successful applicant once the trial is completed. If any decision were made in the future to consider expanding a similar project concept for a broader rollout, broader-based and competitive funding processes would be adopted.

## 4. Eligible grant activities

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

The grant can be used for the following grant activities:

- staff salaries and on-costs which can be directly attributed to the provision of the grant activity in the identified service area or areas as per the grant agreement
- employee training for paid and unpaid staff including Committee and Board members that is relevant, appropriate and in line with the grant activity
- operating and administration expenses directly related to the project as per the grant agreement, such as:
  - telephones
  - rent and outgoings

- computer/ IT/website/software
  - insurance
  - utilities
  - postage
  - stationery and printing
  - accounting and auditing
  - travel/accommodation costs
  - assets as defined in the Terms and Conditions of the grant agreement that can be reasonably attributed to meeting agreement deliverables.
- Payments to sub-contractors to perform eligible grant activities.
  - Part of the grant can be used for evaluation of the funded project and/or to explore options for future sustainability and ongoing viability of the funded project.

## 4.2 What can the grant money not be used for?

The grant cannot be used for the following grant activities:

- purchase of land
- major capital expenditure<sup>6</sup>
- subsidy of general ongoing administration costs such as rent, electricity and phone not directly related to the project being delivered as part of the grant agreement
- costs to attend and travel to conferences
- overseas travel
- the covering of retrospective costs.

Please note the grant cannot be used for the costs incurred in the preparation of your grant application or related documentation.

# 5. The project development and grant selection processes

## 5.1 Project development

The Skills for Micro-enterprise project underwent the Tranche 1 project development process outlined in section 1.3.4. In brief, this project entailed public ideas generation; shortlisting; intensive co-development with a variety of stakeholders including service providers and priority group representatives; and project recommendation and selection.

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<sup>6</sup> See glossary.



The Skills for Micro-enterprise project was co-developed from several ideas submitted to the Try, Test and Learn Fund by Good Shepherd Microfinance; a consortium led by Spark Strategy comprising Little Dreamers, Coder Academy and Young Change Agents; and a selection of representatives from the Tranche 1 Policy Hack.<sup>7</sup> Spark Strategy and Good Shepherd Microfinance are each invited to apply for this grant opportunity as lead partners of consortia.

## 5.2 Grant selection process

Eligible applications for this single grant will be considered through a restricted competitive grant process.

We will assess your application against the criteria set out below. Your application will be considered on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- whether it provides value for money.

When undertaking a selection process we will consider the proportionality of scale, nature, funding amount, complexity and risks involved in the funding round. We will consider proportionality to inform the choice of the application and selection process, the type of grant agreement to be used and the reporting and acquittal requirements.

## 6. The assessment criteria

You will need to address the following assessment criteria in your application. Other criteria, such as innovation, the likely effectiveness of the project and the feasibility of the trial and evaluation of the project have been considered in the idea and project selection stages and do not need to be addressed as part of this grant process.

We will judge your application based on each criterion. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. The application form includes word limits.

The equally weighted assessment criteria are:

1. Demonstrate your organisation's experience, capability and capacity to manage and deliver services for the young carer target group in the trial location.

Your response should:

- demonstrate your organisation's ability to effectively develop, implement, manage and monitor grant activities to achieve positive outcomes for the young carer target group in the trial location

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<sup>7</sup> More information on the Policy Hack can be found on the Try, Test and Learn Fund and in the Handbook: [DSS Engage](#).

- demonstrate your organisation's ability to establish effective links with relevant partners and stakeholders to achieve outcomes for the young carer target group.
2. Demonstrate your organisation's experience, capability and capacity to implement and deliver the project and achieve its objectives.

Your response should:

- outline the number of key staff that will manage and / or deliver your organisation's project and outline their relevant capabilities (experience, skills and qualifications)
- demonstrate your organisation's capacity and approach to support data collection and monitoring activities for project evaluation.

## 7. The grant application process

### 7.1 Overview of application process

You must read these grant guidelines, the application form, and the 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 address all of the assessment criteria to be considered for a grant. Please complete each section of the application form and make sure that you provide the information we have requested.

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

### 7.2 Application process timing

Submit your application/s by the closing time and date below. If an application is late or the Hub is requested to approve a lodgement after the closing date, the Hub may determine that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control resulting in an inability to meet the stipulated 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
- death or disability of key personnel.

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

The expected start date for the granting activities will be on execution of the Grant Agreement. The expected end date will be subject to individual grant agreements. You must spend the grant by the end date.

**Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Application period	2 weeks
Assessment of applications	Timing will be dependent on the volume and complexity of applications received and the capacity of the Community Grants Hub and the Expert Panel
Approval of outcomes of selection process	Timing will be dependent on the volume and complexity of applications received and the capacity of the Community Grants Hub and the Expert Panel
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	By the end of November 2017
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	By the end of November 2017
<b>Activity commences</b>	<b>On execution of the Grant Agreement</b>
<b>End Date</b>	<b>Subject to individual grant agreements</b>

## 7.3 Completing the grant application

You must submit your grant application using the application form, which is available on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. The Application Form can only be accessed by invitees for this grant opportunity. 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).

The 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 it has been submitted.

## 7.4 Attachments to the application

The following documents must be included with your application:

- project plan completed on the provided template
- most recent audited financial statements for two financial years.

Your supporting documentation should be attached to the application form. There will be instructions in the application form to help you. Only attach the documents you have been asked to include.

Please note: There is a 2MB file size limit for each attachment.

## 7.5 Applications from consortia

Some organisations may apply as a consortium to deliver grant activities. A consortium is two or more businesses which 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.

## 7.6 Questions during the application process

Only invited applicants' questions will be responded to during the application period. To submit a question please call the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au). The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

## 7.7 Further grant opportunities

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will run over four years from 2016-17 to 2019-20. It is anticipated that ideas will be sought, and funding released, over multiple tranches.

# 8. Assessment of grant applications

## 8.1 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 staff. The assessment team will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications.

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

An expert panel comprised of policy and delivery staff from the Department of Social Services will then review all ranked applications to inform the final recommendations for funding.

The expert panel will make recommendations having regards to:

- overall objectives for the grant activity,
- how the services and/or project will be delivered, and
- value for money.

The expert panel may seek information about you or your application. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The expert panel may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

## 8.2 Who will approve grants?

The expert panel will make recommendations to the policy delegate (decision maker) who is the Branch Manager, Policy Strategy and Investment Branch. The policy delegate will make the final decision to approve a grant.

The delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

The policy delegate must not approve funding if they reasonably consider the program funding available across financial years will not accommodate the funding offer, and / or that the application does not represent value for money.

## 9. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcomes of your application in writing. 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.

## 9.1 Feedback on your application

The Feedback Summary will offer general round-specific information and will include the 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.

# 10. Successful grant applications

## 10.1 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. Standard terms and conditions for the grant agreement will apply and cannot be changed. A schedule may be used to outline the specific grant requirements. Any additional conditions attached to the grant will be identified in the grant offer or during the grant agreement negotiations.

You will be required to:

- deliver the project and meet the performance reporting and financial acquittal requirements outlined in your grant agreement.

The Department of Social Services will negotiate agreements with the successful applicant. 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 seek to terminate the relevant agreement.

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

## 10.2 How the grant will be paid

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra eligible expenditure, you must pay it yourself.

Grant funding will be paid:

- according to agreed milestones and performance indicators defined in the Grant Agreement and Activity Work Plan.

We recognise that unexpected events may affect the progress of a grant activity. In these circumstances, you can request an activity variation, including:

- changing an activity's milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing an activity but within the time period of the Try, Test and Learn Fund program.

The program does not allow for:

- an increase to the agreed amount of grant funds.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the grant agreement end date. Contact your Grant Agreement Manager for further information. We will not consider changes after the grant agreement end date.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective and any relevant policies of the Department of Social Services
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

## 11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 days after the date of effect<sup>8</sup> as required by Section 5.3 of the *CGRGs*.

## 12. Delivery of grant activities

### 12.1 Your responsibilities

If successful you must carry out the grant activities in accordance with these guidelines and the grant agreement and activity work plan, which includes standard terms and conditions and any supplementary conditions. The grant agreement will outline specific grant requirements.

You must submit reports in line with the timeframes in the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports in the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on

- progress against agreed project milestones

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<sup>8</sup> See glossary.

- contributions of participants directly related to the project
- eligible expenditure of grant funds.

You will also be responsible for:

- ensuring that your application is accurate and complete
- ensuring that the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met and that the activity is managed in an efficient and effective manner
- meeting milestones and other timeframes specified in the grant agreement
- complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements in accordance with the grant agreement
- participating in grant program evaluation as necessary for the period specified in the grant agreement
- ensuring that the grant activity outputs and outcomes are in accordance with the grant agreement.

## 12.2 The Department's responsibilities

The Department of Social Services will:

- meet the terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement
- provide timely administration of the grant
- evaluate the grantee's performance.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and other agreed performance data and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

## 12.3 Grant payments and GST

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

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)
- evidence that you have achieved the associated milestone



- any other conditions of payment (e.g. evidence of purchase of equipment, satisfactory progress report, approvals, and any other documentation).

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](#) for more information.

## 12.4 Reporting

Skills for Micro-enterprise grant recipients must have systems in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their grant agreement.

Performance information (e.g. client characteristics and service delivery information) will be required to be collected by service providers at the client level and entered directly into the department's client data capture system, its predecessor or via a DSS approved alternative mechanism. Where collection of client level data is not appropriate for instance due to the activity involving a large group, aggregate reporting will be permitted.

Information must be provided in accordance with the Data Exchange Protocols available on the [DSS website](#).

The Department of Social Services new application for performance reporting will:

- be a web based portal
- allow submission of data through external approved third party applications
- support submission of data through other approved methods.

Performance information required to be collected may include (but is not limited to):

- client identity characteristics
- client demographic characteristics
- service delivery information
- client outcomes.

## 12.5 Evaluation

The Department of Social Services will evaluate the Try, Test and Learn Fund and each project funded by it to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

## 12.6 Acknowledgement

All materials related to grants under the program must acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

'Try, Test and Learn Fund – an Australian Government initiative.'

## 12.7 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.

**Note:** These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by Department of Social Services. When this happens the revised guidelines will be published on [GrantConnect](#).

## 12.8 Complaints process

The Department of Social Services [Complaints Procedures](#) apply to complaints about the Program. All complaints about a grant 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).

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: DSS Complaints

PO Box 9820

Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

If an Applicant is at any time dissatisfied with Department of Social Services/ the Community Grant Hub's handling of a complaint, they can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman by:

Mail: Commonwealth Ombudsman

GPO Box 442

Canberra ACT 2601

Applicants can also lodge a complaint about the Department of Social Services / Community Grants Hub using the complaints form on the Commonwealth Ombudsman website at the [complaints page](#).

Alternatively, a complaint can be made over the phone on 1300 362 072.

## 12.9 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 a Community Grants Hub staff member, 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, or in an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- 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 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 Grants Hub](#) website.

## 12.10 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of 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 to impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors you engage to assist with the grant activity. You must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else 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.

The Australian Government 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.

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*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Crimes Act 1914*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995.*

We'll 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.

## 12.11 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  
                      The Department of Social Services  
                      Public Law Branch  
                      GPO Box 9820  
                      Canberra ACT 2601

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

## 12.12 Consultation

For information about the co-development process used to refine and develop shortlisted ideas, please see the 'Important Information' section of the [Try, Test and Learn Fund DSS Engage website](#).

## 13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting activity, to determine applicant rankings. (as defined in the CGRGs)
Capital expenditure	<p>Capital expenditure is spending for capital items as defined in the Department's Capital Works Policy. A capital item is any item of real estate or infrastructure valued at \$10,000 or more (including GST). Capital items include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• land</li> <li>• new and existing buildings, including demountable buildings that are a fixture to the land</li> <li>• building renovations</li> <li>• roads, pipelines and airstrips.</li> </ul>
Co-development	The co-development phase involves consultation with stakeholders to collaboratively develop and refine shortlisted ideas from initial concepts into detailed project proposals.
Commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
Commonwealth entity	A Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the <i>PGPA Act</i> .
Completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.
Cost shifting	Involves 'substitution of effort' by the Commonwealth for activities of another organisation or level of government. For example, cost shifting occurs where the Commonwealth provides a grant for an activity that would usually be paid for by a state, territory, or local government, such as municipal services (as defined in the CGRGs).

Term	Definition
Date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date in which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable (as defined in the CGRGs).
Decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
Double dipping	Double dipping occurs where a grant recipient is able to obtain a grant for the same project or activity from more than one source (as defined in the CGRGs).
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 (as defined in the CGRGs).
Grant	<p>A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) under which relevant money or other CRF money, is to be paid to a recipient other than the Commonwealth; and</li> <li>b) which is intended to assist the recipient achieve its goals; and</li> <li>c) which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy objectives; and</li> </ul> <p>under which the recipient may be required to act in accordance with specified terms or conditions (as defined in the CGRGs section 2.3).</p>
Grant activity	The project / tasks / services that the grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the Grant Agreement

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Grant agreement	Grant agreement means the contract template used by Australian Government entities to set out the mutual obligations relating to the provision of the grant. The Australian Government is standardising and streamlining grant agreements between the Commonwealth and grant recipients to allow grant recipients to engage more easily and efficiently with the Commonwealth (as defined in the CGRGs).
Grant Agreement Manager	Monitors performance against agreed objectives within grant agreements and ensure accountability requirements are met.
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.
Selection criteria	Comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria (as defined in the CGRGs).
Selection process	The method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and / or the assessment criteria (as defined in the CGRGs).