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Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – Cashless Debit Card (CDC) Support Services

Feedback for applicants

Overview

The Strong and Resilient Communities Activity (SARC) – Cashless Debit Card (CDC) Support Services grant opportunity will fund services to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people on pathways to self-reliance and empowerment through local community-driven solutions that strengthen economic participation. It will focus on supporting CDC participants in the sites of Ceduna, South Australia, East Kimberly and the Goldfields in Western Australia; Bundaberg and Hervey Bay in Queensland; and in the Northern Territory.

The application period opened on the 27 September 2021 to the 25 October 2021. Up to \$31.1 million (GST exclusive) is available over 2 years for this grant opportunity, starting in February 2022. In total, **38** applications were received and eligible making the selection of grant recipients competitive.

There are 2 streams of grant funding available under the CDC Support Services grant funding opportunity:

Jobs Fund and job ready initiative

\$21.1 million to strengthen local support services and connect CDC participants and other members of the community to employment, or pathways to employment, in the regions of Ceduna, South Australia, East Kimberley and the Goldfields, Western Australia and Bundaberg and Hervey Bay, Queensland.

Northern Territory Support Services

\$10 million to strengthen local support services to assist Income Management participant's transition onto the CDC and provide pathways to support self-reliance and empowerment through community-driven solutions to support economic participation.

The feedback provided below on behalf of the Department of Social Services (the department) is to help grant applicants understand what generally comprised stronger and weaker responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity, and how to strengthen future applications.

Future grant opportunities may be available for this program, though none are currently planned. You can find out about new grant opportunities on [GrantConnect](#)

Selection Process

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

Applications were initially screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Eligible applicants needed to deliver services or have the capacity to deliver services in the CDC locations of Ceduna, South Australia; East Kimberly and the Goldfields in Western Australia; Bundaberg and Hervey Bay in Queensland; and in the Northern Territory.

The department engaged a Selection Advisory Panel (the Panel), that included a mix of relevant policy, program and delivery experience expertise. The Panel was assisted by an Advisory Group comprising of subject matter expertise and input from several relevant departments and agencies. The Panel considered all applications and their assessment results and made recommendations on applications, having regard to:

- the overall objective to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the geographic location of the application matches identified priorities
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meet the outcomes/objectives
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals
- how it compares to other applications.

The department's Decision Maker approved funding to the successful grant recipients.

The successful applications proposed activities that were eligible, appropriate and considered effective for achieving program objectives and contributed to the overall intent to achieve community-driven solutions that strengthen economic participation for CDC participants. They demonstrated their suitability for public funding, value for money and met all of the eligibility requirements in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

General Feedback

Overall, the calibre of applications were good. They generally reflected an understanding of the Grant Program's objectives and consideration of these was usually apparent in the responses. Most supporting claims were relevant, current and usually linked to the grant/policy objectives. All applications addressed the full criteria and there were no incomplete applications. Some applications sought funding in excess of what was set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Criteria Specific Feedback

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

Criterion 1

Demonstrate a strong need for the project within the target community

- a description of the problem or need your project will address
- a description of the demographic of the community your project will target/benefit
- evidence of the need for the project including the extent to which the identified problem or need relates to the identified community (for example statistics, research, empirical evidence, evidence of unmet need or service gap, consultation with the target group)
- the extent to which the problem or need relates to the objectives/intended outcomes of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program.

Successful applications clearly:

- Identified problem/need in a comprehensive manner, providing, in detail, specific areas of concern and outlining how the proposed project will address these.
- Provided well-defined description of the target demographic was provided with linkages to the current issues facing the target demographic provided. The applicant detailed in a concise and logical manner, a brief overview the how the project will assist in addressing the identified problem/need and be of benefit to the target demographic.
- Articulated supporting evidence relating to the project and its need. The applicant detailed how the identified need/problem directly relates to the identified community, citing multiple sources of reference such as statistics, research, empirical evidence, evidence of unmet need or service gap or consultation with the target group. Evidence cited was relevant and appropriate, with strong linkages made.
- Outlined how the problem/need relates to the specific objectives/intended outcomes of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program. A comprehensive breakdown was provided with the applicant explaining in detail the links between the project and the grant.

Stronger responses clearly:

- Communicated the problem/need the project will address clearly outlining the area of need and providing details on who, what and why.
- Outlined in detail the demographic of the relevant area where the need/problem exists. A brief overview of the project was provided with links made to how the project will be of benefit to the target demographic and address the need/problem.

Successful applications clearly:

- Evidenced the need for the project, outlining the extent to which it relates to the relevant community with clear linkages made. The evidence cited by the applicant was relevant and appropriate to the need/problem anticipated to be addressed by the project.
- Described how the problem/need relates to the objectives/intended outcomes of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program. A detailed breakdown and linkages were made by the applicant.

Weaker responses did not clearly:

- Identify the problem/need the project will address or describe the relevant demographic in any detail.
- Explain the need for the project, including how it relates to the need of the community with limited or no evidence cited.
- Outline of how the problem/need relates to the objectives/intended outcomes of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program.

Criterion 2

Describe the project in detail

- provide a description of the project including details of how the project will be implemented, delivered and promoted
- explain the intended outcomes of the project, including how the project will address the identified problem or need and contribute to the intended outcomes, including intended lasting outcomes post completion of your project.
- describe the extent to which the intended outcomes of the project relate to the objectives of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program for example to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people on pathways to self-reliance and empowerment through local community-driven solutions that strengthen economic participation (see Section 2).

Successful applications clearly:

- Described the project comprehensively, providing a summary of the project which included who the project would target, what it would offer to participants, how the project would be undertaken and the approach the applicant would take. The applicant provided specific details relating to how the project would be implemented and delivered including the resources required and methods to be used (face to face, on the job, workshops, seminars). The applicant conveyed how it would accommodate and work with participants to achieve positive outcomes. Clear approaches to promotion were defined including what existing relationships would be used when promoting the project with outlines of promotion mediums described.

Successful applications clearly:

- Outlined the objectives and outcomes of the project including how these address the need/problem outlined in criterion 1. The outcomes were listed in a clear and methodical way and included the indented lasting outcomes the project will aim to achieve. The applicant also provided specifics in project milestones. Means of measuring success of the project against the outcomes was specified, additional details were provided regarding what procedures and processes will be used to monitor objectives, milestones and outcomes including a review process.
- Articulated how the outlined objectives and outcomes of the project related to those of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program. Clear and relevant linkages were made between the 2, with a strong focus on objectives relating to the support of vulnerable and disadvantaged people, creating pathways to self-reliance, empowerment through local community-driven solutions and strengthened economic participation

Stronger responses clearly:

- Detailed the project specifics, providing an outline of who the project will target and what programs and supports will be offered to participants. The application provided a summary regarding how the project would be implemented and delivered including a brief outline of the methods to be used. Promotion strategies were explained including the who, what, when, where and how the project would be promoted.
- Explained a suit of project objectives and outcomes that address the community problem/need outlined in criterion 1. The intended outcomes included those that would be considered as lasting outcomes once the project has reached completion. A brief description of how objectives and outcomes would be measured and monitored was provided including underpinning procedures used by the organisation.
- Described the extent the project specific objectives and outcomes related to the objectives of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program. The applicant articulated these linkages in a clear and concise manner provided relevant examples.

Weaker responses did not clearly:

- Describe the intended project outline, including a limited response relating to how the applicant would implement, deliver and promote the project to the relevant area/demographic.
- Articulate how many people would be supported through the program
- Provide information in respect to the intended objectives and outcomes of the project, both immediate and lasting.
- Explain linkages between project objectives and outcomes and how they relate to the objectives and outcomes of the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program

Criterion 3

Demonstrate your organisation's capability to deliver the project in the identified community

- demonstrate your organisation's knowledge of the local community your project is intended to target/benefit
- describe how you have consulted with and/or involved the target groups in the design of the project, including their role in, or support for the project
- describe why your organisation is well-placed to deliver this project to the target groups within the identified community
- explain how your organisation intends to support/facilitate the target groups within the identified community to gain access to/participate in your project
- demonstrate how your organisation will leverage existing relationships and work with other services to deliver the project
- outline your plan to maintain delivery of the project in response to COVID-19.

Successful applications clearly:

- Articulated experience and knowledge of the local community including outlining past and current supports, programs and projects. Outlined the needs of the community providing in-depth details surrounding how the project is a direct result of this knowledge.
- Outlined the consultation process undertaken with those intended to be involved in the project including clients, providers and support services. Consultation relating to design and project roles was detailed with the applicant able to provide evidence of the consultation process and outcomes.
- Explained the reasons why the applicant was well-placed to deliver this project citing previous experience and understanding of the demographic
- Illustrated how the organisation would support/facilitate the target groups within the identified community to gain access to/participate in the project by providing real life examples and outreach proposals
- Conveyed in detail who, when, where and how it would leverage existing relationships and work with other services to deliver the project including information relating to relationships currently engaged and how these operate.
- Outlined how it would be able to continue the delivery of project in response to COVID-19. Provided examples of actions to be taken relevant to this scenario and referenced organisational procedures and policies relating to COVID-19.

Stronger responses clearly:

- Demonstrated an organisation's knowledge of the local community that the project is intended to target/benefit by previous/current clients supported, their needs and the activities undertaken to support the community.
- Outlined how the applicant had consulted with and/or involved the target groups in the design, specific roles and support services relevant to the project.
- Detailed why the organisation is well placed to deliver this project to the identified target groups within the community.
- Explained how it would support the facilitation of the project as well as outlining how the target groups within the identified community would be able to gain access to and participate in the project.
- Demonstrated how the organisation will leverage existing relationships and work with other services to deliver the project providing details regarding these existing relationships.
- Outlined a plan to maintain delivery of the project in response to COVID-19 citing relevant processes and procedures in place.

Weaker responses did not clearly:

- Outline knowledge in relation to the community where the project is intended to target/benefit.
- Detail the consultation process undertaken regarding the development of the project.
- Convey how the organisation is in a well-placed position to deliver the project.
- Provide information regarding the support/facilitation to be provided to participants with respect to them being able to access or participate in the project.
- Demonstrate how it would leverage existing relationships and work with other services to deliver the project.
- Explain or expand on how it will maintain delivery in response to COVID-19.

Criterion 4

Demonstrate your organisation's governance arrangements to support the delivery of the project

- provide an overview of your organisation, including governance structures, geographical coverage, and dispute resolution policies
- describe the relevant experience and qualifications you intend of staff who will deliver services and how you will ensure they are appropriately skilled and supported, including staff from other organisations funded through any consortium or sub-contracting arrangements
- describe your processes for ensuring that all reporting requirements in section 12.2 for this grant opportunity will be met.

Successful applications clearly:

- Provided a comprehensive overview of the organisation including a thorough history, explanation of services and overarching governance structure. Information of the governance structure includes specific roles and responsibility, an outline of the strategic plan including the organisations mission and relevant procedures and policies. The explanation provided details regarding the organisation's geographical location, including additional areas of community where services can be provided. Procedures and policies were outlined in detail, including specific information relating to dispute resolution.
- Described in detail information relating to the staff who will be delivering the project including role title and description, reporting structure, required experience and qualifications needed to fulfil the position. Policies and procedures to ensure staff, including those outside the organisation (where relevant), are appropriately skilled and supports were in place with relevant sections of these referenced.
- Outlined the policies and procedures in place that ensured the organisation would be able to meet all reporting requirements for the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program including specific details on how requirements relating to section 12.2 would be met.

Stronger responses clearly:

- Provided an overview of their organisation, including governance structures, geographical coverage, and dispute resolution policies.
- Outlined information surrounding the relevant experience and qualifications required for the intended staff who will be delivering the project, including staff from other organisations (where relevant). Additional information was provided regarding how the organisation will ensure those involved are appropriately skilled and supported for the duration of the project.
- Described processes that are in place for ensuring that all reporting requirements, including those that relate to Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC are met including reference to relevant procedures.

Weaker responses did not clearly:

- Provide an overview of the organisation, its governance structures and geographical coverage.
- Outline relevant organisation procedures and policies that are part of its governance, including but not limited to dispute resolution policies.

Successful applications clearly:

- Describe the relevant experience and qualifications of those staff who were to deliver the project. No specific information was included on the procedures or policies in place to ensure staff are appropriately skilled and supported. There was no linkage or information regarding (where applicable) how staff from other organisations funded through any consortium or sub-contracting arrangements would be assessed for suitability or provide support.
- Expand on reporting processes or provide sufficient details regarding how reporting requirements relating to the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity – CDC grants program will be met.

Please note: individual feedback will not be provided.