



Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service

Feedback for applicants

Overview

The Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS) is a free, national intercountry adoption-specific support service, which provides therapeutic care, community capacity building and a Small Grants and Bursaries Program. The service is available to young and adult adoptees, adoptive parents and families (including siblings) and prospective adoptive parents. The ICAFSS also provides post-adoption support for families formed by expatriate adoptions and support to partners and children of adoptees where their need for support relates to the adoptee's experience of intercountry adoption.

Funding of up to \$4.75 million (GST exclusive), plus \$50,000 (GST exclusive) transition funding, was available over a period of 5 years from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026.

The application period opened on 2 October 2020 and closed on 13 November 2020.

As per section 9.1 of the [Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#), individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity. This feedback summary has been provided to assist grant applicants to understand what made a strong application for this grant round, and how to strengthen future applications.

Selection Process

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

Applications were reviewed for compliance against the eligibility criteria and requirements detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, including provision of the Project Plan (including simple budget).

All eligible and compliant applications were assessed against the 5 equally weighted assessment criteria.

Following assessment, a Selection Advisory Panel (the Panel), with a mix of relevant policy, program and delivery expertise from the Department of Social Services, met with an Expert Advisory Group of individuals with lived experience of intercountry adoption. The Panel then interviewed suitable applicants, before making the final recommendation to the delegate.

The successful applicant was determined based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria and input from the Expert Advisory Group, consistent with the grant selection process (sections 6 and 8 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines).

General Feedback

Strong Responses:

- Clearly demonstrated experience in delivering required therapeutic approaches, including case management, psychoeducation, and counselling (section 5.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines)
- Proposed therapeutic services that were intercountry adoption-aware, trauma-informed, strengths-based, incorporated an understanding of grief, loss, identity and racism, and accounted for differing needs across adoptees' and adoptive families' life stages
- Proposed therapeutic approaches that were informed by clinical best-practice principles and intercountry adoption-related research
- Included provision of services through face-to-face and online platforms (e.g. webinars, e-learning modules) by appropriately qualified staff (e.g. social workers, psychologists and counsellors)
- Proposed a range of targeted strategies to promote the ICAFSS, including through stakeholder engagement, social engagement and strong social media presence
- Provided examples of experience in, and/or clear planning for, successfully implementing and delivering large national programs of a similar nature, including a demonstrated capacity to provide online access for client engagement regardless of location
- Proposed a capacity building approach and a Small Grants and Bursaries Program that would be co-designed and managed with those with lived experience of intercountry adoption
- Elevated the involvement of people with lived experience of intercountry adoption in their approach to delivering the ICAFSS, including use of a lived experience reference group (or similar) to guide priorities and advise decision-making
- Demonstrated experience in delivering services to a diverse range of people, including those with physical and intellectual disability, detailing face-to-face, phone and online accessibility
- Demonstrated experience in running mentor, peer and/or group supports to assist clients, as well as consideration of how these supports would be engaged across an adoptee's life
- Proposed well-considered and detailed approaches to promotion of the ICAFSS, including specific promotion of the Small Grants and Bursaries Program (e.g. approaches included, but were not limited to, use of multiple online platforms and direct engagement with the intercountry adoption community and allied health professionals)
- Provided examples of experience managing comparable programs and demonstrated transferrable organisational and staff knowledge and skills relevant to intercountry adoption
- Demonstrated ability to engage staff with lived experience of intercountry adoption and/or with similar experiences or cultural background of those with lived experience of intercountry adoption, along with having bilingual capability
- Demonstrated strong organisational governance structures, with necessary policies and procedures in place, including robust complaints and client triage processes



Limited Responses:

- Did not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the intercountry adoption community and/or did not acknowledge the unique challenges commonly experienced by adoptees, adoptive families and prospective adoptive parents
- Failed to propose a means through which capacity building and the Small Grants and Bursaries Program would be informed and guided by people with lived experience of intercountry adoption or insufficiently outlined or restricted the role that the intercountry adoption community would play in guiding the priorities of the service
- Proposed limited options for community capacity building, including a lack of variety in proposed activities
- Did not sufficiently demonstrate how they would establish and/or manage the Small Grants and Bursaries Program, including provision of relevant prior experience in assessing and selecting grant recipients and managing reporting for similar programs
- Did not successfully demonstrate how their experience delivering services to target communities would be transferrable to the intercountry adoption community
- Did not demonstrate an understanding of the distinct needs of adoptees, adoptive families and prospective adoptive parents, as opposed to other communities they had worked with, where skills transfer was detailed)
- Did not demonstrate the capacity to deliver the services Australia-wide
- Failed to propose a suitable model for the delivery of face-to-face services nationally or in regional areas
- Provided limited details on the proposed use of technology to support the delivery of the service, including lack of evidence to demonstrate experience in using this technology or platforms to provide therapeutic support