Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Individual Capacity Building Program Grant Opportunity 2019-2020

General Feedback for applicants

Overview

The ILC Individual Capacity Building Program Grant Opportunity 2019-2020 assists with providing people with disability the skills and confidence to participate and contribute to the community and protect their rights.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is pleased to share this feedback as part of our commitment to sharing information with the sector and to acknowledge the time and effort applicants put into developing applications. This feedback will help applicants to strengthen future applications by understanding how to prepare strong responses to the assessment criteria.

This grant opportunity contributes to the NDIA's ILC program, which funds new ways to increase the independence, social and community participation of people with disability.

The application period opened on 19 August 2019 and closed on 30 September 2019 with a total of $100 million (GST exclusive) available to applicants over the funding period. This was a highly competitive grant round, with almost 500 applications received.

After assessment by the Selection Advisory Panel (the Panel), 105 applications were selected for funding, totalling just over $105.875 million (Incl GST). The Panel considered whether the

application provided value with relevant money *(*as defined by Section 8 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth). Successful applicants may have received less funding than requested.

Future grant opportunities may be available for this program. You can find out about new grant opportunities on Grant Connect and about ILC activities by signing up on the NDIS, Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) website.

Selection process

The open competitive selection process allowed a range of organisations that met the eligibility criteria to apply. Applications were screened for eligibility and compliance against the Grant Opportunity Guidelines requirements, including the following required attachments:

- A Project Indicative Budget.

- An Activity Project Plan.

- If seeking $100,000 or more (GST exclusive), a copy of the organisation's most recent audited financial statements (or accepted alternative documentation), if audited financial statements were not available.

- A completed Auspice Declaration (only applicable to organisations using an auspicing arrangement to authorise another organisation to apply on their behalf).

- The signed trust deed and any subsequent variations, if applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust.

- If an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation is registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC), a copy of their Certificate of ORIC registration.

Eligible and compliant applications, requesting $90,000 or less, were assessed against two assessment criteria, while eligible and compliant applications that requested more than $90,000 were assessed against three assessment criteria.

A Selection Advisory Panel (the Panel) consisting of a majority of people with disability with a mix of relevant policy, program and delivery expertise then made funding recommendations to the NDIA decision maker. The Panel considered:

- The strength of alignment the project, or any of its elements, had with the program objectives.

- If the project provided value with relevant money.

- Conformance with eligibility criteria.

- Distribution of projects across all disability types and priority cohorts.

- How the project will be delivered.

- How well the level of project resourcing matched the intended scale of program delivery relative to the particular population/s.

- Existing and/or potential market failure (if known).

- Avoiding and/or minimising duplication with other federal, state or territory government programs and/or service delivery.

The NDIA decision maker approved the funding to the successful grant recipients.

General feedback

Successful applicants demonstrated their suitability for public funding, value with relevant money, met the Grant Opportunity Guidelines requirements and included strong responses to the assessment criteria.

Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each assessment criterion is discussed below, as well as feedback on how applicants might strengthen future applications. Key feedback themes from this grant round are:

- **Demonstrating the need** – strong responses provided specific details of the need for the project, including evidence that the need exists within the community, rather than repeating previously published census or scientific data.

- **Demonstrating that the proposed approach would be effective and contribute to ILC outcomes** - strong responses detailed how specific activities would address the identified need and explained how the approach contributes to ILC policy outcomes.

- **Clearly establishing that ILC is the most appropriate funding source for the proposed project** – some applications could not be funded because the proposed activity was the responsibility of other federal, state, territory or local government bodies.

- **Ensuring that the proposal clearly aligned to the Individual Capacity Building Program outcomes** - some applications could not be funded as they better aligned to a different ILC program (e.g. National Information Program or Economic & Community Participation)

- **Clearly outlining proposed stakeholder engagement.** Strong applications clearly explained:

  - Connection to community.

  - How people with disability were central to the design and implementation of an activity, including commitments to employing people with disability.

  - Partnerships and the role of other organisations in delivering the proposed activity.

In general applications were strengthened by:

- Ensuring all aspects of the assessment criteria were addressed, including using the character count available to provide sufficient detail.

- Supporting claims with relevant, reliable and current evidence of the need within the relevant community or region.

- Linking claims between the project description and services/activities to be delivered and policy objectives.

- Ensuring that proposed activities or services did not duplicate those on offer through federal, state, territory or local government programs or another source.

- Clarifying how a proposed activity sufficiently varied from an ongoing ILC project, ensuring that the project budget reflected an appreciation of the total program budget.

- Ensuring the project budget reflected the scale of the project with respect to number of people that the project aimed to engage.

- Ensuring the project budget reflected the ability, experience and capacity of the applicant organisation.

- Ensuring a strong focus on measuring outcomes.

- Demonstrating a program that considered a theory of change.

- Ensuring that people with disability are employed in delivering all aspects of the project

- Providing evidence that relevant skills and expertise would be available to ensure successful project delivery.

Value for Money and Alignment with Objectives

Disabled Peoples and Families Organisation Led applications

In line with government objectives, the NDIS is seeking to grow a strong Disabled Peoples and Families Organisation (DPO/FOs) sector. A core objective of this grant round was to enable systematic, nationwide access to peer support, mentoring and other skills building for people with disability, carers and families; primarily delivered through a national network DPOs/FOs and Priority Cohort Led (PCL) Organisations.

DPOs found to better align to program objectives and provide better value for money demonstrated the following attributes:

- A governance structure with a majority of members being people with disability.

- Deliver information to people with disability as well as advocate on their behalf.

- Involve people with disability in the daily activities of the organisation, whether as paid or volunteer staff to further their mission.

- Strongly aligned in word and action with the social model of disability.

- If also a registered NDIS provider, clearly indicated that they performed this role as a secondary activity to fund and support the mission of the organisation and not as a primary purpose.

Similarly, FOs found to better align to program objectives and provide better value for money demonstrated the following attributes:

- A strong focus on supporting wider cohorts of people with a disability, rather than a focus on those people known directly to them.

- A commitment to a governance structure including members who are connected to people with disability as family, carers or siblings.

- Deliver information to support the needs of families, carers and siblings of people with disability as well as represent the views of this community.

- Strongly aligned in word and action with the social model of disability.

- If also a registered NDIS provider, clearly indicated that they performed this role as a secondary activity to fund and support the mission of the organisation and not as a primary purpose.

Applicants who demonstrated they represented their community were more likely to be assessed as aligning with the overall objectives and provide value for money. These organisations demonstrated they had a strong connection to and listened to the voices of the people they support; whether this was a specific cohort defined by impairment, age, gender or location. Successful applicants had the confidence of their community and could demonstrate a clearly defined mission to improve opportunities and capacity for people with disability through a range of activities; including individual capacity building, mainstream capacity building, self help and support activities.

Priority Cohort Led applications

Applicants who clearly demonstrated they had the support of the community they represented were more likely to be assessed as aligned with the overall objectives of the grant round and provide value for money.

Successful applications included a clearly defined mission statement seeking to build awareness of the relevant population, social cohesion, preservation of cultural practice and community wellbeing.

Applications submitted by organisations that relied on directors with overseas places of birth typically did not demonstrate sufficient connection with a community; or demonstrate a focus on supporting and building the welfare of the relevant community, were less likely to be assessed as aligned with policy objectives and be successful.

Criterion specific feedback

Criterion 1: Building individual capacity

Describe the individual capacity building activities that you intend to deliver and why these are needed in the proposed location.

In your response you should:

- *Describe the individual capacity building activities you seek to deliver; (what will you do?)*

- *Describe the people that the individual capacity building activities are expected to support; (who will you assist?)*

- *Describe where you seek to deliver the activities and explain why these activities are needed in the proposed location/s. (where will you work and why those areas?)*

- *Describe how the proposed activities directly benefit people with disability; (how will it help?) and*

- *Describe how the activity will be developed and delivered in collaboration with people with disability. (who will you work with and how will you work with them?)*

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Areas for improvement

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Generally applicants may have strengthened their responses to Criterion 1 by:

- Clearly describing the people the individual capacity building activities would assist.

- Connecting strong, publically recognised evidence with the underlying need for the activity, in the particular location or area chosen.

- Describing the geographical location the activities would be delivered in, and explaining why the specific location had been chosen.

- Ensuring that the response effectively and clearly addressed how the activity would directly benefit people with disability, listing some of the benefits and linking these with the proposed activities.

- Clearly describing how the activity would be developed and delivered in collaboration with people with disability, using examples, an evidence base or other relevant information to illustrate how this would occur.

- Ensuring the proposed activity did not duplicate or overlap a function or program currently delivered or funded by the federal, state, territory or local governments, such as by Disability Employment Service providers.

Criterion 2: Expected results from the individual capacity building activities

Describe how the Individual Capacity Building activities you intend to deliver will achieve the following outcomes:

- *Improve knowledge and skills of people with disability; and*

- *Improve motivation and confidence of people with disability*

In your response, you should:

- *Describe the current capacity of individuals you will target through your project*

- *Describe how and why the proposed activities will address the above outcomes for people with a disability*

- *Describe any additional evaluation activities (beyond those stipulated by ILC) that you intend to use to monitor the progress of the project and the people who participate*

Areas for improvement

Generally applicants may have strengthened their responses to Criterion 2 by:

- Ensuring any descriptions of the current capacity of the target individuals were specific, clear, and supported by relevant evidence or other supporting information.

- Demonstrating a focus on outcomes and not outputs.

- Clearly describing how and why the proposed activities would result in people with disability having the skills and confidence to participate and contribute to the community and protect their rights, the use of examples or other supporting information to illustrate how and why this would occur.

- Describing an approach to measure and capture data to verify the success of the project.

- Ensuring that the descriptions of any additional evaluation activities did not just focus on what those activities were, but also addressed how they would monitor the progress of the project and the people who participate.

Criterion 3: Your organisation's capability

Describe how you will implement and manage the activities.

In your response, you should describe:

- *Your project plan including key milestones or stages*

- *How you plan to engage people with disability in the planning and delivery of the project (including employment)*

- *Who will manage the project and the role of your board/committee in oversight of the activities*

- *Partnerships or collaborations you intend to undertake.*

When addressing the criterion strong applicants will:

- *Describe a project plan or intention to develop a plan, and outline key project stages*

- *Describe processes or structures for how people with disability will be engaged in the design and delivery of user-led activities*

- *Describe organisation's connection with community or activity participants*

- *Describe structures for governance and oversight and relevant skill sets in project management*

- *List stakeholders involved and describes how they will be involved - e.g. partnerships, alliances or collaborations that will be used to maximise the effectiveness of the proposal.*

Areas for improvement

Generally applicants may have strengthened their responses to Criterion 3 by:

- Including a description of the project plan, with an outline of the key stages in the response.

- Detailing who would manage the project, and explaining how the project would be governed to ensure it remained on track, and be able to positively respond and adapt to any challenges that emerged, listing the key personnel involved in the governance and oversight processes, and detailing their relevant skills, qualifications and experience.

- Describing the role of stakeholders and when and how they would be involved, rather than providing a list of associated people and/or groups without any further detail.

- Clearly describing the organisation's history and connection with community or activity participants.

- Clearly describing the processes or structures of how people with disability would be engaged in the design and delivery of activities, providing examples or other relevant supporting information.

- Describing the lasting impacts the project may have on the organisation itself, such as improved policies, processes and practices or better connection and communication with members.

- Having a clear strategic plan that recognises the current and proposed future state of the organisation and describing the contribution the grant opportunity would make in achieving the plan.

- Demonstrating an understanding of the impact that the grant opportunity would have on an organisation, particularly for those that have historically never received funding, or previously only modestly funded.