



Developing the cultural awareness and trauma responsive skills and capabilities of the child and family sector workforce

General Feedback for Applicants

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the *Developing the cultural awareness and trauma responsive skills and capabilities of the child and family sector workforce* grant opportunity (the Grant).

Overview

The Grant aims to develop the cultural awareness and trauma responsiveness of the child and family sector organisations and workforces engaged through the Department of Social Services' grants funding. The grant will run over 2 years from 2022-23 to 2023-24 financial years.

The program is funded under Outcome 2: Program 2.2.1: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, and was announced as part of the 2021 Commonwealth [Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#). This grant opportunity supports Target 12 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement), which is:

By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

The grant opportunity opened on 15 September 2022 and closed on 13 October 2022.

Eleven applications were received in response to the grant opportunity. Following the Delegate's decision, a single application was selected for funding, to the value of \$6,200,000 (GST exclusive).

There was a strong interest in the program and all eligible applications received were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the Selection Process below.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.



Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (Hub) screened all applications for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for the *Developing the cultural awareness and trauma responsive skills and capabilities of the child and family sector workforce* grant opportunity. If DSS as the Policy owner, determined an application did not meet the eligibility and/or compliance criteria, applicants were notified of the outcome. Ineligible applications did not progress to assessment.

DSS then considered all eligible and compliant applications through a competitive grant assessment process.

Applications were assessed on merit, based on:

- how well it met the assessment criteria
- how it compared with other applications
- whether it provided value with relevant money
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant proposal in achieving the overarching program aims and objectives
- the extent to which the evidence presented in the application demonstrated it would contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives
- how the grant activities target groups or individuals
- how it compared relative to other applications.

Each applicant was required to address the following selection criteria:

Criterion 1: Describe the project in detail (30%)

Criterion 2: Demonstrate your organisation's capability to deliver the project (30%)

Criterion 3: Demonstrate your governance arrangements to support the delivery of the project (20%)

Criterion 4: Project management and contingency planning (20%).

The preferred applicant was identified based on the strength of their responses to the selection criterion and their demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements and objectives outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Selection Results

Based on the comprehensive assessment, a single organisation was selected to deliver the *Developing the cultural awareness and trauma responsive skills and capabilities of the child and family sector workforce* grant.

The selected organisation met the eligibility requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, provided strong responses to each of the selection criteria and demonstrated a high standard of value for money. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below.

Criterion 1

Describe the project in detail (30%)

In responding to this criterion, applications should have:

- provided a description of the project, including how the project would address the identified objectives and outcomes of the grant activity
- explained how your organisation intended to deliver the training
- outlined any partnerships, tools or strategies you intended to utilise and at what points in the project they would be used, and where possible, link to the intended outcomes of the project
- described how you would measure intended outcomes of the project and how they related to the objectives/intended outcomes of this grants activity.

Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
Strong applications were required to provide a clear description of the project, including how the project will address the identified objectives and outcomes of the grant activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In detailed form how the intended approach would deliver the program objectives and contribute to program outcomes.• How the model/proposal would support sustainable improvement in cultural awareness and trauma responsive skills for participating service providers.
Strong applications were required to explain how the organisation intended to deliver the training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A framework for delivery of training in a variety of locations and detailed the linkages between the type of training (including syllabus) and how the approach would contribute to program outcomes.• The benefits of a hybrid model of face-to-face and online training delivery for effective learning outcomes in this field.
Strong applications were required to outline any partnerships, tools or strategies and at what points in the project they would be used, and where possible, link them to the intended outcomes of the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of which organisations/entities they intended or had confirmed to partner with, their partner organisation's skills and competency, efficiencies associated with this approach as well as demonstrating how they would manage ongoing work and performance.• How their partners increased the local sharing of cultural knowledge and provided sustainable connections with First Nations communities.• How utilising partner organisations improved implementation of the project in line with project timeframes.• How partnerships contributed to providing value for money.



Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
Strong applications were required to demonstrate how they will measure intended outcomes of the project and how they relate to the objectives/intended outcomes of this grant activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the grant recipient would work closely with a third-party engaged by the department to undertake program-level evaluation.

Criterion 2

Demonstrate your organisation’s capability to deliver the project (30%)

In responding to this criterion, applications should have:

- demonstrated your organisation’s expertise in training, cultural competence and trauma/healing informed approaches, within the field of child and family services, and disability services
- demonstrated how your organisation would leverage existing relationships and work with other services to deliver the project
- described your previous experience in successfully delivering similar training programs.

Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
Strong applications were required to demonstrate their organisation’s expertise in training, cultural competence and trauma/healing informed approaches, within the field of child and family services, and disability services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their organisation’s experience skills and capabilities to achieve the program objectives, in particular previous experience in providing training/development in this field. How training materials were to be tailored to the requirements of communities and families with complex needs. The qualifications/experience of nominated staff and showed capability and experience in providing/delivering similar training. How the organisations could leverage existing courses/materials to support implementation of the program within required timeframes. Demonstrated capacity in terms of numbers of available staff and/or utilising arrangements with partners to support implementation.



Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate how their organisation will leverage existing relationships and work with other services to deliver the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to established existing relationships with relevant organisations in the sector which provide unique value to the program in various First Nations communities.• The location/relocation of staff from the grant applicant and partner organisation's and ability of staff to access both metropolitan and regional/remote communities.• How utilising existing skills and partnerships with other organisations provide cost efficiencies in project implementation.• How strong and established relationships with First Nations partners contribute to the credibility of the application.
<p>Strong applications were required to describe their organisations previous experience successfully delivering similar training programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examples of delivering similar training programs at both small and large scales.• Ability to draw out relevant learnings from previous training programs and apply lessons learned to future programs.• Tailoring content to specific regions, communities and audiences.• Existing knowledge and experience in teaching similar course content.• A large proportion of identified trainers with experience in the relevant subject matter.

Criterion 3

Demonstrate your governance arrangements to support the delivery of the project (20%)

In responding to this criterion, applications should have:

- provided a description and evidence of your organisation’s cultural governance, links to cultural authority groups and community support to deliver the project. If you did not have this, you needed to explain how you plan to have this before activities began early in the 2022–23 financial year
- provided an overview of your organisation, including governance structures, cultural legitimacy, geographical coverage, and dispute resolution policies
- described the relevant experience and qualifications of staff who would redesign or build your training materials and deliver training in line with the grant requirements
- provided an overview of the appropriate skills and expertise of staff from other organisations funded/engaged through any consortium or sub-contracting arrangements (only if applicable)
- described your processes for ensuring that all reporting requirements in section 12.2 for this grant opportunity would be met.

Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
<p>Strong applications were required to provide a description and evidence of their organisation’s cultural governance, links to cultural authority groups and community support to deliver the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled and experienced Board of Directors/Managers who are culturally informed and trusted in multiple communities, with relevant cultural connections across a wide area. • Decision making, governance and assurance processes of a high standard. • Cultural credentials which are recognised across a wide area. • Strong experience in successfully managing projects with First Nations communities.
<p>Strong applications were required to provide an overview of their organisation, including governance structures, cultural legitimacy, geographical coverage, and dispute resolution policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed overview of their organisation, including well-developed and comprehensive governance structures. • Their cultural legitimacy outlined with reference to the organisation’s acceptance across a variety of communities, including details as to why the organisation is an acceptable provider to communities based on traditional connections. • Geographical coverage with a plan on how the organisation will have capacity to deliver nationally and to a varied audience. • Clear dispute resolution policies and practices in place to avoid and minimise program risks, in particular engaging with project partners.



Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
Strong applications were required to describe the relevant experience and qualifications of staff who will redesign or build their training materials and deliver training in line with the grant requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nominated staff/personnel secured for the program, including relevant qualifications and experience. • Their experience in delivering cultural awareness and/or trauma responsive training programs to similar audiences. • A high level of flexibility to be able to incorporate local cultural differences into the agreed learning framework/approach.
Strong applications were required to provide an overview of the appropriate skills and expertise of staff from other organisations funded/engaged through any consortium or sub-contracting arrangements (only if applicable).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevant skills and experience of reputable and qualified partners. • Their experience in delivering cultural awareness and/or trauma responsive training programs to similar audiences.

Criterion 4

Project management and contingency planning (20%)

- Outline an estimated timeline for delivery of the activity, including establishing governance arrangements, developing and delivering the project as outlined in criterion 1, and evaluating the impact of your activities.
- How would the proposed activity budget provide value for money in achieving the grant opportunity objectives and outcomes?
- What risk management and mitigation strategies would be in place to ensure that the proposal was managed appropriately?

In the event two or more entities are scored equally against the criteria, preference will be given to applicants which have 50% or more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ownership.

Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
Strong applications were required to outline an estimated timeline for delivery of the activity, including establishing governance arrangements, developing and delivering the project as outlined in criterion 1, and evaluating the impact of your activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed Project Plan which incorporated all elements of the project implementation and identified key milestones and deliverables.
Strong applications were required to describe how the proposed activity budget provides value for money in achieving the grant opportunity objectives and outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed draft budget outlining project expenditure. • Identified project savings due to efficient utilisation of arranged project partners in various locations.



Strength	Strong responses demonstrated/described:
<p>Strong applications were required to describe what risk management and mitigation strategies will be in place to ensure the proposal is managed appropriately?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A detailed risk management plan which identified key project risks and mitigation strategies.• Key components of the risk management plan, such as identifying the sharing of risk between parties best able to accept it.