



Paid Employment Pathways – WorkFoundations

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Paid Employment Pathways – WorkFoundations grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (the guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

Overview

The application submission period opened on 14 January 2025 and closed on 11 February 2025.

The funding round aims to explore different ways of assisting job seekers transition into work whilst addressing their significant or complex vocational and/or non-vocational barriers to employment. Through funding social enterprises and value aligned organisations to design and deliver these paid employment pathway placements with integrated wrap around services, diverse approaches will be assessed.

All WorkFoundation placements will be real jobs, paid at the relevant award or enterprise agreement rate, with legal entitlements including superannuation and leave. Placements will have an overall duration of 6 months (in total) and participation will be voluntary for eligible job seekers.

The intent of WorkFoundations is to deliver outcomes that:

- fully support and provide assistance to the participant during the placement, including:
 - leveraging resources from available suppliers, for example public housing services or financial counselling
 - sourcing and providing appropriate vocational and/or non-vocational services
 - holding regular check-ins to stay in touch and identify any emerging issues
 - providing a mechanism to raise matters in a safe way. This could be about their placement, safety, wages, availability and type of support, and so on.
- assist the participant transition, on completion of the placement, into the next stages of their employment pathway by:
 - providing feedback to them so they can consider future options and pathways, such as drawing out learnings, personal growth, new skills learnt, and opportunities to grow
 - linking them with employment opportunities which could be offering an ongoing role with the host employer or a different role with another employer
 - facilitating transition back to the participant’s employment service provider if necessary.

Applicants were asked to detail the services and activities that will be made available to job seekers in their application. They should be specifically targeted to engage job seekers with barriers to employment, in ways that deliver sustained benefits to their business and increase their capability to provide an intermediary labour market. The design and associated outcomes for all placements will inform an overarching evaluation of the effectiveness of different approaches to assist eligible job seekers build their work readiness, increase their employability and transition into long-term secure employment.

Up to \$5 million (GST exclusive) per financial year, will be made available to fund projects in both 2025–26 and 2026–27. Funded grant activities may run across financial years or may be contained within one financial year. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations will only offer one grant opportunity round during the lifetime of this grant opportunity. All grant activities must be completed by 30 June 2027.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered all eligible and compliant applications through an Open Competitive grant process.

The selection advisory panel (panel) established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was, based on:

- Meeting the compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines
- Meeting the eligibility requirements outline in the guidelines
- How well the responses met the assessment criteria
- The volume of applications received and the extent to which applications compared against other applications
- The provision and appropriateness of the requested attachments
- Whether the project demonstrated value with relevant money
- How the proposed activities compared to the intent of the program
- Identified risks and the proposed mitigation strategies for the department and the Commonwealth.

Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

The Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and what were quality responses to the assessment criteria.

Criterion 1

Detail the intent, design, and delivery of the paid employment placement and wrap around services with a focus on explaining how this will assist each job seeker address their barriers to employment, increase their employability and support their transition into the workforce.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants have:

- described the activity objectives and how they will align with the objectives of the WorkFoundations program
- described the intended outcomes and the key deliverables for both the job seeker and employer
- explained how the activity was designed, and how it will remain appropriate to meet the needs of the job seeker and employer, including:
 - who was involved in the design and why
 - whether there is a target demographic within the cohort and why
 - what informed the design of each placement and selection and costing of wrap around services
 - how each key element benefits the job seeker and the employer to achieve success.
- described the key aspects of delivery, such as the user experience, from the perspectives of both the job seeker and the employer.

Strong applications:

- demonstrated the intent of the program by treating the WorkFoundations placement as paid employment and employing the participant from the onset.
- will deliver wrap around services integrated with their WorkFoundations placement.
- explained how the participant will progress through the placement and what positive outcomes will be achieved for the participant and the employer on completion of the placement.
- clearly demonstrated individuality and tailored the design of their application to eligible regions and cohorts.
- limited duplicating existing government funded programs seeking to achieve similar outcomes.
- articulated what suitable wrap around services would be, provided a list of who their tailored services would include and knew why they are important for these participants.
- understood that they will be responsible for the participant for the duration of the placement and that the involvement of the employment service provider will be minimal.
- include a point around the key strengths provided across applications in addressing attribute, ensure they are in past tense, such as, will, becomes, would and so on.

Criterion 2

Demonstrate your organisation's capability and capacity to deliver the activity, including relevant experience delivering similar activities to the target cohort.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants have:

- described their organisational capability and capacity to deliver the activity, including:
 - experience in transitioning unemployed job seekers with barriers to employment into the workforce through programs tailored for each job seeker, such as therapeutic case management, specialised wrap around services, pre-employment training, and so on
 - experience identifying, understanding and delivering the required wrap around services
 - anticipated resource requirements, organisational structure and delivery arrangements, roles and responsibility of key staff, qualifications and experience in delivering similar projects.
- described how you will engage other key stakeholders critical to delivering the activity, including employment services providers, employers, allied health professionals and other service networks. This included outlining their connection with the local community and demonstrating their ability to work collaboratively with stakeholders.
- provided examples or case studies of previous projects and/or activities addressing the target cohort and the associated workforce challenges that are similar in scale and complexity.

Additional requirement for Business stream

- explained how the successful completion of a WorkFoundations placement will lead to an offer of ongoing, sustainable employment with their organisation.

Additional requirement for Social Enterprise stream

- demonstrated clear links with local employers who have capacity to offer ongoing sustainable employment if the WorkFoundations placement does not lead to an offer of ongoing, sustainable employment with the social enterprise.

Strong applications:

- addressed all aspects of the selection criterion.
- provided a clear organisational structure and explained who within their organisation will be the point of contact for the delivery of the program including their experience and qualifications.
- provided detailed case studies that showcased a participant's journey and the applicants experience delivering similar programs.
- understood the requirement for tailored wrap around services that address the complex needs of the participants eligible to participate in WorkFoundations.
- demonstrated clear stakeholder engagement strategies and confirmed who their WorkFoundations partners will include.
- identified specific employment opportunities, clear employment pathways, demonstrated links to employers and their commitment to employment outcomes.
- include a point around the key strengths provided across applications in addressing attribute, ensure they are in past tense, such as, will, becomes, would and so on.

Individual feedback

To request individual feedback please follow the instructions as set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines section 9.1.

Section 9.1 states:

Individual feedback will be available upon request. Applicants seeking individual feedback should submit requests to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations at WorkFoundations@dewr.gov.au.

Requests for individual feedback will only be accepted within 28 days of receipt of the outcome of your application. Feedback will be provided within 60 days of receipt of the request.

Please note the above timeframes taken from the Grant Opportunity Guidelines may change.