



Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Round 5

Feedback for Applicants

Thank you for your interest in the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Round 5 grant opportunity. We appreciate the time and effort you put into your application.

The Department of Education (the Department) is providing the following general feedback for grant applicants to support future grant applications.

Summary of the Grant Opportunity

Application period: opened 20 January 2026 and closed 25 February 2026.

Applications received: 1044

Summary of the round: This grant opportunity aims to support the longer-term sustainability of eligible approved Early Childhood Education and Care services providing care to communities experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability, particularly those in currently under-served or unserved regional, rural, and remote areas. It aligns with the strategic objectives outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Conflict of Interest Management for Assessment and Selection Staff

All Community Grants Hub and Departmental staff were required to declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest before participating in the assessment and selection process.

Where a conflict was identified, appropriate steps were taken to manage it, which could include:

- Excluding the team member from undertaking assessment related to the affected application(s).
- Assigning the application(s) to an alternate assessor.
- Documenting the conflict and the management action in accordance with the Department's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub reviewed all applications to confirm they met the eligibility and compliance requirements for the grant opportunity. This information was provided to the Department's Grant Opportunity Delegate, who made the final decision on whether each identified grant application met those requirements. Grant Applicants whose applications were identified as ineligible or non-compliant were notified of the outcome in writing by the Community Grants Hub.

Following completion of these checks, the Community Grants Hub undertook a preliminary assessment of all eligible and compliant applications through an Open Competitive grant process. This involved assessing applications on their merits against the published selection criteria, and providing a preliminary score to inform the deliberations of the Selection Advisory Panel convened by the Department.

Following the preliminary assessment, the Department convened a Selection Advisory Panel to make final recommendations to the Financial Delegate. The Selection Advisory Panel was made

up of subject matter experts whose role was to review applications and assessment outcomes and make final funding recommendations to the decision maker.

In undertaking their role on the Selection Advisory Panel, panel members were required to consider:

- The preliminary assessment outcomes and scores, and the relative merit of applications compared to others.
- The extent to which applications supported the objectives of the grant opportunity and responded to community need, including priority areas and disadvantaged or vulnerable cohorts.
- Whether proposals represented value for money, taking into account both the level of funding sought and the expected outcomes.
- The feasibility and sustainability of the proposed activities, including delivery approach and supporting financial information.
- Any key risks associated with the applicant or project.

Selection Results

There was strong interest in this grant opportunity, and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicant(s) demonstrated their ability to meet the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the published assessment criteria. Applicants were notified of the outcome of their application in writing at the end of the selection period.

The following feedback is provided to assist grant applicants in understanding what comprised a strong application and what quality responses looked like against the requirements of the grant opportunity.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Read the supporting information before applying:

Before applying, review the Grant Opportunity Guidelines in full, along with FAQs and other support materials. If anything is unclear, use the published contact channels early – this can help prevent avoidable errors and strengthen the application.

Eligible entity types:

Ensure the organisation meets all eligibility requirements, including holding relevant approvals under Family Assistance Law.

Eligibility:

A common issue was applications not fully meeting all eligibility criteria, particularly around service location (for example, priority areas or regional classifications) or activity requirements.

Compliance:

Applications were often deemed non-compliant due to missing required documents or incorrect use of templates. To avoid this, ensure all mandatory documents are included, use the prescribed templates where required, and follow formatting and submission instructions carefully.

Attachments and evidence:

Strong applications provided clear, relevant, and current evidence. For example, financially sound budgets, required financial statements, and detailed project quotes, where applicable. All attachments should directly support the claims made in the application.

Value for money and risk:

Strong applications explained how funding would be used efficiently to deliver outcomes, aligned with program objectives, and included plans to manage financial, delivery and operational risks.

Sustainability Support**Criterion 1: Early Childhood Education and Care needs in the community**

Describe how the proposal for funding will address the Early Childhood Education and Care needs in the community where the approved service is providing care, including:

Service gaps and access barriers

Evidence of gaps in availability of approved Early Childhood Education and Care services meeting the community needs, including suitability (for example flexible or specialised care), and barriers such as distance or travel.

Demand and capacity

Current and future demand compared to available places, supported by data on service capacity, enrolments, and waitlists.

Local need and supporting evidence

Relevant local information demonstrating need, including population data and evidence of demand or support from families, schools, or community organisations.

What strong applications did well:

- Clearly demonstrated genuine community need and service gaps, using evidence to show where existing services do not meet family needs (for example, limited availability, lack of flexible or inclusive care, or barriers such as distance, cost, or transport).
- Presented a clear and consistent picture of demand and capacity, linking service capacity, enrolments, and waitlists to show unmet demand and likely future pressures.
- Used local data and evidence (such as population, disadvantage, or community input) to explain which families need support most and how access to care would improve.
- Connected all evidence clearly to show how the proposed activities would improve access to services, increase participation, and deliver better outcomes for the local community.

Common gaps observed:

- Did not clearly describe the availability, type, or suitability of services in the local area.
- Provided limited or unclear information on capacity, enrolments, or unmet demand, including missing or unexplained waitlist data.
- Relied on general statements about disadvantage without local, service-specific evidence or clear identification of priority groups.
- Did not clearly explain the impact on the community, including what would happen if the service could not meet demand or remain viable.

Criterion 2: Challenges impacting viability or financial sustainability of the service.

Describe how your organisation will use the funding to address challenges affecting the ongoing viability or financial sustainability of your service, including:

Improving access and participation

Activities that increase access to and participation in Early Childhood Education and Care, particularly for children and families experiencing disadvantage, vulnerability, or living in regional and remote communities.

Workforce capability and availability

Strategies to attract, retain and support a qualified workforce, ensuring the service can operate effectively and meet community demand.

Financial sustainability and planning

A clear business approach that outlines current challenges, ongoing costs, and how the service will become financially sustainable over time.

Costing and delivery

A well-planned proposal with cost estimates, showing how funding will be used and how activities will be delivered within expected timeframes.

What strong applications did well:

- Clearly identified barriers to access and participation for priority groups (such as disadvantaged, vulnerable, regional, or remote families) and showed how practical, targeted activities would increase participation.
- Demonstrated workforce challenges and solutions, outlining strategies to attract, retain and support qualified staff, and explaining how this would improve service access and continuity.
- Presented a clear and credible path to sustainability, including a well-explained business model, financial planning, and how the service would remain viable beyond the grant period.
- Provided well-supported budgets and delivery plans, showing how costs were estimated, how funding would be used, and how activities would be delivered within reasonable timeframes.

Common gaps observed:

- Did not clearly explain barriers to participation or how proposed activities would lead to measurable improvements in access for priority groups.
- Provided limited or unclear information on workforce issues or did not show how proposed activities would improve recruitment, retention, or staff capability.
- Lacked a convincing sustainability plan, focusing only on short-term needs without showing how the service would remain viable in the future.
- Did not clearly show how costs, activities and timeframes fit together, making it difficult to determine whether the proposal was achievable within the available funding.

Capital Support

Criterion 1: Operational viability of the service and community care needs

Describe how the proposal for funding will address the service's ongoing viability and operational requirements, and respond to the Early Childhood Education and Care needs of the community it serves, including:

Operational viability and compliance

Evidence of how proposed capital works will address key challenges affecting the service's viability, including meeting safety and regulatory requirements, and supporting ongoing service operation.

Community need and support

Clear evidence that the capital works will respond to a genuine local need, supported by input from families, schools, or community organisations, including consideration of flexible care needs or priority groups where relevant.

What strong applications did well:

- Clearly demonstrated how proposed capital works would address critical infrastructure issues, including safety, compliance, and quality requirements, and support the ongoing operation of the service.
- Explained how the works would reduce risks to service delivery and improve long-term viability, including what would happen if the works did not proceed.
- Provided strong evidence of local need, combining data and community input to show demand and how children and families would benefit, particularly those with additional or flexible care needs.
- Linked together infrastructure needs, community demand, and improved outcomes in a clear and practical way.

Common gaps observed:

- Did not clearly explain how current facilities were affecting safety, compliance, or service viability, or why the works were essential.
- Described capital works as general improvements without showing a clear link to ongoing service sustainability.
- Provided limited or unclear evidence of local need or community benefit or relied on general statements rather than specific data.
- Did not clearly explain the impact if the works did not proceed, or how the proposed works would improve service delivery and outcomes.

Criterion 2: Project delivery

Describe how your organisation will use funding to deliver the proposed project and how the funding will be managed, including:

Project costing and use of funds

Clear cost estimates supported by detailed evidence (quotes), showing how grant funding will be used to deliver the project.

Co-contributions and funding sources

Evidence of other financial contributions and how these will support delivery of the project alongside grant funding.

Managing cost risks

Practical plans to manage potential cost increases, including contingencies or access to additional funding.

Delivery planning and timeframes

A clear approach to completing the project on time, including reasonable schedules and arrangements to ensure delivery within the proposed timeframe.

What strong applications did well:

- Demonstrated a clear and well-supported approach to project costing and funding use, with detailed budgets, quality quotes supporting the entire cost of the proposed works, and a transparent explanation of how grant funding would be applied.
- Clearly identified co-contributions and funding sources, explaining how different funding streams would work together to deliver the project.
- Showed a practical approach to managing cost risks, including contingencies, alternative funding options, or flexible delivery approaches if costs increased.
- Presented a delivery plan, including clear timeframes, milestones and project management arrangements to ensure the works would be completed on time with minimal disruption.

Common gaps observed:

- Did not clearly explain or justify project costs, including missing, inconsistent, or poorly aligned quotes and budgets.
- Provided limited detail on co-contributions or did not explain how multiple funding sources would support project delivery.
- Did not demonstrate a clear approach to managing cost increases or risks, including lack of contingency planning.
- Lacked a credible delivery plan, with unclear timelines, limited milestones, or insufficient detail on how the project would be managed and completed within the proposed timeframe.

Tips for Future Applications

- Start early and read the **Grant Opportunity Guidelines** carefully.
- Check eligibility and gather required evidence before drafting your application.
- Provide complete, relevant attachments and references.
- Address each assessment criterion directly and clearly.
- Explain how your proposed activities deliver outcomes and demonstrate **value for money**.
- Identify risks and outline strategies for managing them.

Next Steps

- Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.
- If you would like to know about upcoming grants opportunities for funding, you can [register](https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Register)¹ to receive email alerts with [GrantConnect](https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Login)² the Australian Government's grants information system.

¹ <https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Register>

² <https://www.grants.gov.au/RegisteredUser/Login>