



NDIS Quality  
and Safeguards  
Commission

# Program Guidelines

## Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program

Version 1.0 (July 2024)



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# Introduction

## Purpose of this document

These Program Guidelines establish the overarching governance policy for the implementation of the *Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program* (Grants Program) administered by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) on behalf of the Australian Government.

The Program Guidelines came into effect in May 2024 and will continue to be revised as required. The current version will be available at [www.ndiscommission.gov.au/grants](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/grants).

A glossary of terms used in these Program Guidelines is at the end of this document. The term 'people with disability' used throughout includes a participant of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

## Administrative Context

The Social Services Portfolio Budget Statements (PB Statements) 2024-25 allocates administered funds to the Grants Program under NDIS Commission Program 1.1.

The grant activities funded under the Grants Program will align with the NDIS Commission's vision, that people with disability achieve their aspirations, and purpose, to uphold the rights of NDIS participants, elevate quality and safety and enable consumer independence.

## Policy Context

The NDIS Commission commenced operations across all states and territories as a Commonwealth statutory authority progressively from 1 July 2018, aligning with implementation of the NDIS in each jurisdiction. This included the rollout of the Grants Program.

The NDIS Commission refreshed the Grants Program in 2024 to better align with NDIS reform objectives, as outlined in recommendations in the NDIS Review and the *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability* (Disability Royal Commission).

The Grants Program aligns with Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (the Strategy), ensuring that the NDIS Commission's activities are connected and contribute to the outcomes areas as outlined in the Strategy, available at [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/document/3106](http://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/document/3106).

The Grants Program contributes to the National Agreement on Closing The Gap (Priority Reform Two) that encourages organisations from the Community-Controlled Sector to apply for grant opportunities to build the capacity of First Nations people to access high quality and safe disability supports and services. The National Agreement on Closing The Gap is available at [www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/priority-reforms](http://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/priority-reforms).

## Legislative Context

Implementation and delivery of the Grants Program is enabled through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013 section 181D, and NDIS Commission policies.

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## Funding Type

The NDIS Commission awards and administers grant funding through the Grants Program on behalf of the Australian Government.

The Program Guidelines align with legislative, policy and procedural requirements for undertaking grants outlined in:

- the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)
- the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule)
- the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)
- the Department of Finance Resource Management Guidelines (RMGs) and
- relevant NDIS Commission policies.

The NDIS Commission may implement a range of commissioning processes to allocate funding, including through open, targeted, and closed grant rounds where grant applications will be selected using competitive or non-competitive processes.

## Policy Authority

Policy authority is required to enable the NDIS Commission to release grant opportunities and award grants from administered funds allocated to the Grants Program.

The Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet (ERC) provided policy authority for the Grants Program through the 2024-25 Budget process.

Current policy authority for the Grants Program terminates 30 June 2026. The Minister for the NDIS is to return to ERC in a future prioritisation process to seek ongoing policy authority.

## Available Grants Program Funds

The Social Services Portfolio Budget Statement (PB Statements) 2024-25 provides Grants Program Forward Estimates under Program 1.1. The most recent PB Statements should be consulted for current figures. The PB Statements are available at [www.dss.gov.au/publications-articles-corporate-publications-budget-and-additional-estimates-statements/portfolio-budget-statements-2024-25](http://www.dss.gov.au/publications-articles-corporate-publications-budget-and-additional-estimates-statements/portfolio-budget-statements-2024-25).

Administered Funds	2024-25 (\$'000)	2025-26 (\$'000)	2026-27 (\$'000)	2027-28 (\$'000)
Grants	4,977	5,092	5,210	5,316

## Scope of the Program Guidelines

These Program Guidelines are only applicable to the three Pillars outlined in the Grants Program Pillars section.

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## Changes to the Program Guidelines

Prioritisation of funding within the Grants Program may change over time, reflecting NDIS reform initiatives and locally based opportunities and need. The NDIS Commission reserves the right to update these Program Guidelines as required.

Updated versions will be published on the NDIS Commission website.

The most recent version of the Program Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect with the release of any new grant opportunities.

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## About the Grants Program

### Grants to support quality and safeguarding in the NDIS

The NDIS Commission is a contemporary, purpose-centred regulator whose role is to uphold the rights of people with disability, to elevate quality and safety, and enable consumer independence and choice. The NDIS Commission utilises a broad suite of powers to regulate for positive impact and to ensure people with disability have their rights upheld when accessing NDIS supports and services delivered by skilled providers and workers.

The Grants Program is a key lever of the NDIS Commission Regulatory Approach, which is available at [www.ndiscommission.gov.au/regulatory-approach](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/regulatory-approach). As a proactive tool, grants can support projects to elevate and ensure:

- Rights of people with disability: The rights, dignity and aspirations of people with disability are upheld and are kept at the centre of decisions about their lives, and choice and control of people with disability is respected and supported.
- Quality providers and workers: People with disability are free from harm, active safeguarding is in place across the system, and high quality service provision, good practice and skilled workers underpin the sector.
- Thriving, diverse markets: People with disability make informed choices and are involved in matters that affect them, from market of diverse, effective and safe providers and workers that is viable, accessible and thriving.

### Objective of the Grants Program

The objective of the Grants Program is that people with disability exercise their rights when accessing NDIS supports and services, and providers and workers uphold the rights of people with disability in the delivery of NDIS supports and services.

### Theory of Change

The Grants Program Theory of Change demonstrates how the NDIS Commission intends to achieve strategic impact through grant funding. The Theory of Change will help to identify and test the efficiencies and effectiveness of the Grants Program outputs, through assessment against short to medium-term outcomes leading to long-term sustainable change.

Through measuring progress and outcomes, evidence will be gathered that will inform continual learning and improvement of the Program. The Grants Program Theory of Change will underpin the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

The Grants Program Theory of Change diagram further outlines the intended outcomes and impacts of the Grants Program, as well as the activities of the NDIS Commission to support the Grants Program to achieve the objective and intended outcomes.

## Grants Program Theory of Change Diagram



The objective of the Grants Program is that people with disability exercise their rights when accessing NDIS supports and services, and providers and workers uphold the rights of people with disability in the delivery of NDIS supports and services.

<b>Impacts</b> Long-term sustainable change	People with disability exercise their rights to quality and safe NDIS supports and services.	Providers and workers uphold the rights of people with disability in the delivery of NDIS supports and services.	People with disability receive quality and safe NDIS supports and services delivered by providers and workers who put quality and safeguarding into practice.	Providers and workers using tools and resources that achieve and continually improve on quality and safeguarding outcomes for people with disability.	Providers and workers meet their obligations to people with disability and deliver person-centred quality and safe NDIS supports and services.
<b>Outcomes</b> Change expected over the life of the grant	Increase the knowledge and skills of people with disability, providers and workers to exercise and uphold the rights of people with disability in the delivery of NDIS supports and services.	Increase provider and worker use of quality and safeguarding practices in the delivery of NDIS supports and services.		Increase in provider and worker capability to meet obligations and deliver person-centred quality and safe NDIS supports and services for people with disability.	
<b>Outputs</b> High level Grants Program outputs	Design grant opportunity, select applicants for funding and execute grant agreements for Pillar 1: Knowledge and Skill Development.		Design grant opportunity, select applicants for funding and execute grant agreements for Pillar 2: Quality and Safeguarding.		Design grant opportunity, select applicants for funding and execute grant agreements for Pillar 3: Regulation and Compliance.

<b>Activities</b>	Participant voice	Partnerships approach and fostering new partnerships	Monitor, evaluate, learn and adapt programs	Evidence-based, adaptable and principles-led
	Communication and collaboration	Innovative projects and pilots	Grant funding and contract management	Capacity building of NDIS market through grant funding
<b>Underpinned by</b>	<p><b>The Grants Program will be designed to align with NDIS Reform, policy and legislation, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NDIS Reform objectives (NDIS Review and Disability Royal Commission)</li> <li>- Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031</li> <li>- Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.</li> <li>- NDIS Act 2013, section 181D and E</li> <li>- NDIS Rules and Guidelines</li> <li>- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators.</li> </ul>			



## Grants Program Pillars

From 2024, the NDIS Commission will implement a Grants Program built on three strategic and complementary Pillars. The Pillars provide the strategic objective for future grant rounds. The NDIS Commission will address each of the Pillars through separate grant opportunities designed to align with their scope. Projects that align with the policy objective of the Pillar will be funded to undertake activities that deliver the intended outcomes of the grant opportunity.



### Pillar 1 – Knowledge and Skill Development

Objective: People with disability exercise their rights when accessing NDIS supports and services, and providers and workers are upholding the rights of people with disability in the delivery of NDIS supports and services.

This will be achieved by:

- Supporting people with disability to understand their rights, have confidence to make complaints, communicate effectively and give feedback.
  - This can include awareness of what quality services and best practice service delivery looks like, feeling comfortable to “have a say”, navigating the NDIS and the disability market and building consumer confidence.
- Supporting providers and workers to understand how to engage with people with disability to deliver person-centred, outcome focused supports and services.
  - This can include implementing co-design principles, effectively tailoring supports to participant needs and supporting knowledge translation in practice.

### Pillar 2 – Quality and Safeguarding

Objective: Increase in NDIS providers and workers use of quality and safeguarding practices in the delivery of NDIS supports and services.

This will be achieved by:

- Encouraging the delivery of quality and safety standards in supports and services
  - This can include reducing and eliminating the need for the use of regulated restrictive practices by creating strategies that are responsive to the individual
- Promoting the importance of building natural safeguards into the delivery of supports and services

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- This can include supporting people with disability to enjoy quality and safe supports and services whilst participating in the community and employment, or in the home.
  - Fostering innovation in the delivery of supports and services with person-centred approaches addressing the needs of people with disability.
    - This can include innovation to co-design, trial and test new ways to deliver safe and quality supports based on a foundation of research, participant feedback and co-design.

### **Pillar 3 – Regulation and Compliance**

Objective: Increase the capability of providers and workers to meet obligations to deliver quality and safe NDIS supports and services to people with disability.

This will be achieved by:

- Supporting providers and workers to understand their obligations for the delivery of high quality and safe supports
  - This can include supporting providers and workers with skills and techniques to successfully incorporate any registration requirements and applicable Practice Standards into their service delivery models.
- Strengthening the sector to improve understanding of provider obligations and increase quality and safety
  - This can include supporting providers and workers to implement obligations for the safeguarding of participants and the quality of support delivery.
- Assisting with the implementation of NDIS reforms in the broader sector
  - This can include supporting providers and workers to adapt to new regulatory requirements in response to reforms in the NDIS.

### **Priority Cohorts**

The NDIS Commission encourages applications that address priority cohorts. Priority cohorts may be identified for specific grant opportunities.

Priority cohorts may include but are not limited to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people
- People living in rural or remote locations
- Women
- People who identify as LGBTIQ+SB
- Children and young people (0 to 25 years).

Funded Grants Program projects must be able to demonstrate how the project will achieve the intended outcomes for people with disability, including the priority cohorts relevant to the project.

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# Application Process

## Overview of the Application Process

All grant processes will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the CGRGs, these Program Guidelines, and the relevant Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

## Choice of Selection Process

The Grants Program will utilise a range and combination of selection processes to select successful applicants. These may include:

- Open competitive single stage process, where applicants submit a proposal for assessment and selection.
- Open competitive two stage process.
  - Stage 1 involves an expression of interest and a shortlisting of suitable applications for progression to the next stage
  - Stage 2 involves shortlisted applicants submitting a more detailed application
- Closed/Restricted processes, where a small number of applicants are invited to submit an application.
- Eligibility/Demand driven processes, based on meeting specific requirements.

## Funding Round Suite of Documents

The following documentation will be available at the opening of each funding round:

- the Program Guidelines
- the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and
- an Application Pack.

## Program Guidelines

The Program Guidelines detail the rules for administration of the funds that have been allocated to the Grants Program. Each funding round will allow for investment in activities that build a robust, coherent, connected capability within the priority area of the designated project. The Program Guidelines detail high level selection criteria that may be used in part or in full or adapted for a particular funding round.

## Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Whilst the Program Guidelines set the high-level policy intention of the Grants Program, the Grant Opportunity Guidelines outline the specific processes and procedures for conducting and

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administering each specific grant round. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines include any specific requirements and policies related to the particular round, consistent with the policy and requirements outlined in these Program Guidelines. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines will include specific details regarding eligible organisations, selection criteria and instructions on how to apply.

## Application Pack

The application pack will provide a suite of documents with information specific to each funding round. Application packs may include an Application Form, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Standard template Grant Agreement and General Terms and Conditions (including Supplementary Terms and Conditions) and any required proformas needed to complete the application.

## Application Period

The opening and closing dates for each funding round will be outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

## Advertisement of Grant Funding

The NDIS Commission may elect to advertise funding opportunities:

- on social media channels
- in newsletters and publications
- on the NDIS Commission website
- via relevant third-party providers including GrantConnect
- any other mechanism as determined by the NDIS Commission.

Any advertisement will provide information on where to access the application documentation for the relevant funding round. Specific funding round details and processes will be provided via any, or a combination of, the mechanisms identified above.

## Preparing an Application

Applications must be submitted on the approved Application Form and include all required attachments as specified in the advertisement for individual funding rounds.

All applicants should be aware of the following:

- Where an advertisement for a funding round specifies a two-stage process, for example an Expression of Interest and full application, the NDIS Commission will decide which applicants proceed to the second stage.
- Applicants should check all eligibility requirements and ensure they are eligible to apply.
- Applicants must respond to all the selection criteria in the Application Form to the extent specified and in the format specified and provide all associated documents required in the

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Application Pack for the relevant funding round, to enable their application to be fully considered.

- A favourable evaluation of the application against the selection criteria does not guarantee funding. Funding is limited and, where relevant, applications will be assessed and prioritised according to the extent to which they meet the selection criteria, represent value for relevant money and meet the overall objectives of the Grants Program.
- If seeking \$150,000 or under (GST exclusive) applicants must include an accountant declaration made by an accountant who is a member of CPA Australia, the Chartered Accountants Australia or the Institute of Public Accountants, or General Purpose Financial Statements (GPFS).
- If seeking \$150,001 or over (GST exclusive), applicants must include a copy of their organisation's most recent audited financial statements.

## How to Submit an Application

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the Application Pack on GrantConnect for each grant round.

An application that is lodged other than in accordance with instructions provided for the respective grant round may be deemed a late or ineligible application, and may not proceed to assessment.

The NDIS Commission will not be liable for any loss, damage, costs or expenses incurred by the Applicant or any other person if, for any reason an application or any other material or communication relevant to a specific grant round:

- is not received on time
- is corrupted or altered or otherwise is not received as sent
- uses document formats that are not allowed
- cannot be read or decrypted
- has its security or integrity compromised.

An application will not be considered lodged until it is received in full. Please note that the NDIS Commission will accept no responsibility for late applications. In order to avoid potential disappointment, it is suggested that applicants leave sufficient time between the submission of completed applications and the deadline for lodgement, so that any technical issues with the submission may be addressed and corrected where possible.

The correct and timely lodgement of applications is the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

For applications lodged at [grants@ndiscommission.gov.au](mailto:grants@ndiscommission.gov.au), an auto-generated response will let the Applicant know that the application has been received. A formal response will be provided in three working days acknowledging receipt.

Applicants should retain a copy of their application and any supporting papers, either electronically or in hard copy, for their own records.

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## Conflict of Interest Declaration

Applicants will be required to declare as part of their application, actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest or that to the best of their knowledge there is no conflict of interest that would impact on or prevent the Applicant from proceeding with the Activity or any Grant Agreement it may enter into with the NDIS Commission.

## Improper Assistance

It is considered improper for an Applicant to prepare an application with the assistance of an NDIS Commission employee, Commonwealth official, employee or contractor or with improperly obtained information. Any Applications which the NDIS Commission considers were developed with improper assistance by a current or former NDIS Commission employee or contractor or other Commonwealth official will be excluded from further consideration. Improper assistance may include, but is not limited to, using information or assistance obtained:

- in circumstances that are contrary to the communications requirements set out in these Program Guidelines;
- in circumstances that constitute a breach of the Crimes Act 1914 (Cth), the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013, the Public Service Act 1999 (Cth), the Public Service Regulations 1999 (Cth) or the Parliamentary Service Act 1999 (Cth); or
- in breach of an obligation of confidentiality or fidelity.

## Applicant Obligations

By submitting an application, the Applicant acknowledges that the NDIS Commission makes no representations or warranties that any information communicated or provided to the Applicant during the application process, is or will be accurate, current or complete.

By submitting an application, the Applicant will be deemed to have:

- examined the Application Pack and any other documents referenced or referred to the Application Pack, and any other information made available in writing by the NDIS Commission to applicants for the purposes of submitting an application
- examined all other information which is obtainable by the making of reasonable and timely inquiries
- satisfied itself as to the terms and conditions of the relevant Grant Agreement and its ability to comply with those terms and conditions
- satisfied itself as to the correctness and completeness of its application, including its budget which is deemed to cover the cost of all matters necessary for the due and proper performance and delivery of the funded activity in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to obtain all information necessary or convenient for the preparation of its application.

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Without limiting any other provision of any grant documentation, including the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and Application Pack no payment will be made to the Applicant or any other entity for any costs, expenses, losses or damages incurred or suffered by the Applicant or any other entity arising out of or in connection with:

- preparing an Application
- the Application process, including any industry briefing, information sessions, debrief or any discussions, negotiations or enquiries or any work undertaken by the Applicant after submission of its Application
- participation in the relevant funding round
- any failure to comply with the Application Pack.

The Applicant must not, and must ensure that its officers, employees, subcontractors, agents and advisers do not, in relation to the preparation, lodgement or assessment of Applications:

- make any false, misleading or deceptive claim or statement
- use information obtained unlawfully or in breach of an obligation of confidentiality to the NDIS Commission, or the Commonwealth in preparing its Application
- receive improper assistance from any existing or former NDIS Commission or Commonwealth official, employee, or contractor
- engage in collusive conduct, anti-competitive conduct, unlawful, unethical or other similar conduct with any other Applicant or other person
- attempt to improperly influence an NDIS Commission or Commonwealth official, employee, or violate any applicable laws regarding the offering of inducements
- approach any NDIS Commission or Commonwealth official, employee, or contractor in relation to the Applicant other than in the manner set out in the Program Guidelines or the relevant GOGs.

If any of these provisions are breached the NDIS Commission may exclude the Application from consideration.

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## Assessment Process

### Assessment Methodology

Grant applications will be accepted at defined times, as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and determined by the NDIS Commission.

Applications will be assessed on their merit against the assessment criteria and will undergo a comparative assessment and ranking against other applications, depending on the nature of the selection process used.

Before the NDIS Commission identifies a particular selection process, the principle of proportionality will be used to assess the scale, nature, funding amount, complexity and ongoing requirements of the grant, against the risks involved in the process for the potential awardees and the NDIS Commission. These considerations will also assist the NDIS Commission to determine which approach will be most likely to encourage strong, viable responses from any eligible applicants.

The NDIS Commission is not under any obligation to fund every application that meets the Grants Program objective and assessment criteria. During a competitive selection process, applications that are found to be suitable will be subject to a comparative assessment. Regardless of the selection process adopted, if the NDIS Commission considers that the applications received through a funding round are unlikely to:

1. meet the NDIS Commission and Grants Program objectives; and/or
2. deliver a satisfactory result for the intended audience,

then all or part of the funding round may be withdrawn or readvertised at the NDIS Commission's discretion, or the NDIS Commission may decide to conduct a new or different selection process for that funding round.

For all funding rounds or opportunities, the Program Delegate will determine whether an application will receive funding, the amount of funding to be allocated and whether the allocated budget for the funding round is fully expended.

## Selection Panel

### Roles and responsibilities

The selection panel considers eligible applications on their merit and makes recommendations to the Program Delegate on proposals to award grant funding.

The selection panel will assess and consider applications on:

- the merit of the application
- a comparative assessment against other eligible applications
- whether the application provides value with relevant money



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- the capability and capacity of the Applicant to successfully deliver activities
  - the strength of the evidence base underpinning the proposed activity.

The selection panel may seek additional information about the application or Applicant. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated as referees. The selection advisory panel may also consider information about the Applicant or application that is available through the normal course of business.

## Membership

The selection panel will include a mix of people with disability, Commonwealth, State and Territory Government staff and people with relevant specialist expertise. Members of the selection panel will be from across Australia, and where possible, representative of community, including representation from culturally diverse groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Subject matter experts may also inform the selection process.

Any selection panel member or any person involved in the selection process who is not a Commonwealth official will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

## Selection criteria

The selection criteria for each grant opportunity comprise eligibility and assessment criteria.

The Program Guidelines detail selection criteria which may be used in part or in full, or be adapted for a particular grant round. Depending on the particular grant opportunity being commissioned (see Program Pillars section) and type of funding process, the Program Delegate may exercise their ability to waive certain criteria.

The Grant Opportunity Guidelines will detail the specific selection criteria for that grant round. The Program Delegate reserves the right to make funding decisions as outlined in the relevant Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

## Eligibility criteria

Eligibility to apply for a grant opportunity is specific to each grant round and will be determined during the design phase to ensure it meets the specific aims and objectives required. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines will set out the specific eligibility requirements for each grant round.

The NDIS Commission can only provide funding to an organisation that is a legal entity and meets relevant eligibility criteria. Non-legal entities, specifically Unincorporated Associations, may work with other organisations through a consortia or subcontracting arrangement, if deemed appropriate for a grant round. The lead organisation of a consortium must be an eligible entity type.

Applicants do not have to be an NDIS provider (registered or unregistered) to apply for a grant under this Grants Program. However, providers may choose to apply for a grant. The same eligibility criteria will apply for providers submitting an application.

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## Assessment criteria

Applications for funding will be assessed against the selection criteria outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for that grant round. All potential applicants should carefully review the information for each funding round before applying for a grant opportunity.

Depending on the requirements of the particular Grants Program funding round, selection criteria may be weighted. This will be determined during the development of each grant round.

Applicants will need to address all of the assessment criteria for the relevant grant opportunity in their application. The NDIS Commission will assess each application based on the responses provided to each criterion.

Each criterion will have a word limit. When assessing applications, the NDIS Commission reserves the right not to take into account any words in excess of this limit. The NDIS Commission recommends applicants keep all responses strictly within the designated word limit.

## Value for Relevant Money

As part of the selection process, applications may be assessed on the extent to which they represent value for relevant money.

Applicants may demonstrate value for relevant money in their application by:

- considering, when developing their proposals, how best to deliver the activities to priority cohorts or individuals. This may involve using existing processes and technologies or professional standards, or it may involve innovation and performance improvement by the Applicant
- having in place an effective risk management approach that will minimise potential waste of grant money
- ensuring sustainability of the deliverables for longevity, where appropriate
- having processes in place for ongoing monitoring and management of the project/task/services funded by the grant, as appropriate. This may involve the effective use of organisational processes, procedures and systems to produce the required reporting information
- considering both the financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each activity proposal throughout the whole grant cycle.

## Checks of Applicants and other Enquiries

As a part of the selection process, further checks of an Applicant, or an Applicant's nominated personnel, if any, may be made with respect to the application.

The NDIS Commission may also conduct checks for non-disclosure of any relevant information. In addition, any debts that the Applicant has accrued to the NDIS Commission or other Australian Government agencies may be taken into account when making a decision to offer funding.

The NDIS Commission reserves the right to use information from:

- the NDIS Commission databases

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- other Australian Government agencies, such as the Australian Taxation Office and Australian Securities and Investments Commission
  - state or territory agencies
  - law enforcement agencies
  - credit reference agencies
  - courts or tribunals
  - any other appropriate organisation or person.

This information can be considered during the assessment of applications or in making the final decision with respect to the application. The NDIS Commission may seek further information or evidence of claims from applicants or make any other enquiries it deems necessary to verify those claims, during the assessment of applications.

## Probity

All Grant Rounds conducted under the Grants Program, regardless of whether undertaken in-house or via an alternative arrangement, must have a Probity Plan in place to guide the process. The selection of Grant Recipients must be fair, open and demonstrate the highest level of integrity.

The following principles will be applied throughout the selection process:

- fairness and impartiality
- consistency, accountability and transparency of process
- security and confidentiality of information
- identification and resolution of conflicts of interest
- compliance with legislative obligations and government policy.

These principles are intended to achieve an equitable, justifiable and sound process.

Funding rounds must be conducted in accordance with any probity plans and protocols put in place. The NDIS Commission, or a relevant third-party provider, will engage a Probity Advisor to help meet its obligations to ensure selection processes are defensible and able to stand up to external and internal scrutiny. The Probity Advisor plays no part in the assessment of applications.

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# Program Administration

## Roles and Responsibilities

### NDIS Commission responsibilities and accountabilities

The NDIS Commission has responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of the Grants Program. The NDIS Commission will:

- identify suitable applicants through a robust assessment process to deliver the activities required as per the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the Program Guidelines
- meet all the terms and conditions applicable to the NDIS Commission for any Grant Agreement established between the NDIS Commission and the Grantee
- administer the Grants Program in a professional and effective manner, and in accordance with applicable legislation (NDIS Act, NDIS Commission AAls, any relevant NDIS Commission policy together with the Program Guidelines and any Grant Opportunity Guidelines)
- work with Grantees to ensure the Grants Program is implemented to agreed standards and within the approved budget and timeframe
- work to ensure that the outcomes contained within the Program Guidelines are being met and evaluate the Grantee performance against the Activity outcomes
- publish information on the successful grants on the NDIS Commission and GrantConnect websites.

### Grantee responsibilities and accountabilities

The Grantee must comply with all requirements of the Grant Agreement entered into.

Grantees are responsible for ensuring that:

- the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement are met
- the project or service is effective, efficient, and is good value for relevant money
- the highest ethical standards and duty of care are applied
- services comply with the requirements as set out within all applicable State, Territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have equal and equitable access to services
- People with disability are employed to deliver the project
- they work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to deliver the Grants Program
- they do not give false or misleading information to NDIS Commission, as this is a serious offence

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- they contribute to the overall development and improvement of the Grants Program, such as through sharing best practice, or cooperating in any evaluation activities as directed.

## Reporting Requirements

The NDIS Commission has internal and external reporting obligations in relation to the Grants Program. Internal reporting requirements include updates to the Program Delegate, internal management reporting and internal Assurance obligations. External reporting requirements include financial, Parliamentary and other public reporting requirements in alignment with the CGRGs.

The NDIS Commission also requires Grant Recipients to report on their Activity. These requirements will be outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for the relevant grant opportunity. Grant Recipient obligations will be outlined in the Grant Agreement to be executed between the lead organisation and the NDIS Commission on behalf of the Commonwealth.

## Grants Program Evaluation

Grant Recipients must commit to designing an evaluation approach for their project, and delivering a final Project Evaluation Report that:

- captures and shares outcomes and learnings of their project
- supports an increased understanding of project activities and implementation processes and recommendations that may inform best practice approaches for future grant rounds
- shares Stories of Change.

Regular monitoring of the grant activities against an evaluation framework will assist applicants to know what is working well and where they may need to adapt.

The NDIS Commission will also undertake assessment of how effectively and efficiently the Grants Program is achieving its strategic objectives, through evaluations of each Grant Opportunity. Evaluations will focus on building an evidence-base of what works, identifying improvement areas and sector capability building through shared learnings. Evaluation of the Grants Program is undertaken using the approaches and methodologies outlined in the Grants Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Evidence generated through evaluations can contribute to performance reporting in annual performance statements, as stated in the PGPA Act.

Grant Recipients will be required to contribute to the NDIS Commission evaluation processes. This requirement will be outlined in respective Grant Agreements and Grant Evaluation Plans. The NDIS Commission recommends that applicants allocate approximately 10% of their total proposed funding budget toward evaluation activities.

## Working with Children and Vulnerable People

It is a matter of law that organisations and individuals who are involved in the administering of any Activity must, if they will be working with or have contact with children or people who are in vulnerable situations, comply with the relevant legislative working with vulnerable person and working with children check requirements of the jurisdiction in which they will be working.

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## Personal Information

Any personal information an Applicant provides as part of its application is protected under the Privacy Act 1988. It can only be disclosed to someone else in the circumstances permitted in the Privacy Act 1988. The Privacy Act 1988 regulates how federal public sector agencies and certain private sector organisations can collect, hold, use and disclose personal information, and how you can access and correct that information. Personal information is information in any form that can identify a living person.

If you think the NDIS Commission may have breached your privacy rights, you may contact us using the contact details:

- Email: [contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au](mailto:contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au)
- Telephone: 1800 035 544
- Post: NDIS Commission Feedback, PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2750

You also have the option of contacting the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OIA) if you wish to make a privacy complaint against the NDIS Commission, or if you are not satisfied with how we have handled a complaint made to us in the first instance. The OIA website contains information on how to make a privacy complaint.

## Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the NDIS Commission are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) (FOI Act).

The FOI Act creates a general right of access to documents in the possession of the NDIS Commission and this right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary for the protection of essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

Decisions regarding requests for access under the FOI Act will be made by an authorised decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

## Complaints

Individuals and/or organisations can lodge a complaint about the Grants Program by writing to [grants@ndiscommission.gov.au](mailto:grants@ndiscommission.gov.au).

If an individual and/or organisations is at any time dissatisfied with the NDIS Commission's handling of a complaint, they can contact the OIA using the details at section 11.2.

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## Glossary

### **Accountable Authority**

The person or group of persons responsible for governing the Commonwealth entity.

### **Activity**

The activities described in the NDIS Commission Grant Agreement.

### **Agreement**

The Grant Details, Supplementary Terms (if any), the General Grant Conditions and any other document referenced or incorporated in the NDIS Commission Grant Agreement.

### **Assessment criteria**

The specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged.

These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.

### **Applicant**

The lead organisation submitting an application for grants

### **Capacity building**

Increasing people's skills and independence. This might apply to an individual, for example developing their skills in a certain area that then allows them to live more independently. Capacity building might also apply to the community as a whole, for example, building the capacity of organisations to be more inclusive benefits the whole community.

### **Choice and control**

The NDIS principle which outlines the right of a participant to determine who, how and when their supports are delivered.

### **Commissioning**

A strategic approach to the identification funding of services and activities that benefit individuals and communities.

### **Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)**

The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.

Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

The CGRGs are available at [www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines](http://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines).

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### **Commonwealth entity**

A Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth.

See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act.

### **Competitive selection**

A selection process for a Grant Funding Round in which applications close on a specified date and applicants are assessed against Selection Criteria and ranked in order of merit.

### **Delegate or Program Delegate**

An official who has been given statutory authority, by an instrument of delegation from the accountable authority, to make particular decisions or perform particular functions. A delegate is constrained by any limitations expressed in the delegation instrument.

### **Event**

The activities that occurred during a business transaction. Event data records the activity that occurred, who did it, when it was done and the result. An event records an instance of a workflow.

### **Goal**

The aspirational outcome which a participant has set for themselves.

### **Grant**

An arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:

- under which relevant money or other Consolidated Revenue Fund money is to be paid to a recipient other than the Commonwealth; and
- which is intended to assist the recipient achieve its goals; and
- which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy objectives; and
- under which the recipient may be required to act in accordance with specified terms or conditions.

### **Grant agreement**

A legally binding agreement setting out the terms and conditions of a grant between the NDIS Commission and a grant recipient for the provision of funding.

The form of a Grant Agreement must be an approved NDIS Commission template. It is also used as a collective noun for Grant Agreement, Schedule and Activities.

### **Grant money**

Means the money, or any part of it, payable by the Australian Government to the grantee as specified in the Grant Schedule.



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## **Grant opportunity**

A term used to describe the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to eligible applicants. Grant opportunities may be open or restricted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process, as defined in the CGRGs.

## **Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs)**

Grant Opportunity Guidelines provides all the relevant Grants Program and opportunity information required for potential applicants to understand: the purpose, outcomes and objectives of a grant; the application and assessment process; the governance arrangements, including roles and responsibilities; and the operation of the grant. Grant Opportunity Guidelines can be made available with related documents, such as an application guide, application forms, invitations to apply, supporting documentation, frequently asked questions, draft grant agreements, and any templates for reporting or acquittals.

## **Grant recipient or Grantee**

An individual or organisation that has entered into a grant agreement with a Commonwealth entity.

## **GrantConnect**

The Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants on [www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au).

## **GST**

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) in Australia is a value added tax of 10% on most goods and services sales. GST is levied on most transactions in the production process but is refunded to all parties in the chain of production other than the final consumer.

## **Material**

Includes documents, equipment, software including source code and object code versions, goods, information and data stored by any means including all copies and extracts of them.

## **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a way of providing support to people with disability in Australia and giving people with disability choice and control over the supports they access. The NDIS provides Australians under the age of 65 who have a permanent and significant disability with the reasonable and necessary supports they need to live an ordinary life.

The NDIS helps people with disability achieve their goals, including independence, community involvement, education, employment and health and wellbeing. As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach, investing in people with disability early to improve outcomes later in life.

## **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission)**

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) is an independent commission established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services. The NDIS Commission works with participants, providers, workers and the community to uphold a nationally consistent approach so participants can access services and supports that promote choice, control and dignity.

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## **Outcomes**

An outcome is the result of an action. In the case of the Grants Program, it is the change or difference made to a person's life which results from an activity or support or service they have used. The NDIS Commission also expect to see changes at the community level as a result of Grants Program activities.

## **Party**

A person or organisation that has a relationship with grants.

Also, means the 'you' or 'us' noted in the Grant Agreement.

## **Personal information**

Has the same meaning as in the Privacy Act 1988.

## **Pillars**

The Pillars constitute the foundational strategic objectives of the Grants Program. The Pillars work together achieve the intended outcomes the overarching Grants Program. All grants opportunities are linked to a Pillar.

## **Policy**

The document that outlines the rules, systems, processes and resources available to support NDIS Commission staff in establishing, awarding and managing grants.

## **Program**

The administrative instruments established to deliver outcomes that execute government policy. Programs may use a number of different strategies to achieve their objectives, including grants, subsidies, payments and services.

## **Program Guidelines**

Set the overall implementation policy for the Grants Program. They underpin the specific Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

## **Provider**

A provider is an individual or organisation delivering a support or a product to participants and receiving payment through the NDIS.

## **Regulatory Approach**

The regulatory approach outlines how the NDIS Commission will use regulatory capabilities and resources to maximise quality and safety across the NDIS and:

- defines regulatory intent and how the NDIS Commission regulates to improve quality and safeguarding for participants
- guides regulation using a range of mechanisms and combination of levers and tools

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- explains to providers, workers, participants and the public how the sector is regulated in the interest of participants.

### **Selection criteria**

The requirements against which grant applications will be determined. Selection criteria comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.

### **Selection process**

The method used to select potential grant recipients. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications, or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.

### **Supports**

Assistance that helps a participant to reach their goals, objectives and aspirations, and to undertake activities to enable their social and economic participation.

### **Value for (relevant) money**

A judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.

When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:

- the quality of the project proposal and activities
- fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives
- that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved
- the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

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## Document information

### Document owner

Strategic Programs, Regulatory Policy, Insights and Review Division

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