



# Feedback for Grant Applicants

## Support for NDIS Providers Grant Opportunity: GO6984 Knowledge and Skill Development

### Overview

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) is providing this general feedback to applicants of the Knowledge and Skill Development grant opportunity (GO6984) as part of our commitment to supporting the sector. This feedback will help support applicants to prepare strong proposals when applying for grants in the future. The NDIS Commission acknowledges the time and effort that organisations invest when developing a grant application.

The Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program (Grants Program) is administered by the NDIS Commission of behalf of the Australian Government. The objective of the Grants Program is that people with disability exercise their right to quality and safe NDIS supports and services in a thriving and diverse market, and these rights are upheld by skilled providers and workers.

The application period for the Knowledge and Skill Development grant opportunity opened Monday 22 July 2024 and closed Friday 30 August 2024. A total of \$5.0 million (excl. GST) was available for this grant opportunity over a two-year funding period for projects between 12 months and 3 years in length. The available funding for proposals was between \$100,000 to \$500,000 (excl. GST).

The NDIS Commission received a large number of applications for this grant round, which was highly competitive. In total, applications sought over \$182 million in funding. The Delegate (the NDIS Commissioner) awarded almost \$4.7 million (excl. GST) in funding to 14 organisations to deliver projects that address the policy objective and intended outcomes of the grant opportunity.

Future grant opportunities may become available for this Grants Program. More information about new grant opportunities is available on [GrantConnect](#) and at the [NDIS Commission grants](#) page.

### Selection Process

The open competitive selection process for the Knowledge and Skill Development grant opportunity allowed a broad range of organisations to apply. Applications underwent a three-stage process:

1. Applications were considered for eligibility as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.
2. Eligible applications were assessed and ranked against three assessment criteria of equal weight.
3. The Selection Panel considered the ranked applications in order based on merit and made funding recommendations to the Delegate. All Selection Panel considerations were overseen by an independent external probity advisor.

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Recommendations to the Delegate were guided by:

- a. the total funding available for the grant round
- b. the policy objective of the Grants Program and relevant grant opportunity
- c. value for relevant money
- d. coverage of priority cohorts or geographical location
- e. other factors as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

## General feedback

Successful applications in the Knowledge and Skill Development grant opportunity:

- met eligibility requirements as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- provided a concise and clear project summary
- answered all assessment criteria questions with a relevant response
- provided sufficient detail using the available word count in the application form
- demonstrated value with relevant money
- were clear with their understanding of the objectives and intended outcomes of the grant opportunity and designed a proposal to address them
- gave specific information rather than making broad or general statements
- included a project budget that reflected the scale of the project activities and engagement numbers
- requested funding that matched the proposed project's scale and scope, rather than requesting the maximum allowable funding and longest timeframe
- attached appropriate financial statements or documents for the amount of funding requested
- proposed a detailed project plan that listed key project phases, stakeholders, timeframes, and deliverables
- outlined a risk plan that was comprehensive, relevant to the project and carefully considered challenges to successful delivery of the project and the mitigations proposed to respond
- provided all requested documents as attachments.

Future applicants are strongly recommended to review the Grant Opportunity Guidelines prior to applying to ensure all required documents are submitted with the application.

Eligibility conditions were applied consistently in accordance with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, and applicants should be aware that incomplete applications were not considered.

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## Specific feedback

Stronger applications:

- demonstrated a considered project approach that contributes to the Grants Program objectives and outcomes by detailing:
  - how the project outcomes would align with and support the objectives of the NDIS Commission to ensure people with disability have their rights upheld when accessing NDIS supports and services delivered by skilled providers and workers
  - how the project activities would contribute to achieving the Grants Program policy objectives and outcomes as detailed in the Program Guidelines and the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
  - how the project would achieve innovative approaches with a strong evidence base and justification for project proposals.
- explained how people with disability were at the centre of proposed project design and the delivery of the activities by outlining:
  - evidence of connections to priority cohorts and/or location-based services
  - how people with disability will be included across all aspects of the project including design, development and delivery of activities, and governance structures
  - strategies within the project and budget to increase employment of people with disability.
- strengthened proposals by providing information and forming partnerships or consortiums with other organisations to deliver the project through:
  - outlining specific arrangements and existing or new partnerships to be formed to deliver the project; for example, *“We will work with Organisation A, who will deliver this element of the project, and we have a new partnership agreement in place”* provides more information than general comments such as *“We intend to partner with disability advocacy services”*.
  - the role of partners or consortium organisations, rather than listing organisation names without any specific detail as to their role in the project and why they will be involved.
- described the difference between their organisation’s regular business operations and the project activities by outlining:
  - how the grant would be used to deliver a project and not fund standard business activities
  - how the proposed activities were different to practices, responsibilities and/or activities the applicant is funded to deliver through other payment streams such as NDIS reasonable and necessary supports or the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grants Program.

Stronger applications demonstrated how the organisation would continue to promote or use resources developed beyond the project’s funding timeframe and outlined plans for the sustainability of the project.

Some applications received were better aligned to a different Grants Program pillar, either Pillar 2: Quality and Safeguarding or Pillar 3: Regulation and Compliance.

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## Assessment Criteria Responses feedback

The Grant Opportunity Guidelines required applicants to answer assessment criteria.

The feedback below outlines how applicants provided stronger responses to the assessment criteria.

### Criterion 1

Describe the activities you will deliver and why these are needed.

You must demonstrate this through a detailed explanation of:

- the activities you will deliver – what you will do?
- the people with disability that the activities will support – who will this benefit?
- where the project will be delivered – where will the activities take place?

Stronger responses to Criteria 1:

- explained in detail with clear, specific information what the activities the project would deliver
- provided specific, relevant, credible and current evidence supporting the claims about the need for the project to meet the policy objectives for people with disability
- demonstrated an understanding of and connection to the NDIS market without duplicating existing NDIS-related projects or overlapping with supports funded through participant plans
- explained how the activity would directly benefit people with disability and the priority cohort identified (if applicable), the benefits and links with the proposed activities
- clearly described which group/s of people with disability would be engaged in the project, and how they would be meaningfully engaged to strengthen the project
- clearly described the geographical location/s where activities would be delivered, including if and how the project would achieve national reach (if applicable)
- provided specific, relevant, credible and current evidence to support the claims of the need for the project in the chosen area
- outlined project activities that were achievable for the amount of funding requested and were supported by and reflected the submitted budget.

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## Criterion 2

Describe how the project will increase:

- people with disability's knowledge of their rights and skills to exercise those rights when accessing NDIS supports and services
- provider and worker knowledge of the rights of people with disability and obligations to uphold these rights in the delivery of NDIS supports and services
- the skills of people with disability, providers and workers to exercise and uphold the rights of people with disability when accessing or delivering NDIS supports and services.

Your response must demonstrate this through including:

- how the project will achieve the intended outcomes
- how you will monitor progress and evaluate the project.

Stronger responses to Criterion 2:

- explained how the proposal would achieve some or all of the intended outcomes for the grant opportunity, specifically how the project activities would:
  - support people with disability to have skills and knowledge to understand and exercise their rights when accessing NDIS supports and services
  - increase provider and worker knowledge of the rights of people with disability
  - support providers and workers to uphold the rights of participants when accessing NDIS supports and services they deliver
- directly linked the proposed project activities intending to be delivered to one or more of the three sub-criterion points
- explained how the outcomes of the project activities would deliver against the criterion requirements to meet the policy objectives
- demonstrated an understanding of the NDIS market and how the project would deliver these intended outcomes to impact the market over time by reaching participants, providers and workers
- gave specific information about the impact of the project activities relevant to the rather than broad, general statements
- detailed a monitoring and evaluation plan to implement during the life of the project, including:
  - identifying realistic, proportionate and appropriate methods to monitor and evaluate the project within the available budget
  - explained why specific evaluation methods were most appropriate for the project.

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### Criterion 3

Describe your organisation's capability and capacity to successfully deliver the project and how your organisation will achieve project sustainability.

You must demonstrate this through including:

- how people with disability will be meaningfully engaged and employed in the project, including in planning, co-design, co-creation and delivery of project outcomes.
- the role of the board or committee in governance oversight and management of the project
- any partnerships or collaborations that you may utilise
- how your organisation will make the project outcomes sustainable beyond the life of the grant agreement and funding.

Stronger responses to Criterion 3:

- provided details of intended engagement and employment opportunities for people with disability throughout the life of the project
- demonstrated how the project would benefit from the lived experience of people with disability involved in the project, particularly participants
- detailed the project management structure, including specifying the role of the organisation's board or committee, as applicable, and how this project management structure would support the delivery of the proposed project
- outlined the involvement of individuals and organisations involved in the project that was achievable for the amount of funding requested and was supported by and reflected the submitted budget
- clearly described the organisation's history and connection with the NDIS sector and project stakeholders
- described the ability, experience and capacity of their organisation, partners and project staff to deliver the project, including their experience and connection to the priority cohorts and locality
- provided details that reflect the project plan to outline the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the project
- described the role of partners and consortium organisations, rather than listing organisations without any detail as to their role in the project
- addressed planning and options for sustainability beyond the end of the grant agreement for grant activity outputs, such as products or resources developed, and identified how the proposal would achieve sustainability as relevant to the project.

**Released:** October 2024