

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Ready for Work

Guidelines for funding 2025–26

The *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative continues to achieve on social, economic and fiscal fronts, with an ongoing annual investment of \$80 million to support up to 15,000 Queenslanders into work each year.

The initiative represents a commitment to increasing workforce participation, driving job growth and strengthening the performance of the Queensland economy by improving skills development and work opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Ever evolving, *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* is flexible in design and delivery and has been revitalised to accommodate the changing labour market conditions as a result of COVID-19.

The initiative comprises the following suite of programs:

- Community Work Skills
- Work Skills Traineeships
- Get Set for Work
- Ready for Work
- Youth Skills
- Community Foundation Skills
- Skill Up
- First Start

Overview and objectives

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of support for those in the community most vulnerable to reduced employment opportunities.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is the proactive means for increasing Queensland's workforce participation and the overall performance of the Queensland economy by directly and positively engaging those outside of or disadvantaged in the labour market.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work represents the Queensland Government's commitment to support strategies that encourage equitable participation by a broad range of marginalised groups that generally

face barriers or challenges to their participation in skills development and the labour market.

In 2025-26, disadvantaged Queenslanders will benefit from targeted training pathways that help to ensure they gain the skills they need to find new jobs. The Queensland Government is working to identify current and future sustainable employment and skills needs, aligned to economic and social development and creating relevant training opportunities to meet those needs.

Training that improves an individual's skill level, employment prospects and social inclusion is a priority for the Queensland Government.

Ready for Work

Ready for Work is one of eight programs that make up the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. The program assists disadvantaged Queenslanders to transition into the workforce by providing them with the practical skills they need to successfully find work.

Ready for Work is a short program (6–8 weeks duration) targeting job seekers that lack the skills and/or knowledge to find employment.

The program will continue to support young job seekers but is being expanded to also target people who lost their jobs due to COVID-19, and older job seekers who may benefit from specific job preparation and employment activities to get back to work sooner.

Industry and local employers will be engaged to determine the employment requirements and expectations to meet local employment demands.

In 2025-26, up to \$4 million will be available to organisations for up to 5,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders to get ready for work.

Applicant organisations are encouraged to offer flexible projects that can be customised to meet individual needs.

Ready for Work is administered by the Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET).



Where will the program be delivered?

Ready for Work will be available throughout Queensland, however, priority will be given to identified areas of high need or where access to services may be limited due to market failure.

Who can apply for funding?

Non-profit community-based organisations and school Parents and Citizens' and Parents and Friends' associations are eligible for funding. Applicant organisations must be registered for GST.

Where required, organisations are able to partner with organisations that specialise in providing job search assistance to deliver Ready for Work.

Applicant organisations must be able to demonstrate a commitment to access and equity principles, as well as an ability to provide appropriate support services to participants.

Who will the funds support?

Ready for Work primarily targets Queensland residents who are ineligible for Australian Government employment services or assistance.

Individuals accessing Australian Government services are eligible if they are disadvantaged and require complementary services, regardless of the length of time they have been unemployed or in receipt of assistance.

To be eligible, disadvantaged Queenslanders must also be:

- aged 15 years or older and no longer at school
- an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident (includes humanitarian entrant), temporary resident with the necessary visa and work permits on the pathway to permanent residency, or a New Zealand citizen.

Identified disadvantaged groups

Disadvantaged groups to be targeted include:

- recently retrenched or displaced workers as a result of COVID-19
- mature-age job seekers (aged 45 years or older)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people with disability
- young people (aged 15–24 years), including those in and transitioned from out-of-home care
- women re-entering the workforce
- displaced workers
- veterans, ex-ADF personnel and their families

- recently released prisoners and individuals with criminal records
- under-utilised workers, including workers who are marginally attached to the labour force or under-employed.

School students may only participate in Ready for Work where it can be demonstrated that the student meets all of the following:

- is at risk of disengaging from school
- has minimal barriers to achieving employment (i.e. only requires limited assistance to successfully transition to work)
- does not have access to other forms of job search assistance.

The selection of disadvantaged participants for assistance is at the discretion of the funded organisation, subject to the above eligibility criteria and in consultation with DTET.

Permission to recruit participants outside of the above criteria needs to be sought from DTET.

Ready for Work is to be delivered at no cost to participants.

What assistance can be funded?

Ready for Work will provide job search assistance and training including:

- resume preparation and writing
- job interview skills
- job search advice, including where to look for work, how to apply for work and understanding employer expectations
- networking opportunities with local businesses and employers to share their experiences and industry knowledge
- employability skills, such as communication in the workplace, working in a team, problem solving, planning and organising, and self-management.

Delivery of the projects should be tailored to participants' circumstances. It is anticipated that Ready for Work will be delivered over a 6–8 week period on a part-time basis (for example, approximately 10 hours per week) to allow participants to trial job search techniques and gain feedback from the project provider to refine their job search skills.

Where it is identified that full-time delivery is a preferred option for participants, then project delivery may be completed over a shorter period, for example 2–3 weeks.

Where it is identified that a Ready for Work participant has very low foundation skills (e.g. literacy and numeracy), funded organisations should assist

participants and refer them to other *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* training programs which focus on the delivery of foundation skills courses and qualifications. This will build the participant's foundation skills and prepare them to participate in and complete vocational qualifications.

What outcomes are expected?

Funded organisations will be required to provide participants with skills and knowledge to enable them to successfully seek employment and get back into the workforce.

Ready for Work has standard key performance indicators (KPI) that organisations are expected to meet or exceed.

KPIs:

- Recruitment – the target number of participants are recruited onto the project
- Employment outcome – 55 per cent of participants successfully gain employment.

Organisations will work with local businesses and employers to develop employment links/pathways for program participants.

It is also expected that local businesses and employers will participate in the Ready for Work program by sharing their experience and knowledge.

Referrals to other *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* programs from Ready for Work, based on individual needs, are permitted. However, referrals from other *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* programs to Ready for Work are not permitted as job search assistance and employability skills are already funded and provided through these programs.

What is the application process?

Generally, there are two funding rounds each year under a transparent contestable application process.

Applicant organisations are encouraged to contact their local DTET regional office to discuss their project proposals.

One lead organisation is to apply for and manage the funding for each project. Applications are capped at ten per organisation, per funding round, across all programs.

Projects that address emergent needs or government priorities may be funded by DTET outside of the published funding rounds.

The application and selection process, and assessment criteria, may be varied or discontinued by DTET as required at any time and for any reason, in its sole discretion.

Without limitation, DTET may, in its sole discretion:

- apply such criteria and weightings as DTET sees fit

- for applications considered ambiguous, erroneous or incomplete, refuse to consider the application or request further information from the applicant, as DTET sees fit
- not accept any application.

DTET may also decide to accept, suspend or not proceed with, or carry out itself, all or any part of the project proposals included in an application.

Funding rounds will be announced on the [Ready for Work webpage](#). Interested organisations are advised to check this page regularly.

Organisations should apply online via the [Ready for Work webpage](#) by the closing deadline. Incomplete applications and applications received after published closing dates will be ineligible for consideration.

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed by DTET in two stages.

Stage one

The stage one assessment will involve the assessment of applications by DTET against the 'capacity to manage' criteria. An applicant must demonstrate a 'capacity to manage' for the application to be determined by DTET as eligible to proceed to stage two assessment.

Stage two

The stage two assessment involves assessing eligible applications against the assessment criteria below by DTET and locally-based SQW Advisory Committees comprising of representatives from the community, industry, government and unions.

The role of these committees will be to discuss, prioritise and recommend applications for funding to DTET. Applicants should note that:

- the order of the list of assessment criteria is not to be taken as an order of precedence or an indication of weighting which will be given to any particular criteria; and
- the list of assessment criteria is not necessarily exhaustive and DTET may also consider other criteria in its sole discretion.

Following the completion of both stages of assessment for a funding round, DTET will notify each applicant of its decision in relation to the application.

Assessment criteria	How will this be assessed – including but not limited to:
Capacity to manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> financial viability of the lead organisation lead organisation's structure, governance, risk management and reporting framework relevant experience, and current and past performance, in managing government funds and delivering similar services staff with appropriate experience and qualifications for supporting and mentoring disadvantaged job seekers recruitment strategies non-accredited training delivery outside an institutional setting and in a community-based environment
Servicing community and industry needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear articulation of how the project will address gaps in or complement existing local services level of community benefit no duplication with other programs or services evidence to support the organisation's strong community presence within the local area links to local employers, industry or other stakeholders to identify local skills shortages and future employment opportunities demonstrated industry demand and benefit opportunities for participants to network with local businesses and employers
Strategies to assist participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support mechanisms that specifically address the individual's learning needs and career goals support mechanisms to encourage completion of the Ready for Work program and pursue employment leads specialist assistance or links with other agencies to help disadvantaged job seekers gain the skills required to find work or re-enter the workforce. support strategies to build on the existing skills and interests of participants to help them become job ready ability to provide effective training and realistic learning pathways in terms of method, location and timing of delivery strategies to motivate participants to improve their job search skills and techniques to take up local job opportunities level of job search activities and post-placement support methods
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of Ready for Work program completions, referrals to other <i>Skilling Queenslanders for Work</i> programs, and/or linking participants to further education or training and/or employment outcomes forecasted, and demonstrated evidence of ability to achieve quality outcomes past employment outcomes capacity to meet skills shortages and local labour market needs – extent of support and links with local employers and industry that will facilitate placement into employment
Cost/value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cost effectiveness – cost of proposal and overall cost per participant and outcome ability to deliver proposed outcomes over the period being applied for, and any identified innovative ways to reduce the costs of service delivery level of complementary funding and assistance accessed from other sources and in-kind resources.

What level of funding is available?

The funding available under Ready for Work is for a maximum 12-month term, based on rolling intakes of part-time duration for 6–8 weeks (or full-time equivalent) in a variety of locations.

What can project funds be used for?

Project funds can only be expended on costs directly associated with the delivery of the project including:

- wages and on-costs for project coordinator and other delivery staff
- administration costs such as rent, accommodation, venue hire, office supplies, advertising, travel costs, vehicle hire/lease
- materials and equipment excluding capital equipment or assets
- overheads (with the management fee not to exceed five per cent of total funds up to a maximum \$15,000).

Ineligible costs

Project funds cannot be used:

- to purchase assets/capital equipment e.g. IT equipment, buildings or vehicles
- for interstate travel, training or conferences for project staff
- for any recurrent or normal business costs such as established positions within the organisation or core functions of the organisation.

Funding from other sources must also be disclosed to DTET.

To avoid duplication of services, funding is not available for the same services being delivered through other initiatives or programs.

Any third party contributions must be specified in the project application to enable clear consideration of all funding, resources and in-kind support provided. Any addition of resources or subcontracting of learner support measures post project approval must be approved in writing by DTET.

What are the funding conditions?

Successful applicants must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DTET, which will include standard key performance indicators.

A first payment will be made once the Services Agreement has been executed, and no sooner than 30 days prior to the start of the project. Subsequent payments are made upon satisfactory compliance with all reporting requirements and the acquittal of expenditure of the previous payment. Monthly reports will be required throughout the life of the project.

All projects must be fully acquitted after completion and any unexpended or surplus funds returned to DTET.

A copy of the Services Agreement, which is performance based and outlines the standard terms and conditions of funding, is available on the [Ready for Work webpage](#).

Appeals process

Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DTET in relation to the provision of funding under Ready for Work. The appeals process has been established to help identify any problems in the application process, ensuring these processes continue to improve, and to assist with future applications.

Appeals must be lodged in writing to:

Appeals Officer
Investment Division
Department of Trade, Employment and Training
PO Box 15483
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Organisations will be notified in writing of the appeal outcome within 21 business days from receipt of the appeal.

More information

For more information about Ready for Work:

Phone: 1300 369 935
Email: training@desbt.qld.gov.au
Visit: desbt.qld.gov.au/training/community-orgs/funded/sqw/ready-for-work

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