The highly successful *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative represents a total funding commitment of $420 million over six years from its reintroduction in 2015–16 up until 2020–21, to support up to 54,000 Queenslanders into work.

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* represents a commitment to increasing workforce participation, driving job growth and strengthening the performance of the Queensland economy by improving work opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

The initiative comprises the following suite of programs:

- Community Work Skills
- Work Skills Traineeships
- Get Set for Work
- Ready for Work
- Youth Skills
- First Start
- Work Start incentives.

**Overview and objectives**

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* plays a critical role in increasing workforce participation and the overall performance of the Queensland economy by improving work opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Skilled workers support industry to increase productivity, drive innovation and improve workplace performance.

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* represents the Queensland Government’s commitment to support strategies that encourage equitable participation by a broad range of groups that generally face barriers or challenges to their participation in skills development and the labour market.

In 2019–20, disadvantaged Queenslanders will benefit from targeted training initiatives 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 seven programs that make up the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. The program assists young people 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 young job seekers that lack the skills and/or knowledge to find employment.

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

In 2019–20, $1.5 million will be available to organisations for up to 2000 young job seekers 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 Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).

**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 aged 15–24 years who either:

- are ineligible for Australian Government employment services or assistance, or
- require complementary services because they have significant barriers to learning and employment, or
- have accessed Australian Government services for more than six months and remain unemployed.

Priority will be given to young people who have already left school or are undertaking further education and training.

Eligible participants include young people who are:

- aged 15–24 years, including those in and transitioned from out-of-home care
- 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.

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

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.

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?
There are two funding rounds each year under a transparent contestable application process.

Applicant organisations are encouraged to contact their local DESBT regional office to discuss their project proposals.
One lead organisation is to apply for and manage the funding for each project. Projects that address emergent needs or government priorities may be funded by DESBT outside of the published funding rounds.

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

Without limitation, DESBT may, in its sole discretion:

- apply such criteria and weightings as DESBT sees fit
- for applications considered ambiguous, erroneous or incomplete, refuse to consider the application or request further information from the applicant, as DESBT sees fit
- not accept any application.

DESBT 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 DESBT in two stages.

Stage one

The stage one assessment will involve the assessment of applications by DESBT against the 'capacity to manage' criteria below. An applicant must demonstrate a 'capacity to manage' (with reference to the non-exhaustive list of factors below) for the application to be determined by DESBT as eligible to proceed to stage two assessment.

Stage two

The stage two assessment involves assessing eligible applications against the assessment criteria below (with reference to the non-exhaustive list of factors for each criteria) by DESBT and locally-based Regional Priority Jobs 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 DESBT. Applicants should note that:

- the order of the list of assessment criteria set out below 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 set out below is not necessarily exhaustive and DESBT may also have regard to such other criteria as it considers appropriate in its sole discretion.

Following the completion of both stages of assessment for a funding round, DESBT will notify each applicant of its decision in relation to the application.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria</th>
<th>How will this be assessed – including but not limited to:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to manage</td>
<td>• financial viability of the lead organisation&lt;br&gt;• lead organisation’s structure, governance, risk management and reporting framework&lt;br&gt;• relevant experience, and current and past performance, in managing government funds and delivering similar services&lt;br&gt;• staff with appropriate experience and qualifications for supporting disadvantaged job seekers and learners&lt;br&gt;• recruitment strategies&lt;br&gt;• commitment to an inclusive learning framework&lt;br&gt;• training delivery outside an institutional setting and in a community-based environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicing community and industry needs</td>
<td>• clear articulation of how the project will address gaps in or complement existing local services&lt;br&gt;• level of community benefit&lt;br&gt;• no duplication with other programs or services&lt;br&gt;• evidence to support the organisation’s strong community presence within the local area&lt;br&gt;• links to local employers, industry or other stakeholders to identify local skills shortages and future employment opportunities&lt;br&gt;• demonstrated industry demand and benefit&lt;br&gt;• opportunities for participants to network with local businesses and employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies to assist participants</td>
<td>• support mechanisms that specifically address the individual’s learning needs and goals&lt;br&gt;• support mechanisms to encourage completion of the Ready for Work program&lt;br&gt;• specialist assistance or links with other agencies to help young jobseekers to gain the skills required to find work&lt;br&gt;• training strategies that support the needs of young learners&lt;br&gt;• ability to provide effective training and realistic learning pathways in terms of method, location and timing of delivery&lt;br&gt;• strategies to motivate participants to complete their training and take up local job opportunities&lt;br&gt;• level of job search activities and post-placement support methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>• level of Ready for Work program completions, referrals to other <em>Skilling Queenslanders for Work</em> programs, and/or linking participants to further education or training and/or employment outcomes forecasted, and demonstrated evidence of ability to achieve quality outcomes&lt;br&gt;• 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</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost/value for money</td>
<td>• cost effectiveness – training costs and overall cost per participant&lt;br&gt;• level of complementary funding and assistance accessed from other sources and in-kind resources.</td>
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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
- overheads (with the management fee not to exceed five per cent of total funds).

Funding from other sources must also be disclosed to DESBT.

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 DESBT.

What are the funding conditions?
Successful applicants must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DESBT, 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 DESBT.

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 DESBT 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
Program Delivery and Contract Management
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
PO Box 15033
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

Policy Owner: Deputy Director-General Investment Division

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