

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

# Youth Skills

Guidelines for funding 2024–25

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 2024-25, 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.

## Youth Skills

Youth Skills is one of eight programs that make up the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. The program offers customised training to support young people aged 15–24 years who are engaged with Youth Justice or Queensland Corrective Services to gain nationally recognised skills and vocational qualifications up to and including a certificate III level.

Transitioning young Queenslanders away from the criminal justice system is critical. Combined with the ability for young people to be rehabilitated, effective interventions in youth justice practice can help foster a positive future.

The Youth Skills program encourages the use of adaptable and diverse approaches to effectively engage this group. Providers must deliver services that encourage a creative and dynamic approach to intervention. Through a coordinated approach, learning barriers are identified and addressed, and participants are provided with coordinated and supported pathways into mainstream training, leading to further education and employment.

Queensland Government agencies, industry and local employers will be engaged to determine industry-specific vocational training options, as well as new or existing labour opportunities that are appropriate for the participant's circumstances and that meet local employment demand.



Youth Skills complements the [Certificate 3 Guarantee](#), Queensland's training entitlement program, by providing supported training places.

In 2024-25, up to \$2 million will be available to organisations to assist up to 400 people aged 15–24 years who are engaged with Youth Justice or Queensland Corrective Services or the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to gain nationally recognised qualifications and build skills that will maximise local employment opportunities.

Youth Skills is administered by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).

## Where will the program be delivered?

Youth Skills 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 are eligible for funding. Applicant organisations must be registered for GST.

Organisations with the relevant capacity and experience to work with young Queenslanders who are people engaged with, or at risk of engaging with, Youth Justice or Queensland Corrective Services will be encouraged to apply for funding.

Applicant organisations must have experience in delivering services in the location for which they are applying.

## Who will the funds support?

Youth Skills targets young people who are engaged with Youth Justice, Queensland Corrective Services or the QPS.

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.

Individuals who have completed the Queensland Government's *Transition 2 Success* program are also eligible for assistance.

To be eligible, participants must be:

- aged 15–24 years and no longer at school
- engaged with Youth Justice or Queensland Corrective Services or is at risk of offending
- 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.

Existing or prior qualifications are not a barrier, as Youth Skills provides a second chance to participants to retrain and gain new qualifications.

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

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

Youth Skills is to be delivered at no cost to participants.

## What assistance can be funded?

Youth Skills is not a general education program. It maintains a clear focus on the attainment of nationally recognised qualifications in demand by local employers.

Youth Skills has a project-based delivery model and funds organisations to deliver customised training opportunities which include:

- nationally recognised training to gain qualifications (including foundation skills) up to certificate III level and delivered in a community-based setting
- integrated learner support including career advice, job preparation skills and case management.

Youth Skills funds the tailored support that must accompany the delivery of training and the student co-contribution fees. Training and assessment services under Youth Skills are funded under the Certificate 3 Guarantee.

Youth Skills focuses on the eventual attainment of full qualifications up to a certificate III level, however, certain skill sets are recognised as an appropriate entry level pathway for young learners in some industries. Funding is also available for the delivery of lower-level preparatory and pre-vocational courses and language, literacy and numeracy skills contextualised to the qualification and vocational area.

Under Youth Skills, every participant must be enrolled in priority training as listed in the [Priority Skills List](#) or in other training that has been approved by DESBT as a priority through the application and assessment process.

## Practical learning activities

Delivery should be tailored to meet individual needs and local circumstances through a range of training-related activities. Practical learning activities that support the delivery of nationally recognised training may include (but are not limited to):

- recreational activities or team building exercises
- adventure-based learning
- work experience or volunteering
- workplace or employer visits

- social and community-based activities
- guest or motivational speakers
- learner driver training.

Youth Skills recognises that integrated learning support and core skills development are needed to provide young learners with the opportunity to achieve training outcomes and transition into employment.

Young people engaged on Community Service Orders are also allowed a count of hours for attendance on programs that address criminogenic risk. Youth Skills program attendance has been included in approved programs allowable under these provisions.

## Training and support plans

A training and support plan is to be developed for each participant and individually tailored for the acquisition of foundation skills embedded in the learning support. Foundation skills refer to the core capabilities required for effective workplace and community participation which include language, literacy, numeracy and employability skills.

Training and support plans must be developed based on an upfront skills assessment and available training options.

Program delivery must respond to participant needs with strategies to overcome any barriers identified in the training and support plans. This includes links and referrals to appropriate specialist or support services addressing personal, health and social issues, assistance to gain qualifications (including foundation skills) up to certificate III level with accompanying career advice, job preparation skills and case management.

Youth Skills participants are people engaged with Youth Justice or Queensland Corrective Services. Priority must be given to collaboration with Youth Justice and Queensland Corrective Services who maintain lead case management responsibility for the participants.

## Scope of registration

Registered training organisations (RTOs) must be Skills Assure suppliers ([SAS](#)) approved by DESBT to deliver training.

Applicant organisations will need to partner with a RTO with SAS status for the accompanying delivery of training and assessment services.

Qualifications and units of competency to be delivered must be nationally recognised and included in the RTO's scope of registration at the time of submitting the application for funding

## Specific requirements

Youth Skills providers must:

- have a strong local presence including well-established community and employer relationships
- be able to demonstrate proven experience and success in assisting young people engaged with Youth Justice and Queensland Corrective Services or the QPS
- have documented anti-cyberbullying policies and procedures on prevention, intervention and responding to bullying and cyberbullying
- liaise closely with Youth Justice and Queensland Corrective Services or the QPS to identify participants
- deliver outside an institutional setting – experience shows that this cohort prefers a community-based setting environment that is able to link them into employment or back to learning and training
- deliver projects throughout the year
- flexible entry, exit and re-entry points for participants to allow young people maximum access
- avoid duplication of services in the local area – be aware of, and satisfied, that other youth programs and options are complementary to the Youth Skills project.

## What outcomes are expected?

Youth Skills participants will gain nationally recognised qualifications and build skills that will maximise their ability to get a job in their local community. Outcomes for individuals will vary according to their learning pathway and goals.

Outcomes may include:

- full-time employment of more than 25 hours per week in a permanent, temporary, casual or self-employed capacity
- part-time employment of less than 25 hours per week in a permanent, temporary, casual or self-employed capacity
- volunteer employment
- enrolment in an accredited vocational education and training course
- participation in other skills and training programs
- return to school.

As an initial outcome, it is anticipated that participants will achieve personal and social development improvements. These outcomes will equip participants with the foundation skills needed to progress to employment or further education and training.



Funded organisations will be assessed on the outcomes achieved against those specified in their application.

Additional outcomes specific to identified community need may be negotiated.

## 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 DESBT 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 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 [Youth Skills webpage](#). Interested organisations are advised to check this page regularly. Organisations should apply online via the [Youth Skills 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. An applicant must demonstrate a 'capacity to manage' 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 by DESBT 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 DESBT. 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 DESBT may also consider other criteria 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.

Assessment criteria	How will this be assessed – including but not limited to:
Capacity to manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial viability of the lead organisation</li> <li>• lead organisation’s structure, governance, risk management and reporting framework</li> <li>• relevant experience, and current and past performance, in managing government funds and delivering similar services</li> <li>• staff with appropriate experience and qualifications for supporting young people engaged with Youth Justice or Queensland Corrective Services</li> <li>• recruitment strategies</li> <li>• commitment to access and equity principles</li> <li>• training delivery outside an institutional setting and in a community-based environment</li> </ul>
Servicing community and industry needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear articulation of how the project will address gaps in or complement existing local services</li> <li>• no duplication with other programs or services</li> <li>• evidence to support the organisation’s strong community presence within the local area</li> <li>• links to local employers, industry or other stakeholders to identify local skills shortages and future employment opportunities</li> <li>• links to local Youth Justice Service Centres and/or Corrective Services Officers and/or the Queensland Police Service (QPS)</li> <li>• demonstrated industry demand and benefit</li> <li>• clear rationale for linking particular learner groups to specific job types and industries where there is evidence of skills shortages or labour needs</li> </ul>
Strategies to assist participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support mechanisms that specifically address the learning needs and goals of young Queenslanders aged 15–24 years who are engaged with Youth Justice or Queensland Corrective Services or QPS</li> <li>• support mechanisms to encourage completion of qualifications and skill sets</li> <li>• specialist assistance or links with other agencies to help this cohort overcome barriers to learning and employment</li> <li>• training and assessment strategies that support the needs of the cohort</li> <li>• ability to provide effective training and realistic learning pathways in terms of method, location and timing of delivery</li> <li>• volume of learning sufficient to ensure disadvantaged learners gain all relevant skills and knowledge</li> <li>• strategies to motivate participants to complete their training and take up further education and training or local job opportunities</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• level of qualification completions, further education or training and employment outcomes forecasted, and demonstrated evidence of ability to achieve quality outcomes</li> <li>• past outcomes</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
Cost/value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cost effectiveness – cost of proposal and overall cost per participant and outcome</li> <li>• ability to deliver proposed outcomes over the period being applied for, and any identified innovative ways to reduce the costs of service delivery</li> <li>• level of complementary funding and assistance accessed from other sources and in-kind resources.</li> </ul>

## What level of funding is available?

The funding available under Youth Skills is for a maximum 12 month term.

The level of funding is dependent on the type of project and nature of the training and assistance to be provided, as well as the number of participants targeted by the project.

## 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
- co-contribution fees which may also cover training costs for approved qualifications and skill sets not funded on the Priority Skills List
- administration costs such as rent, accommodation, venue hire, office supplies, advertising, travel costs, vehicle hire/lease
- support costs such as learner driver training, subsidised travel, personal grooming, counselling services or participant meal programs
- materials and equipment excluding capital equipment or assets
- overheads or operating costs (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 DESBT.

To avoid duplication of services, funding is not available for the same services being delivered through other initiatives or programs (e.g. Australian Government's Transition to Work service or the Queensland Government's Transition 2 Success program).

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 [Youth Skills webpage](#).

## Appeals process

Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DESBT in relation to the provision of funding under Youth Skills.

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 Employment, Small Business 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 Youth Skills:

Phone: 1300 369 935  
Email: [training@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:training@desbt.qld.gov.au)  
Visit: [desbt.qld.gov.au/training/community-orgs/funded/sqw/youth-skills](https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/community-orgs/funded/sqw/youth-skills)

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