

Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant 2024-25 Funding Guidelines

Introduction

Paving the Way – the First Nations Training Strategy is the Queensland Government's plan to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' skills development and respond to local and community employment needs.

Paving the Way includes actions and initiatives to help drive job opportunities across three focus areas:

- focus area one: Indigenous-led training and workforce solutions
- focus area two: skills and training pathways that meet local workforce needs
- focus area three: cultural awareness and competency.

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program was implemented as a key action under focus area one of *Paving the Way*.

In 2024, the Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program was extended under the *Good Jobs, Great Training – Queensland Skills Strategy 2024-2028*. Up to \$7 million will be available under the program until 30 June 2025 to fund Indigenous designed and led projects that support or respond to local training and workforce needs.

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program is administered by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).

Overview and objectives

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program recognises that skills and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be more successful when solutions are designed and developed locally and supported by the community.

The program aims to create training and employment pathways for up to 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to increase their likelihood of greater economic and social participation.

Where will the program be delivered?

Community consultations undertaken across Queensland over 12 months highlighted the importance of local decision making to ensure authentic and effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' representation.

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program will be available for Indigenous-led projects throughout Queensland, with flexibility to respond to different priorities and opportunities across different regions and to identified areas of high need.

Who can apply for funding?

Applicant organisations eligible for funding must be an Indigenous organisation and:

- located in Queensland
- have an ABN and be registered for GST
- be an incorporated association or a public company or a council
- have past experience delivering employment, training and/or workforce development services
- can provide company constitution, charitable constitution or governance documentation
- 50% of the board of directors identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Examples of eligible organisations can include:

- Indigenous councils, corporations and Institutes
- Indigenous community groups and neighbourhood centres
- Indigenous social enterprises and not-for-profit organisations
- Indigenous organisations who are the only workforce or service provider in remote or discrete communities
- Indigenous groups such as chambers of commerce
- Indigenous businesses who focus on improving training and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For this program, other Indigenous business types not listed above and those registered as sole traders or partnerships are not eligible to apply.

Applicant organisations must be able to demonstrate they have a strong local presence, including well-established community and employer relationships.

Partnership arrangements between eligible organisations are strongly encouraged as there may be benefits by connecting and collaborating to generate effective solutions.

Who will be supported?

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program specifically targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are seeking local training and employment opportunities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may also be indirectly assisted with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous employers being supported to create culturally safe and responsive workplaces.

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

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program is to be delivered at no cost to participants.



What can be funded?

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program has a project-based delivery model and will fund Indigenous-led projects to address a training and skills challenge or opportunity, with a specific focus on activities that support job outcomes and improved economic participation and advantage.

It is expected local solutions and new approaches will be developed to support transitions from school to training or work; increase training completions; build local workforce capability; or ensure local non-Indigenous businesses have culturally safe workplaces.

Indigenous organisations are encouraged to offer flexible projects that can be customised to meet individual needs and can include a mix of the following face-to-face services and activities

Culturally safe training

- delivery of fit-for-purpose, regionally responsive and culturally safe training approaches that are adapting to changing job markets and skills needs
- development of training products to build cultural capability to transform workplace practices
- delivery of, or referrals to, nationally recognised training to gain skill sets or qualifications up to Advanced Diploma level
- delivery of 'soft' or 'essential' skills to promote job mobility so participants can thrive in any workplace
- delivery of foundation skills - language, literacy, numeracy, digital and employability skills.

Support services

- provision of wrap around support including meal programs, subsidised travel costs, interview outfits, driver licence assistance, case management etc
- delivery of integrated learner support including career advice, resume writing, job search techniques and job readiness skills
- provision of health and wellbeing support to build confidence
- assistance with formal identification such as birth certificates, Medicare cards, tax file numbers etc.

Connections with employers

- provision of ongoing career coaching and mentoring
- connection to local employers and/or peak industry bodies to advise on career options, workplace expectations and promote networking opportunities
- provision of work experience opportunities
- delivery of education sessions and workshops to increase cultural competency of local non-Indigenous employers to support employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers
- delivery of culturally customised business training to support self-employment and build business skills to start a small business
- provision of post-employment support.

Workforce planning and research

- development of workforce plans – identifying ways to address local workforce challenges and opportunities in remote areas
- delivery of action-based workforce planning initiatives such as flexible career and employment pathways
- applied research and/or course development and product design.

DESBT may also fund other strategic interventions based on identified need under the Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program that may have different project delivery models.

Specific Requirements

Training

There are specific requirements in relation to training delivery under the program. Applicant organisations will need to partner with registered training organisations (RTOs) approved by DESBT as a Skills Assure Supplier (SAS) to deliver nationally recognised training.

Qualifications, skill sets or units of competency to be delivered must be nationally recognised and included in the SAS agreement at the time of submitting the application for funding.

Non-accredited training can also be delivered where it meets an identified need for participants and will be funded on a fee-for-service basis.

Other services

As projects will support or respond to local training and workforce needs, it is expected that funded providers and partnering organisations delivering under the program will:

- have cultural competency
- have a strong local presence including well-established community relationships and links with industry or local employers
- have proven experience and success in assisting and increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- have experience promoting opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- liaise closely with local referral agencies, other Indigenous organisations and cultural and faith-based associations to identify suitable participants
- be capable of coordinating service delivery between partnering organisations.

Some applicant organisations may rely on partnering organisations to help them deliver some activities.

Outcomes

Funded organisations will be required to identify what employment, further education and/or training and other outcomes will be achieved from the project.

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program has standard key performance indicators (KPIs) for projects directly assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that organisations are expected to meet as follows:

- completion of training – 65 per cent of participants undertaking accredited or non-accredited training successfully complete
- employment – 55 per cent of participants successfully gain employment which can be full-time or part-time in a permanent, temporary, casual or self-employed capacity.

DESBT acknowledges there will be benefits to the community and other outcomes for participants as they undertake steps towards employment on their individual career pathways such as:

- volunteer employment
- staying in current employment, increased hours or promotion
- enrolment in further education and/or training
- personal and social development improvements
- building local workforce capability.



Level of funding

Funding is available up to a maximum of \$250,000 per project, for 12 months of delivery.

Funding levels will vary and be dependent on the location of project delivery, nature of the training and employment support to be provided, number of participants to be assisted and additional activities or specialist services.

PIPO network

DESBT has a state-wide network of Principal Indigenous Program Officers (PIPOs) who are available for a yarn and to hear your project ideas.

Application process

There will be one funding round held each year, for three years up until 2024-25, under a transparent contestable application process.

Project proposal review

Applicant organisations are encouraged to submit a draft project proposal for review and feedback from their friendly local PIPO.

This helps with the development of applications prior to full submission.

Online application

One lead Indigenous organisation is to apply for and manage funding for each project.

Applications are submitted via the online Training and Skills Programs Portal at: [IWSDG webpage](#)

Funding round dates are published.

Incomplete applications and applications received after the published closing date will be ineligible for consideration.

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 at any time and for any reason, in its sole discretion.

DESBT may, in its sole discretion and without limitation:

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

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed by DESBT in two stages. Each stage includes Indigenous representation.

Stage one

The stage one assessment involves determining eligibility of the applicant organisation and project proposal and an assessment against the 'capacity to manage' criteria. An applicant must demonstrate a 'capacity to manage' for the application to progress to stage two assessment.



Stage two

The stage two assessment involves assessing eligible applications against the assessment criteria below by DESBT and an Assessment Panel.

The role of the Assessment Panel 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

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria. Applicants should note that that list of assessment criteria is not necessarily exhaustive and DESBT may also consider such other criteria as it considers appropriate in its sole discretion.

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 in Indigenous communities staff with appropriate experience and qualifications for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples project delivery outside an institutional setting and in a community-based environment
Responding to community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear articulation of how the project will address identified gaps or complement existing local services no duplication with other programs or services clear articulation of how the project will meet skills shortages and/or local labour market needs – training is genuinely linked to jobs clear evidence local solution meets community needs and supports self-determination goals links to local employers, industry or other stakeholders to identify local skill shortages and future employment opportunities
Assistance strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support mechanisms that specifically address the individual learning and employment needs and goals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples support mechanisms to encourage completion of qualifications and skill sets including effective training and realistic learning pathways specialist assistance or links with other agencies to help overcome barriers to learning and employment ability to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with opportunities to improve skills in a workplace setting and/or feel supported in the workplace ability to improve the employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by supporting them to build skills and confidence and provide work experience opportunities strategies to motivate participants to take up local job opportunities strategies that support employers in recruiting, on-boarding and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the workplace level of job search activities and post-placement support methods
Community outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of qualification completions, further education or training forecast level of employment outcomes with evidence of ability to achieve them identified economic and social impacts of the project 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 within prescribed timeframes identified innovative ways to reduce the costs of project and service delivery level of complementary funding and assistance accessed from other sources

Project funds

Grant funds under the Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program can only be expended on costs directly associated with the delivery of the project including:

- wages and on-costs for a project coordinator and other service delivery staff
- student co-contribution fees which may also cover training costs for approved qualifications and skill sets not funded on the Priority Skills List
- non-accredited training costs
- development of training resources and assessment materials
- administration costs such as rent, accounting fees, accommodation, venue hire, telecommunications, office supplies, advertising, travel costs, vehicle hire/lease
- administration fees associated with the facilitation of work experience or work placement
- support costs such as learner driver training, subsidised travel, personal grooming, counselling services or participant meal programs
- specialist workshops and mentoring costs
- 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).

Ineligible costs

Grant 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
- business development within the organisation
- for any normal business costs such as roles that already exist within the organisation or core functions of the organisation
- to pay allowances to participants for attending.

Funding from other sources must be disclosed to DESBT at the time of application.

The Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program is expected to complement other programs and not duplicate services or funding.

Any third-party contributions must be outlined in the project application to enable clear consideration of all

funding, resources and in-kind support provided. Any addition of resources or subcontracting post project approval must be approved in writing by DESBT.

Funding conditions

Successful applicants must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DESBT, which will include standard and non-standard key performance indicators.

Payments are GST inclusive. A first payment will be made once the Services Agreement has been executed, and no sooner than 30 days before the start of the project.

Subsequent payments are made when all reporting requirements are met.

Monthly reports will be required throughout the life of the project.

Grant funds must be fully acquitted when the project has completed, and any unspent funds returned to DESBT.

Appeals process

Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DESBT in relation to the provision of funding under the Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant program.

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 the program or to have a yarn with a PIPO, please call 1300 369 935 or email iwsdg@desbt.qld.gov.au.

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