

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

# First Start

## Guidelines for funding 2020–21

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 2020–21, 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.

## First Start

First Start is one of seven programs that make up the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. The program aims to provide young people and disadvantaged job seekers with opportunities to gain a nationally recognised qualification and 12 months paid employment by undertaking a subsidised traineeship with a local council or a community-based organisation (CBO).

Funding under First Start is specifically targeted at new employees and will provide eligible organisations with a significant subsidy to boost their traineeship commencements above their normal workforce levels.

Specifically, First Start will:

- provide immediate job opportunities
- encourage people to enter into skills-based training
- keep Queenslanders earning and learning
- guarantee a pool of skilled workers is available as the economy recovers and grows.

In 2020–21, \$6.0 million will be available for local councils across Queensland to create 400 new traineeships.

Up to \$2.9 million will also be available for CBOs to create new traineeships.

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



## Where will the program be delivered?

First Start will be available throughout Queensland, however, priority will be given to areas of high youth unemployment.

## Who can apply for funding?

Organisations eligible for First Start funding include:

- Local councils, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils, and statutory authorities
- Incorporated not-for-profit CBOs.

Eligible organisations must be community-based and must not operate in a commercially competitive environment.

Organisations must be registered for GST and also able to demonstrate a commitment to access and equity principles, as well as an ability to provide appropriate support services.

## What level of funding is available?

Funding available under the First Start Program is dependent on the organisation type, as follows:

Organisation Type	Funding
Local councils/statutory authorities	\$15,000
Not-for-profit CBOs	\$20,000

The funding available under First Start is for a maximum 12 month term.

First Start provides a subsidy per trainee for 12 months of employment. While the funding level remains capped at the above levels for a maximum 12 months of employment, DESBT will allow organisations the discretion to elect to employ a trainee in a traineeship that is longer than 12 months duration or even an apprentice in an apprenticeship.

## What about other government funding?

Organisations are eligible to apply for other incentives offered by the Queensland and Australian Governments.

However, you cannot receive funding under First Start, Work Start incentives or the *Back to Work* program for the same person.

## Who will the funds support?

First Start primarily targets young Queensland school leavers and disadvantaged job seekers considered at risk of enduring prolonged periods of unemployment.

To be eligible, disadvantaged Queenslanders must also be:

- aged 15 years or older and no longer at school
- able to meet citizen, residency and visa requirements to undertake a traineeship

## Identified disadvantaged groups

Disadvantaged groups to be targeted include:

- young people (aged 15–24 years), including those in and transitioned from out-of-home care
- long-term unemployed job seekers
- 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
- displaced workers
- women re-entering the workforce
- veterans, ex-ADF personnel and their families.

Organisations are encouraged to consider individuals for traineeships who have participated in a *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* community program as they will have transferable vocational and employability skills, work experience and self-confidence.

## What assistance can be funded?

First Start will provide 12 months paid employment and the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification via a traineeship. The trainee must enter into a training contract for a qualification that is funded by DESBT.

Upon completion, the trainees will have learnt new and transferable skills and gained experience and confidence by working in a real job.

## What are the work conditions?

Organisations offering traineeships are the employer. Traineeships combine paid work with structured training. Trainees complete a nationally recognised qualification while learning valuable skills at work and under the guidance of a training organisation.

Wages and conditions for trainees in Queensland vary, however, as a minimum they must be paid a training wage as outlined in the award or agreement for their occupation or industry and the National Employment Standards.

*For more information on wages and entitlements, contact the Fair Work Ombudsman on 13 13 94.*

## What training is involved?

As well as being employed, trainees are training in vocational areas and upon successful completion will receive a qualification.

A registered training organisation (RTO) is a training provider registered to deliver vocational education and training and assessment services. A supervising registered training organisation (SRTO) is an RTO who accepts the role to deliver specified services in regards to an apprenticeship or traineeship and to monitor delivery of training and assessment services

required under a training plan. The SRTO must be approved as a Skills Assure supplier (SAS) by DESBT under the [User Choice](#) program.

The local council or CBO and their First Start trainee will select their SRTO, as part of the signing and registration of the training contract. The SRTO will work with the local council or CBO and the trainee to develop a training plan, deliver training, assess the achievement of skills, and issue the qualification stated in the training plan upon completion.

As RTOs offer different ways of training, local councils and CBOs and their First Start trainees should 'shop around' for the appropriate SRTO that best suits their needs.

Funding applies to Certificate levels I, II, III and IV of the Australian Qualifications Framework and should be subsidised qualifications available under the [User Choice](#) program. There is a preference to provide generic training opportunities, leading to ongoing employment. To clarify eligibility for User Choice and the level of funding available and other financial incentives, contact your DESBT regional office and local Australian Apprenticeship Support Network provider.

## Are there any special requirements?

First Start trainees must be additional to the existing workforce. The priority is for new employees, however, an existing worker identified as being able to benefit from the traineeship opportunity can be employed in the traineeship. It is expected that the existing worker's position would be backfilled.

First Start trainees should be employed on a full-time basis, however a more flexible work pattern may be available to people whose personal circumstances impact on their employment arrangements. Approval for part-time work arrangements must be sought from DESBT prior to any amendments to the training contract.

Funding will only be provided once for each individual undertaking a First Start traineeship and is not available for existing trainees.

Local councils are able to sub-contract group training organisations for the employment of their First Start trainees and act as host employers.

CBOs are **not** able to enter into sub-contract arrangements for the employment of their First Start trainees. Applications proposing host employer models will not be supported by DESBT.

## Post-participation support

Post-participation support refers to assistance or support that the trainee may require either nearing or following the completion of the traineeship to retain employment or obtain further employment.

The level of support will vary for each individual trainee and may include:

- assistance with resume and job application writing interview techniques
- allowing time for job search activities.

It is expected that all organisations funded under First Start will provide post-participation support to trainees employed under the program.

## What outcomes are expected?

Funded organisations will be required to identify what employment, further education and/or training targets will be achieved throughout the First Start.

First Start has standard key performance indicators (KPIs) that organisations are expected to meet or exceed.

KPIs:

- Completion outcome – 65 per cent of trainees successfully gain the required outcome of a qualification or statement of attainment
- Employment outcome – 70 per cent of trainees successfully gain ongoing employment.

## What is the application process?

### Local councils

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body for local government in Queensland. Funding under First Start is via a bidding process conducted by LGAQ. Local councils submit an annual bid for traineeship positions. This process involves councils requesting the number of traineeship positions required for the following financial year.

These bids are assessed by DESBT, based on government priorities and past performance including:

- ability of the council to employ, train and supervise trainees
- ability of the council to fulfil their allocations
- commitment to securing ongoing employment and/or training/further education opportunities
- meeting all contractual and reporting obligations of the funding agreement
- commitment to the provision of post participation support.

DESBT will allocate traineeship positions on a financial year basis and notify local councils of their successful bids.

## Community-based organisations

CBOs can request a First Start Application Form via [sgwapps@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:sgwapps@desbt.qld.gov.au). Completed applications will be evaluated on a number of criteria including:

- experience in managing government funding to deliver training, skills development or other services in a community setting to disadvantaged target groups.
- ability to employ, train and supervise trainees
- the organisation's ability to either retain the individual on completion of the traineeship, or provide assistance into further employment
- the suitability of the proposed work location
- preference for funding will be given to organisations that have an expertise in working with and training disadvantaged job seekers
- where the organisation has received funding from DESBT previously, past performance will also be taken into account.

The allocation, 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.

## What are the funding conditions?

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

Organisations are also required to have appropriate insurance prior to the commencement of the trainee and during their period of employment, including:

- public liability insurance in the amount of \$10 million in respect of each claim
- workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*.

Organisations are required to supply certification from the insurers confirming coverage.

A first payment will be paid once the Services Agreement has been executed. Trainees must have commenced by 30 June 2021. Funding under First Start will be provided on the basis that the training contract for each trainee under the program is successfully registered with DESBT.

Second payments for local councils (if required) will be made following a reconciliation process to confirm all trainee commencements, completions, and cancellations and periods of employment for previous contracts.

Second payments for CBOs will generally occur after the trainee has been employed for six months full-time

or 12 months part-time; however these may be paid earlier at the discretion of DESBT.

Monthly reports are required throughout the life of the Services Agreement.

All Services Agreement funding must be fully acquitted by the funded organisation after completion and any unexpended or surplus funds returned to DESBT for any trainees who terminate their employment prior to completion of the training contract and 12 months of employment.

## Appeals process

Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DESBT in relation to the provision of funding under First Start. 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 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 First Start contact DESBT on 1300 369 935 or councils can contact LGAQ on 1300 542 700.

Alternatively, please visit [desbt.qld.gov.au/training/community-orgs/funded/sgw](https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/community-orgs/funded/sgw).

Visit [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au) to find your local Apprenticeship Network provider or call the referral line on 13 38 73.

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