



Feedback for Grant Applicants

Support for NDIS Providers Grant Opportunity: GO6985 Quality and Safeguarding

Overview

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) is providing this general feedback to applicants of the Quality and Safeguarding grant opportunity (GO6985) as part of our commitment to supporting the sector. This feedback will help support applicants to prepare strong proposals when applying for grants in the future. The NDIS Commission acknowledges the time and effort that organisations invest when developing a grant application.

The Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program (Grants Program) is administered by the NDIS Commission on behalf of the Australian Government. The objective of the Grants Program is that people with disability exercise their right to quality and safe NDIS supports and services in a thriving and diverse market, and these rights are upheld by skilled providers and workers.

The application period for the Quality and Safeguarding grant opportunity opened Monday 9 September 2024 and closed Friday 18 October 2024. A total of \$3.0 million (excl. GST) was available for this grant opportunity over a two-year funding period for projects between 12 months and 3 years in length. The available funding for proposals was between \$300,000 to \$800,000 (excl. GST).

The NDIS Commission received a large number of applications for this grant round, which was very competitive. In total, applications sought over \$161 million in funding. The Delegate (the NDIS Commissioner) awarded over \$3 million (excl. GST) in funding to 6 organisations to deliver projects that address the policy objective and intended outcomes of the grant opportunity.

Future grant opportunities may become available for this Grants Program. Information about new grant opportunities will be available on [GrantConnect](#) and at the [NDIS Commission grants webpage](#).

Selection Process

The open competitive selection process for the grant opportunity allowed a broad range of organisations to apply. Applications underwent a three-stage process:

Applications were considered for eligibility as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Eligible applications were assessed and ranked against three assessment criteria of equal weight.

The Selection Panel considered the ranked applications in order based on merit and made funding recommendations to the Delegate. All Selection Panel considerations were overseen by an independent external probity advisor.

Recommendations to the Delegate were guided by:

- a) the total funding available for the grant round
- b) the policy objective of the Grants Program and relevant grant opportunity
- c) value for relevant money
- d) other factors as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

General feedback

Strong applications in the Quality and Safeguarding grant opportunity:

- met eligibility requirements as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- used the Application Guide for direction when completing the Application Form
- provided a concise and clear project summary
- demonstrated a clear understanding of the project need
- outlined how the project would impact the broader sector
- answered all assessment criteria questions with a relevant response
- provided sufficient detail using the available word count in the application form
- demonstrated value with relevant money
- were clear with their understanding of the objectives and intended outcomes of the grant opportunity and designed a proposal to address them
- gave specific information rather than making broad or general statements
- included a project budget that reflected the scale of the proposed activities and engagement required
- attached the appropriate financial statements as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- proposed a detailed project plan that listed key project phases, stakeholders, timeframes, and deliverables
- outlined a risk plan that was comprehensive, relevant to the project and carefully considered challenges to successful delivery of the project and the mitigations proposed to respond
- provided all requested documents as attachments.

Future applicants are strongly recommended to review the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the Application Guide prior to applying, to ensure all required documents are submitted with the application in entirety.

Eligibility conditions were applied consistently in accordance with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, and applicants should be aware that incomplete applications were not considered.

Specific feedback

Successful applications:

- demonstrated a considered project approach that contributes to the Grants Program objectives and outcomes by detailing:
 - how the project outcomes would support the rights of people with disability by making sure they have access to quality providers and workers and thriving, diverse markets
 - how the project activities would contribute to achieving the Grants Program policy objectives and outcomes as detailed in the Program Guidelines and the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
 - how the project would achieve innovative approaches with strong evidence and justification for project proposals
 - how the project would achieve outcomes for people with disability and/or providers and workers who were not already engaged with their organisation
- explained how people with disability were at the centre of proposed project design and the delivery of the activities by outlining:
 - evidence of connections to priority cohorts and/or location-based services, where appropriate
 - how people with disability will be included across all aspects of the project including design, development and delivery of activities, and governance structures
 - strategies within the project and budget to increase employment opportunities for people with disability.
- strengthened proposals by providing information of partnerships or consortiums with other organisations by outlining:
 - specific arrangements of existing or new partnerships to be formed to deliver the project; for example, *“We will work with Organisation A, who will deliver this element of the project, and we have a new partnership agreement in place”* provides more information than general comments such as *“We intend to partner with disability advocacy services”*
 - the role of partners or consortium organisations, rather than listing organisation names without any specific detail as to their role in the project and why they will be involved.
- described the difference between their organisation’s regular business operations and the project activities by outlining:
 - how the grant would be used to deliver a specific project aligned to the policy objective, and not fund standard business activities
 - how the proposed activities were different to practices and responsibilities such as those that must be met under the NDIS Code of Conduct, and/or activities the applicant delivers through other payment streams such as NDIS reasonable and necessary supports or other grant programs.

Stronger applications demonstrated how the organisation would continue to promote or use resources developed beyond the project’s funding timeframe, how the resources would be shared across the broader sector and outlined plans for the sustainability of the project.

Some applications received were better aligned to a different Grants Program pillar, either Pillar 1: Knowledge and Skill Development or Pillar 3: Regulation and Compliance.

Assessment Criteria Responses feedback

The Grant Opportunity Guidelines required applicants to answer assessment criteria. The feedback below outlines how applicants provided stronger responses to these assessment criteria.

Criterion 1

Describe the activities you will deliver and why these are needed. You must demonstrate this through a detailed explanation of:

- the activities you will deliver – what you will do?
- the people with disability that the activities will support – who will this benefit?
- where the project will be delivered – where will the activities take place?

Stronger responses to Criteria 1:

- proposed fully formed projects that clearly aligned to the grant objective
- explained in detail with clear, specific information what the activities the project would deliver
- provided specific, relevant, credible and current evidence supporting the claims about the need for the project to meet the policy objectives for people with disability
- demonstrated an understanding of and connection to the NDIS market without duplicating existing NDIS-related projects or overlapping with supports funded through participant plans
- referenced any pre-existing projects underway or completed in a similar field
- explained how the activity would directly benefit people with disability and the priority cohort identified (if applicable), the benefits and links with the proposed activities
- clearly described which group/s of people with disability would be engaged in the project, and how they would be meaningfully engaged to strengthen the project
- clearly described the geographical location/s where activities would be delivered, including if and how the project would achieve national reach (if applicable)
- provided specific, relevant, credible and current evidence to support the claims of the need for the project in the chosen area
- proposed activities and expenditure that was eligible under the Grant Opportunity Guidelines

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- outlined project activities that were achievable for the amount of funding requested and were supported by and reflected the submitted budget.

Criterion 2

Describe how the project will increase one or multiple of the following:

- people with disability receiving person-centred, quality and safe NDIS supports and services delivered by skilled providers and workers
- providers and workers achieving and continually improving quality NDIS supports and services
- providers and workers achieving and continually strengthening natural and formal safeguards in the delivery of NDIS supports and services

Your response must demonstrate this through including:

- how the project will achieve the intended outcomes
- how you will monitor progress and evaluate the project.

Stronger responses to Criterion 2:

- explained how the proposal would achieve some or all of the intended outcomes for the grant opportunity, specifically how the project activities would:
- support people with disability to receive person-centred, quality and safe NDIS supports and services delivered by skilled providers and workers
- support providers and workers to achieve and continually improve the delivery of quality NDIS supports and services
- supports providers and workers achieve and continually strengthen natural and formal safeguards in the delivery of NDIS supports and services
- demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of quality and safeguarding in the NDIS and the impact on people with disability
- directly linked the proposed project activities intending to be delivered to one or more of the three sub-criterion points
- explained how the outcomes of the project activities would deliver against the criterion requirements to meet the policy objectives
- demonstrated an understanding of the NDIS market along with ongoing reform, and how the project would deliver the intended outcomes to influence the market over time by reaching participants, providers and workers
- gave specific information about the impact of the project activities rather than broad, general statements
- detailed a monitoring and evaluation plan to implement during the life of the project, including:

- identifying realistic, proportionate and appropriate methods to monitor and evaluate the project within the available budget
- explaining why specific evaluation methods were most appropriate for the project.

Criterion 3

Describe your organisation's capability and capacity to successfully deliver the project and how your organisation will achieve project sustainability.

You must demonstrate this through including:

- how people with disability will be meaningfully engaged and employed in the project, including in planning, co-design, co-creation and delivery of project outcomes
- the role of the board or committee in governance oversight and management of the project
- any partnerships or collaborations that you may utilise
- how your organisation will make the project outcomes sustainable beyond the life of the grant agreement and funding.

Stronger responses to Criterion 3:

- provided details of intended engagement and employment opportunities for people with disability throughout the life of the project
- demonstrated how the project would benefit from the lived experience of people with disability involved in the project, particularly participants
- detailed the project management structure, including specifying the role of the organisation's board or committee, as applicable, and how this project management structure would support the delivery of the proposed project
- outlined the involvement of individuals and organisations involved in the project that was achievable for the funding requested and was supported by and reflected the submitted budget
- described the role of partners and consortium organisations, rather than listing organisations without any detail as to their role in the project
- clearly described the organisation's history and connection with the NDIS sector and project stakeholders
- described the ability, experience and capacity of their organisation, partners and project staff to deliver the project, including their experience and connection to the priority cohorts and locality
- provided details that reflected the project plan to outline the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the project
- addressed planning and options for sustainability beyond the end of the grant agreement for grant activity outputs, such as products or resources developed, and identified how the proposal would achieve sustainability as relevant to the project.

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