

Growing Workforce Participation Fund Funding Guidelines

Introduction

The Growing Workforce Participation Fund (the Fund) one component of the suite of programs delivered under the revitalised Back to Work initiative, which is designed to give businesses the confidence to employ Queenslanders who have experienced a period of unemployment and help workers facing disadvantage in the labour market.

Overview and objectives

The Fund aims to develop partnerships with industry to build longevity and sustainability in the workforce by empowering industry and employers to support jobseekers from identified groups who experience greater disadvantage in the labour market.

The Fund also aims to create systemic change to encourage greater labour market participation from groups that experience greater disadvantage in the labour market.

The Fund will:

- provide industry-led solutions to employment shortages and retention challenges in Back to Work target locations
- provide greater industry-specific support for disadvantaged and vulnerable target groups.

The Fund is administered by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT). For more information on the revitalised Back to Work program refer to the website <https://backtowork.initiatives.qld.gov.au/>.

Who can apply for funding?

DESBT encourages collaborative projects and may include the participation of local governments, partnerships with regional industry groups and other industry groups, and cohort representative groups. However, applications must be submitted by an eligible provider.

To be an eligible provider under the Fund, applicants must:

- be Queensland-based and have operated for a minimum of two consecutive years prior to the applicant submitting an application

- be an industry organisation or a not-for-profit community-based organisation that represents identified groups
- be registered for GST and hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN) at the time of submitting an application and for the life of the Services Agreement
- have a proposed eligible activity that relates to the target groups and locations
- have proven experience in providing employment-related (or similar) support to the target groups
- be compliant with all local, State and Australian Government laws and regulations, including but not limited to, industrial relations, workplace health and safety and taxation legislation.

Funding available

Funding of between \$20,000 and \$200,000 is available under this Fund.

Industry organisations funded to delivery projects under this Fund have a maximum of 12 months to complete a project.

Who will the funds support?

The Fund will fund industry organisations to primarily support people from the following target groups:

- young people (aged 15–24 years)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people with disability
- long-term unemployed people (unemployed 52 weeks or longer).

Where can the Fund be delivered?

Eligible locations under the Fund include:

- Regional Queensland; and
- The following select Local Government Areas (LGAs) within South-Est Queensland:
 - Ipswich
 - Lockyer Valley
 - Logan
 - Moreton Bay
 - Scenic Rim
 - Somerset



What can be funded?

Grant funding is available for projects that can assist with breaking down the barriers facing the target groups in fully participating in the labour market, including a strong focus on promoting and supporting retention. All projects must be evidence-based and have measurable outcomes.

Eligible activities include projects that:

- aim to increase labour market participation and engagement from the target groups
- provide pre-employment support
- address industry-identified employment shortages
or
- provide new methods of workforce planning and development and supporting resources.

What outcomes are expected?

The Fund aims to create systemic change to encourage greater labour market participation from groups that experience greater disadvantage in the labour market and therefore, funded organisations must specify target numbers of jobseekers, employers, and/or employees to be assisted over the life of the project.

Further, of those targets specified the following standard Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be applicable:

- For number of employers assisted: at least 95% of that target must be achieved.
- For the number of employees being assisted: at least 95% of that target must be achieved.
- For the number of jobseekers assisted: at least 95% of that target must be achieved; **and** of those jobseekers assisted, a minimum of 55% are successfully employed at completion of the project.

Other project KPIs will be established based on approved project specifications.

Example of eligible activities

The following table provides examples of eligible activities and is not an exhaustive list:

Eligible activity	Example
Projects that aim to increase labour market participation and engagement from the target groups	Development of contemporary solutions to overcome barriers and increase accessibility to jobs in the Queensland labour market.
Pre-employment support projects	New programs and approaches that support the target groups through job matching, enterprise skills development, mentoring and workplace experience.

Workforce development and resources	<p>Improving employee and workforce skills that support business growth, productivity and staff retention.</p> <p>Development of attraction and recruitment strategies for the industry to create sustainable pathways for the target groups into employment.</p> <p>Development of new approaches that aim to transition employees from being a casualised workforce to long-term, sustainable employment.</p>
Projects that address industry-identified employment shortages	Solutions that examine, explore and trial new employment approaches to industry specific employment shortages with the purpose of creating long-term, sustainable employment.

Ineligible activities

Funding cannot be used for:

- any project or scope of work that is deemed to be core business for the applicant and/or partners
- any project or part thereof that has or may be funded under another government program
- any recurring cost for the organisation, for instance, ongoing staff costs not related to the project; established positions within the organisation; normal operating costs (i.e. utility and telecommunications charges, building lease costs) and core functions of the organisation
- the purchase of assets/capital equipment, or significant assets (buildings or vehicles)
- retrospective payments for expenses already incurred prior to grant funding approval or for work already undertaken
- costs for consultants/contractors or other suppliers of services that are financially associated entities with the applicant
- travel costs, including hiring and leasing of transport, airfares and fuel (in recognition of the transport restrictions in rural and remote areas in Queensland, travel costs may be considered if it is critical in enabling full participation of the eligible activities)

- costs associated with attendance at domestic and international trade show/s, including interstate and overseas travel
- any other costs deemed ineligible by DESBT.

Note: Funding from other sources must be disclosed. Funding is not available for projects, equipment and/or services that are eligible for funding under other Back to Work or other DESBT funded programs, or that are being funded through other initiatives/programs.

What is the application process?

For industry organisations proposing to deliver projects under the Fund, one funding round will be held each year, for two years up to 2024-25, under a transparent fully contestable application process.

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.

Industry organisations must apply online during the open funding round period. Incomplete applications and applications received after published closing dates will be ineligible for consideration.

Supporting information

Documents to support your funding application must be provided at the same time as your online application. This must include, but is not limited to:

- a comprehensive project plan, including KPIs and detailed budget
- project impact assessment plan
- risk identification and management plan
- demonstrated financial capacity to deliver project
- two years of audited financial statements including an income statement, balance sheet, statement of cash flow (if available) and notes to the accounts

- if the organisation cannot provide two years of audited financial statements, the following may be considered
 - financial statements of related companies e.g. another company with shareholding/directors
 - financial statements of the parent company (if a subsidiary)
 - financial statements of partner entities if a joint venture is proposed
 - an account prepared by a CPA or CA qualified accountant for the duration of the operation.

How will applications be assessed?

Stage one

Stage one involves the assessment of applications by DESBT against the 'capacity to manage' criteria outlined in these Guidelines. 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

Stage two involves assessing eligible applications against the remainder of the assessment criteria outlined in these Guidelines by DESBT and an Assessment Panel established by DESBT that may include representatives from both within and outside of the department.

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 have regard to such other criteria as it considers appropriate in its sole discretion.

Following the completion of both stages of assessment for the funding round, DESBT will notify each applicant of its decision in relation to the application.

What are the funding conditions?

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

Appeals process

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

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 within 21 days of being notified of a funding decision to:

Appeals Officer
Program Investment
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.

Privacy collection notice

Applicants are required to read and agree to [the terms and conditions](#) of the Fund, including the terms of collection of their personal information.

If you have any questions regarding how DESBT will use your information, please contact DESBT at corporate.legal@desbt.qld.gov.au.

More information

For more information on the Fund please contact 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or email at: GWPF@desbt.qld.gov.au.

Assessment Criteria

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 organisation. • Organisational structure, governance, risk management and reporting framework. • Has experience in managing government funds and delivering similar projects. • The project team, including the project team’s experience in working with and supporting the target groups.
Project innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project objectives and outcomes, including the project innovation. • Evidence of how the project addresses issues using contemporary solutions. • Commitment that the project supports the objectives of the revitalised Back to Work program. • Links to local employers, other industry organisations and stakeholders.
Addresses and responds to industry need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated industry demand (evidence-based) and benefit. • No duplication with other programs or services, which includes clear articulation on how the project differs from normal business activities. • Capacity to meet employment shortages and labour market needs.
Outcomes and sharing practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined key performance indicators (KPIs) for project delivery. • Define ‘project success’, the measurable outcomes of success and how these will be incorporated in project implementation and outcomes reporting. • Explanation of the economic and social impact of the project. • Commitment to sharing learnings with industry and government. • How the information will be shared and through what mechanisms/channels.
Cost/value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that demonstrates the project is the most suitable option/solution. • Ability to deliver proposed outcomes within prescribed timeframe. • Identified approach to reducing the costs of project delivery. • Level of complementary funding and assistance accessed from other sources. • Clear articulation to explain why Government funding is required for the project.
Matters of public interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable checks against available Government and publicly available information to verify there are no matters of public interest that would prevent funding from being paid. • Examples of when an application might not be approved on a public interest basis include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the applicant, its owners, or relevant management staff, have a history of poor compliance with legislation, including but not limited to laws in relation to workplace health and safety and industrial relations ○ matters involving bankruptcy or fiscal insolvency, ○ matters involving fraud or financial crime, ○ the applicant having received or is currently being funded for a similar scope of work under another government program.