



SKILLING QUEENSLANDERS FOR WORK

COMMUNITY WORK SKILLS

Guidelines for funding 2025–26

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 being reshaped to meet changing labour market conditions.

The initiative comprises the following suite of programs:

- Community Work Skills
- Work Skills Traineeships
- Get Set for Work
- Youth Skills
- Community Foundation Skills
- First Start

Overview and objectives

The Queensland Government is committed to delivering real outcomes for Queenslanders with a renewed focus on driving economic outcomes, empowering local communities, and supporting individuals to become job ready.

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 2025-26, disadvantaged Queenslanders will benefit from targeted training and employment 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 designed in partnership with local organisations and employers, and focused on real jobs in real communities is a priority for the Queensland Government.

Community Work Skills

Community Work Skills is one of the programs that make up the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. The program offers tailored assistance to disadvantaged Queenslanders, enabling them to gain nationally recognised skills and vocational qualifications up to a certificate III level and prepare for work.

Community Work Skills complements the Career Start program, Queensland's training entitlement program, by providing supported training places.

Industry and local employers will be engaged to determine what industry-specific vocational training, employment skills, and new and existing labour is required to meet local employment demands.

In 2025-26, up to \$10 million will be available to support up to 3,125 disadvantaged Queenslanders and under-utilised workers to gain nationally recognised qualifications and build skills that will maximise local job opportunities.

Community Work Skills is administered by the Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET).

Where will the program be delivered?

Community Work 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.

Projects are expected to target high priority industries with entry-level skill shortages to meet local workforce demands.

Who can apply for funding?

Applicant organisations eligible for funding must be not-for-profit, registered for GST and can include:

- community-based organisations
- peak body associations
- local councils
- registered training organisations.

Applicant organisations must have a strong local presence, be able to demonstrate a commitment to access and equity principles, as well as an ability to provide appropriate support services.

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

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

Who will the funds support?

Community Work Skills primarily targets Queensland residents who are ineligible for Australian Government employment services or assistance.

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.

To be eligible, disadvantaged Queenslanders must also be:

- aged 15 years or older and no longer at school
- 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 Community Work Skills provides a second chance for participants to retrain and gain new qualifications.

Identified disadvantaged groups

Disadvantaged groups to be targeted include:

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

- recently released prisoners and individuals with criminal records
- under-utilised workers, including workers who are marginally attached to the labour force or under-employed.

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

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

Community Work Skills is to be delivered at no cost to participants.

What assistance can be funded?

Community Work Skills has a project-based delivery model and funds organisations to deliver customised training places and employment assistance to disadvantaged job seekers.

Tailored support and assistance is provided to eligible participants to gain a qualification (including foundation skills) up to certificate III level, with accompanying integrated learner support, including career advice, job preparation skills and case management.

DTET acknowledges that non-accredited training, mentoring and job search assistance is valuable for job seekers who often have the required training and work experience, but may benefit from specific job preparation and employment activities to get back to work sooner.

Training pathways

Vocational education and training (VET) provides an essential pathway to further education and work.

Community Work Skills will fund the tailored support that must accompany the delivery of training within a community-based setting, as well as the student co-contribution fees. Training and assessment services under Community Work Skills are funded under Career Start.

Community Work Skills focuses on the attainment of certificate III qualifications, however, certain skill sets and lower level qualifications may be recognised as an appropriate entry level pathway in some industries.

Under Community Work Skills training projects, participants must be enrolled in priority training as listed in the Queensland Subsidised Training List, or in other training that has been approved by DTET as a priority through the application and assessment process.

It is recognised that integrated learning support measures and foundation skills development is needed to provide disadvantaged Queenslanders with the opportunity to achieve training outcomes and transition into employment.

Industry partnerships – pilot new approaches

Organisations are encouraged to offer flexible projects that can be customised to meet individual needs. This can include partnerships with local employers for work experience opportunities, and industry to address local skill shortages and employment demands.

New approaches or local solutions to assist a priority industry or local regional workforce need, can also be developed.

Foundation skills

Foundation skills refer to the core capabilities for effective workplace and community participation which include language, literacy, numeracy and employability skills.

A significant proportion of Queenslanders have very low foundation skills, which is linked to lower workforce participation and greater vulnerability to labour market instability (*based on ABS analysis of Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) data*).

Funding is available for training projects that focus on the delivery of foundation skills courses and qualifications. This will provide additional support to specific disadvantaged groups to build foundation skills, preparing them to participate in and complete vocational qualifications.

Job preparation assistance

Funding is available for stand-alone projects delivering short courses offering career advice, job preparation and job search activities and employability skills.

Job preparation projects assist participants to transition into the workforce by providing them with the practical skills they need to successfully find work.

Training and support plans

A training and support plan is to be developed for each participant and, where appropriate, individually tailored for the acquisition of foundation skills embedded in the learning support. The plans must be developed based on an upfront skills assessment and available training options.

Scope of registration

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

Applicant organisations will need to partner with a RTO that has 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.

What outcomes are expected?

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

Community Work Skills has standard key performance indicators (KPIs) that organisations are expected to meet or exceed.

KPIs:

- Recruitment – the target number of participants are recruited onto the project
- Completion outcome – 65 per cent of participants enrolled in training successfully gain the required outcome of a qualification or statement of attainment
- Employment outcome – 55 per cent of participants successfully gain employment.

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 DTET 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.

The application and selection process, and assessment criteria, may be varied or discontinued by DTET as required at any time and for any reason, in its sole discretion.

Without limitation, DTET may, in its sole discretion:

- apply such criteria and weightings as DTET sees fit
- for applications considered ambiguous, erroneous or incomplete, refuse to consider the application or request further information from the applicant, as DTET sees fit
- not accept any application.

DTET 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 [Community Work Skills webpage](#). Interested organisations are advised to check this page regularly.

Organisations should apply online via the [Community Work Skills webpage](#) by the closing deadline.

Incomplete applications and applications received after published closing dates will be ineligible.

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed by DTET in two stages.

Stage one

The stage one assessment will involve the assessment of applications by DTET against the 'capacity to manage' criteria. An applicant must demonstrate a 'capacity to manage' for the application to be determined by DTET as eligible to proceed to stage two assessment.

Stage two

The stage two assessment involves assessing eligible applications against the assessment criteria below by DTET 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 DTET.

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 DTET may also consider other criteria in its sole discretion.

Following the completion of both stages of assessment and the approval process for a funding round, DTET will notify each applicant of its decision in relation to the application

Emerging needs

Projects that address emergent needs or government priorities may be funded by DTET outside of the published funding rounds.

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, and risk management framework relevant experience, and current and past performance, in managing government funds and delivering similar services staff with appropriate experience and qualifications for supporting disadvantaged job seekers and learners recruitment strategies commitment to an inclusive learning framework training delivery outside an institutional setting and in a community-based environment
Servicing community and industry needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear articulation of how the project will address gaps in or complement existing local services local labour market research evident – participation rates, unemployment rates, current job vacancy rates, industry growth etc level of community benefit no duplication with other programs or services evidence to support the organisation's strong community presence within the local area links to local employers, industry or other stakeholders to identify local skills shortages and future employment opportunities demonstrated industry demand and benefit – training linked to jobs clear rationale for linking particular job seekers to specific job types and industries where there is evidence of skills shortages or labour needs
Strategies to assist participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support mechanisms that specifically address the individual's learning needs and career goals support mechanisms to encourage completion of qualifications and skill sets specialist assistance or links with other agencies to help disadvantaged job seekers overcome barriers to learning and employment support strategies to build on existing skills, experience and interest of participants (including overcoming fragmented work histories) to help them become job ready training and assessment strategies that support the needs of disadvantaged learners ability to provide effective training and realistic learning pathways in terms of method, location and timing of delivery volume of learning sufficient to ensure disadvantaged learners gain all relevant skills and knowledge strategies to motivate participants to complete their training, improve their job search skills and techniques to take up local job opportunities level of job search activities and post-placement support methods
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of qualification completions, further education or training and employment outcomes forecasted, and demonstrated evidence of ability to achieve quality outcomes past employment outcomes capacity to meet skills shortages and local labour market needs – extent of support and links with local employers and industry that will facilitate transition or 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 service delivery level of complementary funding accessed from other sources and in-kind

What level of funding is available?

The funding available under Community Work 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 employment support to be provided, as well as the number of participants to be assisted and additional activities or specialist services.

Projects offering short courses or job preparation and job search activities only are expected to be of lesser value.

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 Queensland Subsidised Training List
- administration costs such as room hire, accommodation, venue hire, office supplies, advertising, travel costs, vehicle hire/lease
- support costs such as learner driver training, subsidised travel, personal grooming or counselling services
- materials and equipment excluding capital equipment or assets
- non-accredited training costs
- 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 DTET.

To avoid duplication of services, funding is not available for the same services being delivered through other initiatives or programs.

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 DTET.

What are the funding conditions?

Successful applicants must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DTET, 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 when all reporting requirements are met.

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

All projects must be fully acquitted when the project has completed, and any unspent or surplus funds returned to DTET.

A copy of the Services Agreement, which is performance based and outlines the standard terms and conditions of funding, is available on the [Community Work Skills webpage](#).

Appeals process

Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DTET in relation to the provision of funding under Community Work 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
Training and Skills Pathways
Department of Trade, Employment 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 Community Work Skills:

Phone: 1300 369 935
Email: training@desbt.qld.gov.au
Visit: dtet.qld.gov.au/sqw

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