



**ACT**  
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and  
Economic Development

## **2018 ACT Mature Workers Grants Program Information Session 14 September 2018 Questions and Responses**

### **1. Is the program a two or three year program? What are Skills Canberra's expectations for project duration, as it affects the project focus and associated costings?**

The Mature Workers Grants Program (MWGP) seeks to fund two or three projects of either two or three year duration. Proposals for 3-year projects will not be given a higher weighting than proposals for 2-year projects. The evaluation criteria is strongly focussed on evidence of the likely effectiveness of proposed projects. There is no evaluation criterion related to the length of the project.

Therefore, applicant organisations should concentrate on providing a range of convincing evidence to support any claims about the effectiveness of their organisation and the proposed project activities over the chosen duration.

Applicant organisations should compare the financial implications associated with 2- and 3-year projects when developing their project proposals.

### **2. Will hidden forms launch when applicants work their way through the online application process?**

No, the application is straightforward, with fixed questions and answer fields, and capacity to upload supporting documentation.

### **3. Does the grants program include all industries or is there a narrower field of interest e.g. skilled shortages?**

The MWGP will consider projects that target any industries. In the ACT there are over 50 industry sectors that are covered by upskilling or reskilling opportunities available through the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

It is anticipated that the range of industry sectors targeted in an applicant's proposal will be closely related to the project's identified budget and aims. Applicant organisations are advised to provide a convincing rationale to support why their proposal chooses to target a particular industry sector or sectors. Some questions that proposals might address are:

- is the sector experiencing chronic or severe workforce shortages?
- is the sector anticipated to grow at a fast rate in the next few years?
- does the sector employ a relatively large proportion of the Canberra workforce?
- does the ACT economy rely heavily on this sector in terms of gross state product?

### **4. Is the program focused on upskilling and enhancing current engagement of existing mature aged workers or supporting new mature age workers to enter industries?**

The MWGP aims to fund projects that have identified and address gaps in existing services and support for mature age workers. The MWGP seeks to fund support for both existing mature age workers and mature age Canberrans who are unemployed or not in the labour force. Skills Canberra's research

indicates that both existing workers and job seekers experience barriers to navigating the wide range of government-subsidised upskilling and reskilling opportunities currently available.

For estimates of the number of mature age Canberrans not in the labour force see the latest issue of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Persons Not in the Labour Force survey:

6220.0 - *Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2013*, which can be found at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0>

Some cohorts of interest are people residing in Canberra who are 45 to 65 years old, not registered as unemployed, and reported that they:

- wanted to work and were actively looking for work but were not available to start work in the reference week;
- wanted to work but were not actively looking for work and were available to start work within four weeks;
- were not actively looking for work and who intended to or might enter the workforce in the next 12 months; or
- were available to start work within the next four weeks but whose main reason for not actively looking for work was that they believed they would not find a job for any of the following reasons:
  - considered to be too old by employers;
  - believes ill health or disability discourages employers;
  - lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience;
  - difficulties because of language or ethnic background;
  - no jobs in their locality or line of work;
  - no jobs with suitable hours; or
  - no jobs at all.

For information about Australian Government employment programs targeting mature age job seekers registered with Centrelink and/or JobActive providers see:

- [www.jobs.gov.au/jobactive](http://www.jobs.gov.au/jobactive)
- <https://www.jobs.gov.au/restart-help-employ-mature-workers-0>
- [www.jobs.gov.au/career-transition-assistance](http://www.jobs.gov.au/career-transition-assistance)
- <https://www.jobs.gov.au/pathway-work>
- <https://www.jobs.gov.au/national-work-experience-programme-expansion>

## **5. Is there a size limit to the attachments applicants are able to upload during the application process?**

No, there is no size limit for attachments.

## **6. Does the program prioritise projects that are sustainable beyond the 2- or 3-year period?**

Evidence of sustainability is likely to strengthen an application.

Within the evaluation criteria the following practices are emphasised:

- building collaborative approaches with other stakeholders;
- linking with and leveraging other relevant local and national initiatives; and
- implementing effective communication strategies for promoting activity and sharing outcomes beyond the direct parties involved.

It could be argued that these practices increase the likelihood of achieving sustainability dividends after the project is completed.

Therefore it is reasonable to assume that—in seeking to demonstrate achievement against these criteria—providing evidence of probable ongoing sustainability would add strength to an application in these areas.

## **7. Can Skills Canberra provide more information on what is meant by ‘gaps’?**

Currently, numerous ACT and Australian Government agencies and non-government organisations facilitate programs and projects that aim to support mature workers to improve their employment status and educational attainment.

The MWGP hopes to support new project proposals that identify areas of ongoing need, where there is not existing support services available.

To aid in identifying gaps, information about other existing initiatives can be found:

- on the websites of the following entities:
  - Office for Veterans and Seniors
  - Office for Women
  - Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
  - Office for Multicultural Affairs
  - Innovate Canberra
  - Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm
  - ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority
  - Jobs ACT (Inclusion Employment Programs)
- in publications, such as:
  - *Justice & Community Safety Directorate Annual Report 2016-17* (see pp.71-75 for information about Alexander Maconochie Centre prison industries and detainee education and training) <http://justice.act.gov.au/resources/uploads/JACSD-Annual-Report-2016-17.pdf>
  - *Community Services Directorate: Annual Report 2016-17* (see p. 62 for information about the Women’s Return to Work Program) [http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1114528/CSD-Annual-Report-2016-17\\_v2.pdf](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1114528/CSD-Annual-Report-2016-17_v2.pdf)
  - *ACT Defence Industry Strategy 2017* (see pp. 24-25 “Support for training and up-skilling the Defence Industry Workforce”) [https://www.business.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1197712/ACT-Defence-Industry-Strategy2017.pdf](https://www.business.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1197712/ACT-Defence-Industry-Strategy2017.pdf)
  - *ACT Active Ageing Framework 2015–18*

- *ACT Multicultural Framework 2015–20*
- *ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026*

<http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/hcs/community-sector-reform/industry-strategy-2016-2026>

In 2017, Skills Canberra implemented a number of new initiatives aimed at addressing barriers to mature workers upskilling or reskilling. These measures included:

- from 1 January 2017, the limits were removed on the eligibility to access government-subsidised VET programs of people holding temporary and bridging visas that provided work and study rights. This measure addressed barriers to mature refugees and asylum seekers accessing upskilling and reskilling opportunities likely to improve their participation in the workforce;
- from 1 April 2017, the limits were removed on the number of subsidised traineeships and apprenticeships an individual can access during their lifetime. This policy adjustment addressed a barrier that had a proportionately greater impact on mature workers than younger workers;
- on 28 September 2017, Skills Canberra amended the ACT Adult Community Education (ACE) Grants Application Guidelines for 2018 to more explicitly reflect the potential of ACE projects to address barriers to upskilling and reskilling experienced by mature job seekers lacking proficiency in spoken English, literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills in technology-rich environments. The new guidelines also included veterans as a target group, specifically aimed at supporting veterans seeking to make successful transitions to employment in the civilian workforce.
- during 2017, Skills Canberra administered and promoted a new model—called ‘Higher Apprenticeships’—for providing tailored support to assist existing workers and their employers to better utilise upskilling opportunities available through the Australian Apprenticeships program. The Higher Apprenticeships pilot was conducted in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers and CIT Solutions.

## **8. Are you still eligible to apply for the program if you are already receiving funding from other sources?**

Yes, projects currently funded by other sources are still eligible to apply for the MWGP. Grants may be awarded to existing projects in order to expand existing services or to provide new services. Funding will not be provided to enable projects to meet existing service requirements.

## **9. Is the aim of the program for applicants to propose projects that offer solutions to the identified problem of engaging and upskilling mature workers?**

Yes, the MWGP aims to support projects that have identified and are designed to address issues facing mature workers, which are not currently addressed by existing services.