APPLICATION GUIDELINES

2018 Mature Workers Grants Program
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1. INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government is committed to supporting economic development and social inclusion through outreach activities that improve the productivity and workforce participation of all working-age Canberrans.

To support economic development, the ACT Government is committed to growing and diversifying the jobs and skills available in Canberra’s economy. Upskilling or retraining can assist mature workers to take advantage of new work opportunities emerging from growth areas in the economy. Upskilling existing mature workers can benefit Canberra businesses through improved productivity and workforce retention.

The ACT Government also recognises that mature members of the community often experience specific barriers to accessing available work-related training services. Additional assistance is required to support those facing social, health and economic challenges to participate in upskilling and reskilling opportunities that may improve their employment status and experience of being a valued member and contributor to the community.

Skills Canberra is looking to fund activities that address barriers to participation in work-related training and associated support services designed to improve the employment outcomes of mature workers. Skills Canberra is seeking new pilot projects that address gaps in current service provision targeting the mature workforce and related employers.

Within this target group, Skills Canberra is seeking services that will also be well placed to cater for mature workers who are part of other groups traditionally experiencing disadvantage, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; carers; workers made redundant; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; people living with disability; people without post-school qualifications; people working in an industry sector affected by structural readjustment; veterans; volunteers; and women returning to work after an extended absence.

The details of the Program and the process to apply for the available funds are outlined below.

2018 MATURE WORKERS GRANTS PROGRAM

For the purposes of the Mature Workers Grants Program, the category ‘mature workers’ includes persons aged 45 years or older and Australian Apprentices aged 25 years or older (a.k.a. ‘mature apprentices/trainees’). The Program targets mature workers who live and/or work in the ACT. Mature workers may be employed, unemployed, underemployed or not in the labour force. A mature worker may be working as a volunteer or unpaid carer.

The Mature Workers Grants Program also targets employers and potential employers of mature workers, with emphasis on educating businesses about available support for recruiting and retaining skilled, experienced workers to deliver the services, infrastructure and other major projects our city needs now and in the years ahead.

A range of reforms implemented by the ACT Government in 2016 and 2017 have improved mature workers’ access to a wide range of government-subsidised upskilling and reskilling opportunities. For example, an initiative introduced on 1 April 2017 removed the limit on the number of subsidised Australian Apprenticeships a Canberran can access over their lifetime.

Results to date have been encouraging. There has been a significant increase in the uptake of government-subsidised training by mature Canberrans across a variety of cohorts and industry sectors.

In 2018, Skills Canberra is seeking to augment these efforts. Our strategy with this Program is to implement additional approaches that support both direct outcomes for mature Canberrans and seek to understand and address factors impacting employers’ ability to utilise the mature workforce to solve their skills needs and workforce shortages.
Grant Objectives

The 2018 Mature Workers Grants Program is seeking applications from eligible organisations that aim to address gaps in service provision in one or both of the following areas:

**Objective 1:** Services targeting mature workers: i.e. specific services assisting mature workers—seeking employment, a new career or a better job—to navigate the wide range of available upskilling and reskilling opportunities and associated financial, learning and job seeking supports. These services should be flexible to meet the individual needs of mature Canberrans experiencing social, health and/or economic challenges.

**Objective 2:** Services targeting employers: i.e. specific services:

a) advocating to employers about the benefits of hiring, retraining and/or upskilling mature workers;

b) educating employers about the available supports for hiring new mature workers and upskilling existing mature workers; and

c) supporting engagement between business leaders with experience in successfully employing mature workers and businesses who:
   
   i. may not have considered mature workers as a means to address workforce shortages; and/or
   
   ii. experience difficulties with retaining mature workers.

Applications must address one or both objectives outlined above and demonstrate how they will contribute to addressing barriers to upskilling and reskilling experienced by mature workers. Additionally, robust and compelling evidence of collaborative approaches and partnerships will add strength to your application. Note that, to be successful, it is not necessary for proposals to address both objectives. A project that tightly targets one cohort can be highly effective and efficient. However, there may be some natural or obvious synergies that can be leveraged within your proposed project’s budget.
2. **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

In order to be eligible for funding applicants must:

▷ be a public or private Australian based organisation or consortium with at least one member organisation based in the ACT;
▷ have an Australian Company Number (ACN) or an Australian Business Number (ABN);
▷ provide financial reports or annual reports;
▷ provide certificate of currency for public liability and workers compensation insurance;
▷ be able to contract with the ACT Government; and
▷ disclose all funding received from sources other than Skills Canberra for activities proposed or related to this project.

3. **ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

Successful applicants must:

▷ enter into a Deed of Grant (template provided at Attachment A) with the ACT Government which outlines the requirements of the Mature Workers Grants Program and the conditions under which the funding is awarded;
▷ report project outcomes and acquit the grant funding as outlined in Section 6 – Reporting and Acquittal of Funds of these guidelines;
▷ hold and keep current for the grant period, all insurance coverage required by law, including, but not limited to:
  - workers compensation insurance; and
  - public liability insurance for $10 million or more per claim, including voluntary workers insurance cover if volunteers are engaged by the applicant;
▷ include an acknowledgement of the Mature Workers Grants Programs as a Skills Canberra initiative on all publicity relating to the Mature Workers Grant Program, including publications, promotional and advertising materials, public announcements and activities or any products or processes developed as a result of these guidelines;
▷ participate in publicity opportunities, including assisting in writing short article/s on the Mature Worker Grants Program and achievements for local and national newsletters and reports;
▷ collect and retain information (for example, a range of demographic information) on the project participants, as specified in the Deed of Grant;
▷ support project participants to complete an anonymous online survey —Participants’ Use and Views of the Mature Workers Program Survey—about their perceptions and outcomes from engaging in the project. A survey relevant to each project will be published by Skills Canberra and a link to the survey provided on Skills Canberra Mature Workers Grants Program webpage.

Skills Canberra may visit providers of projects funded under the Mature Workers Grants Program for the purpose of observation and gathering information.
4. AVAILABLE FUNDING

Approximately $500,000 will be made available in 2018 to support a small number of highly targeted projects to be delivered over 2-3 years.

While the ACT Government will determine the number of projects to be funded based on the quality of responses received, ideally we see two or three projects as providing the necessary scale to create impact and sustainable outcomes. In exceptional circumstances, only one, large project may be funded (for example, a proposal submitted by a consortium of organisations designed to meet all elements of both of the Program objectives).

Depending on how many projects are selected and the available funding, a second round may be announced.

Proposals should indicate any financial and/or in-kind contributions the applicant organisation can make towards the project. Financial and/or in-kind contributions from the applicant organisation is not mandatory. However evidence about how the proposed project design will leverage the applicant organisation’s existing resources will strengthen assessment against the relevant criteria.

The following will not be funded:
▷ applicant’s existing services unless the applicant can demonstrate additionality outcomes;
▷ duplicative services that are already being delivered in the ACT;
▷ project set-up costs (office space, supplies, software, outsourcing of services);
▷ staff travel and accommodation expenses; and
▷ expenses incurred prior to signing the Deed of Grant

5. PAYMENTS

The grants will be payable to the recipient in tranches, determined and negotiated during contract negotiation. An initial payment will be made available within 30 days of receipt of an invoice to the Directorate, following execution of the Deed of Grant. This initial payment will be negotiated during the grant negotiation stage. Once initial payments have been expended, subsequent funding support will reimburse costs already incurred and is payable half-yearly upon successful milestone completion.

Applications must propose amount of initial payment sought, reasonable milestones and corresponding payment schedule broken down by milestones for the entire duration of the Program. This schedule will be finalised during the Deed of Grant negotiation process.

Progress or completion of milestones must be reported in the half-yearly progress reports (see section 6- Reporting and Acquittal of Funds). Each milestone claim will require a written report of activities undertaken and outcomes achieved and must include suitable evidence of completion.

The proposed date for each milestone must be achievable and the activity measurable. With costs to be reimbursed at the successful completion of milestones it is advised that applicants be mindful of cash flow when determining milestones.

Grantees are required to provide evidence of all expenditure on activities funded under the Grant and via identified financial and/or in-kind co-contributions (if applicable) such as receipts, paid tax invoices and bank statements. The evidence of expenditure must show that payment has been made. This should be supported by photographs, screenshots, diagrams and/or demonstrations where relevant to demonstrate milestone completion.

If Grantees have negotiated at the Deed of Grant stage to claim internal wages as part of the grant funding, they are required to submit detailed timesheets. The timesheet must capture the hourly rate and hours worked against the funded activities identified in the Deed of Grant. Grantees cannot claim internal wages as part of the grant funding for activities not listed in the Deed of Grant.
6. REPORTING AND ACQUITTAL OF FUNDS

Successful applicants must expend the approved funds on the delivery of the Mature Workers Grants Program funded activity by the end of the project period as specified in the Deed of Grant. The recipient must complete and submit the following reports to Skills Canberra via skills@act.gov.au:

- half-yearly progress reports in the format provided in the Deed of Grant;
- half-yearly acquittal of grant funds in the format provided in the Deed of Grant; and
- a complete and final project report in the template provided with the Deed of Grant.

The format of the report and the acquittal must be as specified in the Deed of Grant and the templates provided must be used. Any funds remaining upon completion of the funded activity must be returned to Skills Canberra.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

To select the applications that best meet the objectives and requirements of the Mature Workers Grants Program and offer the best value for money, applications will be assessed against the following evaluation criteria:

1. Organisational Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the issues and factors impeding:</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- the upskilling and reskilling of mature workers seeking a job, a better job or a new career; and/or</td>
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<tr>
<td>- employers recruiting and/or retaining mature workers.</td>
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<td>Previous experience in project delivery in similar or related initiatives, including a review of past approaches and the learnings gained.</td>
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<td>A demonstrated capacity to engage with the target groups and build a collaborative approach with other stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff with an understanding of the range of government-subsidised upskilling and reskilling opportunities and support currently available for mature Canberrans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff with an understanding of the available services to support employers of mature workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrated capacity to make financial and/or in-kind contributions towards successfully achieving the objectives and requirements of the Program.</td>
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2. Activity Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurate identification of linkages to other existing initiatives, both local and national, and evidence they can be successfully leveraged.</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective communication strategies for promoting activity and sharing outcomes beyond the direct parties involved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence supporting the likely effectiveness of the proposed methodologies and strategies to address one or more of the Program objectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of a gap in service provision for mature workers and/or their employers and that this gap can be directly addressed by the proposed activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound strategies to deliver tailored support in relation to identified social and economic inclusion groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence that the proposed project design can effectively leverage the applicant organisation’s identified financial and/or in-kind contributions.</td>
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Total 100%
8. EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process will include the following steps:

1. **Compliance check to ensure the application:**
   a. meets the eligibility criteria (see Section 2);
   b. addresses at least one of the Mature Workers Grants Program objectives (see Section 1);
   c. proposes new initiatives and does not seek funds to support applicant’s existing services unless the applicant can demonstrate additional outcomes;
   d. will not be duplicative of ongoing projects/initiatives addressing mature workers;
   e. includes a financial proposal with itemised budget for the entire duration of the project; and
   f. provides all information required by the application format.

   In the instance of an incomplete application, Skills Canberra will contact the applicant requesting the required information be provided within two working days. Applications that pass the Compliance Check will be shortlisted for evaluation by the Evaluation Panel.

2. **Assessment by Evaluation Panel**

   Applications will only progress for assessment by the Evaluation Panel if they pass the Compliance Check. The Evaluation Panel will assess the written applications against the evaluation criteria and the value for money each application offers.

   The Evaluation Panel will be comprised of government officials, and may include industry experts, peak bodies or representatives provided the organisation or the individual does not have a conflict of interest. The Evaluation Panel members will be required to sign a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Undertaking form and other disclosure documents.

   A final selection will be made based on applicants’ ability to soundly demonstrate the suitability of their application to meet the requirements of the Mature Workers Grants Program. The Evaluation Panel may seek clarification from applicants and consider references before recommending their selections.

3. **Panel recommendations**

   The Evaluation Panel will provide their recommendations to the ACT Government decision-maker for the Mature Workers Grants Program fund who will make the final decision about which projects will receive grants.

4. **Successful applicants notified**

   Successful applicants will be notified by 24 October 2018. Contract negotiation will occur between 24 October and 6 November 2018 with all projects expected to commence before 27 November 2018.
9. INFORMATION SESSION

Applicants are invited to attend the scheduled information session on the Mature Workers Grants Program. The presentation from the session and FAQs arising from the information session will be made available on the Skills Canberra website: https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/enterprise-canberra2/skillscanberra/mature-workers-grants-program

Date: 14 September 2018
Time: 3:00 to 4:30pm
Location: Level 4 Conference Room, Canberra Nara Centre, 1 Constitution Avenue

Registration: Please email the name of the organisation along with the name and contact information of the person attending the Information session to skills@act.gov.au by 13 September 2018.

10. APPLICATION PROCESS AND KEY DATES

Applications must be submitted via the Smarty Grants online application process. The Smarty Grants weblink is: https://innovation-connect.smartysgrants.com.au/MatureWorkers

The Smarty Grants weblink will be available on 31 August 2018 and will remain open for four weeks.

The details in the application must be complete and correct at the time of submission. No additional documents or attachments will be considered by the panel, unless requested. Each application must be submitted by midnight on 1 October 2018. Applicants will be provided with a receipt at the time of lodgement.

Depending on how many projects are selected and the availability of funding, a second round of grants may be made available. However, the ACT Government does not make any commitment to announce a second round at this stage.

Organisations awarded grants will be published on the Mature Workers Grants Program webpage on the Skills Canberra’s website following notification and the execution of the Deed of Grant. Grantees should not publish any announcement of their success prior to Skills Canberra’s publication of the list of Grantees.

Unsuccessful applicants may request verbal feedback on applications from the Directorate. Requests for feedback must be submitted in writing to skills@act.gov.au and received by Skills Canberra no later than 13 December 2018.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Indicative Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of Call for Proposals</td>
<td>30 August 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application process opens</td>
<td>31 August 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Session</td>
<td>14 September 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission closing date</td>
<td>Midnight on 1 October 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Selection</td>
<td>23 October 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Negotiation</td>
<td>24 October to 6 November 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announcement of Successful Applications</td>
<td>7 November 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Commencement</td>
<td>8 to 26 November 2018</td>
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11. COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Grievances or complaints relating to the Mature Workers Grants Program may be lodged by utilising the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate Complaints Handling Process. The complaint/appeal must be made in writing and can be emailed to CMTEDDCorporate@act.gov.au. Complaints/appeal must be lodged within five working days of the publication of final selection. The Delegate will review the complaint/appeal within 15 calendar days and inform the applicant of the final decision. This decision will be final and cannot be challenged.

12. GRANT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Grantees are required to submit half-yearly progress reports including information on results/milestones achieved, measures of success, and funds acquitted in the format provided with the Deed of Grant. Skills Canberra reserves the right to request additional information and clarification on the information provided and visit the Grantee in person or visit facilities utilised by the project. The Grantees are required to facilitate such visits if informed prior to the visit. Skills Canberra reserves the right to conduct evaluations of the Mature Workers Grants Program internally or externally. The Grantees are required to facilitate such evaluation by providing information requested and by allowing access to Program documents, contact information and staff involved.