Community Learning

Inclusive learning for Queenslanders

Guidelines for funding 2014–15
Community Learning

Inclusive learning for Queenslanders

Guidelines for funding 2014–15

Introduction

Community Learning is a five-year $47 million training program that forms part of the Queensland Government’s efforts to address a gap in service delivery for disadvantaged learners. Commencing in 2013–14 as part of Great skills. Real opportunities, the Queensland Government’s reform action plan for further education and training, Community Learning complements the Certificate 3 Guarantee, Queensland’s training entitlement program by providing supported training places. As Queensland introduces a more flexible and demand driven training system, it is imperative that the new framework continues to encourage equitable participation by disadvantaged learners.

In 2014–15, Community Learning will offer nationally recognised training for a minimum of 4000 disadvantaged learners with funding totalling $10 million.

Community Learning is being administered by the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE).

Overview and objectives

Community Learning provides another supported pathway for Queensland’s disadvantaged learners, offering high levels of support to participate in and complete vocational qualifications up to and including Certificate III. The program complements the introduction of the Queensland Certificate 3 Guarantee.

Training that improves an individual’s skill levels, employment prospects and social inclusion is a priority for the Queensland Government. Community Learning will be delivered in an informal, community-based setting which has proven successful for those who have not previously succeeded in formal education and training environments.

Community Learning fills a gap in the training marketplace, providing extra support and encouragement for disadvantaged learners by identifying effective interventions that will build their aspirations to begin a learning pathway through the provision of:

- supported access to nationally recognised training to either undertake a certificate level III qualification or begin a learning pathway to progress to that level
- flexible learning and assessment styles to increase the likelihood of completing a qualification
- courses that build confidence and self-esteem to support learners in adapting to a formal learning environment
- encouragement to undertake training that will enhance employment opportunities
- relevant skills to maximise job opportunities.

Why community-based skilling?

The provision of training in a community setting provides a supportive learning, less restrictive environment for those who have had less than successful experiences in government, school or institutional settings.

A community-based setting ensures the training is specifically tailored to the learner’s individual circumstances and abilities, work ambitions, and local activities.

Where will the program be delivered?

Community Learning is available on a statewide basis; however, priority will be given to areas of identified high need for disadvantaged learner services.

Who will the funds support?

Community Learning will focus on assisting those disadvantaged learners that are not on income support and/or are not accessing Australian Government employment services or assistance. To be eligible, disadvantaged learners must also:

- be 15 years of age and above and no longer at school
- be Queensland residents, New Zealand citizens permanently residing in Queensland, Australian permanent residents residing in Queensland or humanitarian entrants living in Queensland, or temporary residents with necessary visa and work permits on the pathway to permanent residency
- not already hold or be enrolled in a certificate level III or higher qualification.

Identified learner groups

Disadvantaged learners are defined as those facing barriers to accessing, effectively participating in and successfully completing accredited training due to individual, environmental and/or systemic factors. Priority will be given to identified learner groups for whom education and training opportunities have traditionally been poor, such as disengaged youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability, and migrants and individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

The selection of disadvantaged learners for assistance is at the discretion of the funded provider, subject to the above eligibility criteria and in consultation with DETE. Permission to recruit participants outside of the above criteria needs to be sought from DETE.

Community Learning is to be delivered at no cost to the participants.
What assistance can be funded?
From 2014-15 onwards, training and assessment services under Community Learning will be funded under the certificate 3 Guarantee. Every learner must be enrolled in training and Community Learning will pay the student contribution fees. Funding is also available for the provision of learner support measures that must accompany the delivery of training within a community-based setting. Delivery methods should be tailored to meet individual needs and local circumstances through a diverse range of training related activities.

Organisations are eligible for funding. Applicant organisations must have an upfront skills assessment and training options. Applicants must provide evidence of inclusive practice measures that must accompany the delivery of training within a community-based setting. Delivery methods should be tailored to meet individual needs and local circumstances through a diverse range of training related activities.

Under Community Learning, there is a focus on the attainment of certificate III level qualifications, however certain skill sets are recognised as an appropriate entry level pathway for disadvantaged learners in some industries. Funding is also available for the delivery of lower-level preparatory and pre-vocational courses and language, literacy and numeracy skills contextualised to the qualification and vocational area.

Under Community Learning, it’s recognised that integrated learning support measures and core skills development is needed to provide disadvantaged learners with the opportunity to achieve training outcomes and transition into employment. However, Community Learning is not a general education program. It maintains a clear focus on the attainment of nationally recognised skills and qualifications in demand by local employers.

Scope of registration
Registered training organisations must be Pre-qualified Suppliers (PQS) under the Certificate 3 Guarantee (or applying for PQS status). Qualifications and units of competency to be delivered must be nationally recognised and included in the training provider’s scope of registration at the time of submitting the application for funding.

Training and support plans
A Training and Support Plan is to be developed for each Community Learning participant with the acquisition of foundation skills embedded in the learning support. The plans must have an upfront skills assessment and training options.

What outcomes are expected?
Community Learning aims to see an increase in the participation in, and achievement of, qualifications and transitions from vocational education and training for disadvantaged learners in Queensland.

Organisations are also encouraged to align employment outcomes to priorities identified in the Queensland Government’s Ministerial Industry Commission’s Annual Skills Priority Report.

Who can apply for funding?
Community-based organisations and registered training organisations are eligible for funding. Applicant organisations must have experience in delivering services in the location for which they are applying.

To deliver both learner support and training and assessment services, community-based organisations will need to either purchase training by partnering with a registered training organisation with PQS status or vice versa. Training organisations must be able to demonstrate a commitment to access and equity principles, as well as an ability to provide appropriate support services.

Inclusive Learning
DETE is encouraging inclusive learning practices as outlined in Queensland’s VET Inclusive Learning Framework, Inclusive Learning: A way forward, to provide greater access to, participation in and outcomes for vocational education and training. The framework is available online at www.training.qld.gov.au/inclusivelearning. DETE is providing access to inclusive practice resources to ensure training providers can assist eligible students complete their training.

Under Community Learning, DETE will look for Pre-qualified Suppliers that can provide evidence of inclusive practice as a core business element, such as staff completing the department’s inclusive practice resources (offered at no cost from February 2014) as part of continuous professional learning or through documentation relating to the existing inclusive practice learning processes used by the registered training organisation.

What is the application process?
Funding under Community Learning is fully contestable. There will be two funding rounds each year, with opening and closing dates published on the DETE website.

DETE reserves the right to fund projects addressing emergent needs or government priorities outside of the published funding rounds. DETE is not bound to accept any application and reserves the right to discontinue or change the application and selection process and vary the selection criteria as appropriate.

Once a funding round opens, community-based organisations and training providers will be invited to download and email the completed application form to communitylearning@dete.qld.gov.au. Only complete applications will be considered. Only one organisation is to apply for and manage the funding for each project.

How will applications be assessed?
A selection panel will assess the applications against the selection criteria detailed below. The successful applicants will be those that score the highest total points against all selection criteria, and represent the best value for money.
How will applications be assessed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria</th>
<th>How this will be assessed – including but not limited to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Capacity to manage                        | • financial viability of lead organisation  
• relevant experience in managing grant funds and delivering similar services  
• staff with appropriate experience and qualifications for supporting disadvantaged 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    | • why the project is needed; clear articulation of how the project will address gaps in, and complement, existing local services  
• projects that duplicate other programs or offer available services will not be funded  
• evidence to support your organisation’s strong community presence within local area  
• links to local employers, industry or other stakeholders to identify local skills shortages and future employment opportunities  
• demonstrated industry demand and benefit  
• clear rationale for linking particular learner groups to particular jobs and industries where there is evidence of skills or labour needs |
| Strategies to assist learners             | • learner support mechanisms that specifically address the individual’s learning needs and goals  
• learner support mechanisms to encourage completion of qualifications and skill sets  
• specialist assistance or links with other agencies to help disadvantaged learners overcome barriers to learning  
• training and assessment strategies support the needs of disadvantaged learners  
• ability to provide effective training and realistic learning pathways in terms of method, location and timing of delivery  
• strategies to motivate learners to complete their training and take up local job opportunities |
| Outcomes                                  | • level of qualification completions, further education or training and employment outcomes forecasted and demonstrated ability to achieve quality outcomes  
• capacity to meet skills shortages and local labour market needs – extent of support and links with local employers and industry that will facilitate placement into employment |
| Cost/value for money                      | • cost effectiveness - accredited training (training cost per hour), and cost per learner and outcome  
• level of complementary funding and assistance from other sources and in-kind resources |
What level of funding is available?
Community Learning provides funding up to a maximum of $400,000 per project, depending on the nature of the training and assistance to be provided and the number of participants targeted by the project.

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 for project coordinator and other delivery staff
- administration costs
- student contribution fees
- materials and equipment
- accommodation
- travel costs
- overheads.

Funding from other sources must also be disclosed.

What are the funding conditions?
Organisations submitting applications that best meet the selection criteria will be offered funding of up to 12 months duration.

A copy of the Services Agreement, which is performance based and outlines the standard terms and conditions of funding, is available on the DETE website at: www.training.qld.gov.au/communitylearning.

A pre-payment will be paid 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 lodgement of the reporting requirements of the funding agreement and acquitting expenditure of the previous payment. All projects must be fully acquitted after completion and any unexpended or surplus funds returned to DETE.

Appeals process
Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DETE in relation to the provision of funding under Community Learning. The appeals process has been established to help identify any problems in the application process, ensuring these processes continue to improve.

Appeals must be lodged in writing to:
Appeals Officer
Skills Participation and Pathways
Department of Education, Training and Employment
PO Box 15033
City East, Queensland 4002

Organisations will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 21 business days from receipt of the appeal.

More information
For more information about Community Learning contact DETE on 1300 369 935 or visit the website at www.training.qld.gov.au/communitylearning.