



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts**

# **Frequently Asked Questions – Art and Screen Employment Pathways Pilot Program**

**March 2026**

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## About the Program

### What is the Arts and Screen Employment Pathways Pilot Program?

The Arts and Screen Employment Pathways Pilot Program (the Program) is a key action under [Equity: the Arts and Disability Associated Plan \(Equity\)](#). This is a 4-year plan with \$8.1 million for activities to build equity for artists, arts workers, and audiences with disability across Australia. *Equity* is a supporting document for:

- [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#)
- Australia's Cultural Policy, [Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place \(Revive\)](#).

The Program will match early to mid-career d/Deaf and disabled artists and arts workers with arts, cultural, screen and digital games organisations for temporary paid job placements of up to 12 months, for any art form and any position level across Australia. This includes people from diverse backgrounds who may face multiple barriers to building careers in the sector.

### How long will the Program run for?

The Program will run over 3 years from 2025-26 to 2027-28.

### Why do you use identity-first language?

Many artists and arts workers with disability have expressed the view that many people with disability in the arts and cultural sector prefer to use identity-first language rather than person-first language to describe themselves (i.e. 'disabled person' rather than 'person with disability').

We recognise there are diverse preferences for language, that personal choices can change over time, and language is always evolving. Some people may prefer person-first or different language to describe their experiences, or may not identify as a person with disability but rather as part of a cultural group.

To reflect and respect this feedback, we use identity-first language when referring to d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors, and person-first language when talking about disability for audiences and people in the wider community.

### What are the objectives and outcomes of the Program?

The objectives of the Program are:

- to support d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors to build professional skills and networks to advance their careers
- to support arts, cultural, screen and digital games host organisations to become more accessible, equitable and culturally safe
- to collect data on the impact of temporary job placements for d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors, and the host organisations.

The intended outcomes of the Program are:

- enhanced access to sustainable career pathways for d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors

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- more accessible, equitable and culturally safe host organisations
- an evidence base for future policy development.

The Program will also contribute to the priorities of *Equity* and *Revive* by:

- providing opportunities for d/Deaf and disabled artists and arts workers to advance their careers
- uplifting the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors' awareness and capabilities to support and access this workforce.

### What is a 'host organisation'?

A host organisation is an organisation in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors that hosts a participant for a temporary job placement through the Program to help them advance their career.

### What is a 'participant'?

A participant is an early to mid-career d/Deaf or disabled artist and/or worker in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors who does a temporary job placement for up to 12 months through the Program.

### When can my organisation apply to be a host organisation?

We expect to start the open process for arts, cultural, screen and digital games organisations to apply to host placements in late 2026.

If you would like to keep updated, you can subscribe to our *Equity* e-newsletter through our [contact form](#) which is available on our website at: [www.arts.gov.au/equity](http://www.arts.gov.au/equity).

### When can I apply to do a temporary job placement as a participant?

We expect to start the open process for d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors to apply for placements towards the end of 2026.

If you would like to keep updated, you can subscribe to our *Equity* e-newsletter through our [contact form](#) which is available on our website at: [www.arts.gov.au/equity](http://www.arts.gov.au/equity).

### When will placements start?

Placements are expected to start in early 2027.

## Grant funding and applications

### What is the grant opportunity for?

The grant opportunity is for applications to deliver the Program and not for organisations seeking to host temporary job placements or for individuals seeking to apply for placements.

The grantee will be responsible for the recruitment, selection and matching processes and oversight of the placements, in close consultation with the department. This includes providing support to participants and host organisations over the life of the placements and assisting host organisations to ensure they are accessible and culturally safe prior to placements starting.

## When is the closing date for applications?

The application form must be submitted in [SmartyGrants](#) by 11:59pm (Canberra local time) on 19 April 2026. The opening and closing dates will be advertised on [GrantConnect](#) and our [website](#). Late applications will not be accepted.

## How much funding can I apply for?

A total of \$2.2 million (GST exclusive) is available over 3 years from 2025-26 to 2027-28, as outlined in the table below.

Financial year 2025-26	Financial year 2026-27	Financial year 2027-28
\$0.1 million	\$1.1 million	\$1.0 million

The funding is available for:

- Wages for d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors who do temporary job placements through the Program, including superannuation and on-costs (up to \$1.7 million). Participants will be employed under any applicable award or agreement wages and conditions.
- Grantee overheads to run the Program, including any accessibility and cultural safety provisions for host organisations (up to \$0.3 million).
- A pool of funding for accessibility adjustments for d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors who do temporary job placements through the Program, and which are not available through existing Government programs such as the [Employment Assistance Fund](#) (EAF) (up to \$0.2 million).

## What is the Employment Assistance Fund?

The [EAF](#) is an Australian Government service which provides funding for workplace changes and equipment to support employees with disability in the workplace. This can include equipment such as communications software, Auslan services, minor building modifications, and workplace assistance and support services, such as disability awareness training.

## What does 'cultural safety' mean?

Cultural safety is a practice of ensuring respect for cultural and social differences through self-reflection and recognition of the attitudes, beliefs and social, historical, political and economic circumstances that create power relationships and inequalities.

Disability cultural safety recognises that people with disability have a shared identity, community, and culture, based on a shared history of oppression, lived experience, and language to describe that experience. Projects or workplaces that do not respect this are alienating.

## Eligibility – applicants

### Can individuals apply?

Yes, individuals such as sole traders can apply as long as they meet all the eligibility requirements in section 4 of the grant guidelines.

### What types of organisations or entities are eligible for funding?

We can only accept applications from:

- entities that have a track record of experience and skills in disability access and equity. If applying as a consortium with another entity/ies, the lead entity must have this experience and skills. Key personnel for either a single applicant, or the lead entity of a consortium, must have lived experience of disability.
- entities that have experience in and understanding of the Australian arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors. If applying as a consortium with another entity/ies, at least one of the partner entities must have this experience and understanding.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must also:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- where required by law, be registered for the purposes of GST
- be a permanent resident of Australia
- have an account with an Australian financial institution
- be a legal entity with the capacity to enter into a legally binding agreement or contract
- comply with all regulatory, industry and legal requirements in relation to copyright, licensing, employment, planning and environmental protection
- not have any outstanding reports, acquittals or serious breaches relating to any Commonwealth funding.

And be one of the following entity types:

- a company incorporated in Australia
- a company incorporated by guarantee
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust
- an incorporated association
- an incorporated not-for-profit organisation
- a sole trader
- a partnership
- a local or territory government agency or body
- an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the [Corporations \(Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander\) Act 2006](#).

## **What types of organisations or entities are not eligible to apply for funding?**

Applicants (including all partner members if applying as a consortium) are not eligible to apply if they are:

- not able to meet the eligibility criteria in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the grant guidelines
- a Commonwealth or state agency or body (including government business enterprises)
- an overseas resident/entity
- an organisation included on the [National Redress Scheme's website](#) on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'
- an organisation (employer of 100 or more employees) that has not complied with the [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012](#). Please see the non-compliant organisations list on the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency website](#).

## **Can I apply as a consortium in partnership with other organisations or entities?**

Yes. The Program may be delivered by a single grant recipient, multiple grant recipients or through consortia arrangements. We recognise that some applicants may want to partner with other applicants to deliver the Program. These applications are encouraged to meet all the required skills and experience, particularly assessment criteria one and two of the grant guidelines.

In these circumstances, applicants must appoint a 'lead entity'. Only the lead entity can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of them. It is also the responsibility of the lead entity to ensure that all parties and subcontractors comply with the relevant aspects of the grant agreement.

## **Do I need to have lived experience of disability to apply?**

Key personnel for either a single applicant, or the lead entity of a consortium, must have lived experience of disability. Key personnel are the main people leading on the delivery of grant activities and engagement with participants and host organisations. They are not necessarily the leaders or managers of a grantee entity.

## **Can residents of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Norfolk Island, and the Jervis Bay Territory apply?**

Yes, eligible applicants from Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Norfolk Island, and in the Jervis Bay Territory can apply.

## **Will my previous record with the department or other Australian Government agencies be considered during the assessment of my application?**

Yes, your history as a funding recipient will be considered, particularly if you have outstanding acquittal reports. If you have a reasonable explanation for a delay in submitting a previous report, you may explain this in your application for the assessor's consideration.

## Eligibility – activities

### What are eligible grant activities?

Eligible grant activities are outlined in section 5.1 of the grant guidelines.

### Do I need to start the grant activities by a specific date?

The earliest start date of the grant activities is 1 July 2026. For the successful grantee/s, eligible grant activities must occur between the start date and end date of their grant agreement and as per the budget in the grant agreement.

### Funding is available for 2025-26 but activities can't start until 1 July 2026 – why is this?

Funding for 2025-26 will be paid on execution of a grant agreement with the successful grantee/s. This funding must be allocated to activities in the work plan for 2026-27.

### What are eligible locations for the grant activities?

All grant activities must take place in Australia and the Program aims to have a national reach. It will be important to encourage placement applications from potential host organisations and participants from across Australia and to ensure there is a diverse representation of geographical locations, including regional and remote locations.

### Do I need to directly deliver all the grant activities or can I partner with others?

You can partner with other entities or personnel with appropriate expertise to deliver elements of the Program such as providing training or mental health support to participants.

## Eligibility – expenditure

### What are eligible expenses under the Program?

Eligible expenditure items are:

- eligible grant activities in section 5.1 of the grant guidelines
- wages for participants who do temporary job placements through the Program, including superannuation and on-costs (a total of \$1.7 million is available)
- accessibility adjustments for participants which are not available through existing Government programs such as the [EAF](#) (a pool of funding of up to \$0.2 million is available)
- operational costs directly related to delivering the eligible grant activities under the grant agreement, such as telephone, internet and software usage, rent, utilities, insurance, printing, stationery, and vehicle leasing
- wages of personnel or contractors who directly deliver the eligible grant activities under the grant agreement, including superannuation and on-costs
- reasonable domestic travel (transport, accommodation, per diems) associated with delivering the eligible grant activities, such as any stakeholder engagement which cannot be done online;

site visits to audit host organisations for accessibility and cultural safety; or site visits to support participants and/or host organisations (the grantee/s must seek our approval of any travel).

For successful applicants, expenditure on eligible grant activities must occur between the start date and end date of their grant agreement and as per the budget in the grant agreement.

For further details on eligible and ineligible expenditure, please refer to section 5 of the grant guidelines.

## **What are not eligible expenses under the Program?**

The grant cannot be used for the following activities:

- purchase of land
- major construction or capital expenditure such as purchase of real estate or extensions to buildings
- retrospective costs
- general wage costs not related to the delivery of the Program
- costs attributable to general ongoing administration of an entity such as electricity, insurance, phone and rent
- first class or business class domestic travel, or travel otherwise not accepted by us (the grantee/s must seek our approval of any travel)
- overseas travel
- temporary job placements or other employment arrangements that are already supported through other mechanisms or initiatives
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

For further details on eligible and ineligible expenditure, please refer to section 5 of the grant guidelines.

## **Does the Program fund organisational administration costs?**

No, the Program does not fund costs attributed to general ongoing administration of an entity. However, operational costs directly related to delivering eligible grant activities under the grant agreement may be included in an application, such as telephone, internet and software usage, rent, utilities, insurance, printing, stationery, and vehicle leasing.

The grantee/s will be required to minimise expenditure on overheads and operational costs to prioritise direct funding support for d/Deaf and disabled artists and workers in the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors, and upskilling and building greater accessibility and disability confidence within host organisations.

## **If an item in my proposed budget is ineligible for funding, does this mean my entire application will be considered ineligible for funding?**

No, if an expenditure item within the proposed project budget is deemed ineligible to receive funding, this does not mean the entire application is automatically ineligible. Assessors can recommend partial funding.

## **Are there any other items not listed in the grant guidelines that the Program will consider funding?**

Where a sufficient need is demonstrated for the success of the project, consideration will be given to funding expenditure items.

## **Does the Program fund the purchase of assets?**

No, the Program does not fund the purchase of assets unless you can demonstrate they are a critical element for delivering activities under the Program. For further details on eligible and ineligible expenditure, please refer to section 5 of the grant guidelines.

## **Assessment criteria**

### **How are the assessment criteria weighted?**

The 5 assessment criteria are weighted equally. Further information about the assessment criteria is available in section 6 of the grant guidelines.

We will assess your application against the assessment criteria. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the size, complexity and grant amount requested. The application form includes word limits for each question.

Funding will only be awarded to applications that score highly against all assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are outlined in section 6 of the grant guidelines.

### **My organisation or entity doesn't have disability skills and experience – can I still apply?**

You can apply as a consortium with another entity/ies that has disability skills and experience, if you meet the eligibility criteria in section 4.1 of the guidelines. If applying as a consortium, the lead entity must have disability skills and experience. The lead entity must submit the application form and, if successful, enter into a grant agreement with the department.

### **My organisation or entity doesn't have experience in and understanding of the Australian arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors – can I still apply?**

You can apply as a consortium with another entity/ies that has sector experience and understanding, if you meet the eligibility criteria in section 4.1 of the guidelines. If applying as a consortium, at least one of the partner entities must have sector experience and understanding.

## **Application and assessment process**

### **How do I submit an application?**

You must submit your online application form in [SmartyGrants](#). You can create a free new user account if you do not already have one.

Before applying, you must read the grant guidelines, which are published on [GrantConnect](#) and the [Office for the Arts' website](#).

## **How will I know the department has received my application?**

You will receive an automated email from SmartyGrants to acknowledge receipt of your application once it has been submitted.

## **Does the application require any attachments?**

Yes. Applications must include the following supporting documents:

- a detailed work plan, which also demonstrates how accessibility will be embedded throughout the grant activities
- an indicative budget, including a breakdown of all costs such as grantee overheads and wages
- key personnel skills and experience, which may be in the form of résumés
- a risk management plan
- evidence of support from the lead entity's board or leadership and/or letter of support from any proposed consortium members, if applicable
- trust deed, if applicable.

Applicants may also attach evidence of disability skills and experience, and sector experience and understanding (see assessment criteria one and two in the grant guidelines).

## **How can I get assistance with my application?**

Department staff can discuss your project with you and answer any specific questions you have in relation to the assessment criteria and how to complete and submit your application. You can contact the Arts Inclusion and Workforce team at:

- Email: [Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au](mailto:Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au)
- Phone: 1800 080 090 (during business hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm [Canberra local time] Monday to Friday)

Please note that we cannot review draft applications or provide advice on the content and details of your individual application or budget.

If you are having technical issues with SmartyGrants, visit <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants> or contact the SmartyGrants support desk on:

- Email: [service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:service@smartygrants.com.au)
- Phone: (03) 9320 6888

## **What happens if I find an error in my application?**

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact the Arts Inclusion and Workforce team at:

- Email: [Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au](mailto:Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au)
- Phone: 1800 080 090 (during business hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm [Canberra local time] Monday to Friday)

We do not have to accept any additional information, or requests to correct your application, after the closing date and time. Applications cannot be changed after the closing date and time.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask you for clarification or additional information that will not substantially change the nature of your application.

## **Who will assess my application?**

Each application will be assessed by at least one official from the department and at least one pre-selected external industry assessor.

All assessors, including external industry assessors, are required to perform their duties in accordance with the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#), including declaring any conflicts of interest. For further information about probity, please see section 13 of the grant guidelines.

## **How will applications be assessed?**

We will first review applications against the eligibility criteria in section 4 of the grant guidelines. Only eligible applications will be considered further.

We consider eligible applications through an open competitive grant process. Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria in section 6 of the grant guidelines and against other eligible applications. Each application is considered on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the assessment criteria
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to the overall objectives and outcomes
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money.

## **Who are the external industry assessors?**

External industry assessors are selected based on their lived experience of disability and knowledge, experience and skills related to the arts, cultural, screen and digital games sectors.

## **Will I know which external industry assessor assessed my application?**

No, external industry assessors' personal information is kept confidential and held securely by the department in line with our [Privacy Policy](#). We do not publish or provide the names of external industry assessors selected for the grant opportunity.

## **Who approves grants?**

The Minister for the Arts, or their nominated delegate, decides which grants to approve and is 'the Decision-Maker'. They consider the recommendations of department officials, and the availability of grant funds.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

## **How long will it take to be notified of the decision on my application?**

It is anticipated that applicants will be notified of outcomes within 2-3 months of the closing date of the grant opportunity. Please be aware this is an indicative timeframe only and we may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with the successful applicant/s.

## What are the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs)*?

The CGRPs provide the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework for better practice grants administration. The document sets out a range of rules and requirements that apply to Australian Government officials and Ministers involved in grant making. The rules are designed to ensure transparency and probity in the spending of public money.

The CGRPs are formally included in legislation, meaning that adhering to them is a legislative requirement. For more information, see [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#).

## If I am awarded a grant, why are my details published on the grants register?

Under the CGRPs, all Commonwealth entities must publish information about the awarding of individual grants on [GrantConnect](#) no later than 21 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect.

## Evaluation

### What is the purpose of the evaluation?

The evaluation for the Program will measure how well the objectives and outcomes have been achieved. Information from the grantee's application and reports may be used for this purpose. We may also interview the grantee/s or ask for more information to evaluate how effective the Program was in achieving its outcomes.

### Who will do the evaluation?

We will work with the grantee/s and external expertise to support the development of an evaluation framework and data collection for the Program, as well as external communications to profile the Program, participants and host organisations. This may include recording feedback received throughout the placements from both participants and host organisations, collecting disaggregated demographic data through methodologies such as surveys and interviews, and tracking outcomes after placements end.

We will use the evaluation framework, data collected, and grant reporting to conduct the evaluation and may also contact the grantee/s up to one year after the grant activity is completed for more information.

## Privacy

### How will my personal information be handled?

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption under the Australian Privacy Principles applies.

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The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this Program in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on [GrantConnect](#) as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

Our [Privacy Policy](#) contains information on how we will store your personal information securely, complaint handling processes and how to access and/or seek correction of personal information held by the department. For more information, see [www.infrastructure.gov.au/privacy](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/privacy).

## Enquiries, feedback and complaints

### Who can I contact to ask questions?

If you have any questions, you can contact the Arts Inclusion and Workforce team in the Office for the Arts at:

Email: [Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au](mailto:Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au)

Phone: 1800 080 090 (during business hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm [Canberra local time] Monday to Friday)

### Can I request feedback on my application?

Unsuccessful applicants may ask for feedback within 60 working days of being advised of the outcome. We will aim to give written feedback within 25 working days of any request.

### What if I am unhappy about how the department has handled my application?

Complaints regarding any aspect of the application process should first be addressed to the Arts Inclusion and Workforce team in the Office for the Arts at:

Email: [Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au](mailto:Arts.Disability@arts.gov.au)

Phone: 1800 080 090 (during business hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm [Canberra local time] Monday to Friday)

If your complaint has not been resolved, please contact our Governance Team through our online enquiries form and address it to the Director of Integrity and Investigations: [infrastructure.gov.au/contact-us/online-enquiries](http://infrastructure.gov.au/contact-us/online-enquiries)

Your feedback will be handled in line with our [Client Service Charter](#).

If you do not agree with the way we have handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

- Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
- Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)
- Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)