



ACT
Government

ACT Vocational Education and Training (VET) Completions Grants 2026

*Supporting learners to complete training and
succeed in employment*

Applications open 9am 21 April 2026, and close 5pm 4 June 2026

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1 About ACT VET Completions Grants 2026

1.1 Skills Canberra

Skills Canberra develops and administers funding initiatives to support the delivery of adult community education (ACE) and vocational education and training (VET) in the ACT.

Skills Canberra implements ACT Government objectives to build an interconnected system that is accessible, high quality, meets the needs of students, employers and industry, and enables movement between sectors.

Skills Canberra is responsible for the ACT's implementation of the National Skills Agreement, a five-year joint agreement between the Commonwealth and states and territories to strengthen the VET sector, which commenced on 1 January 2024.

1.2 ACT VET Completions Grants 2026

The ACT VET Completions Grants 2026 (Grants Program) will enable eligible VET providers, employers and community organisations to deliver targeted supports for learners, to assist them to successfully complete training and succeed in employment.

It gives effect to commitments and priorities under the:

- [Improved Completions – Especially for Priority Groups Bilateral Implementation Plan 2024–2028 under the National Skills Agreement](#)
- [ACT Skills Action Plan 2024-28](#)
- [Skilled to Succeed: Skills and Workforce Agenda for the ACT](#)
- [CBR2030: ACT's Strategic Economic Development Framework](#)
- [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) and the [ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028](#).

The Grants Program gives effect to the first action within the [Improved Completions – Especially for Priority Groups Bilateral Implementation Plan](#) (BIP) under the National Skills Agreement.

Improved Completions is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and ACT Government.

1.3 Introduction

These guidelines outline the objectives, outcomes, funding parameters and application requirements for interested organisations to apply for funding through the Grants Program. Eligible organisations can apply for up to \$250,000 (GST exclusive) to deliver projects from August 2026 through to December 2027.

For the purposes of this Grants Program, “completions” refers to nationally recognised VET training including accredited qualifications, training package skill sets and accredited courses, including apprenticeships and traineeships.

1.4 Acknowledgement of cultural load

In designing and delivering projects under this Grants Program, it is important to be mindful of cultural load. Activities involving consultation, engagement, cultural advice,

reporting and evaluation can create cumulative demands on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and organisations if not carefully planned and resourced. The ACT Government recognises its responsibility to mitigate this through early planning, shared responsibility, appropriate resourcing and flexible implementation.

2 Primary Objective

The Grants Program aims to fund projects that assist learners from priority groups to complete accredited VET qualifications or courses and move into sustainable employment.

Priority groups include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- women;
- people with disability;
- young people;
- people experiencing long-term unemployment;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and
- mature age Australians.

3 Outcomes

Funded projects will contribute to one or more of the following outcomes, consistent with the [National VET Completions Report](#):

- improved learner engagement, retention and completion through timely, tailored supports addressing personal, academic, cultural, linguistic, social and other barriers;
- enhanced cultural safety and participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners through community-led, culturally grounded approaches;
- higher-quality and better-aligned enrolment pathways that match learner goals, capabilities with labour-market opportunities;
- earlier identification and appropriate intervention for learners facing difficulties in continuing or completing their training, reducing withdrawals and supporting re-engagement or constructive transitions;
- supportive and effective training and workplace environments, strengthened by improved employer–RTO–learner relationships, supervision, mentoring and inclusive practices;
- flexible, accessible delivery models focused on learners, that actively reduce barriers and increase participation; and
- systemic improvements that address root causes of low completion rates and create long-term change.

In addition, funded projects will:

- strengthen transitions to support learners secure sustainable employment aligned to their skills and career goals; and
- strengthen understanding to inform future initiatives aimed at improving VET completion rates for priority groups.

4 Funding Parameters

1. Maximum funding per application is \$250,000 (GST exclusive). No minimum applies.
2. Projects must commence by August 2026 and be completed by 31 December 2027.
3. Applications must demonstrate value for money and a strong return on investment relative to expected outcomes.
4. Projects must involve identified partnerships with employers, industry bodies, education providers, community organisations and/or group training organisations. Letters confirming specific partnership arrangements must be included with the application.
5. A range of partnership and delivery models will be appropriate, including community-led and ACCO-driven approaches where relevant. Partnerships do not need to reflect mainstream or traditional employer-led structures to be considered effective, provided they demonstrate genuine collaboration, cultural integrity where relevant, and alignment with identified learner and community priorities.
6. Applications that include structured engagement with employers, including to support supervision capability, safe workplaces, or consistent mentoring practices, are encouraged.
7. Contributions from partners (financial and/or in-kind) are encouraged and will strengthen the assessment of an application. Any in-kind commitment must be itemised in the application.
8. Applicants must disclose any other ACT or Australian Government funding contributing to the project.
9. Funding is limited and awarded via a competitive assessment process. An Evaluation Panel will assess applications on relative merit, in accordance with the assessment criteria, and grant funding should not be deemed automatic or anticipated.
10. The Delegate may determine, based on the recommendations of the evaluation, a funding amount for a successful project. This amount may vary from the total amount of funding sought in the application.
11. Adjustments to the Evaluation Panel's recommended funding amount may be considered during the negotiation phase, if required. The final funding amount is subject to approval by the Delegate.
12. The ACT Government may establish additional funding rounds under this Grants Program. Future rounds may focus on continuing, expanding or scaling projects funded under Round 1. This may include separate funding streams that are restricted to Round 1 recipients or open to new applicants, depending on program priorities.
13. All applicants, new or returning, will be subject to the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria set for any future round. Receipt of funding in Round 1 does not guarantee further funding.
14. This is a new Grants Program. These guidelines supersede all terms and conditions contained in all previous Skills Canberra grants program guidelines.

5 Eligibility requirements

5.1 Applicant eligibility

The following organisations are eligible to apply:

- education and training providers or other organisations with training as a key focus of their business including registered training organisations (RTOs);
- group training organisations;
- community organisations;

- industry associations;
- employers;
- Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)* as per Clause 44 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap; and
- ACCOs and First Nations Owned Organisations (FNO) RTOs.*

To be eligible, the organisation must also:

1. deliver programs within the ACT;
2. hold Public Liability Insurance of at least \$10,000,000;
3. hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) that matches the legal entity name;
4. be registered for GST if applicable (turnover greater than \$150,000 per annum);
5. be compliant under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* (if applicable);
6. have satisfactorily acquitted all previous ACT Government grants;
7. hold volunteer workers insurance if volunteers will be engaged; and
8. hold workers' compensation insurance.

** ACCOs and FNO RTOs are encouraged to apply. Partnerships with these organisations are also encouraged. Mainstream organisations who are committed to genuinely partnering with an ACCO or FNO RTO need to acknowledge cultural load and demonstrate their responsibility in reducing cumulative demands through early planning, shared responsibility, appropriate resourcing and flexible approaches.*

Consistent with the objectives of the Grants Program, funding for projects, activities or initiatives that contribute towards Closing the Gap on disadvantage between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous community members will be prioritised. As outlined in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement, the ACT Government is committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services.

5.2 Participant Eligibility

For projects that support individual learners, participants must meet the following eligibility requirements at the time of enrolment:

1. live or work in the ACT; and
2. be either:
 - an Australian citizen, or
 - a New Zealand citizen; or
 - a holder of an eligible visa (as defined on the [Skills Canberra website](#)); and
3. be either:
 - aged 17 or over and not enrolled in school/college or another Year 12 program; or
 - be currently enrolled in, or considering, an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA).

5.3 Who is not eligible to apply

1. state, territory or federal government agencies (other than RTOs); and
2. schools (applications from eligible organisations partnering with schools will be considered).

5.4 Provision of quotes and supporting documents

For an application to be considered eligible, it **must** include the following supporting documents:

- letters of support from each project partner, confirming their contributions and the partnership arrangement;
- at least one quote for any planned expenditure over \$5,000 (for purchased items or subcontracted services);
- an itemised budget using the 2026 ACT VET Completions Budget Template; and
- a project plan using the 2026 ACT VET Project Plan Template, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they will be measured.

The ACT Government acknowledges that documentation and evidentiary requirements can place an administrative burden on smaller organisations, including ACCOs. Where appropriate, Skills Canberra may provide guidance or support to assist applicants to meet requirements and will apply a proportionate approach consistent with the scale and complexity of projects.

5.5 What may be considered for funding

Projects can be designed to:

1. support currently enrolled VET learners, including apprentices and trainees, to remain engaged and progress in training;
2. support prospective VET learners to increase the likelihood of successful completion once enrolled; and/ or
3. implement system-level improvements that strengthen tools, supports and system effectiveness for VET completions.

Activities which support recommendations outlined in the [National VET Completions Report](#), and that contribute to sustainable employment outcomes for individual learners or at the system level, may be considered for funding. Examples of eligible activities include (but are not limited to):

- tailored supports addressing personal, academic, cultural, accessibility, wellbeing or logistical barriers delivered through relationship-based, face-to-face assistance where possible;
- culturally safe, community-led supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners, including ACCO-designed and delivered initiatives;
- activities that strengthen the apprentice/trainee–employer–RTO relationship, including improving supervision, mentoring, and training plan use, upskilling supervisors who lack training in people management, mentoring or culturally safe practice, and supporting employers to create positive workplace cultures that retain learners.
- skilling employers to create safe, supportive and inclusive workplace cultures;
- mentoring, career pathway guidance and workplace exposure, and culturally or contextually appropriate wrap-around assistance to support training and employment outcomes;
- proactive identification and support for learners facing difficulty in continuing or completing their training (for example outreach, re-engagement, transition supports);
- improving the quality, accessibility and inclusiveness of delivery (for example learner-centred, flexible and responsive practices); and
- supporting informed learner decision-making (for example clearer VET and employment pathways information, high-quality enrolment support, structured taster, tasters/preparation programs).

Training delivery

Accredited or non-accredited training may be funded when:

1. it is part of a broader strategy to support learners to complete training and succeed in employment ;
2. it is not already available through another funding mechanism, including but not limited to Fee Free TAFE, Skilled Capital and User Choice; and
3. an RTO is confirmed to deliver any accredited training and:
 - has the relevant unit(s) of competency on scope for delivery and assessment in the ACT;
 - provides a quote for delivery, assessment and certification (unless the RTO is the applicant, in which case, this should be clearly expressed in the application);
 - holds a current ACT Training Initiative Funding Agreement (TIFA)*; and
 - ensures training and assessment meets ASQA national registration requirements.

** ACCO and FNO RTOs are not required to hold a TIFA for accredited training to be considered. This reflects the ACT Government's priority to support the growth of the ACCO and FNO RTO sector. All other requirements must still be met.*

What may be considered for funding project costs

Reasonable wages and on-costs for service-delivery staff, such as program coordinators, may be considered where they are required to undertake activities such as:

- coordinating and delivering project activities, including attracting, selecting, supporting and retaining participants;
- planning, developing and refining project components;
- monitoring and evaluation activities including to support reporting and continuous improvement; and
- remuneration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural advisers, Elders or community representatives contributing cultural knowledge, governance, advice or oversight.

While reasonable wages and on-costs may be included where they are necessary to deliver the project, applications are expected to be learner-focused, with the majority of requested funding to support participant outcomes, rather than coordination or administration.

Acknowledgement of cultural load

In designing and delivering projects under this Grants Program, it is important to be mindful of cultural load. Activities involving consultation, engagement, cultural advice, reporting and evaluation can create cumulative demands on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and organisations if not carefully planned and resourced. The ACT Government recognises its responsibility to mitigate this through early planning, shared responsibility, appropriate resourcing and flexible implementation.

5.6 What will not be considered for funding

- an applicant's existing services, unless additional outcomes are clearly demonstrated;
- activities that duplicate existing funded services or supports (this includes services provided by Apprentice Connect Australia Providers);
- expenses incurred prior to signing the Deed of Grant or requests for retrospective funding;

- wages and financial incentives for participants;
- capital expenses intended for ongoing organisational operations beyond the project scope;
- excessive or unreasonable administration or overhead costs; and
- activities primarily for marketing or promotion of an RTO or employer (unless directly tied to project participant recruitment).

5.7 Application process

Apply via the online grants portal:

<https://CMTEDD.smartygrants.com.au/VETCompletionsGrants2026>

The portal opens 9:00am on 21 April 2026 and closes 5:00pm on 4 June 2026. Late applications will not be accepted.

Applications must be complete and correct at submission. Additional documents will not be considered unless requested by Skills Canberra or the Evaluation Panel.

5.8 Request Extension of Application Timeline

Requests for extension must be sent to skills.projects@act.gov.au at least two business days prior to the closing date. Requests will be reviewed, and the requestor will be notified of the outcome.

6 Assessment

6.1 Overview of assessment process

Applications are checked for eligibility (see Section 5). Eligible applications are then assessed by an Evaluation Panel chaired by a senior Skills Canberra officer.

Each application is assessed against the evaluation criteria and overall alignment with Program aims and ACT priorities.

Evaluation Panel funding recommendations are provided to the Executive Branch Manager, Skills Canberra, who is the Delegate, for approval.

Approval depends on the number of applications, their relative merit, Government priorities and available funds.

Partial funding may be offered and may require scope adjustments.

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	
Project design (25%)	<p>Assesses whether the proposal clearly demonstrates expected benefits and aligns with the Program Objective (Section 2) and Outcomes (Section 3).</p> <p>Assessment considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the project's likely contribution to achieving Program Objectives and Outcomes; • whether the project incorporates lived experience and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on-the-ground insights; a clear and logical project model, with key activities and intended impacts well-articulated; an innovative approach that does not duplicate existing services or funding; targeted, tailored and learner-centric approaches that address the specific barriers and needs of priority groups, rather than relying on broad, one-size-fits-all models; culturally safe practice and genuine community led approaches where relevant; and where relevant quality of wrap around supports, for example centred on meaningful relational support as opposed to solely information referral.
Longer-term Impact (25%)	<p>Considers whether the project will contribute to the evidence base and lead to sustainable, substantial outcomes for learners.</p> <p>Assessment considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a well-developed approach to tracking expected outcomes; the potential to generate sustained improvements in completions or employment outcomes; and the project's potential to test models, tools and partnerships, and inform new or improved approaches that support completions for priority groups.
Demonstrated partnerships, capacity and capability (25%)	<p>Considers the applicant's capacity and capability to successfully deliver the project.</p> <p>Assessment considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrated organisational capacity and capability to deliver the project; the skills and experience of project staff; evidence of effective partnerships; demonstrated stakeholder engagement; and if previously funded, a track record under ACT/Australian Government programs, including delivery of outcomes and reporting.
Value for money (25%)	<p>Assesses whether the requested funding represents a sound investment relative to scope, timing and expected outcomes.</p> <p>Assessment considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> whether the budget is clear and reasonable; costs proportionate to project scale and expected benefits; and efficient allocation of resources aligned to core activities.

7 Accepting a Grant

7.1 Grant requirements and payment process

Successful applicants must enter into a Deed of Grant setting out the terms and conditions, including reporting and acquittal requirements. Grants are paid in instalments upon execution of the Deed and achievement of agreed milestones. Payments may take up to 30 days to process upon receipt of an invoice.

7.2 Conditions of funding

1. Information provided in the application must be true and correct. The Territory may seek repayment of funds where information is false, or funding is not used for the approved purpose.
2. Organisations must adhere to all Program guidelines and conditions.
3. Organisations must acknowledge ACT and Australian Government support as outlined in the Deed of Grant.
4. Organisations receiving public funding must comply with the ACT Government Equal Employment Opportunity policy.
5. Organisations must make every effort to ensure access and equity principles guide organisational development and program delivery.
6. Written approval from Skills Canberra is required for any project variation. Requests should be emailed to skills.projects@act.gov.au. Approval is not guaranteed.
7. Applicant organisations grant a licence to Skills Canberra to use project outcomes and deliverables to share learnings and support broader sector improvement, as negotiated in the Deed of Grant.
8. Applicant organisations are responsible for managing roles and responsibilities of partners and third parties and ensuring clarity about how outcomes may be used by the ACT Government.

7.3 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

GST is payable to organisations receiving financial assistance under this Grants Program if they are GST registered with the Australian Tax Office, and can provide an ABN (i.e., if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum).

7.4 Publication

All successful applicants, along with their funded activity and the funded amount, will be published on the Skills Canberra website. Projects may also be selected for further promotion by ACT or Australian Governments.

8 Reporting and Acquittal of Funding

8.1 Reporting

All grant recipients must submit half-yearly progress reports via SmartyGrants, in the format outlined in the Deed of Grant. Recipients will also be required to participate evaluation activities for the Grants Program, as specified in the Deed of Grant.

Reporting and evaluation requirements will be applied in a proportionate manner, taking into account project scale and organisational context. Skills Canberra is committed to working with grant recipients, particularly ACCOs, to ensure reporting processes do not place disproportionate or unintended cultural load on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and organisations.

8.2 Acquittal of funding

All funds must be expended within the timeframe specified in the Deed of Grant. An acquittal task will be created in SmartyGrants upon execution of the Deed. Within one month after the grant end date, recipients must submit the completed acquittal and expenditure report in the required format. No further financial assistance will be provided until all outstanding grants have been acquitted.

9 Important Information for Applicants

9.1 Accessibility

If you need this publication in an alternative format, call Access Canberra on 13 22 81. For Translating and Interpreting Services, call 131 450. For the National Relay Service, call 131 677.

9.2 When to submit your application

- Applications open 9:00am, Tuesday 21 April 2026.
- Applications close 5:00pm, Thursday 4 June 2026.

The ACT Government recognises that some organisations, particularly ACCOs, may require additional time for community consultation and governance approvals. Where appropriate, Skills Canberra may work with applicants to provide flexibility in timeframes to support equitable participation.

9.3 How to submit your application

Submit applications via

<https://CMTEDD.smartygrants.com.au/2026VETCompletionsGrants>. You will need to create a login. The form will be available when the round opens.

For help using SmartyGrants, see:

<http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>

For questions about the guidelines or eligibility contact 6205 4006 or skills.projects@act.gov.au

If you have difficulty accessing the form or an error occurs, contact Business Services: economicdevelopmentgrants@act.gov.au

9.4 Addendum

Any additional information will be posted on Skills Canberra's Grants webpage. Applicants who have started or submitted an application will be notified by the email registered on SmartyGrants.

9.5 Confidentiality

All material submitted to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate is provided in confidence. The ACT Government may promote successful applicants for the mutual benefit of the Program and the applicant. The provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* apply to documents in the Directorate's possession.

9.6 Complaints

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the application process and/or an unsuccessful application for a Grant.

You or your representatives have the right to raise your concerns. This information supports us to improve services and supports your right to ask questions about the Grant application process as well as decisions made in relation to an unsuccessful application.

You can expect to:

1. be treated respectfully, fairly and in confidence;
2. have your concerns dealt with as soon as possible;
3. be informed of progress; and
4. be told of the outcome.

10 Further information

For more information on the Grants Program Guidelines, eligibility requirements or to lodge a complaint, contact Skills Canberra, Grants and Projects on: 6205 4006 or skills.projects@act.gov.au.

For technical assistance with the online application form, contact Business Services: economicdevelopmentgrants@act.gov.au.