



ACT
Government

ACT Adult Community Education Grants Program

2023-24

Applications open on 10 August 2023 and close on 21 September 2023

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1 About the program

1.1 About 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.

One of these initiatives is the ACT ACE Grants program, which has operated since 1998. This program targets unemployed and underemployed adults, funding learning activities and support to address barriers to further education, training and/or work.

Skills Canberra is responsible for implementing the ACT Government's objectives to create an interconnected ACE and VET system that:

- is accessible to all working age Canberrans
- meets the needs of students, employers and industries
- is high quality
- facilitates students' movement between sectors.

1.2 Introduction

These guidelines provide details for organisations wishing to apply for financial assistance of up to \$100,000 from the ACT ACE Grants program for projects commencing in February 2024 and completed by 31 December 2025. This program is funded by the ACT Government and administered by Skills Canberra.

ACT ACE Grants program funding is limited and as such, all applications will be assessed on relative merit. It is not possible to approve all requests for assistance, therefore grant funding should not be deemed automatic or anticipated.

These guidelines supersede all terms and conditions contained in previous guidelines administered by Skills Canberra.

2 Primary objective

The primary objective of the 2023-24 ACT ACE Grants program is to provide financial assistance to eligible organisations to support Canberrans experiencing barriers to learning, training and work to develop and use the foundation skills required to effectively participate in the labour market and contribute to Canberra's economic future.

Foundation skills have regularly been identified by employers as essential for successful performance in the workplace. Rapid industry and technological changes mean individuals need to continually build and adapt their skills for new contexts, technologies and purposes.

Foundation skills encompass the core skills defined by the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)—learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy—as well as employability skills—such as cooperation and collaboration, planning and organising, problem solving, self-management, teamwork and digital technology skills. They exist on a continuum from very basic skills to highly developed and specialised skills and underpin the successful achievement of vocational competencies at all levels.

Participation in work could be as an employee, as someone who is self-employed, or as a volunteer.

3 Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the 2023-24 ACT ACE Grants program are:

1. projects engage Canberrans with low levels of educational attainment and/or who experience social, health and/or economic barriers to thriving in learning, training and work.
2. learning activities are provided in informal, community-based settings at locations accessible via public transport.
3. tailored learning activities are provided and meet the needs of a target cohort/s and local labour market needs for skilled workers.
4. project participants are supported to develop the foundation skills they need for effective participation in further education, training, volunteering and/or employment.
5. support is available throughout the grant period for all participants seeking to progress from foundation skills training into further work-related training and/or work.
6. project design, delivery, assessment and reporting is outcomes focused.

The Minister for Skills is responsible for the final endorsement of all applications recommended for a 2023-24 ACT ACE grant.

4 Funding parameters

Applicant organisations must be aware of the following funding parameters:

1. organisations can apply for a maximum of \$100,000 and a minimum of \$20,000 in funding for any single application under the 2023-24 ACT ACE Grants program.
2. it is recommended organisations make explicit, in their application, any in-kind financial commitment they will make to the project. This financial contribution must be exclusive of GST.
3. organisations must disclose details of any other ACT or Australian Government funds contributing to the project.
4. organisations must be able to demonstrate they will have sufficient funds to commence and complete the project.

5 Eligibility requirements

5.1 General eligibility

Any organisation applying for a 2023-24 ACT ACE grant must:

1. be a not-for-profit organisation

2. be incorporated in the ACT under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991, or a company registered under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Commonwealth) with a physical presence in the ACT
3. deliver projects within the ACT
4. have current public liability insurance cover to a minimum level of \$10,000,000
5. have an Australian business number (ABN) which is matched to the entity name
6. be registered for the goods and services tax (GST) if applicable (if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum)
7. be up to date with their compliance requirements under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*
8. have satisfactorily acquitted all previous grants provided by Skills Canberra or any other ACT Government agency (except for currently active projects)
9. have volunteer workers insurance cover if volunteers will be engaged by the applicant
10. have workers' compensation insurance
11. provide quotes outlining all costs associated with each element of the proposed project the applicant intends to subcontract to another organisation.

5.2 Subcontracting

Applicant organisations can propose to subcontract one or more components of their project to a for-profit or not-for-profit organisation. The applicant organisation must clearly articulate, in the application form, the roles and responsibilities of the subcontractor in the delivery of the project. For subcontracting conditions of funding refer to item 7.2.1.

5.3 Provision of quotes

As outlined in general eligibility (item 5.1) of this document, where relevant, all organisations must submit a quote if they intend to subcontract an intended component to another organisation.

For example, a community organisation intending to subcontract delivery of the training component of the project to a registered training organisation (RTO) would need to seek a quote from the RTO and submit this quote with their application.

Failure to submit this information may jeopardise any offer of funding.

5.4 Who is not eligible to apply

The following organisations or groups are not eligible to apply for a 2023-24 ACT ACE grant:

1. commercial entities (including RTOs that are for private profit)
2. schools, technical and further education (TAFE) institutions and universities
3. state, territory or federal government agencies.

5.5 What may be considered for funding

5.5.1 Targeted participants

To be considered for funding, projects must be designed for participants meeting the following eligibility criteria:

1. age 17 years or older and not enrolled in or attending a school, college or another program leading to the completion of year 12;
2. residents of the ACT; and
3. an Australian or New Zealand citizen; or
4. a holder of a permanent residence visa; or
5. a migrant, refugee or asylum seeker holding a temporary or bridging visa providing work and/or study rights.

In addition to the participant eligibility criteria, projects may be considered for funding if they target Canberrans from one or more of the following groups:

6. the unemployed, underemployed or people not in the labour force
7. youth at risk (17-24 years)
8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
9. people living with disability
10. parents returning to the workforce
11. people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
12. migrants, refugees or asylum seekers
13. mature-aged people (45 years or older)
14. workers displaced due to industry restructures
15. veterans seeking to enter the civilian workforce
16. unpaid carers
17. people without post-school qualifications.

5.5.2 Training and learning activities

To be considered for funding, projects must be designed to deliver one, or more of the following types of training and learning activities.

Accredited foundation skills units of competency

Accredited foundation skills units of competency refer to the units of competency described in the current, nationally accredited Foundation Skills (FSK) Training Package (Release 2.0). This can be found at [training.gov.au - FSK - Foundation Skills Training Package](https://training.gov.au)

FSK Training Package (Release 2.0) units of competency can only be delivered and assessed in the ACT by RTOs approved to do so by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). A list of RTOs with FSK Training Package (Release 2.0) currently on their scope of registration for the ACT can be found here: [training.gov.au - Organisation / RTO search](https://training.gov.au)

To be approved by ASQA to deliver and assess the FSK Training Package (Release 2.0) in the ACT, RTOs must have sufficient:

- trainers and assessors to deliver the training and assessment
- educational and support services to meet the needs of the learner cohort/s undertaking the training and assessment
- learning resources to enable learners to meet the requirements for each unit of competency, which are accessible to the learner regardless of location or mode of delivery
- facilities, whether physical or virtual, and equipment to accommodate and support the number of learners undertaking the training and assessment.

Any applicant who is not an RTO with the FSK Training Package (Release 2.0) on scope, may be considered for funding if they demonstrate a partnership with an RTO:

1. with FSK Training Package (Release 2.0) currently on their scope for delivery and assessment in the ACT
2. who has provided a quote to the applicant for the delivery of training, assessment and certification
3. with a current ACT Training Initiative Funding Agreement with the ACT Government
4. who has agreed in writing to issue statements of attainment to eligible participants and be responsible for the training and assessment meeting the national registration requirements of ASQA.

Non-accredited foundation skills modules

Non-accredited foundation skills modules refer to training and assessment activities designed to develop the learning, reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy, and employability skills underpinning participation in VET and work.

Each proposed non-accredited foundation skills module may be considered for funding if it:

1. is selected according to the learning and pathway needs of project participants
2. maps to an outcome (a.k.a. element of competency) of an accredited FSK unit of competency.

Elements of competency describe the outcomes of the significant activities and tasks that make up a unit of competency. Elements describe demonstrable and assessable actions or outcomes.

An example of three modules that map to three elements of competency is provided in the table below:

Unit of competency	Elements of competency	Module
Participate in work placement	Plan to participate in work placement	Plan to participate in work placement
	Undertake work placement	Undertake work placement
	Finalise and review participation	Finalise and review participation

Units of competency in the FSK Training Package have been aligned to the ACSF from very basic skills at pre level 1 to high level skills at level 5. The ACSF provides a systematic approach to benchmarking, monitoring and reporting on core skills performance.

More information on the ACSF can be found at [Australian Core Skills Framework - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](https://www.dese.gov.au/australian-core-skills-framework)

The intention of requiring non-accredited foundation skills training to use the same framework as the FSK Training Package is to ensure projects deliver high quality, outcomes-focused learning and assessment activities.

Projects may contextualise modules to reflect local skill needs. Contextualisation could involve additions or amendments to the module to suit delivery methods, learner profiles, and/or job or work placement requirements. Any contextualisation must ensure the integrity of the outcome of the module is maintained.

5.5.3 Wrap-around support services

Wrap-around support services include:

- tailoring of training activities to meet the learning needs of individuals
- modified equipment for participants with special needs
- physical resources, food and transport to support participation
- childcare to support participation
- adjustments to address constraints related to health, or family and work commitments
- counselling and mentoring to support participation and transitions
- modified assessment processes and techniques:
 - for distance-based learners
 - to be culturally appropriate and suitable to the communication skill level, language, literacy and numeracy capacity of the participant
 - for the work the participant is preparing for or performing.

A range of wrap-around support services may be considered for funding where the applicant demonstrates they are:

1. relevant to identified learner needs, barriers and/or pathway intentions
2. not available elsewhere
3. necessary and reasonable to allow individuals to have equal access to training and assessment.

5.6 What will not be considered for funding

The following will not be considered for funding:

1. the delivery of full qualifications

2. the delivery of skill sets or units of competency from training packages other than the FSK Training Package
3. duplicative services already being funded in the ACT
4. applicant's or subcontractor's existing services unless additional outcomes can be demonstrated
5. wages or financial incentives for participants, including payments for work experience placements
6. costs associated with voluntary labour and in-kind support
7. purchasing of real estate
8. capital equipment to assist with the ongoing operation of the applicant or subcontractor
9. requests for routine maintenance, replacement or repair work
10. staff travel and accommodation expenses
11. requests for retrospective funding
12. expenses incurred prior to signing the deed of grant.

5.7 Application process

Applications including all support material, must be made through the online grants portal at <https://CMTEDD.smartygrants.com.au/2023-24ACE>

The Smarty Grants weblink will be available from 9am on 10 August 2023 and will remain open until 5:00 pm on 21 September 2023.

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 evaluation panel, unless requested by Skills Canberra or the evaluation panel. Applicants will be provided with a receipt at the time of lodgement.

Applications must be received by the due time and date, as outlined on the online portal. Late applications will not be accepted.

If you do not comply with the above eligibility requirements, your application will not be assessed for funding.

5.8 Request extension of application timeline

Any request for extension should be sent to: skills.projects@act.gov.au two business days prior closing date. The request will be reviewed, and requestor will be notified.

6 Assessment

6.1 Stage 1: eligibility assessment

When Skills Canberra receives your application, it will be checked to ensure eligibility for funding (refer to Item 5 for eligibility requirements).

6.2 Stage 2: assessment by evaluation panel

All eligible applications are then provided to an evaluation panel to be rated. The assessment panel is chaired by a senior staff member of Skills Canberra.

Each application will be assessed against the guidelines and assessment criteria in the application form.

In addition, the assessment panel will consider the application as a whole and make an assessment as to the merit of the application in meeting the aims and objectives of the assessment round and its overall ability to address priority issues for the ACT community.

Applications meeting all the general eligibility requirements will be assessed against the following criteria related to the primary objective and outcomes of the 2023-24 ACT ACE Grants program.

Assessment criteria	
Demonstrated need	The need for the project in the targeted community is demonstrated. Consultation with the targeted community is recommended.
Demonstrated benefits	The expected benefits of the project have been clearly demonstrated. The proposed project contributes to the primary objective specified in Item 2 and the outcomes specified in Item 3.
Value for money	The level of funding requested is proportionate to the project outcomes and benefits. In the context of the entire project, the timing of the project, the amount of requested funding and the planned expenditure demonstrates a sound investment.
Demonstrated capacity	The applicant has demonstrated their capability to deliver the project and described previous experience delivering similar projects. The applicant organisation has effective relationships and networks with other organisations who can support the project and the transition of participants into further training and/or employment.
Overall application quality	The application must provide sufficient information for the panel to make an informed assessment.

Even though an application may meet the above criteria, approval will depend on the number of applications received, the relative merit of the application, government priorities and available funds.

Project funding allocations will be determined during this stage of the assessment process and may be adjusted by Skills Canberra, in negotiation with the applicant. Skills Canberra cannot guarantee applicants will receive their full requested funding amount for the project.

6.3 Stage 3: Ministerial approval

Recommendation for funding will then be made to the Minister for Skills for final approval. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application as soon as possible after Ministerial approval has been given. Skills Canberra is unable to provide feedback on the outcome of your application prior to the conclusion of the assessment process.

7 Accepting a grant

7.1 Grant requirements and payment process

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a deed of grant with the ACT Government setting out the terms and conditions for which funding will be provided, including acquittal requirements within the agreed timeframe.

Successful applicants will receive a notification from Skills Canberra with a deed of grant attached and instructions for the payment process.

Payments can take up to 30 days to process following the execution of the deed of grant and upon receipt of an invoice.

7.2 Conditions of funding

1. The declaration on the application form certifies all information provided in the application is true and correct. Action may be taken for repayment of any grant made where information contained in the application is subsequently found to be false or the grant is not used for its approved purpose.
2. All organisations are accountable for funds received from Skills Canberra and must adhere to all conditions and guidelines of the 2023-24 ACT ACE Grants program.
3. All organisations must provide suitable acknowledgment for the financial support provided by the ACT governments under this program, as outlined in the deed of grant.
4. All organisations receiving public funding from Skills Canberra must comply with the ACT Government policy on equal employment opportunity.
5. All organisations must be able to demonstrate every effort is being made to ensure the principles of access and equity are guiding the development of the organisation and any programs it conducts.
6. All organisations receiving 2023-24 ACT ACE Grants program funding from Skills Canberra need to be aware deeds of grant must be executed by 15 December 2023 and the announcement of successful applicants will be released in January 2024.
7. Successful applicants will need to seek written approval from Skills Canberra to make any variation to the project, as detailed in the application form and deed of grant. Requests to amend the scope of the project need to be addressed to the Executive Branch Manager, Skills Canberra, clearly outlining why the change of purpose is

required. Organisations should not assume a change of purpose request will be approved. Request should be emailed to skills.projects@act.gov.au

7.2.1 Subcontracting conditions of funding

Successful applicants with approval from Skills Canberra to subcontract any funded activity have the following additional conditions:

1. Only one organisation can be identified as the lead organisation and the lead organisation must be the successful (not-for-profit) grant applicant.
2. Grant funds will only be paid to the lead organisation.
3. They must provide Skills Canberra with evidence the subcontractor agrees with the roles and responsibilities assigned to them in the project plan.

7.3 Goods and services tax (GST)

GST is payable to organisations receiving financial assistance under this 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.

For successful applicant organisations, Skills Canberra will gross up the grant by 10 per cent, if registered for GST and after receipt of a tax invoice. Organisations not registered for GST will not have their grants grossed up.

7.4 Publication

All successful applicants, their proposed activity and the funded amount will be published on the Skills Canberra website.

8 Reporting and acquittal of funding

8.1 Reporting

All successful applicant organisations must complete and submit half-yearly progress reports to Skills Canberra via SmartyGrants in the format stated in the deed of grant.

An example of a participant progress report can be found on Skills Canberra's grants website.

8.2 Acquittal of funding

All successful applicant organisations must expend the funds within the timeframes nominated in the deed of grant of the 2023-24 ACT ACE Grants program.

A task to complete the acquittal will be set-up in SmartyGrants once the deed is executed. The user of the system will receive a notification to complete the task.

When you have expended the funds, please log on to SmartyGrants <https://www.smartygrants.com.au> and complete the acquittal process. Use the same username and password to log in you used to register with SmartyGrants when you applied for the grant.

Within three months after the termination date of the grant period, the successful recipients must provide Skills Canberra completed acquittal and expenditure

documentation clearly identifying the income and expenditure of the grant signed by the official auditor of the organisation.

No further financial assistance will be provided until all outstanding grants provided by Skills Canberra (except for active projects) have been successfully acquitted, including financial acquittals for any other ACT Government agency grant, and organisations are compliant under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*.

9 Important information for applicants

9.1 Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format—such as large print or audio—please telephone Access Canberra Contact Centre on 13 22 81.

If English is not your first language and you require the translating and interpreting services, please telephone 131 450.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the National Relay Service, please telephone 131 677 then ask for 133 427.

9.2 When to submit your application

- Applications open 9am Thursday 10 August 2023.
- Applications close 5pm Thursday 21 September 2023.

Late applications will not be accepted.

9.3 How to submit your application

All applications must be submitted via the online program application form at <https://CMTEDD.smartygrants.com.au/2023-24ACE>.

Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted.

You will need to create a log in to begin your application and you may begin anywhere in the application form. Please ensure you save as you go.

SmartyGrants provides an online help guide for applicants. This guide will explain the essential steps you need to take to complete and submit your application form. The help guide is accessible at:

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

If you have any questions about the program guidelines and/or eligibility requirements, please contact the Skills Canberra Grants and Projects team on 62054006 or email skills.projects@act.gov.au

If you are having difficulty in accessing the online application form or if an error occurs, please contact the Business Services team for assistance on email EconomicDevelopmentGrantsandProcurement@act.gov.au.

9.3.1 Navigating (moving through) the grants application form

On the right-hand side of every screen, there is a box which links directly to every page of the application. Click on any page to jump directly to that page. You can also click 'next page' or 'previous page' on the top or bottom of each page to move forward or backward through the application.

9.3.1 Saving your draft application and returning

You can press 'save' at any point and log out. When you log back in, your draft application will be saved and you can start where you left off.

9.3.1 Submitting your application

The submit button is on the final page. You will not be able to submit your application until all the questions are completed.

9.3.1 Attachments and support documents

You may wish to upload/submit attachments to support your application. For some categories you will have to include attachments. This is very simple but requires you to have the documents saved on your computer, on a zip drive, or similar. If you are not able to upload a document, please contact the program officer for support.

9.3.1 Completing an application in a group/team

Several people can work on an application using the same log in details provided only one person is working on the application at any given time. Ensure you save as you go.

Once you have completed your application form it will be submitted to the Skills Canberra ACT ACE Grants program officer.

PLEASE NOTE: The ACT ACE Grants program officer is unable to view your application until it is submitted. All supporting documentation must be submitted with the grant application.

You can upload supporting documentation to your application form on the page after the declaration and privacy statement.

If you submit your application and then realise you forgot to add an attachment, and it is before the deadline, the Business Services team can re-open the form for you. If you have any technical difficulties, you need to contact the Business Services team for assistance on (02) 6207 1080 during business hours or email EconomicDevelopmentGrantsandProcurement@act.gov.au before the deadline for applications.

9.4 Addendum

Any additional information provided by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate as part of the 2023-24 ACT Grants program will be posted online at Skills Canberra's Grants webpage.

In addition, all applicants that have started or submitted an online application form will be notified by email to the address registered with SmartyGrants.

9.5 Confidentiality

All material submitted to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate is provided in confidence. However, the ACT Government may promote successful applicants for the mutual benefit of the grants program and the applicant. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without permission.

However, applicants should be aware that the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* apply to documents in the Office'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
4. be told of the outcome.

10 Further information

For more information on the program guidelines, eligibility requirements or to lodge a complaint, please contact one of the Skills Canberra Grants and Projects team's contact officers on:

Phone: 6205 4006

Email: skills.projects@act.gov.au

If you are having difficulty in accessing the online application form or if an error occurs, please contact the Business Services team for assistance:

Email: EconomicDevelopmentGrantsandProcurement@act.gov.au