Train Now Fund ST061 August 2023

Grant Program Guidelines





Contents

ı.	Fund aim		
2.	Elig	gibility criteria	.3
2	.1.	Eligible training that meets immediate or unexpected needs	4
2	.2.	Ineligible Activities	. 4
2	.3.	Ineligible Learners	. 4
3.	Ass	sessment criteria	.5
3	.1.	Supporting evidence	. 7
4.	Tin	meframes	.7
5.	Α p	plication process	8.
6.	Cal	lculating Training Costs	8.
6	.1.	Subsidy prices	. 8
6	.2.	Employer contribution to training costs	9
6	.3.	Learner contribution	9
7.	Ass	sessment and funding allocation	.9
7	.1.	Funding allocation	0
8.	Gra	ant application outcomesl	
8	.1.	Grant Deeds for successful applicantsI I	
8	.2.	Training commencement and completion timelinesl	
8	.3.	Reporting and paymentsl	
9.	Αp	pealing a decisionl	2
10.	Tax	xation and financial implicationsl	2
11.	Adı	ministration and contact detailsl	2
I	1.1.	Publicity of grant assistancel	13
		tht to informationl	3
13.	Co	nfidentialityl	3
		rsonal information protectionl	
		sclosurel	
			4

I. Fund aim

The 2023 Train Now Fund (Fund) provides grants for Skills Tasmania Endorsed registered training organisations (RTOs) to deliver nationally recognised training that meets:

- an immediate or unexpected industry or enterprise training need, and/or
- an immediate or unexpected learner training need in a particular region or for a particular cohort.

The Fund supports nationally recognised training and assessment services to deliver single unit and multi-unit skill sets to existing workers and/or jobseekers. Training must commence within three months of the start of the Grant Deed (Training Services) and training providers must aim to complete learners within six months.

The Fund is intended to fund training responses to rapidly changing needs and to complement the more strategic and longer-term funding provided under Skills Tasmania's Building a Skilled Workforce program.

The Fund is aligned with Skills Tasmania's Industry Partnerships Program and encourages partnerships, collaboration and innovation between RTOs and Tasmanian employers and industry groups to deliver:

- better quality training experiences for Tasmanian learners, and
- improved responsiveness of the training system to meet industry and business needs.

The Train Now Fund supports the Tasmanian Government's commitment to develop Industry Skills Compacts that will improve industry engagement and support stronger partnerships between RTOs and industry in the training and workforce development system. The Fund also aligns with the *Ministerial Priorities for the Training and Workforce Development System*, including being responsive to the needs of employers, and ensuring training and skills investment is aligned with industry needs.

A total of \$1 million in funding is available for allocation under the 2023-24 round of the Fund and is available until funds are fully allocated.

The Fund is administered by Skills Tasmania, a division in the Department of State Growth that manages the Government-funded training and workforce development system in Tasmania in partnership with industry, training providers and employers, as set out in the *Training and Workforce Development Act 2013* (the Act).

Responding to rapidly changing need

Improving the responsiveness of the training system to meet industry and business needs is a key commitment outlined in the *Ministerial Priorities for the Training and Workforce Development System* and is reflected in issues raised in Industry Skills Compacts.

Training providers say that grant funding rounds released only once or twice a year can make it difficult for them to respond to immediate or unexpected needs in between.

Many employers and businesses must deal with unexpected requirements such as new regulations, shifts in their external operating environment (including things like pandemic, war, market shifts, new technologies or disruptive approaches from competitors), or compliance audit requirements (for example under NDIS). There are also training needs in regions or for particular cohorts of learners to take advantage of emerging job opportunities.

2. Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet the following eligibility criteria.

Train Now Fund 2	.023
Eligible Applicants	To be eligible to apply applicants must meet each of the following eligibility criteria both at the time of applying, and for the duration of any subsequent funding agreement:
	be a Skills Tasmania endorsed registered training organisation
	be financially viable, and
	have the qualification(s) and/or unit(s) of competency included on their scope of registration for delivery in Tasmania.
	TasTAFE is ineligible for funding under this Fund.
	Applicants must ensure that all eligibility requirements are met prior to submitting the application. If the application conditions or eligibility criteria are not met, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be assessed or considered for grant funding.
Eligible Activities	Funding is available for the delivery of nationally recognised training and assessment services in skill sets (both single and multi-unit) for existing workers and/or job seekers.
	The training must meet:
	an immediate or unexpected industry or enterprise training need, or
	an immediate or unexpected learner training need in a particular region or for a particular cohort.
	Further information on immediate or unexpected needs is included below in section 2.1.
Eligible Learners	Existing workers (employed on a self-employed, casual, part-time or full-time basis) and/or
	Job seekers (individuals out of work and individuals who are underemployed, which is defined as employed people who would prefer, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have, including part-time workers)
Grant conditions	 Learners must commence training within three months of the RTO entering a Grant Deed (Training Services) with the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) and aim to complete learners within 6 months. Applications to vary a Grant Deed (Training Services) will be assessed judiciously.
	An applicant must be financially viable for the duration of any grant made under the Fund. *
Funding amounts	Maximum requests of \$150,000 per application per purpose.
	Multiple funding applications for different purposes are permitted.
	Subsidy prices are set in accordance with the Skills Tasmania Subsidy Policy. Requests for a higher subsidy price will not be accepted.

* Financial Viability

An applicant must be financially viable for the duration of any grant made under the Fund. A financially viable entity is one that is not under external administration, is not being wound up, dissolved, or trading while insolvent nor where a liquidator has been appointed. To demonstrate financial viability the applicant must be able to demonstrate the ability to generate sufficient income to meet operating costs, debt commitments and, where applicable, to allow for growth while maintaining service levels.

2.1. Eligible training that meets immediate or unexpected needs

The Fund is intended to fund training responses to rapidly changing needs and to complement the strategic and longer-term funding provided under Skills Tasmania's Building a Skilled Workforce program.

Eligible activity includes training that meets:

- an immediate or unexpected industry or enterprise training need, and/or
- an immediate or unexpected learner training need in a particular region or for a particular cohort.

Examples of an immediate or unexpected need include:

- New or recently identified regulations or requirements
- Remedial action required by an audit or review (for example under NDIS)
- Unexpected shifts in external operating environments (including things like pandemic, war, market shifts, new technologies or disruptive approaches from competitors)
- Immediate or unexpected opportunities for a particular learner cohort (for example a new business opening and needing staff)
- Immediate or unexpected opportunities in a particular region.

2.2. Ineligible Activities

The following activities are not eligible to be funded under the Train Now Fund

- Non-nationally recognised training
- Nationally recognised training in full qualifications
- Training that is expected to commence more than 3 months into the future
- Training that does not respond to an immediate enterprise, learner or industry level training need
- Planned training demand that is better serviced by the Building a Skilled Workforce Program.

2.3. Ineligible Learners

Learners are not eligible for a place under the Train Now Fund if they are:

- currently enrolled at a Tasmanian school, as defined by the Education Act 2016
- currently funded for the same training by another funding source, or
- employees of a Tasmanian government agency as defined in the Skills Tasmania Policy Statement -Employer Eligibility - Subsidising Employees of Government Organisations.

Information about eligibility for visa holders is available on the Skills Tasmania website.

3. Assessment criteria

Applicants must address each of the following selection criteria to demonstrate how their funding request will successfully support the aims of the Fund. The information and evidence provided by the applicant will be assessed and scored by a Skills Tasmania.

Criterion

Higher assessment scores when projects:

Criterion I - Training need and alignment with Government priorities (weighting 45%)

- A. Demonstrated **immediate or unexpected** need for training and why the need is immediate or unexpected 35%
- B. Alignment with Government priorities 10%Questions
 - A. What is the need for training and why is the need immediate or unexpected? How will the training you propose to deliver address that need?
 - B. How does the training align with Government priorities?

- ✓ Demonstrated immediate or unexpected need for training
- ✓ Clear alignment between need and training response (including the number of requested places supported by evidence of need)
- Alignment with Government priorities, including Ministerial Priorities, industry compacts, sectors and occupations of high value to the Tasmanian economy.

Your answers to the questions in the application form will be the primary assessment, however the following evidence may support and enhance your score.

- ✓ Demonstrated need for the training which may include a letter from an employer, industry group, or Regional Jobs Hub provider demonstrating need and number of training places.
- ✓ Evidence relating to the immediate or unexpected nature of the need, such as audit reports, changed legislation, or other supporting data.

Criterion 2 – Quality delivery (weighting 40%)

Evidence of delivering high quality learner and employer outcomes, connection with employers and compliance

A. Learner outcomes – Learner needs are met and they receive a high-quality training experience, including appropriate learner support (15%).

Questions:

Provide an example of how you have previously ensured learner needs were met and they achieved the outcomes they were seeking. Include reference to providing necessary learner support services.

What were the challenges and how did you resolve them?

A. Learner Outcomes

- ✓ Demonstration that previous learner needs have been met, learners are satisfied with the training services provided, and learners achieve employment outcomes or progress to further training or education.
- ✓ Learners' training support needs are identified and monitored for any change; learners are provided with access to the necessary training support services to undertake and achieve the relevant training and assessment.

Criterion		Higher assessment scores when projects:			
		Your answers to the questions in the application form will be the primary assessment, however the following evidence may support and enhance your score. ✓ Recent Learner questionnaires report, positive NCVER Student Outcomes Survey results, if available			
B.	Employer outcomes – Employers are satisfied with the training services accessed and the services meet their need (15%) Questions: Provide an example of how you have previously ensured employer needs were met and achieved the outcomes they were seeking. What were the challenges and how did you resolve them?	 B. Employer outcomes ✓ Demonstration that employers are satisfied with the training services delivered and that the services meet their needs and the needs of their employees. ✓ Demonstration that training is responsive to industry and business needs – for example flexibility, contextualisation of training, partnerships and collaboration on training. ✓ Understanding of why training is needed, and detailed specific strategies to ensure outcomes for proposed skill sets. Your answers to the questions in the application form will be the primary assessment, however the following evidence may support and enhance your score. ✓ Recent employer questionnaire results 			
C.	Compliance – a good record of compliance with Tasmanian Government (Skills Tasmania) grant requirements and Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) requirements (10%) Question: Describe your previous record of compliance with Skills Tasmania grant requirements and ASQA requirements. Note that Skills Tasmania reserves the right to use information about the applicant's compliance with regulatory and contractual obligations to assess the application against this criterion.	 C. Compliance ✓ Previous accurate estimation of places (high take up rate), where available. ✓ No previous issues with compliance with the Skills Tasmania Agreement for all Programs or previous Grant Deeds (Training Services). ✓ ASQA has not taken any adverse regulatory actions against the RTO. 			
Cr	Criterion 3 – Capacity to deliver (weighting 15%)				

A. Capacity to deliver **quickly** (within the timeframe) the number of places requested in the context of other funding and training commitments. (15%)

Question:

How will you ensure you can quickly deliver the training (the number of places requested)

- Have a clear plan to enrol learners, deliver training and ensure completions that is realistic and achievable.
- ✓ Timeframes complement other committed training or funding.
- Demonstrate sufficient organisational capacity to deliver the training services (including, but not limited to, key personnel, marketing, delivering

Criterion	Higher assessment scores when projects:
considering Skills Tasmania and other funding and training commitments?	training and assessment services and reporting, facilities and resources). ✓ Appropriate risk management plan for ensuring training is started and completed on time that identifies key barriers and suggests contingencies.

3.1. Supporting evidence

Applicants are encouraged to attach evidence to support any claims made. Where there is no evidence to support claims made or the information provided in the application, the assessment score will be affected. Any evidence provided must be attached to the relevant criterion, should have a clear document title and be referred to in the text in the application addressing the related criterion.

Evidence could include:

- Demonstrated support for the training which may include a letter from an employer, industry group, or Regional Jobs Hub provider indicating support for the training and/or the RTO, and the number of training places requested.
- Documentation evidencing partnerships or collaboration (including from Regional Jobs Hubs).
- Evidence supporting claims on learner and employment outcomes, such as learner questionnaire results, positive NCVER Student Outcomes Survey results, employer survey results.
- Any other evidence supporting the application (such as audit reports, changed legislation, data identifying numbers of affected businesses and people, waiting lists, expressions of interest).

4. Timeframes

No applications will be accepted after the closing date and time.

There is a limited budget for this Fund. Applications will be assessed as they are received. Applications submitted late in the period may risk funds already being fully allocated.

Fund Now Fund				
Fund opens	31 August 2023 10:00am			
Fund closes	Applications can be submitted at any time before 30 June 2024 at 2:00pm, or until funds are fully allocated.			
Apply online	Apply for the Train Now Fund online using SmartyGrants here:			
	https://skills.smartygrants.com.au/trainnowfund			
	One application is required per learner type (existing worker or jobseeker)			
Outcomes of application	Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application within two weeks of lodgement.			
	The decision will be final, and applicants will not be able to re-apply with the same request.			
	Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with an opportunity to receive feedback on their application.			

5. Application process

Applications must be submitted using the SmartyGrants online grant management system.

Applicants must register with SmartyGrants before making an application. There is a Help Guide for Applicants available from Smarty Grants. This can be accessed via the SmartyGrants website at: https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/.

This is a competitive, merit-based process. Meeting the eligibility criteria will not automatically result in a successful outcome.

- Applicants should read the Grant Program Guidelines carefully before starting an application. The
 application form is designed to help structure applicants' responses to the eligibility and assessment criteria
 as set out in the Guidelines.
- 2. Applicants should complete and lodge an application online via SmartyGrants.
 - There will be no opportunity to change an application or provide further information to support it once it has been submitted. Applicants should, therefore, ensure that all supporting documentation provided is accurate and is attached correctly before submitting.
 - Following the submission of the application via SmartyGrants, applicants will receive an automatic receipt of their application. This receipt will include details of the application and a unique application ID.
- 3. Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria. Information supplied by applicants may be subject to authenticity checks using third party software prior to being submitted for assessment. Skills Tasmania also reserves the right to use information about the RTO's compliance with regulatory and contractual obligations to assess applications against criteria.
- 4. Final approval will be determined by General Manager, Skills and Workforce. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application once the final approval process is complete.

6. Calculating Training Costs

6.1. Subsidy prices

Skills Tasmania pays a subsidy towards the total cost of training and assessment services in Tasmania. The subsidy is based on a rate of \$7.50 per nominal training hour. A Field of Education (FOE) weighting is applied to reflect different costs to deliver qualifications. Loadings are available for delivery to particular learner cohorts or in regional areas, as determined by the Skills Tasmania Policy Statement – Tasmania Training Subsidy Policy.

Applicants must use the Skills Tasmania – Train Now Fund subsidy calculator to determine the subsidy we will pay for each learner. Applicants cannot request a different price to the Skills Tasmania subsidy. The subsidy calculator is available within the SmartyGrants application form.

A skill set subsidy price is based on the qualification level. If the units in the skill set come from more than one qualification, the qualification from which most of the units are sourced determines the FOE. If there are a mix of units across multiple qualifications, the intent of the skill set and the employer industry determines the FOE.

6.1.1. Applying set loadings

Set loadings are also available to deliver to particular learner cohorts or delivery regions. Loadings are available for learners who are long-term unemployed; living with physical or learning disability; or have English as a second language. Loadings are also available where training is to be delivered in a regional area. For more information on loadings and the rates applicable, see the *Skills Tasmania Policy Statement – Tasmania Training Subsidy Policy*. Applicants can select more than one applicable loading as part of the application process and may be required to provide evidence to justify a loading request.

6.2. Employer contribution to training costs

Where the learner is a job seeker, there is no employer contribution required.

Where the learner is an existing worker, the business owner/employing organisation must pay a contribution to the cost of training. This payment is made directly to the RTO.

Contributions will be based on the size of the organisation(s) named in the application. For information on co-contribution rates, refer to the *Skills Tasmania Policy Statement – Tasmania Training Subsidy Policy*. It is important to also read the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) Grant Deed (Training Services) regarding the payment and collection of the co-contribution.

6.3. Learner contribution

Training and assessment services must be provided fee-free for jobseeker learners supported by this Fund. Skills Tasmania expects applicants to consider this as part of its requested subsidy.

Applicants may charge existing workers fees for training and assessment services. These fees are to be collected by the RTO and are considered separate to the Government subsidy contribution from Skills Tasmania.

7. Assessment and funding allocation

All eligible applications will be assessed against the selection criteria by independent assessors. Applications will be awarded a score for each of the criteria and weightings are then applied. During the selection process, the Grant Program Manager may seek to clarify details with the applicant.

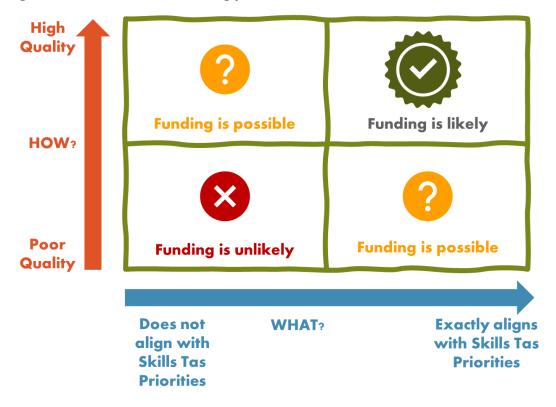
The assessment criteria for the Fund align with the two key components (summarised as 'WHAT' and 'HOW') of Skills Tasmania's funding prioritisation framework (see Figure 1):

- 'WHAT' training will be delivered; how it aligns with industry, employer, learner and community needs and Government priorities; and the RTO's capacity to deliver the training.
- 'HOW training will be delivered capturing training provider quality delivery and compliance (based on previous outcomes).

When applicants who have previously demonstrated high quality delivery propose to deliver training that closely aligns with Skills Tasmania priorities and meets industry, employer, learner and community needs, they are more likely to score higher and be funded.

The assessors' recommendations are considered and approved by the General Manager, Skills and Workforce.

Figure 1: Skills Tasmania funding prioritisation framework



7.1. Funding allocation

Skills Tasmania aims to maximise the public benefits and outcomes for the Tasmanian community in any funding round. Funding is recommended for an equitable mix of applications that satisfactorily address the assessment criteria, and together cover a mix of Tasmanian regions and industries.

Skills Tasmania reserves the right to offer applicants an adjusted number of places. This is particularly likely where the demand for funding is significantly larger than the allocated budget for the fund.

Applicants may be offered a lower number of places where:

- Multiple training providers request funding for similar training
- There is a significant number of training places to be offered in one (or adjoining) regions
- One training provider has requested funding for a very large number of training places.

The following factors may be considered in the final allocation of places:

- Previous performance of meeting Skills Tasmania requirements
- Total scores from assessment criteria.

8. Grant application outcomes

Applicants will receive advice about the outcome of their application within two weeks of application.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with an opportunity to receive written feedback on their application and are free to reapply for future grant rounds or for different purposes within this same grant round. Applications that have been rejected cannot be resubmitted.

8.1. Grant Deeds for successful applicants

Applicants that are approved for a grant will be required to enter into a Department of State Growth, Skills Tasmania Grant Deed (Training Services), on behalf of the Crown in Right of Tasmania.

Breaches of a grant condition/s may lead to amendment or cancellation of the RTO's Grant Deed.

The details of all successful applicants will be published on the Skills Tasmania website.

8.2. Training commencement and completion timelines

It is a condition of the Train Now Fund that training in all places must commence within three months of signing of the Grant Deed.

It is a condition of the Train Now Fund that training be completed within six months of commencement.

The 'training can commence from' and 'training in all places must commence by' dates will be identified in the Grant Deed (Training Services). RTOs can apply to change the 'training in all places must commence by date' by submitting a request to the Train Now Fund email address: TrainNowFund@skills.tas.gov.au.

8.3. Reporting and payments

8.3.1. Reporting

RTOs with a Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) Grant Deed (Training Services) are required to report training activity data to Skills Tasmania monthly.

The training activity data submitted by the RTO must be in accordance with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS). This section of the Skills Tasmania website provides more information regarding reporting: Reporting my activity.

If an RTO receives funding for a custom multi-unit skill set, this must be reported in the same manner as a Full Qualification or Nationally Recognised Skill Set (i.e. activity must be reported in both the NAT00120 and NAT00130). In order to facilitate reporting, all custom multi-unit skill sets must be assigned a name by the applicant and a code will be assigned by Skills Tasmania, which is to be reported in the same way as a qualification code (e.g. CHC33015 - Certificate III in Individual Support). This means that custom multi-unit skill set completions must be reported in the NAT 130, as well as the corresponding NAT 120.

8.3.2. Grant payments

Grant payments are based on RTOs submitting validated AVETMISS learner activity data to Skills Tasmania.

Details on payment arrangements can be found in the AVETMISS Payments, Reporting and VET Research and Evaluation section of the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) Grant Deed (Training Services).

Payment arrangements for custom multi-unit skill sets are identical to the payment structure for a full qualification.

9. Appealing a decision

The appeals process is designed to ensure that all applicants have been treated fairly and consistently in applying for Department of State Growth grants. The Department will consider appeals relating to administrative process issues in grants management.

All requests must be in writing and should be addressed to the Director of the business unit where the application was assessed.

Your request must be received within 28 days from the date of the Department of State Growth notifying you of the decision about your application. For further information about the process, contact the Grant Program Manager via email at TrainNowFund@skills.tas.gov.au or phone (03) 6165 6060.

10. Taxation and financial implications

Grants that deliver vocational education and training services are not subject to Goods and Services Tax (GST). For more information, contact the Australian Tax Office.

The receipt of funding from this program may be treated as income by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

It is strongly recommended that, prior to submitting an application, potential applicants seek independent advice from a tax advisor, financial advisor and/or the ATO, about the possible tax implications for receiving the grant.

II.Administration and contact details

The program will be administered by the Department of State Growth on behalf of the Crown in the Right of Tasmania. Contact the Grant Program Manager via email at TrainNowFund@skills.tas.gov.au or phone (03) 6165 6060.

All applicants must take care to provide true and accurate information. Any information that is found to be false or misleading may result in action being taken and grant funds, if already provided, will be required to be repaid to the department.

11.1. Publicity of grant assistance

The Department of State Growth disburses public funds and is therefore accountable for the distribution of those funds. As part of the accountability process, the department may publicise the level of financial assistance, the identity of the recipient, the purpose of the financial assistance, and any other details considered by the department to be appropriate.

The names of successful RTO applicants and the training programs approved for each RTO will be made publicly available on the Skills Tasmania website.

12. Right to information

Information provided to the Department of State Growth may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the Right to Information Act 2009.

13. Confidentiality

The Tasmanian Government may use and disclose the information provided by applicants for the purposes of discharging its respective functions under the Program Guidelines and otherwise for the purposes of the program and related uses.

The department may also:

- 1. Use information received in applications for any other departmental business.
- 2. Use information received in applications and during the delivery of training for reporting purposes.
- 3. Use third party software to review information received in applications to confirm its authenticity.

14. Personal information protection

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act 2004.

This information may be accessed by the individual to whom it related, on request to the Department of State Growth. A fee for this service may be charged.

15. Disclosure

The following applies to all successful applicants:

- Despite any confidentiality or intellectual property right subsisting in the grant funding agreement or deed, a party may publish all or any part of the grant funding agreement or deed without reference to another party.
- Please note that all obligations under the Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas) and the Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth) still apply.

16.Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Crown in Right of Tasmania, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document, and any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk absolutely.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that are in any way related to the program.



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