

Flying Start

Multi-Disciplinary Workforce Localised Capacity Building Grants

Grant guidelines

March 2026





Acknowledgement of Country

From the heart:

We acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples as the First peoples of South Australia and as custodians of the lands, waters, skies and communities where we live, learn and raise children.

We recognise Aboriginal peoples as having the longest living culture, raising children safe and strong in their identity, Community, Culture, and Connection to Country.

We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present, and their role as the first knowledge sharers for children. We follow in their footsteps.

Aboriginal peoples, working with and for children, are central in shaping our work. Their wisdom, advice, and guidance enrich our practices, creating a more inclusive and culturally safe environment for children and families.

We respect Aboriginal peoples' ways of being doing and wise practices guiding our continual learning.

Together we walk and build stronger, more supportive communities for all children.

Terminology

In South Australia, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which the staff of the Government of South Australia works. We respect preference to use the term 'Aboriginal peoples' to acknowledge in written and spoken language both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	1
Terminology	1
Key information	3
Key dates	3
Background.....	4
Purpose of the Grants.....	4
Grant objective.....	4
Available funding.....	5
Who can apply	5
Allied health workforce areas supported by the program.....	6
Types of initiatives that may be funded	6
Activities that may be funded.....	6
Initiatives and activities that will not be funded.....	7
Funding conditions.....	7
How to apply	7
Applications	7
Submitting your application	8
Support.....	8
Assessment process.....	8
Assessment criteria table	9
Grant management.....	9
Grant agreement	9
Payment information.....	9
Reporting requirements	9
Timeframes	10
Confidential information	10
Contact.....	10





These guidelines set out the funding requirements for the Localised Capacity Building Grants program - an initiative of the South Australian Early Childhood Multi-Disciplinary Workforce Strategy (2025-2027).

The Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) is responsible for administering the program.

Key information

Name of the program:	Multi-Disciplinary Workforce Localised Capacity Building Grants
Funding Available:	Funding will support multiple grants of up to \$200,000 each.
Type of Funding:	One-off grants of 18-month duration
Eligible Organisations:	<p>The following organisations are eligible where services are delivered in very remote, remote, outer regional, SEIFA 1 or SEIFA 2 areas of South Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preschool Boost suppliers*• Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs)• Department for Education (DfE) (Student Support Services)• Local Health Networks (LHNs) <p>* Refers to Preschool Boost suppliers who have indicated on the Preschool Boost Menu they can service very remote, remote, outer regional, SEIFA 1 or SEIFA 2 areas of South Australia.</p>

Key dates

Applications open	Friday 13 March 2026
Applications close	Wednesday 22 April 2026
Notification of outcomes	May 2026
End of Grant funding	December 2027

Anticipated dates listed in the table above may change.



Background

In response to the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care, the Office for the Early Childhood Development (OECD) was established as the system steward. Its role is to position South Australia as a national leader in early childhood development, enhancing the wellbeing of children, reducing vulnerability, and improving outcomes across the state.

Building on strategies such as the [South Australia's Early Childhood Workforce Strategy](#) and the [Aboriginal Early Childhood Workforce Strategy](#), the OECD has strengthened the scale, capability, and diversity of the early childhood workforce.

To further support children's development, the [South Australian Early Childhood Multi-Disciplinary Workforce Strategy \(2025–2027\)](#) was launched in late 2025. This strategy aims to create a sustainable, connected workforce by fostering collaboration between educators, teachers, and allied health professionals, including speech therapists, psychologists, occupational therapists, and social workers.

By developing a multi-disciplinary network of support around children, the strategy seeks to reduce developmental vulnerability and improve early childhood outcomes.

Workforce shortages, limited access to essential services - particularly in regional and remote areas - and fragmented collaboration across professional groups are key challenges that the strategy is designed to address.

Purpose of the Grants

The Localised Capacity Building Grants Program forms part of the South Australian Early Childhood Multi-Disciplinary Workforce Strategy (2025–2027). This program provides targeted local grants to increase the supply of allied health workforces and strengthen their capacity to address developmental vulnerability in 3- and 4-year-old children in South Australia.

These grants are intended to expand student placements, strengthen graduate programs, and implement innovative employment opportunities for allied health students and professionals in early childhood settings.

Funded projects will contribute to building strong, sustainable, and locally responsive multidisciplinary relationships within early childhood settings across South Australian communities.

The Localised Capacity Building Grants Program compliments OECD's [Preschool Boost](#) program which provides funding to Flying Start partner early childhood services to purchase a range of evidence informed programs and supports, to do more to address developmental vulnerability.

Grant objective

- a) Increase the supply of the allied health workforce to do more to address developmental vulnerability in South Australia, in line with the objectives of Preschool Boost.
- b) Improve access to allied health supports for geographically isolated ECEC services, ensuring equitable benefit.





Available funding

Under the Multi-Disciplinary Workforce Localised Capacity Building Grants program, one-off 18-month grants are available.

The total budget for this program is \$2.1 million, with grants of up to \$200,000 available.

Grant funding will be distributed across the 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 financial years. It will be awarded based on a competitive assessment process. Funding is not guaranteed and will depend on the quality, merit, value for money and demonstrated local need of applications received. Some successful applications may receive partial funding where appropriate.

Applications must include costings to demonstrate anticipated grant spending that aligns with the program's purpose and objectives.

Who can apply

Funding will support projects delivered in South Australia located either in:

- a) an outer-regional, remote or very-remote area according to [ARIA+ classification](#)

OR

- b) a Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) with a SEIFA quintile of 1 or 2 on the [Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage \(IRSD\) 2021](#).

Organisations eligible for funding under this program must deliver services in very remote, remote, outer regional, SEIFA 1 or SEIFA 2 areas of South Australia, and include:

- Preschool Boost suppliers who have indicated on the Preschool Boost Menu they can service these locations.
- Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).
- Department for Education (DfE) with eligibility limited to Student Support Services operating in, or willing to travel to, these locations.
- Local Health Networks (LHNs) with eligibility limited to allied health professionals working in, or willing to travel to, these locations.

To be eligible for funding under this program, applications must also meet the conditions listed below.

- The applicant must have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
- The applicant must be currently operating within South Australia.
- The applicant must have the appropriate type and level of insurance, including at least \$10 million in public liability insurance.





Allied health workforce areas supported by the program

This program is designed to increase the supply of the workforce in specific allied health disciplines and roles. Proposals must focus on one or more of the following allied health workforce areas:

- Speech Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychology
- Physiotherapy
- Developmental Education
- Dietetics
- Social Work
- Allied Health Assistants
- Aboriginal Support workers

Other supporting disciplines may also be considered.

Types of initiatives that may be funded

Below are examples of possible initiatives that may be funded. These examples are indicative only and do not limit the scope of eligible proposals.

- New or increased placements of allied health students in early childhood settings.
- New or increased graduate programs for allied health professionals in early childhood settings.
- Innovative employment opportunities for allied health professionals in early childhood settings, including:
 - employment of final year allied health students/local staff working in allied health support roles or as allied health assistants in early childhood settings.
 - creation of a hybrid/shared employment model across suppliers.
- Innovative service delivery models in early childhood settings to support delivery by allied health professionals, such as use of allied health assistants.
- Upskilling and cross-skilling of the existing workforce who are not experienced working in early childhood settings.

Applicants are encouraged to collaborate and form partnership where appropriate; however collaborative applications/projects are not mandatory.

Activities that may be funded

Funding is available to cover various costs related to the application's proposed initiative(s). Here are some examples:

- Salary and staffing costs directly associated with the project
- Program development and implementation costs
- Upskilling and short course training
- Materials, resources and equipment required to onboard new staff
- Culturally responsive and inclusive practice activities to deepen understanding of implementation
- Reasonable travel





- Reasonable administrative costs directly tied to the project (e.g., data collection, reporting, evaluation).

Initiatives and activities that will not be funded

- Business-as-usual or compliance activities
- Initiatives or activities already funded through other sources
- Individual relocation costs or incentive payments
- Individualised coordination or provision of allied health profession services for specific children/families
- Capital works or infrastructure
- Retrospective costs
- Scholarships and course costs for individuals to undertake allied health degrees.

Funding conditions

- Applicants must agree to the requirements outlined in these guidelines.
- Applicants should only apply if they intend to accept a grant.
- If the application is selected for a grant, applicants must enter into a formal grant agreement.
- If the application is selected for a grant, the organisation listed as the applicant will be responsible for receiving and managing the grant funds and all grant reporting and acquittal obligations.
- Grant recipients must provide progress updates, a final report, and an acquittal form with supporting evidence, as per the grant agreement.
- Applicants must return any unspent grant funds, or grant funds not expended in accordance with the funding conditions.
- Applicants must accept responsibility for any costs exceeding the agreed funding amount or unforeseen expenditure. No additional grant funding will be provided.

How to apply

Applications

Applications must address all requirements outlined in these guidelines including the following:

- Clear evidence of eligibility.
- Succinct and suitable responses to all assessment criteria.
- A proposal that describes the initiatives planned to be undertaken over the grant period
- A list of key activities, including anticipated timeframes.





- A budget proposal outlining how grant funds will be used to implement the proposed initiatives.
- All requested documentation.

Late applications will only be accepted under extenuating circumstances at the discretion of OECD.

Submitting your application

Applications will be submitted via an online form, through [SmartyGrants](#)

Responses should be submitted on or before 22 April 2026.

Support

Various resources are available to help you prepare your grant application including:

- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [Information webinar](#)
- [Application checklist](#)

For help and advice please contact: OECD.ECWorkforceSupport@sa.gov.au.

For assistance with the SmartyGrants online application system, please:

- review the [SmartyGrants Help Guide](#) and [Applicant Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- contact SmartyGrants Support Desk (03) 9320 6888 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday
- email service@smartygrants.com.au

Assessment process

The grants available through this program are competitive. A series of grants will be awarded in very remote, remote, outer regional, SEIFA 1 and SEIFA 2 areas of South Australia. The OECD will review applications to ensure they are complete and meet all eligibility requirements outlined in these guidelines.

Eligible applications will then be assessed by the grant assessment panel against the assessment criteria listed in the table below. Each application will be scored and ranked based on the specified themes, criteria, and weightings.

The assessment panel will comprise of representatives from within the OECD.

Following assessment, the panel will make funding recommendations, which will be provided to the OECD Chief Executive for approval. All decisions regarding funding allocations are final and cannot be appealed.

Additional information or clarifications may be sought from applicants during the assessment process.

Applicants will be notified via email about their application's outcome. Please note the key dates for timeframes.



Assessment criteria table

Theme	Criteria	Weighting
Local need	The application demonstrates a clear local need for an increased supply of allied health workforces.	20%
Expected benefits	The application outlines the expected benefits of the proposed initiative for children, families, and early childhood services in targeted communities.	20%
Alignment with grant objectives	The application describes how the grant objectives will be achieved and how the proposed activities align with the broader objectives of Preschool Boost.	20%
Organisational capacity and readiness	The application demonstrates the organisational capacity to deliver the proposal, including evidence of workforce expertise, the scale and nature of their current Preschool Boost service delivery, and their readiness to commence within required timeframes.	15%
Value for money	The application represents value for money.	15%
Inclusiveness	The application provides examples of how the applicant organisation embeds inclusion, Aboriginal cultural responsiveness and broader cultural responsiveness, wellbeing and mental health.	10%

Grant management

Grant agreement

Successful applicants will enter into a grant agreement with the OECD.

Be prepared to provide all required information for a funding agreement to be arranged shortly after we communicate outcomes notifications.

Payment information

Payments will be provided at the times and in the manner specified in the grant agreement.

Payments will be subject to meeting all conditions of the grant agreement, including reporting requirements.

Reporting requirements

Grant recipients must meet ongoing program monitoring and reporting obligations, including:

- Submitting a **progress report** at the specified point during the grant term
- Submitting a **final report** just prior to the conclusion of the funding period



- Submitting a **funding acquittal document** at the conclusion of the funding period
- Participating in **progress meetings** with the program team
- Participating in **evaluation activities** or requests from the program team.

Reports must detail key activities conducted, along with summaries of outputs delivered and outcomes achieved.

Timeframes

Any activities proposed in an application must be completed within the grant duration.

Confidential information

If you believe that any information in your application should remain confidential or be regarded as commercial-in-confidence, you must clearly identify which information and the reason for its confidentiality.

Please be aware that the OECD must meet certain legislative, parliamentary and administrative accountability, as well as the transparency requirements of the Australian Government and the Government of South Australia. These responsibilities include public disclosure in accordance with state Department of the Premier and Cabinet policy.

The OECD will treat all information provided by applicants sensitively. Any information contained in or relating to an application, including information that you identify as confidential, may be disclosed by us:

- to our employees, advisers or third parties in order to evaluate and assess an application
- within the Government of South Australia or other entities where this serves OECD's legitimate interest
- in response to a request by a House or Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or South Australia
- if the application is successful, for promotion of project activities and outcomes
- where information is authorised or permitted by law to be disclosed
- where the information is already in the public domain.

Contact

If you have any questions or comments about this program you can get in contact with the Workforce Policy and Innovation team at OECD.ECWorkforceSupport@sa.gov.au.