



Disability Employment Centre of Excellence

Webinar Questions and Answers

1. How will the Centre of Excellence provide value for providers?

The Centre of Excellence will develop and deliver evidence based, best-practice, free and accessible resources, tools and training for employment services that are practical and digestible and influence practice. This will in return add value to providers and subsequently participants who engage with employment services. This will be tested as part of the future evaluation.

2. Does freely available mean free or do you expect the Centre of Excellence to charge for certain services?

One of the core functions of the Centre of Excellence is the development and delivery of free and accessible resources (including easy read versions), tools and training for employment service providers that are practical and digestible and influence practice. Should the successful applicant want to deliver additional services with associated fees this would need to be negotiated with the Department of Social Services.

3. How will providers be supported and encouraged to share best practice resources with the Centre of Excellence in a competitive environment? Will there be any strategies in place to support this?

Part of the role of the Centre of Excellence is to share best practice resources with all employment service providers and increase delivery and improve disability outcomes through those resources, tools and training. It is also expected the Centre will establish and collaborate with all employment service providers bringing them together.

The Department of Social Services has recently released the new Disability Employment Services Performance Framework. The Framework encourages providers to continuously improve the overall performance of the program. One of the key changes is the introduction of benchmarks. This change will mean providers can collaborate together to improve performance and exceed benchmarks. Whereas the previous performance measures were relative and lead to a highly competitive approach.

4. Will the grant accommodate individuals that can offer specific expertise, as opposed to applications to meet full end to end Centre of Excellence requirements?

Individual organisations are encouraged to apply if they can meet the scope of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. If they cannot meet the requirements of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, individuals could partner in a consortium arrangement and provide their expertise.

5. Is there a way to link with interested organisations to set up a consortium?

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is not providing a process for organisations to link with other interested organisations. It is recommended that interested organisations link up with organisations within their own networks.

6. How will the Centre of Excellence be connected to various parts of the Specialist Disability Employment Program?

The Centre of Excellence is expected to develop, disseminate and deliver best practice resources and tools to new Specialist Disability Employment Program providers and all employment services providers. The Centre is expected to foster collaboration across the program by working with employment service providers, employers and other stakeholders to improve the quality and effectiveness of services.

7. How much focus will the Centre of Excellence have on Workforce Australia providers?

The Centre of Excellence will collect, translate, disseminate and deliver disability employment research, evidence and training to improve the quality of services provided by providers of the new specialist disability employment program, Workforce Australia, the Community Development Program, the National Disability Insurance Scheme and supported employment, including Australian Disability Enterprises.

8. As an unemployed disabled person working towards getting back into the work force, how can this hub navigate discrimination by organisations?

The Centre of Excellence will directly support recommendation 7.17 of the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with Disability by developing a suite of accessible education and training resources for providers of disability employment services to uplift their staff and better meet the needs of people with disability and employers. Information, resources and training will be developed and delivered on several topics, including disability awareness and human rights.

People with disability are also expected to be collaborated with in the delivery of the Centre of Excellence.

9. Does the Centre of Excellence need to be its own separate legal entity?

There is no requirement in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for the Centre to be established as a separate legal entity.

The Centre of Excellence is expected to be a highly reputable entity across the disability employment sector. The Centre is to undertake the necessary planning, preparation, legal, accounting, human resources, governance and other administration steps and activities directly related to the establishment and running of the Centre.

The Centre will be responsible for establishing the appropriate governance for the Centre of Excellence, including its decision-making process.

10. What is the long-term intention/expectation for the Centre of Excellence after the grant period expires?

The intent is for resources developed and delivered by the Centre of Excellence to remain accessible. The long-term intention for the Centre after the grant period expires is a decision for government that will be informed by the independent evaluation.

11. Will the Centre of Excellence be a repository for Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Grants and other DSS Pilots and Grants so there is better insight to learnings and initiatives?

The Centre of Excellence will collect and analyse evidence from a variety of sources, including academic research, national and international best practice models, insights from pilots, case studies, and grant projects.

12. How will conflict of interest issues be managed?

Any conflicts of interest that could affect the performance of the grant opportunity should be declared, whether real or perceived. The process for doing this is outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines at Section 13.2.

13. Can the online central hub/website have back of house links to other evidence sets/websites to draw through data and publications?

The Centre of Excellence website is expected to host Centre resources on a standalone website. The website is expected to provide an accessible, clear, central repository of all the information, resources, tools, and training materials developed. The website should be a standalone website, however links to other websites where appropriate (for example JobAccess or Disability Gateway) may be referenced.

14. If the Centre wishes to utilise pre-existing resources, how will existing Intellectual Property be managed?

The Commonwealth is requesting full intellectual property rights to the content developed by the successful grantee to ensure that the resources, tools, and training materials produced by the Centre of Excellence are freely accessible to all stakeholders across the disability employment sector.

If content has been already developed by a partner organisation and they wish to use it as a resource for the Centre, licensing will be negotiated with the owner.

The Centre will work closely with the lead organisation and consortium partners to ensure that the ownership and use of intellectual property are clearly defined in the grant agreement.

15. What is the Government's long term plan to use the Intellectual Property, is the Government considering going in house after the 4-year grant period?

The Commonwealth is requesting full intellectual property rights to the content developed by the successful grantee to ensure that the resources, tools, and training materials that are produced by the Centre of Excellence are freely accessible to all stakeholders across the disability employment sector.

By retaining ownership of the intellectual property, the Commonwealth can ensure that these materials can be widely distributed, shared, and utilised without restrictions and therefore maximising their impact in supporting sort of the long term goals.

Whilst the grant opportunity is for four years, what is going to happen to the Centre after that is a decision for government, which will be informed by an independent evaluation.

16. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines do consider 'researchers' to be an eligible expenditure item, does this mean the Centre can conduct research?

The Centre will not conduct original research at this stage. Instead, it will focus on collecting, analysing, and translating existing research and evidence from a variety of sources, including academic studies and national/international best-practice models, pilot programs and case studies, and bring that together.

The Centre will collaborate with high-performing service providers, research institutions, and other stakeholders to validate these practices before developing and disseminating them as best-practice resources.

The Centre will be required to collaborate with universities and research institutions with research programs in disability employment, including the National Disability Research Partnership.

17. Will international research gained and drawn on be contextualised to the Australian marketplace?

The Centre of Excellence will ensure that its resources remain current by continuously reviewing and incorporating new research, feedback from stakeholders, and best-practice models from both national and international sources.

18. Is there a data repository where policy makers can draw evidence from to implement policy and practice? How will the Centre share data in a transferable way?

The Australian Government's National Disability Data Asset (NDAA) will bring together de-identified information from different government agencies about Australians with disability and without disability. This will help us to better understand the experiences of people with disability.

Employment service providers will continue to be responsible for the collection of data on employment outcomes for people with disability.

The primary role of the Centre of Excellence is to support the delivery of quality employment services to people with disability, not to be a data repository.

19. What is the investment in families to support young family members into employment pathways at school and how does this sit within/alongside the Centre?

The Centre of Excellence focus is to improve the quality of services by providers of the new Specialist Disability Employment Program, Workforce Australia, the Community Development Plan, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and supported employment, including Australian Disability Enterprises.

The Centre is expected to engage and collaborate with groups including, but not limited to employers, employment consultants, people with disability, their families and carers, peak bodies, advocacy organisations and representative bodies.

20. How much autonomy will the awarded consortium have to manage the grant and make decisions/what will Government's role be?

The Centre will be expected to work with the Department of Social Services (the department) during implementation. The draft activity work plan and formalised workplan will step out the Centres' reporting requirements with the department. The Centre must meet with the department quarterly to discuss strategic direction, updates and to discuss any emerging issues, risks, and sensitivities.

21. What other Centre(s) of Excellence, nationally or internationally, do DSS think provides a good example of where this works well?

The design of the Centre of Excellence was informed by the consultation undertaken by the Department of Social Services with the disability sector through feedback received in response to the Disability Employment Centre of Excellence Options paper.

The [Options paper](#) listed several Centres the department considered in its approach.

22. Where can I access the Webinar presentation and recording?

The recording, transcript, presentation and talking points of the Webinar can be found at www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programs-services-disability-employment-programs/disability-employment-centre-of-excellence.