Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning – Tertiary Support (Round 2)

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (the department) has provided the following general feedback for grant applicants of the Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning - Tertiary Support (Round 2) (RPL) grant opportunity.

Assessment of grant applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the grant opportunity guidelines (the guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong grant application and quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.

Overview

The grant application submission period opened on 13 June 2024 and closed on 18 July 2024.

The aim of the program is to support Australian tertiary organisations in recognising the skills and learnings veterans gain from their Australian Defence Force (ADF) service, and in doing so, support them to undertake tertiary education. This is intended to assist veterans during their transition from ADF service into civilian employment.

The intended objectives of the RPL program were to:

- offer a smoother entry to university for veterans who may require additional support to achieve a successful educational outcome.

- support tertiary organisations to establish or enhance veteran RPL frameworks and support for veterans pursuing further study within tertiary organisations.

- ensure the support for veterans studying at tertiary organisations is sustained beyond the grant funding period.

The intended outcomes of the RPL program were to assist:

- veterans into tertiary education by providing an avenue where their existing skills and experience were recognised as part of the entry pathways.

- tertiary organisations to adapt, expand or establish direct or assisted entry pathways and study support programs for veterans.

- tertiary organisations to share knowledge from their RPL programs with other tertiary or education institutions about how they supported veterans with entry to university.

The RPL program is a targeted competitive program which accepts grant applications annually. The RPL program offers up to $150,000 per grant application.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether a grant application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered all eligible and compliant grant applications through a targeted competitive grant process.

The selection advisory panel (panel) established by the department comprised of subject matter experts who assessed grant applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

When assessing and deliberating on grant applications the panel considered factors including the volume of grant applications received, the requirements outlined in the guidelines and the available funding envelope.

The panel's consideration of assessed grant applications was based on:

- meeting the compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines

- meeting the eligibility requirements outline in the guidelines

- how well the responses met the assessment criteria

- how each grant application compared to other applications

- the merits of the proposed grant activities, relative to other grant applications

- the provision and appropriateness of the requested attachments

- whether the grant project demonstrated value for money

- identified risks and the proposed mitigation strategies for the department and the Commonwealth Government.

Selection Results

Grant applications received were of a high standard, the preferred grant applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines and provided strong responses to the assessment criteria.

The Community Grants Hub notified grant applicants of the outcome in writing where their grant applications did not meet the eligibility or compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines.

The department notified all other grant applicants of the outcome of their grant application in writing.

Grant assessment criteria

Criterion 1 - Proposed approach to RPL or credit-mapping for veterans seeking to enrol in study.

Strong applications:

- provided a detailed description of the activity which would be undertaken and the number of veterans expected to enrol, including accessibility by veterans regardless of their location within Australia

- identified how they would focus on and support veterans and how they would improve the range of options offered to transitioning veterans wishing to undertake tertiary study, and

- provided examples and evidence of strong partnerships with other universities or education providers and the benefits these relationships would offer to veterans wishing to undertake tertiary study.

Criterion 2 - Experience with the veteran community.

Strong responses:

- provided examples of veteran specific projects and programs and demonstrated how this experience would enable the successful implementation of their RPL project

- presented evidence of networks and partnerships in the veteran community which demonstrated an ability to deliver a successful program supporting veterans, and

- demonstrated a clear awareness of the barriers to, and enablers of, veteran access to education and how their proposed activities would address the needs of veterans.

Criterion 3 - Organisational capacity and experience.

Strong responses:

- demonstrated the organisation's ability and experience in delivering RPL or alternative entry pathway programs for other cohorts, such as students from low socio-economic or culturally diverse backgrounds

- identified skills and qualifications of key staff that would manage and deliver the project and how that experience would specifically benefit the veteran cohort, and

- demonstrated their organisation's policies, procedures and approach to managing a grant agreement including monitoring the delivery of activity outcomes, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

General feedback

Grant applicants are encouraged to read all grant opportunity documentation, in particular the guidelines and instructions provided throughout the grant application form.

The grant opportunity documentation is specific to each grant opportunity and contains important information about the purpose of the program, eligibility and compliance requirements, eligible items, timeframes and how to apply.

The grant application form includes helpful information relating to eligibility, and mandatory information required by the Community Grants Hub and the department for the selection process.

Individual feedback

The department provided applicants with written individual feedback when notifying them of the outcome of their grant application.