

General feedback on applications

Thank you for your application to the Empowering *Queensland Women* grant program.

There is strong competition for the funds available in each round. We received a high volume of interest in this grant program and were impressed to see such a wide variety of initiatives across Queensland.

We received 174 applications in Round 1 and have only been able to fund 16% of the total applications, indicating that grant program is highly competitive. Not being successful does not mean you did not meet the selection criteria, rather there is strong competition and there was insufficient funding to support your initiative. We encourage you to apply for future rounds.

To assist you with preparing for future opportunities, this document summarises feedback from assessment and panel moderation.

Feedback on selection criteria responses

Selection Criteria 1

How will this initiative support Queensland women and girls to improve their economic security?

Successful applicants clearly articulated the intended impact of their initiative and outlined measurable outcomes. Applications included insight into how they would measure the outcomes such as through pre and post program surveys and in some cases longer-term follow up surveys. Successful applicants also included clear details on outputs (resources and tools) to support their initiative.

For example: *This program will enhance the economic security, independence and leadership capacity of First Nations women by improving access to education, employment, entrepreneurship knowledge and culturally grounded financial well-being. Participants will have access to online workbooks and modules covering topics such as education and career pathways, business fundamentals, and long-term financial well-being. These resources will complement three workshops, which can be attended in person or virtually.*

Successful applicants also demonstrated a clear understanding of the need for the initiative within the community. They addressed broader *community* issues impacting women's economic security by including baseline data, which helped the panel to assess the initiative's relevance and potential impact.

For example: *This initiative directly addresses critical barriers to women's economic security, such as the superannuation gender gap, where women retire with 25% less super than men nationally. Regional (SA4) data highlights significant economic vulnerability among women, particularly First Nations women, who face higher unemployment rates and are more likely to head single-parent families. These factors contribute to lower levels of economic security in the region.*

Panel Observations

Some applications focused heavily on describing the benefits of their initiative but did not clearly outline the expected outcomes. While the panel acknowledges that defining outcomes can be challenging at the proposal stage, applications that included plans to measure outcomes (e.g., pre and post program surveys, baseline data, or past program results) were rated more highly.

Selection Criteria 1

How will this initiative support Queensland women and girls to improve their economic security?

The panel recognises that measuring outcomes can be challenging, particularly for smaller low value grants. However, this process does not need to be overly complex. Simple tools such as pre and post engagement surveys or online feedback forms (e.g., MS Forms) can be effective in capturing and demonstrating outcomes.

The panel also observed that some applications were not strongly aligned with the primary objective of increasing women's economic security, instead focusing on fitness and wellbeing. While it is widely accepted women's wellbeing and economic security are interconnected, applications that focused solely on fitness and wellbeing without demonstrating a clear link to economic security were not considered strongly aligned to the purpose of the grant program.

Tip

Clearly identify the data you will measure, the methods you will use to measure it, and how this aligns with your initiative's goals.

Selection Criteria 2

Organisational Capability

Overall, applicants effectively outlined their organisation's suitability to deliver the proposed initiative. This included highlighting relevant skills, expertise, resources, and established networks within the community. Successful applications provided clear examples of their organisation's experience in delivering similar programs or initiatives, demonstrating their capacity to achieve the proposed outcomes. Applications that included details about the facilitators delivering financial and digital literacy content were particularly strong.

For example: *Our organisation has a proven track record of managing community, business, and resilience-building initiatives in collaboration with local, state, and federal stakeholders. Key inputs supporting delivery include, qualified and experienced staff. The team is led by a General Manager with extensive experience managing multi-stakeholder programs, workforce initiatives, and women's leadership projects across regional Queensland. Workshops will be delivered by a Certified Practising Accountant, retired stockbroker, and qualified Trainer and Assessor with over 25 years of financial and agribusiness experience. Additionally, a finance broker with deep community connections, practical finance expertise, and a background in regional industries will contribute to the program's success.*

Panel Observations

The panel observed that some applications assumed a level of knowledge or expertise without clearly demonstrating it. While it is important to convey confidence in delivering the initiative, strong applications provided specific evidence of organisational capability, such as examples of past experience, qualifications of key personnel, or detailed plans for implementation. Applications that lacked this information were less compelling and did not provide sufficient assurance of the organisation's ability to achieve the proposed outcomes.

Selection Criteria 2

Organisational Capability

Additionally, some applications relied heavily on partnerships or collaborations to deliver key aspects of their initiatives but did not include supporting documentation, such as letters of support or partnership agreements. While partnerships can strengthen an application, the absence of formal evidence of these arrangements made it difficult for the panel to assess the feasibility and reliability of the proposed collaborations.

Tip

Clearly outline your organisation's relevant experience and expertise, and provide examples where possible. If your initiative involves partnerships or collaborations, include letters of support or partnership agreements to demonstrate the commitment and capability of all parties involved. This will provide the panel with greater confidence in your ability to deliver the initiative successfully.

Selection Criteria 3

Appropriate delivery and engagement mechanisms

Successful applicants detailed the existing networks they engage with and outlined how they plan to reach their audience. This included strategies such as leveraging social media, newsletters, flyers, and partnerships with other organisations.

For example: *We have 300 people registered to receive our newsletter and consistently high engagement through our social media channels. We will utilise our existing networks, including {name specific organisation or groups}, and extend invitations to existing clients. Additionally, we will partner with organisations to reach our intended audience through newsletters, social media posts, flyers and email.*

Successful applicants demonstrated consideration for accessibility needs, ensuring their initiative is inclusive of individuals with disabilities or those facing economic barriers to participation, and other specific needs of their target audience. They also provided clear details on how their initiatives would be delivered, tailoring their approach to meet the unique requirements of participants.

For example: *We will provide support for mothers who require assistance to attend by offering childcare services and/or transport support. Workshops will be trauma-informed and delivered in a culturally safe environment. Any safety or risk concerns for women will be identified and referred to appropriate agencies as required.*

Panel Observations

The panel noted that successful applicants provided realistic participant numbers for their initiatives. We strongly encourage applicants to keep participants numbers modest and achievable. Additionally, it may also be beneficial to have a plan to manage potential attrition, particularly for workshops or ongoing programs, to ensure the initiative remains effective and impactful.

Tip

It is generally appropriate to reimburse the cost to participants taking part in research and co-design activities, such as travel costs, parking, or other out-of-pocket costs. In some cases, participants may also be paid for time involved. Where there is risk of disclosure (e.g., trauma related discussions), the Office for Women encourages applicants to carefully consider payment structures. Payments should reflect the time and effort involved but also be set at a level that avoids creating undue pressure on individuals to participate.

Selection Criteria 4

The proposed initiative represents value for money

Successful applications demonstrated consistency between the budget description and the initiative's outline, ensuring that elements such as the number of workshops were accurately reflected in the budget.

For example: *The number of workshops and cost aligned with the description and number of workshops detailed in the application.*

Successful applicants ensured their budgets aligned with eligible and ineligible items. It is important to note that EQW will not fund initiatives that duplicate an existing or similar service in the community or an existing government service.

For Example: *Travel for guest speakers was limited to travel within Queensland only. Administration items did not exceed 20%, and assets purchased to deliver the initiative did not exceed 10%.*

Successful applicants also provided details on whether their event was ticketed or free for certain participants, demonstrating thoughtful planning to ensure accessibility while maintaining financial sustainability.

For example: *To ensure successful delivery of this event and keep cost reduced, tickets will be sold for \$50 pp. Additionally, several tickets will be offered at a reduced cost to women who may not otherwise be able to afford to attend.*

Panel Observations

The panel noted that some applications included ineligible items, such as travel outside Queensland or the purchase of assets (e.g., laptops) exceeding the allowable 10% asset allocation. It is important to emphasise that applications containing ineligible items may be deemed ineligible for funding in their entirety.

Additionally, a few applications appeared overly ambitious, including a high number of program elements that raised concerns about the feasibility of delivering the initiative within the proposed budget and timeframe.

Tip

Ensure your budget is realistic and achievable, with a clear alignment between the proposed initiative and the funding guidelines.