



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

**National Framework for Protecting Australia's
Children Program**

**Towards Independent Adulthood (TIA) Trial
Funding Round Summary**

September 2016

Note to Applicants: This selection process is being undertaken by the Community Grants Hub (supported by the Department of Social Services) on behalf of the Department of Social Services (DSS).

The Towards Independent Adulthood (TIA) Trial

The Towards Independent Adulthood (TIA) Trial is a project to be delivered under Strategy 2 of the Third Action Plan under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* (the National Framework). This is part of the National Initiatives Activities under the Families and Communities Program.

The National Initiatives Activities aim to achieve positive outcomes for families, women and their children by working across sectors to improve the safety and wellbeing of children, advancing gender equality and reducing violence against women and their children.

The National Framework is a long-term partnership between the Commonwealth Government, state and territory governments and the community sector to deliver a substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect over time. It aims to drive change for families and children so that Australia's children grow up safe and well.

Projects funded under the National Framework aim to drive change via a national approach in order to gain greater national consistency or improve outcomes for children and young people.

The National Framework projects will be delivered by organisations that are committed to working together to improve safety and wellbeing of Australia's children through research, policy development and evaluation, enabling and strengthening the focus of other national reform agendas.

Strategy 2 of the Third Action Plan under the National Framework is about helping young people in out-of-home care to thrive in adulthood. This includes trialling ways to improve support for young people leaving out-of-home care, to assist them to transition to adulthood and independence by linking them with appropriate services and supports.

Under the TIA Trial, one Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in Western Australia will be funded to engage Personal Advisers to provide intensive, holistic supports and mentoring for young people for up to three years as they transition from formal care into adulthood.

Selection type

This selection is a restricted (or targeted) process to select one organisation to undertake the TIA Trial.

A restricted selection process is used where there are few providers available due to highly specialised services being required, or there are geographical considerations, or specific expertise is required, or there are time constraints. A restricted round is still competitive, but only opened to a small number of potential grant recipients based on the specialised requirements of the granting activity or project under consideration. Potential grant recipients are invited to apply and are assessed against designated selection criteria.

Funding available

\$2.39 million is available to undertake the TIA Trial over four years as follows:

- Year 1 – \$543,000 (GST exclusive) in the 2016-17 Financial Year
- Year 2 – \$768,000 (GST exclusive) in the 2017-18 Financial Year
- Year 3 – \$768,000 (GST exclusive) in the 2018-19 Financial Year
- Year 4 – \$320,000 (GST exclusive) in the 2019-20 Financial Year

The funding in the 2016-17 financial year includes \$95,000 for set-up costs.

Closing date and time

Applications **must** be submitted by **2:00pm AEST 21 October 2016**.

Late Applications – Any Application that is lodged after the Closing Time and Date may be rejected. If an Application is late or a request is made to approve a lodgement after the Closing Time and Date, a determination may be made that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the Applicant's control resulting in an inability to meet the stipulated deadline.

Examples of exceptional circumstances could include, but may not be limited to:

- a) natural disasters;
- b) power outages affecting the ability of the Applicant to submit their Application by the stipulated deadline; or
- c) death or disability of key personnel.

An Applicant whose Application has been deemed to be a Late Application may propose other incidents of exceptional circumstances (other than those listed above). Any proposed incidents of exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Questions

Questions and answers for this funding round are included in the Application Pack.

Applicants may submit any additional questions relating to the program or this Application process by email to grants@dss.gov.au. Responses to questions will be emailed to all invitees, except where the answers are already available in the Application Pack.

All questions will be responded to within five Business Days.

The Community Grants Hub will only answer questions to explain the Application Form and Program Guidelines. Advice on how to respond to specific selection criteria will not be provided.

The Community Grants Hub may provide technical help or support in using and/or submitting the Application Forms. Applicants may direct any requests for technical help or support to the Community Grants Hub by phone on 1800 020 283 or TTY 1800 555 677 or by email to grants@dss.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will not respond to any questions after **Friday 14 October 2016** until the conclusion of the selection process.

Statement of Requirement

Towards Independent Adulthood Trial

The aim of the program is to trial a service model for supporting young people transitioning out of out-of-home care, which could be rolled out nationally by state and territory governments, following an independent and comprehensive evaluation. The service model's objectives are to improve the wellbeing of young people transitioning from care to independence by supporting them to engage with education, training and employment. This is achieved through provision of a Personal Adviser who can support participants in developing independent living skills and link them to culturally and contextually appropriate services.

The TIA Trial objectives are accomplished through:

- participant engagement with employment, education or training, and the community
- innovative service delivery approaches through the Application of reflective practice and best practice principles
- improved coordination of services delivered by government and the community sector.

The trial participants will receive support to develop life skills for independent living and priority access to support services such as employment, education and training support, health assessments, housing support services, and case management resources, as required. The trial will focus support in the areas of education, training and employment. The TIA Trial service model will include reflective practice process, for example, Participatory Action Research (PAR). The trial will also include a separately funded independent evaluation.

Noting the significant representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system, one of the key aims of the trial is to contribute to improving outcomes for Aboriginal children, families and communities through alignment with the following foundation elements and guiding principles:

Foundation Elements

- Cultural respect
- Consultation, collaboration and leadership
- Self-determination and autonomy
- Holistic and strengths based

Guiding Principles

- Equity and access
- Cultural safety and security
- Accountability
- Aboriginal community control and engagement
- Partnership

Preference will be given to Applicants who have existing locally based working relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal elders, communities and/or organisations, to address the challenges relating to diversity and locality for Aboriginal young people.

Trial Scope

Eligible participants will be young people aged 16 years at the beginning of the trial who are transitioning from out-of-home care. There is no scope to extend the trial to other age groups.

The participants will be identified and referred to the trial by the Department for Child Protection and Family Support WA (CPFS).

The majority of the CPFS clients are Aboriginal, with the percentage of Aboriginal children in the care of the CPFS CEO in Western Australia currently being 53%. Based on current information it is expected that around 40 per cent of the potential participants will be Aboriginal.

Location

The Trial will be conducted in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia and WA country (regional) location. The exact locations are to be determined by DSS in consultation with CPFS and the Applicant as part of a co-design process.

Activity Objectives

The objectives for this activity are as follows:

- a) provide support to a minimum of 80 young people leaving care, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, by providing Personal Advisers to assist with linking them to culturally responsive and contextually appropriate supports and services, with a focus on education, training and employment. Personal Advisers will have a caseload of no more than 10 and no less than eight participants at any time.
- b) provide a valuable, effective, culturally responsive and contextually appropriate service to young people leaving out of home care (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people) in the proposed locations, including engaging and retaining young people in the service for the full length of the trial.
- c) utilise existing knowledge of, and relationships with, services in the out-of-home care sector that are already available to support young people leaving out-of-home care in the selected locations, with the view of developing this knowledge and these relationships to provide appropriate linkages and support to the participants
- d) work with the state and Commonwealth governments, and relevant service providers, to coordinate appropriate assistance for participants, including brokerage and access to payments, services and programs, and:
 - o ensuring a Leaving Care Plan (and Cultural Plan where appropriate) is completed and implemented for each participant
 - o ensuring communication strategies and tools are in place to support the participants to communicate with the Personal Advisers during the trial
 - o ensuring that Personal Advisers and the participants are supported to take part in reflective practice, for example PAR

- participating in evaluation activities.
- e) improve participant engagement with employment, education and/or training.

Service provider requirements

The service provider will be required to recruit Personal Advisers who will provide intensive, holistic supports, including mentoring, for up to three years, for young people as they transition from out-of-home care into adulthood.

The service provider is also required to work with DSS to finalise the TIA Trial model under a co-design arrangement, including, but not limited to the following:

- work with a DSS contractor to establish priority access referral pathways to relevant government services and supports
- work with a DSS communications contractor to establish a communication strategy and tools for Personal Advisers to communicate with trial participants
- refine the role description and selection criteria for the Personal Advisers and finalise salary arrangements and other entitlements
- determine how the Personal Advisers will be recruited, including how the positions will be advertised
- refine the practice approaches and theories the Personal Advisers will be required to commit to work under, taking into account the potential qualifications of the Personal Advisers

It is expected that the service provider will incorporate reflective practice into their service delivery and will support and participate in reflective practice, for example, PAR. The aim of the reflective practice processes will be to refine the service model throughout the course of the trial as appropriate to ensure that best practice is being delivered. This means that the model as stipulated in this statement may change over time. The service provider will be required to make necessary adjustments to service delivery in line with changes made to the practice model as a result of the reflective practice processes.

Consortium and partnership with other organisations

Feedback from the not-for-profit sector has identified that cultural competence and collaboration between service providers is essential to achieving improved outcomes for Aboriginal young people. To that end, the Applicant is strongly encouraged to utilise approaches involving consortium and/or a lead organisation with working relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal elders, communities and/or organisations including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). These ACCOs should be registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act) or under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA)*.

Should the Applicant wish to take this consortium approach, it must be made clear in **Attachment A** how the budget will be divided between all organisations represented in the Application. In addition the Applicant must provide information in terms of managing risks, shared responsibilities, financial arrangements and reporting to illustrate how this approach will work. No further funding will be made available for organisations wanting to work as a consortium.

Personal Adviser requirements

The Personal Advisers will support participants to develop life skills to support independent living and assist them to gain priority access to support services such as health assessments, housing support services, employment support, education support and case management resources, as required. The Personal Advisers will focus support in the areas of education, training and employment.

The Personal Adviser will also focus on active engagement to build and maintain relationships with the participants and relevant service providers to provide a stable point of support and referrals during the transition period. While they will be professional practitioners, they will also take on a mentoring role, as well as facilitating access to services. Supported by the WA State Government endorsed Rapid Response framework, priority access referral pathways to some government services will be made available for the participants. In addition, priority access to some Commonwealth services will be made available to participants. Personal Advisers will be the main contact point for referral to those arrangements. The Personal Advisers will need to be aware of these arrangements and other local services available to the participants and committed to ensuring that all appropriate referrals have been made.

The Personal Advisers will be required to contribute to the reflective practice processes and work to implement any required changes to the service model identified through these processes, as well as contributing to a separate independent evaluation.

The Personal Advisers will be required to work alongside the state case managers who are already working with the young people in their caseloads to ensure a Leaving Care plan (and Cultural Plan where appropriate) is in place, and to agree on how to work together to ensure the participants are appropriately supported. The details of the working relationship between the case managers and the Personal Advisers will be worked through as part of the co-design process.

Each Personal Adviser will have a caseload of no more than 10, and no less than eight, participants at any time. It is expected that around 40 per cent of the participants will be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, and the Personal Advisers will need to be equipped to provide culturally responsive services.

The Personal Advisers will work on the TIA Trial exclusively, that is they will only work with the trial participants on behalf of the service provider. The Personal Advisers will be required to be contracted for the full trial period. This will provide consistency for participants, assist with engagement, and ensure they receive the support they need over the course of the trial.

The Personal Adviser will be required to have relevant qualifications such as in Social Work / Psychology / Community Services / Youth Work / Mental Health and previous experience working with children or young people.

Experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be highly desirable. It is expected that up to three of the Personal Adviser positions will be 'identified positions', and being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a genuine occupational qualification for these identified positions. These positions will not require qualifications if the person has extensive relevant experience.

Consideration should be given to succession planning for the Personal Adviser positions to cover leave periods and if a Personal Adviser is unable to continue in the position. Succession planning should prioritise continuity of service for the participants. Each participant should have a primary relationship with one Personal Adviser. A secondary Personal Adviser should be introduced to each participant in case of relationship breakdown or absence of their primary Personal Adviser.

Practice approaches and theories

Personal Advisers are required to practice in line with a set of practice approaches and theories. An integral part of the model is training Personal Advisers to ensure their knowledge and skills are up to date and reflect the model approach. Resources are provided for appropriate training in the practice model which takes into account the following approaches and theories.

- Trauma informed
- Strengths based
- Rights based
- Person centred
- Solution Focused Therapy

Provision of support under the eight life domains and for particular cohorts

Eight life domains and a number of cohort characteristics were identified by the Commonwealth Government in *Supporting young people transitioning from Out-of-Home Care to Independence in Australia: good practice in 2011/12*.

The model will endeavour to support participants across all eight life domains and selected cohorts, with a specific focus on education, training and employment. Some examples of supports that should be made available to participants include the following:

The eight domains

1. Education and training and employment
2. Housing
3. Health
4. Legal matters
5. Identity and culture
6. Social relationships and support networks
7. Financial security
8. Life (and after care) skills

Particular cohorts

Young people transitioning out of care are often experiencing vulnerability. However, within this group there are a number of cohorts which are likely to experience particular vulnerabilities. Some examples of such cohorts are outlined below.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Young parents and carers
- Young people with disability

- Young people who have had contact with the Juvenile Justice system.

Reflective practice

A key component of the TIA model is reflective practice. Both the Personal Advisers and participants are expected to participate in reflective practice processes to gain an understanding of what works and, where necessary, refine and/or develop enhanced intervention approaches and model parameters.

Professional supervision must be provided by the service provider for the Personal Advisers, suitable to their qualifications and level of experience to assist with reflective practice.

The value of reflective practice in the model will lie in its capacity to ask questions about how to achieve positive outcomes for participants, seek answers through reviewing work practices, and then improve those practices on the basis of the insights gained. Reflective practice in the TIA Trial must aim to be responsive to participants and stakeholders by finding appropriate ways to include them, so the questions, strategies and interpretations of the process are not solely influenced by the service provider.

During the trial a contractor will be engaged by DSS to facilitate the involvement of the participants in the reflective practice component of the model, which may include surveys, face-to-face group or one-on-one feedback sessions.

Reporting

The service provider will be required to provide regular reports to DSS on the progress of the TIA Trial, including outcomes of reflective practice processes and any service model refinements that have been made.

Value for Money

In assessing the extent to which Applications represent value for money, DSS will consider the information provided at the 'Achieving value for money' of the National Initiatives Program Guidelines.

Selection Criteria

When completing your Application you **must** provide all information where you are directed to do so.

The equally weighted selection criteria are:

Criterion 1 – Demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the need for the funded Activity in the specified community and/or the specified target group.

Your response **must** demonstrate an understanding of all of the following:

- a) knowledge and understanding of young people leaving care, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, and the extent of the issues this group experiences; and

- b) knowledge and understanding of services in the out-of-home care sector that are already available to support young people leaving out-of-home care in the locations you are proposing to base your service, and/or whether there is an unmet need.

Criterion 2 – Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the Grant funding.

Your response **must** demonstrate capability to:

- a) attract, recruit, support and retain suitably qualified and experienced people for the Personal Adviser positions in your proposed locations for the full course of the trial
- b) provide a valuable, effective service to young people leaving out-of home care in the proposed locations, including engaging and retaining young people in the service for the full length of the trial.
- c) provide a culturally responsive and contextually appropriate service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, including engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families/carers/guardians, as well as Aboriginal elders, communities and/or organisations.

Criterion 3 – Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring Activities to achieve Activity objectives for all stakeholders.

Your response **must** demonstrate:

- a) your ability to provide an existing presence, including service provision and associated resources and tools, in these locations and appropriate linkages to other services and supports available to young people leaving out-of home care in the proposed community
- b) your experience participating in co-design and/or collaboration processes with government agencies and/or academic experts to develop services.
- c) your experience collaborating with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to develop, deliver, manage and monitor support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, including the nature of working relationships, risk management, financial arrangements and reporting.

Attachment A

Please attach a proposed budget for your service delivery that will provide value for money, using the template provided in the Application Pack.

Multicultural Access and Equity Policy

Australia's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting diversity. Improving responsiveness, means that Australian Government agencies make sure that cultural and linguistic diversity is not a barrier for people who need to access government and community services. This means, for example, that appropriate language services should be provided. Grant applicants should consider whether professional translating or interpreting services may be needed to deliver services, projects, activities or events to non-English speakers. If

your Application Form states that a budget is required, costs for translating and interpreting services should be included in your budget.

Assessment

The Assessment Team may be comprised of Australian Government officers from each state/territory and national offices. Teams will undertake training so that Applications are assessed consistently. The Australian Government officers in the Assessment Team will be bound by the APS Code of Conduct and the DSS Secretary's Instructions.

Probity and fairness

The selection of funding recipients must be fair, open and demonstrate the highest level of integrity.

The following principles will be applied throughout the selection process:

- a. fairness and impartiality;
- b. consistency, accountability and transparency of process;
- c. security and confidentiality of information;
- d. identification and resolution of conflicts of interest; and
- e. compliance with legislative obligations and government policy.

These principles are intended to achieve an equitable, justifiable and sound process.

The Community Grants Hub may engage a Probity Advisor to help meet its obligations to make selection processes defensible and able to stand up to external and internal scrutiny.

The Probity Advisor also advises on, and monitors, the procedures used in the selection process to make sure they comply with the published relevant Program Guidelines. The Probity Advisor plays no part in the assessment of Applications.

Program Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide the starting point for parties considering whether to apply for funding and is/are the basis for the business relationship between DSS and the funding recipient. Applicants are strongly advised to read the Program Guidelines before completing an Application Form.

How to apply

Please read and complete the declaration part of the Application Form carefully. Make sure all responses are true and accurate. Click the **Submit Application** button and follow the instructions. The Application Form will not submit until all responses have been verified.

When you have successfully submitted your Application, you will get an automated confirmation receipt and email. Submission may take several minutes, the confirmation you should receive is an automated response from DSS. **Please be patient and do not close the Application Form before you get the confirmation. Do not try to submit your Application more than once.** If you do not receive confirmation or you have difficulties submitting the Application Form, please call the Community Grants Hub Hotline on 1800 020 283.

Grant Agreement information

The Grant Agreement is a performance-based, legally enforceable agreement between the Commonwealth (represented by DSS) and the successful applicant that sets out the Terms and Conditions governing the funding to be provided.

The type of Grant Agreement entered into will depend on the Activity, the assessed Activity risk level, the length of the Activity and the amount of the grant.

The executed Grant Agreement represents each grant provided within it and the relevant Activity and supersedes all prior representations, communications, agreements, statements and understandings, whether oral or in writing.