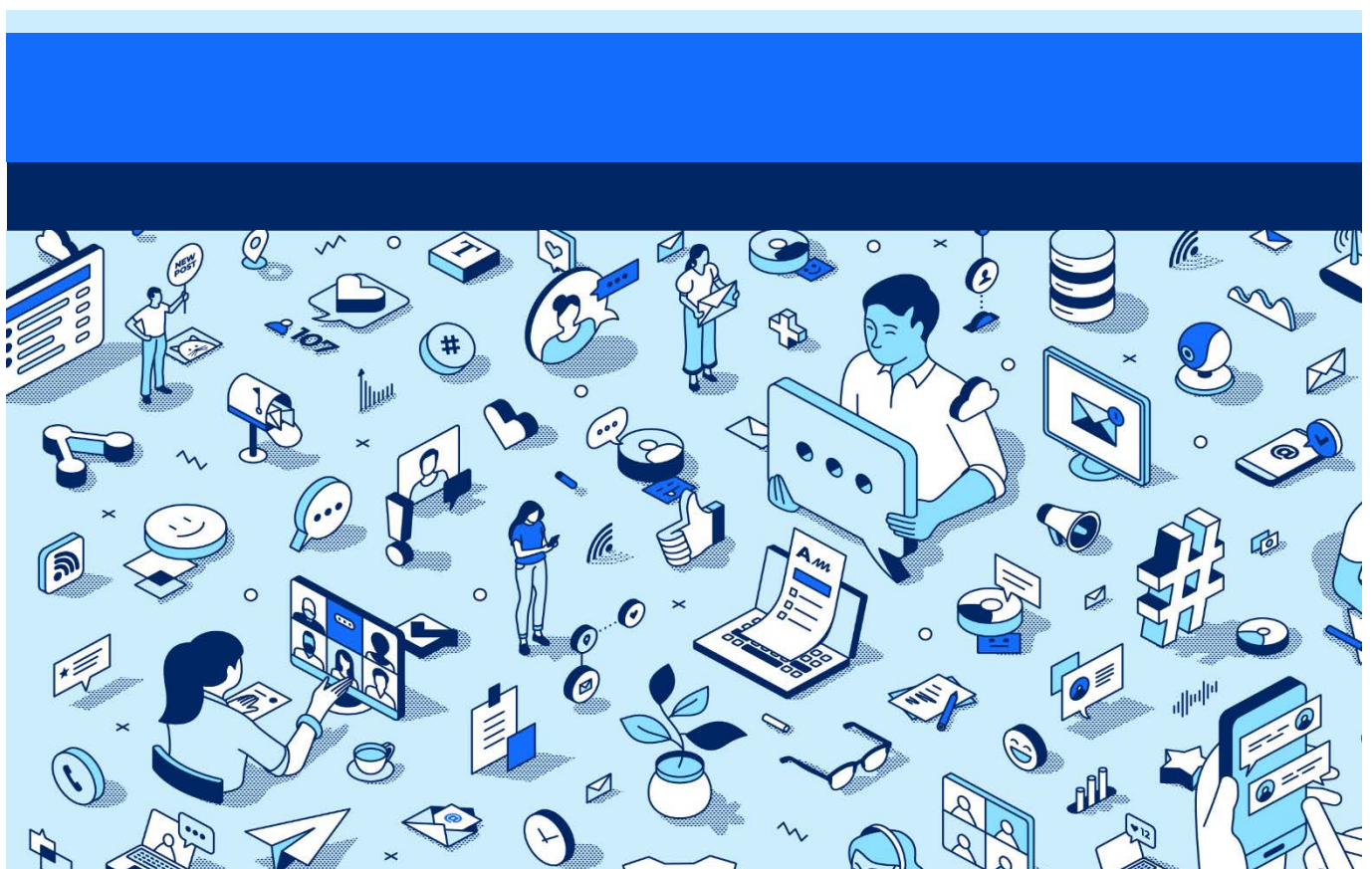


Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets Program Round 4 Grant Guidelines

A Fresh Start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets

September 2026





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets Program

Round 4 Grant Guidelines

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More information

Office of Local Government

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Message from the Minister



The Hon. Ron Hoenig MP
Minister for Local Government

Councils have traditionally been an employer of choice for young people, whether they are seeking a trade, looking for a professional role as a cadet or learning to provide local services through a traineeship. We have made a commitment to increase council workforces by 15% by hiring more apprentices, trainees and cadets boosting council workforces and to bring service delivery back 'in-house'.

As a tangible commitment to the increase in apprentices, trainees and cadets, the NSW Government is investing \$333.3 million to employ an additional 1,700 places in the local government sector across the state.

Councils are experiencing declining workforce numbers with serious skill gaps and a large portion of experienced professionals who have worked in the sector for decades are also likely to retire within the next five years.

This investment will train up the next generation of skilled labour while keeping jobs within local councils, reversing the trend of councils outsourcing jobs. The funding will go towards hiring people in new roles created by councils above their current workforce numbers with the new roles to focus on in-demand trades including electricians, plumbers, engineers, civil construction workers, mechanics, planning cadets and many more.

This investment is great news for regional NSW, meaning young people can pursue careers within their own communities, which will revitalise local training networks and importantly, keep people in our regions.

Local government employs more than 65,000 people across the state's 128 councils, as well as its county councils and joint organisations. Many trainees and apprentices who start their career at councils also go on to work in local industry. With a shortage of skilled labour acting as a significant handbrake on the development of new housing and infrastructure across NSW, this will play a key role in training up new apprentices and trainees that will build better communities.

Program overview

Grant type	Open, competitive, merit-based grant for councils, county councils, and joint organisations
Program objectives	• Increase the local government workforce through the employment of apprentices, trainees and cadets (recruits) over eight years to 2032. • Increase the directly employed local government workforce. • Create positive social outcomes by generating local education, training and employment opportunities particularly targeting youth. • Contribute to the outcomes from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap by increasing employment and education opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Primary funding purpose	Provide funding to employ an additional 1,700 apprentices, trainees and cadets in the local government sector across the state. This is in line with the NSW Government's goal to increase local government workforces by 15 per cent by hiring more apprentices and trainees.
Funding period	1 January 2025 – 30 June 2032 (across 8 financial years)
Funding rounds	Grant recipients will be able to start claiming funding: • Round 1 – January 2025 • Round 2 – July 2025 • Round 3 – January 2026 • Round 4 – July 2027
Application dates	Applications to be submitted through SmartyGrants by: • Round 1 – Closed • Round 2 – Closed • Round 3 – Closed • Round 4 – 2 October 2026 (Friday, 5:00PM)
Notification of application outcome	From 9 November 2026 (Round 4)
Agency responsible and contact	Office of Local Government Fresh Start Program Team E: freshstart@olg.nsw.gov.au

About the Program

1. Program purpose

This Program is a key initiative targeting the NSW Government's commitment to make 15 per cent of local government workforces apprentices and trainees. Under the Program, \$333.3 million is being invested over eight financial years to provide direct support to local councils across the state in wage support for 1,700 new apprentices, trainees and cadets.

The Program funding addresses identified workforce shortages, closes skill gaps, and will boost critical workforce numbers. The sector is impacted by a trend for outsourcing which has caused a severe depletion of in-house trade capabilities and the expected retirement of experienced professionals over the next five years will have significant ramifications.

The local government sector currently employs more than 65,000 people. As respected employers within their local communities, the local government sector is a key player in workforce development across regional, rural, and remote communities, which allows community members to gain qualifications and have employment within their local area. Many trainees and apprentices who start their career at councils also go on to work in local industry.

The funding will be administered by the Office of Local Government in accordance with these guidelines and the [Grants Administration Guide](#).

2. Program objectives

By using the Program to fund the wages for new apprentices, trainees and cadets, the NSW Government seeks to:

- Increase the local government workforce through the direct council employment of

apprentices, trainees and cadets (recruits) over eight years to 2032.

- Build capacity in councils and a stronger local government sector.
- Create positive social outcomes by generating local education, training and employment opportunities particularly targeting youth.
- Contribute to the outcomes from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap by increasing employment and education opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

3. Program and funding duration

This Program is running over eight years to 2032, delivering \$333.3 million to employ an additional 1,700 apprentices, trainees and cadets in the local government sector. The Program funding will be completed by 30 June 2032.

Funding is based on the nominal term of the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship.

4. What is being funded

The Program will fund:

- 100 per cent of the applicable salary rate of pay for a new apprentice, trainee or cadet, specified in the Local Government (State) Award 2026 (Clause 31C Trainee Employment and Apprenticeships and Part B, Monetary Rates – Table 1, Clause 7 – Rates of Pay); and
- On-costs of 15 per cent of the wage amount, to contribute to additional employment-related expenses such as the superannuation guarantee and any consequential increase in the cost of compulsory workers compensation insurance.

The Program is funding up to 1,700 new positions over eight financial years from January 2025.

In round 4, funding will commence for up to 574 positions which will include, a minimum of 200 apprentices, 100 trainees and 100 cadet positions.

For clarity, a new position includes the filling of a current vacant position and the transition of an existing casual role to an apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship.

5. How the funding is being allocated and managed

Eligible organisations are the funding recipients.

Allocation of funding to recipients will be done in an equitable manner. The funding is assigned to the individual recruit, not the position. It cannot be transferred to another recruit.

Funding can be transferred with the recruit if they move to the employment of another eligible organisation.

In the event of oversubscription to round 4, a waitlist of provisionally approved positions will be created. Where extra funding capacity is generated through resignations, terminations or early completions, the waitlist will be progressively activated, subject to continued eligibility and available funding.

6. Consideration of the needs of the organisation and community

The NSW Government recognises that not every organisation has the same needs or skill shortages, and the Program and Guidelines are designed so that each organisation can determine its own workforce priorities (in line with the Guidelines).

It is an open, competitive, merit-based grant. All eligible organisations can apply in each round, regardless of previous allocations.

It is important that organisations prioritise the positions in their application, in case of over-subscription.

The program aims to support new apprentices, trainees and cadets in areas of critical skill needs and workforce shortages.

It is recognised that rural and remote organisations have additional challenges in recruiting and retaining apprentices, trainees and cadets, including access to training providers.

Eligible organisations may seek other funding opportunities for the training component or additional on-cost support, although, this is distinct and separate from the funding under this Program and not reflected in these Guidelines. See Appendix C for further information.

7. Aboriginal inclusion

The NSW Government, with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and Local Government NSW, has commitments to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, supporting Priority Reforms enabled by specific socio-economic outcome targets in NSW. This Program will contribute to targets related to providing employment and education opportunities.

Representation parity for Aboriginal peoples is a focus of this program. Participation in nationally accredited training supports increased career outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

Guidelines have been developed to guide organisations on the employment of Aboriginal peoples in NSW under the Program (Appendix G).

8. Diversity and inclusion

Diversity in the workforce reflects the breadth of difference that exists within the community. Inclusion enables genuine participation and contribution, which results in employees feeling safe to bring their whole selves to work.

Organisations are encouraged to consider how they can achieve diversity and inclusion in

their workforce, including pathways for employment of Aboriginal peoples, support for the employment of culturally and linguistically diverse populations, support for women in trades, and by providing an accessible workplace.

Recruitment assistance is available through various programs. Links to further information can be found at Appendix A.

Eligibility

9. Eligible local government organisations

Local government organisations eligible for funding are:

- councils,
- county councils, and
- joint organisations.

Identification of need

Each organisation is responsible for identifying their apprentice, trainee and cadet needs. It is expected that councils have identified their workforce needs in their Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) which forms part of a council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements. (See section 10 for further information).

Recruitment

In building capacity and a stronger sector, organisations are responsible for the recruitment of apprentices, trainees and cadets.

Recruits must be employed directly by the organisation.

Councils may use a Group Training Organisation (GTO) to assist in their recruitment of new staff, but if they do so, the council must meet the cost of the GTO and not use grant funding from the Program.

Recruits must be starting a new apprenticeship or traineeship or have completed 50% or less of the nominal term of an apprenticeship or traineeship and are not currently employed by the organisation and completing an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Steps to Apprentice and Trainee recruitment

Councils can find all apprenticeships and traineeships using the [Training Services Apprenticeship and Traineeship Search](#).

Councils are strongly encouraged to identify training providers that offer government subsidised training available on the [Smart and Skilled Provider List](#). These are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that deliver NSW Government subsidised training.

It is recommended that an [Apprentice Connect Australia Provider](#) be contacted once the apprentice/trainee start date is known, as this entity is funded by the Australian Government to help the employer with registration and completion of a Training Contract.

For an apprenticeship or traineeship to be legal in NSW, the employer and apprentice/trainee must sign a Training Contract and have it approved by [Training Services](#).

Support, advice and information to consider when employing an apprentice or trainee can be found on the [Training Services website](#).

Reporting

Reporting will be required to confirm delivery of training and supervision. This reporting is a condition of grant payments. Periodic and end of project funding acquittals will also be required for each recruit. See section 17 for further information.

Funded and unfunded costs

The NSW Government is funding the total of the following monetary amounts payable by the council to each Funded Employee (recruit)

under the *Local Government (State) Award 2026* (the Award):

- the minimum rate of pay that is applicable to the Funded Employee as per the Award; and
- the monetary cost of the Funded Employee's entitlement to public holidays, sick leave, annual leave and bereavement leave where payable under the Award; and
- the sewer choke allowance payable in accordance with the Award for time engaged by the Funded Employee in the clearing of blockages in live sewers; and
- any additional septic tank rate of pay payable to the Funded Employee in accordance with the Award for time occupied on work in connection with the cleaning of septic tanks, and/or septic closets and/or chemical closets; and
- any tool allowance payable to the Funded Employee under the Award; and
- any travelling allowance payable to the Funded Employee as per the Award where the employee is required to start and/or finish work at a location other than the agreed normal place of work and travel to and/or from such location in their own time; and
- any use of community language skills and signing work allowance payable to the Funded Employee under the Award; and
- any special leave granted to a Funded Employee who is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to attend Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural events.

The Program will also fund on-costs at a rate of an additional 15 per cent of the minimum rate of pay. This is to contribute to additional employment-related expenses such as the superannuation guarantee and any consequential increase in the cost of compulsory workers compensation insurance.

Organisations must meet any other costs and are encouraged to consider other funding

opportunities, some of which are outlined in section 7.

Supervision

Supervision and mentoring must be provided by a suitably experienced and qualified staff member, meeting any requirements under the *Local Government (State) Award 2026 and Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*.

It is expected that organisations will have supervisors available for the duration of the funding term.

For assistance with supervisor training, please contact the Fresh Start Program team at freshstart@olg.nsw.gov.au

Submitting an application

10. Assessment criteria

The following criteria will be considered in assessing applications.

Meeting program objectives Addressing workforce challenges

How the positions applied for address the following challenges outlined in section 2 of the grant guidelines:

- Addressing skills and workforce shortages
- Managing the succession of retiring workforce; and
- Reducing the reliance on outsourcing.

Councils are encouraged to consider the skills and workforce shortages identified in the [2025-26 Local Government Skills Audit Report](#).

The occupation shortages identified in the Audit Report will be considered priority occupations for funding under round 4.

This does not mean these are the only positions that will be funded. Well-evidenced skills shortages in other occupations that

meet the assessment criteria will also be eligible for funding.

Career pathway

The grant funding responds to identified needs within the local government organisation, in particular building capacity. There is an expectation that there will be a strong possibility of an ongoing career for recruits at the conclusion of their training within local government organisations.

Qualification and training

The proposed apprenticeship or traineeship course must be listed on the NSW Skills List, refer to <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/resources/nsw-skills-list>.

For cadetships, new recruits must be enrolled to study with a registered higher education provider.

Demonstrated need Workforce Management

A submitted application should:

- Clearly outline the need for the new position
- Demonstrate how the new position links to the organisation's workforce planning and the [2025 Local Government Skills Audit](#), and
- Explain how the new position aligns with the purpose and objectives of the Program, such as planning for an ageing workforce, opportunities to create additional new positions for local young people, learning and development, and recruitment strategies to fill emerging and critical skills gaps.

Applications from councils should provide evidence of these additional needs above their existing workforce and budget in their WMS. Further information on the WMS can be found on the [OLG IP&R webpage](#).

Capacity Recruitment

Organisations are responsible for recruiting apprentices, trainees and cadets and recruits must be directly employed by the organisation.

Note that Councils can use their own resources to get assistance to recruit, but the expectation is that councils develop their own capabilities in this area.

Supervisor

Workplace supervisors play a vital role in coaching, ongoing engagement, and ensuring workplace safety.

Organisations must confirm in their application that they have supervisors for the roles applied for and that these supervisors have appropriate qualifications, knowledge and skills to support recruits.

Further information can be found on the [Training Services Coaching and supervising apprentices or trainees webpage](#).

Premises

The organisation's workplace must have the work schedules that will allow the recruit to demonstrate their competency in the work-based component of the proposed training.

Inclusion, diversity and social outcomes

The organisation should outline how its recruitment processes support:

- Closing the Gap, employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Increasing women in non-traditional roles
- Increasing cultural diversity in the workforce
- Ensuring an inclusive workplace that is accessible to everyone
- Social and economic benefits to the community.

Information and resources to support organisations to incorporate processes in their recruitment to contribute to these outcomes can be found at Appendix A.

11. Application process

To ensure all councils have the capacity to apply, it is intended to keep the application process simple, while adhering to the Grants Administration Guide. Applications are submitted through SmartyGrants.

There are four funding rounds:

Funding Round	Application closing date
1 – January 2025	Closed
2 – July 2025	Closed
3 – January 2026	Closed
4 – July 2027	2 October 2026

The deadline for applications must be met to enable training providers to plan for expected intake in courses.

SmartyGrants automatically sends an email to the grant applicant when they have submitted a grant application.

Multiple positions can be applied for in one application. The application will ask a series of questions based on the assessment criteria, the responses to which will be used to assess eligibility and alignment with Program objectives.

Assessment, allocation and funding

12. Assessment and allocation

As administrator of the Program, OLG will work within the annual funding available across the duration of the Program and factor this into the competitive assessment process when determining the allocation of funding.

Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with the Grants Administration Guide.

Initial assessment

The review team will check all submitted applications for eligibility and undertake a preliminary assessment. As part of the initial assessment, TAFE NSW and Training Services will be consulted to assist with availability of training.

Applicants may be requested to clarify or provide additional information to assist in the assessment process to determine eligibility.

Assessment Panel and Approvals

The Assessment Panel comprises of an independent Chair, and representatives from four key organisations with expertise in the program objectives as follows:

- Chair – Independent, with deep knowledge and understanding of the local government sector
- Office of Local Government
- Training Services
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure – Aboriginal Strategy, Policy and Engagement
- Local Government NSW and
- United Services Union.

Appointments to the Panel, including staff appointments, will be confirmed with an independent probity advisor. Advice on the appropriateness and inclusiveness of the Panel members nominated may be referred by the probity advisor to the OLG Deputy Secretary.

The Assessment Panel will assess eligible applications against the criteria and pre-established weightings, with the assistance of the review team, and make its recommendations to the program funding approver.

The Deputy Secretary is the final decision maker (including for the approval of funding). The Deputy Secretary ensures compliance with the Grants Administration Guide and these Guidelines (as approved by the Minister for Local Government), in determining allocations.

Assessment criteria and weightings

The assessment will consider the organisation's response to the key objectives and criteria listed in section 10. The Assessment Panel will establish weightings against the assessment criteria:

- Meeting funding objectives
- Demonstrated need
- Capacity
- Inclusion, diversity and social outcomes.

The Assessment Panel reserves the right to set aside an application from further consideration where it does not meet a required standard on one or more of the criteria, should this be required.

Broader factors that may be considered

The Assessment Panel may need to consider limits on trades or geographic locations to meet training market capacity.

Where the program is over-subscribed, the Assessment Panel may consider:

- previous funding under this program and councils' commitments to the program
- enhancing the skilled career opportunities for people in rural, remote and regional areas
- likelihood of ongoing employment
- apprenticeships, traineeships, and cadetships not previously offered by the organisation
- the 2025-26 Local Government Skills Audit
- occupations that are identified on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List²

the application of a relative disadvantage assessment based on the methodology used for Federal Assistance Grants.

Waitlist

In the event of oversubscription to round 4, a waitlist of provisionally approved positions will be created.

Where extra funding capacity is generated through resignations, terminations or early completions, the waitlist will be progressively activated, subject to continued eligibility and available funding.

Notification of grant application outcome

OLG will notify successful applicants of their provisional approval approximately six weeks from application closing date to enable these organisations to undertake recruitment for the new roles.

Once provisional approval is granted, final approval is guaranteed on employment commencement of the recruit.

Organisations will need to provide OLG with details of the recruit via the commencement form, including a copy of the approved establishment letter for apprenticeships/traineeships, for final approval and allocation of funding.

Unfilled positions

All apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship positions allocated in round 4 must commence employment by 28 February 2028.

Any approved positions that haven't commenced employment by this date will automatically return to the funding pool and be offered to the waitlist.

Unrecruited positions offered in round 4 will not be rolled over to any future funding rounds.

13. Funding Agreement

Funding agreements between an organisation and OLG as the grant administrator are legally enforceable. They include:

- agreed terms and conditions with regard to the use of the funds and the periodic payments to councils to meet employment and on-costs
- clear information on required outcomes
- appropriate accountability for funds, including reporting and acquittal requirements
- data that will be used to evaluate the outcomes of the individual recruit funding and the program
- the organisation's commitment to provide appropriate supervision to support the recruit's successful completion of the training and the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship
- the organisation's acknowledgement of the financial support provided by the NSW Government.

14. Funding and payments

Funding

The funding amount will be determined on successful recruitment. It will be adjusted in accordance with changes to the applicable award rates of pay as approved by the

Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales.

For further information regarding the level of wages that will be funded under the Program, refer to Schedule 1 of the Program Guidelines – Apprentice, Trainee and Cadets wages table.

Funding of wages is for the nominal term of the apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship unless completed early or in the event of employment being terminated before completion.

Funding allocation is predicated on the successful completion of each element in the approved training plan. This allows for the maximum number of new roles to be created within the program funding. See section 16 for information on changes in circumstances.

Nominal terms

The nominal term refers to the expected length of time it should take a recruit to complete their accredited training and workplace requirements under normal circumstances.

It is the standard duration set for the qualification, such as two or four years, and is used as a guide for training contracts, funding, and planning.

However, apprentices and trainees may complete earlier depending on factors such as prior experience, training progress, competency achievement, and agreement between the recruit, employer, and training provider.

Standard nominal terms are:

- Apprenticeships - up to 4 years
- Traineeships - up to 3 years
- Cadetships - up to 2 years

There is no legislative framework for cadetship nominal terms. The Fresh Start program will fund cadetship for a period of up to 2 years.

Award wage

Funding is capped at the award rate of pay applicable to the apprenticeship, traineeship or cadetship at the time of approval, adjusted in accordance with changes to the award rates of pay as approved by the Industrial Relations Commission.

Where a council pays above the applicable award rate, the program will only fund costs up to the award rate, and council will be responsible for meeting any additional salary costs.

Payments

The process leading to the first payment of wages will be made after the applicant submits a confirmation of employment form for each recruit to OLG. This first payment will be from the employment start date to the end of the current claim period.

Payments thereafter will be made at 6 monthly intervals. The Recipient may only submit (and the Department will only accept) a claim for Funding for each Funded Employee once in the following periods during the nominal term:

- 1 July to 31 December – for claim period ending 31 December; and
- 1 January to 30 June – for claim period ending 30 June.

To receive the Funding, the Recipient must provide to the Department an acquittal of the previous claim period in the format specified by the Department.

Change of circumstances

Organisations are not prevented from reapplying under future rounds of funding in any of the following circumstances.

Funding is linked to the individual recruit, not the position.

Transfer

If two eligible organisations agree to transfer a recruit from one to the other, the funding can be transferred to the new organisation if that organisation meets the funding criteria and is approved by OLG. Both organisations must contact OLG regarding approval and Agreement arrangements.

Suspension

Organisations can suspend the program for a period of time. OLG must be notified of the suspension in the next reporting period.

Payments can continue to be made to the organisation in accordance with the Agreement, for the organisation to hold in trust for the recruit's return or OLG under the direction from council can withhold payments where suspensions occur.

Organisations must continue to report the suspension status in SmartyGrants during the suspension period and return to regular reporting once it recommences. If the recruit does not return, the organisation must return the grant funding held in trust to OLG for reallocation within 30 days.

Extension to achieve satisfactory completion

Funding is for the nominal training term for the duration of the Program listed in the Training Contract. Circumstances that require additional wages beyond the duration, such as repeating a term of training, will be the responsibility of the organisation.

Discontinuation

Should the recruit discontinue their training or not complete all the units of competency as identified on their training plan, the funding will cease. Organisations will be reimbursed for wages up until the point where council is no longer required to pay the individual a wage.

Monitoring and reporting

15. Monitoring and Reporting requirements

Reporting to OLG will be undertaken via SmartyGrants and will involve administrative reporting throughout the funding term. Any changes to the funded circumstances must be reported to the Department immediately.

The Department may, from time to time and for the purposes of its audit requirements, request in writing any information relating to the Project. Without limitation, this includes a written Training Progress Report for each Funded Employee or any other information as outlined in the Fresh Start Program Funding Agreement.

End of financial year reporting

End of Financial Year Organisations will need to report:

- FTE workforce at 30 June 2024 (baseline)
- FTE workforce at 30 June each year up to 30 June 2032, and
- the number of recruits employed under the Program each year up to 30 June 2032.

Reporting to the community

To report back to their communities, councils should report within their Delivery Program progress reporting, and other organisations are required to report within their annual reporting, information on:

- the amount of funding received under the program
- the number of apprentices, trainees and cadets employed in that year and their roles.

Acquittal

Each organisation must acquit all funding received via SmartyGrants. A summary statement of expenditure for the entirety of the program funding, evidence of completion, data, and feedback to assess the success of the program will be required.

Auditing

OLG will undertake periodic auditing of the Program and the use of funds by councils to ensure appropriate probity principles have been met.

Appendix

A. Inclusion, diversity and social outcomes resources

Programs to help recruit new apprentices or trainees, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, support for Aboriginal staff and business, and opportunities employing people with disabilities - www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/apprentices-and-trainees/employers

Closing the Gap - www.closingthegap.gov.au

NSW Women's Strategy - www.nsw.gov.au/women-nsw/nsw-womens-strategy

Women in Trades - www.apprenticeshipsupport.com.au/Employers/Women-in-male-dominated-trades

B. Apprenticeships and traineeships available and training providers

Registering an apprentice - Support, advice and information, especially for less experienced councils to consider when employing an apprentice or trainee.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/apprentices-and-trainees/employers>

Training Services Apprenticeship and Traineeship search: <https://online.training.nsw.gov.au/vtu/vto/vtoEnquiry.do?command=goToVTOSearch#na>

Skills NSW provides access to course and training information: www.skills.education.nsw.gov.au

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships: <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/vet/school-based-apprenticeships-and-traineeships>

C. Other Government funding

Organisations are encouraged to identify Government training subsidies, particularly for critical occupational skills shortages

Organisations can apply for funding under the Program for recruits who have been successful in a personal application for funding under another NSW or Federal Government program (see [Training Services](#) for information).

Apprentices or new entrant trainees who have to travel more than 120kms (round trip) to attend day or block release training, may be able to apply for financial assistance from the [Vocational Training Assistance Scheme \(VTAS\)](#).

D. What are apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships?

Apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships and traineeships are regulated by government and established under a Training Contract. Training Services regulates apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW. It also provides support and services to apprentices/trainees and employers.

Apprenticeships and traineeships combine on-the-job practical training with an employer, and formal training with a training provider.

People learn new skills while working, leading to a nationally recognised qualification for work in a specific job role and industry.

Apprenticeships last around 3 to 4 years and traineeships around 1 to 3 years. They can be part-time, full-time, or school-based.

Find further information at <http://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/apprentices-and-trainees>

Cadetships

Similar to an apprentice or trainee, a cadet will work with an employer in a relevant field while completing their studies. The main difference

is that cadetships are for those studying at a registered higher education provider.

To be eligible for Fresh Start funding, a cadet must be enrolled and studying at a registered higher education provider.

As funding for cadets is for up to two years, it is preferred that cadets are enrolled in their last or second last year of study. This is to best support transition into the skilled workforce at council.

Where council recruits a cadet with more than two years of study remaining, Fresh Start funding will be for two years only. In this situation, council will be expected to fund the cadet's employment for the remainder of their degree.

There is no legislative framework for cadetships. Organisations will need to prepare their own Training Plan.

E. Questions and complaints

Contact the Fresh Start Program team at freshstart@olg.nsw.gov.au

F. Access to information

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

Provide any relevant contact details or other sources of information for individuals seeking information from the relevant agency about the GIPA Act and/or Standing Order 52.

G. Employment of Aboriginal peoples in NSW

The purpose of this guide is to assist organisations in this program to contribute to the targets related to employment and education outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

1. Objectives

- **Empowerment:** Foster self-determination and empowerment for Aboriginal peoples.
- **Skill Development:** Provide comprehensive vocational training and essential skills development.
- **Cultural Integration:** Respect and incorporate Aboriginal cultural practices and values.
- **Economic participation:** Enabling and creating career opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.
- **Representation parity:** At each location, achieve at least population parity of participants identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

2. Identifying as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander

- **Aboriginal Identity:** Must identify as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander and provide relevant documentation as per.
 - o Be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
 - o Identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person

- o Be accepted as such by the community in which you live or have lived

3. Recruitment phases

- **Attraction approach:** Engage with local Aboriginal entities and businesses to promote this program, including the career based opportunities beyond this program. Promote within local schools, education institutions and other stakeholders as relevant.
- **Information sessions:** Hold specific information sessions to inform of this program, including detailed information on the expectations, on-the-job and classroom learning, support during the program and career-based opportunities beyond the program.

4. Program Structure

- **Duration:** Typically, 1-4 years, depending on the qualification.
- **Training Components:** Combination of on-the-job training and classroom instruction.
- **Mentorship:** Access to dedicated mentors and peer support networks. Including cultural support.

5. Cultural Competency

- **Cultural Training:** Enable Aboriginal cultural education training for all NSW local councils, county councils, Joint Organisations and council-controlled entities staff and participants.
- **Cultural Leave:** Allow for special leave and participation in cultural or community events.

6. Support Services

- **Holistic Support:** Offer support services including literacy and numeracy training,

cultural based mentoring, health and wellbeing support, and career counselling.

- **Financial assistance:** Aboriginal apprentices and trainees have access to Abstudy and Away from Home training funding through Centrelink to support additional learning or connection.
- **Employee Assistance Program:** As available for all participants, support and managed by the relevant NSW local councils, county councils, Joint Organisations and council-controlled entities.
- **Training support:** Aboriginal participants will receive mandatory referral to culturally appropriate mentoring.

7. Community Involvement

- **Partnerships:** Apply a place-based approach to collaborate with local Aboriginal entities and businesses to promote careers and economic participation opportunities.

8. Evaluation and Accountability

- **Regular Assessments:** Conduct regular assessments to monitor progress and outcomes.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement.
- **Transparency:** Maintain clear communication and accountability to the Aboriginal community.

9. Outcomes

- **Employment:** Aim for high employment rates post-apprenticeship.
- **Skill Proficiency:** Ensure apprentices achieve proficiency in their chosen trade.

Schedule 1 – Apprentice, Trainee and Cadets wages table

PART B

MONETARY RATES – TABLE 1

CLAUSE 7 – RATES OF PAY

Band/Level	(a) Rate Per Week \$	(b) Rate Per Week \$	(c) Rate Per Week \$
	First Pay Period 01/07/26	First Pay Period 01/07/27	First Pay Period 01/07/28
Operational Band 1			
Level 1 (Juniors and Trainees)			
T1 at 15 years of age	501.30	521.40	542.30
T2 at 16 years of age	625.80	650.80	676.80
T3 at 17 years of age	736.00	765.40	796.00
T4 at 18 years of age or over or HSC	860.50	894.90	930.70
T5 at 21 years or over	985.60	1025.00	1066.00
T6	1063.90	1106.50	1150.80
T7	1116.30	1161.00	1207.40
T8	1169.90	1216.70	1265.40
T9	1223.90	1272.90	1323.80
T10	1279.60	1330.80	1384.00

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124
W: dphi.nsw.gov.au
