

NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grant Program

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

ABOUT THE GRANTS

Non-government organisations (including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations) that receive funding from NSW Health to deliver alcohol and other drugs (AOD) prevention, harm reduction and/or treatment services (via the NSW Ministry of Health or Local Health Districts) are invited to apply for one-off competitive grants to support research, evaluation and monitoring capacity building activities.

Background

The NSW Government response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug Ice (the Ice Inquiry) made several recommendations which are dependent on AOD services having the capacity to engage in research, evaluation and monitoring. However, a recent [NSW Ministry of Health funded study of the research capacity of NSW non-government organisations](#) (NGO) AOD services identified lack of staff time and research skills as consistent barriers to research engagement.

The Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA) are leading the development and operation of a collaborative NGO grant program between NADA and NSW Health. NADA will auspice the funds and administer the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants Program, guided by a funding contract with NSW Health.

The NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants Program will target identified gaps in research capability and infrastructure, to help build the research capacity of the NGO AOD sector and improve outcomes for people accessing AOD services. It also supports the vision of the [NSW Health Future Health report](#) of 'a sustainable health system that delivers outcomes that matter most to patients and the community, is personalised, invests in wellness and is digitally enabled'.

Background resources

The NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants are based on findings from the [Research Capacity Study: NGO Services Report](#). Before applying for the grants, it may be useful to access this resource and also the corresponding [Evidence Check of Strategies to Build the Research Capacity of Healthcare Professionals](#).

These reports will help the applicant understand the background and intent of the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants.

Objectives

The primary objective of the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants is to enable NGO AOD Services to improve their capacity for research and evaluation. This improvement in research and evaluation capacity should ultimately be of benefit to people accessing AOD services in NSW.

Specifically, the program seeks to:

- Enable services to respond to current and future demands for evidence based AOD services
- Improve the capacity of the AOD NGO sector to conduct research, evaluation and monitoring
- Overcome barriers to research engagement such as lack of staff time and research skills within organisations
- Enable services to participate in and conduct research and evaluation that is translatable into practice

Grant scope

The purpose of this grants program is to support organisations to develop and build their capacity to undertake research, evaluation and monitoring. The grants are intended to build sustainable research capacity to help generate translational research that leads to improved client experiences and outcomes when accessing AOD prevention, harm reduction and/or treatment services in NSW.

Grant recipients will have up to 18 months to complete their projects. The intention is for organisations to have time to develop their research capacity and embed an ongoing cultural shift whereby research, evaluation and monitoring are valued and add benefit for people who access the service.

These grants may not be used to pay a university to conduct an entire research project for an organisation. However, the funds may be used to pay a university to provide mentorship for the organisation to develop their own research program or to provide a specialised skill that will support a research project undertaken by the organisation. Furthermore, these grants are not intended to provide one-off training for a single staff member except where the staff member needs to update their research skills in a particular area. Instead, the organisation may want to consider how to engage multiple people in training that supports a culture of research and evaluation throughout the organisation.

Eligibility criteria for the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants Program

To be eligible for funding, applications must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant is a non-government organisation (including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations) that receives funding from NSW Health to deliver AOD prevention, harm reduction and/or treatment services (via the NSW Ministry of Health or Local Health Districts)
- The service location where the grant funds will be utilised is within NSW
- The application is received on time (by 5pm on Wednesday 11th of October 2023), and
- All relevant fields of the application form have been completed. Incomplete application forms may not be assessed

Priority services

Based on recommendations from the Ice Enquiry, specific priority will be given to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health organisations or organisations that are located in regional and/or rural NSW for the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants. Other organisations are not excluded but these priority services may receive funding over other applicants.

Project timelines

Date	Milestone
30 th August 2023	Applications open
11 th October 2023	Applications close
October 2023	Selection Committee meets
October – December 2023	Applicants are notified of the outcome of their application Grant agreements finalised (if applicable) Projects commence
May 2024	Progress or Final reports due (dependent on length of project)
May 2025	Final reports due for projects with a longer time frame

Funding available

A total funding pool of \$400,000 ex GST is available for the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants Program

*Grants for **one organisation** will be available for amounts of up to **\$80,000 ex GST**.*

*If **2 or more organisations** apply as a collaborative project, the maximum grant amount will increase to **\$120,000 ex GST**. Please see ['Collaborative Applications'](#) for more information below.*

The number of grants available will be dependent on the funding requested and applications received.

NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grant can be used for:

- Costs for staff time for research, evaluation and monitoring purposes. Examples of this include utilising the funds to give staff dedicated time to focus on research, evaluation and monitoring activities, partnering with other organisations to hire a research dedicated staff member for the grant period or utilising the funding to support a staff member to build on an existing evaluation
- Research infrastructure upgrades, implementation or changes. For example, data collection or analysis software development, database setup cost
- Training in research and evaluation for the whole organisation or for a staff member undertaking a research project who needs to upskill in a certain area
- To support the costs of transforming existing program evaluations to publishable research projects
- Costs associated with conducting research projects, including remuneration for lived experience involvement
- Costs associated with technical support for a research project such as contracting someone to conduct statistical analyses

NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants do not cover:

- Staffing costs beyond the Grant Period (ends June 2025)
- Costs associated with a university conducting research without a program of organisational research capacity development
- Any activity that does not directly build research and evaluation capacity of the organisation

Collaborative Applications

Under the Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants, organisations can apply with other organisations to form collaborative research and evaluation capacity building projects. For organisations that collaborate with at least one other organisation up to \$120,000 ex GST will be available. These funds are intended to support the organisations to hire a dedicated research position and share the resource across the collaborating organisations.

Collaborative Applications for funds can support organisations to add to the evidence base by undergoing collaborative research projects throughout the grant period, embedding a culture of evaluation, research and monitoring across organisations.

Collaborative projects will require a lead organisation to be identified in the application. The lead organisation will be the main contact for any communications with NADA.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants program will be open for six (6) weeks.

All applications must be submitted via email to sectordevelopment@nada.org.au by the closing date and time (5pm on the 11th of October 2023).

All applications must be complete and signed by the CEO, or appropriate senior management, to be eligible for consideration for the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants.

The application selection criteria are described below in '[Assessment of the Application](#)'. Applicants should demonstrate how the proposed project will meet the objectives of the Grant program in their responses to the Selection Criteria.

We want to make the process as easy as possible for members, please remain within the word limits provided.

ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

Once the application has been submitted, it will be screened for eligibility against the stated criteria. If assessed as eligible, the application will be sent to the Selection Committee for review against the selection criteria specified below.

Each application will be assessed on merit and scored according to a pre-determined rating scale.

The Selection Committee will meet to discuss all applications and finalise the outcome of each application. The Selection Committee may consider the mix of individual grants and region coverage to achieve value for money and the achievement of the stated outcomes. The Selection Committee may also prioritise applications from Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and service sites that are in regional and rural areas.

The Selection Committee will include representatives from NSW Health, NADA and one independent assessor from a university.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria.

Criteria	Response should demonstrate	Word count
Please provide a brief overview of the proposed project including background and scope	A clear project overview with particular emphasis on the background and scope	100
Please outline the proposed project, including the intention of the project and implementation considerations.	A more detailed project outline, focusing on implementation and the intention of the project	200
How does the proposed project meet the objectives and scope of the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants?	Applicants should directly address the objectives and scope of the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants and clearly demonstrate how the project meets these objectives.	200
Describe the project's anticipated impacts and outcomes, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will the funding be used to generate useful research and evaluation that will improve outcomes for clients of NGO AOD prevention, harm reduction and/or treatment services in NSW? How will the funds build the organisation/s ongoing research and/or evaluation capacity? 	Responses should address both subheadings in the question, highlighting how the funds will be used to implement these anticipated outcome.	300
(Collaborative applications only) Question 4: Describe how the project will work across all the organisations involved including the relationship between the partner and lead organisations	Clearly outline how the funds will be implemented across all organisations and how the collaboration will work, including discussions of any potential collaborative research projects (if applicable).	200
Budget	Costs are clear, itemised and seem reasonable. All funds requested are in scope	N/A
Project Timeline	The timeline is appropriate and considers the particulars of the project	N/A
Organisational Capacity to deliver on project / Risk	Risks are clearly outlined and mitigating factors are considered. There is evidence of organisational capacity and support to deliver on grant	200

Notification of application outcome

Once the Selection Committee has met and finalised the assessment of all the applications, all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email.

If the application is successful, further information about the next steps will be provided.

If the application is unsuccessful, the applicant has the right to request further information about why their application was unsuccessful in this instance. All such communications should be directed to sectordevelopment@nada.org.au.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS, SUPPORT AND KEY CONTACT

Grant Agreements

Successful applicants of grants in excess of \$25,000 ex GST are required to enter into a Grant Agreement with NADA (as the auspicing body) for the funds awarded to be released. These Grant Agreements will cover expectations for the use of funds and reporting requirements.

Grant funds distribution timeframes

Smaller one-off grants funds (under \$25,000 ex GST) will be paid in one upfront instalment.

For larger grant amounts (more than \$25,000 ex GST), particularly for those projects that are expected to continue throughout the project period, grant funds will be paid in instalments, with the initial funds to be provided after the successful organisation has signed a Grant Agreement and provided NADA with an invoice.

Reporting requirements for successful applicants

For smaller / one off grants (e.g. projects less than 6 months, projects for training or small IT infrastructure changes), one report will be required (due May 2024).

For larger, longer-term projects (of more than 6 months in duration), two reports will be required throughout the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants. A brief progress report mid-way through the funding cycle (May 2024) and a final report in May 2025.

Templates will be provided closer to the due date.

Academic support

For successful grant recipients who are not currently connected with an academic institution, NADA recommends that the organisation or lead organisation (in collaborative applications) seeks to engage a research mentor through The Matilda Centre's mentoring program.

More information about The Matilda Centre's mentoring program can be found on their [website](#) or by contacting [CMHDARN](#).

Please note: having academic support or contacting the Matilda Centre about academic support is not a requirement of the application process. This will be offered to successful applicants only.

Communication throughout the AOD Research Capacity Building Grants

Throughout the projects funded through the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants, communication with NADA must be maintained to advise the Grants Coordinator of the status of the project, any projected changes to the project or any significant delays to the project start or completion dates. All projects must alert NADA when the project has been completed. Contact can be made at sectordevelopment@nada.org.au.

What if the scope of the project needs to change?

If the scope of a funded project significantly alters after the initial application, NADA must be notified (via email at sectordevelopment@nada.org.au) before any changes take place regardless of the cost implications. NADA will assess the proposed changes to the scope against the original criteria for the grants and either approve the suggested alterations or notify the applicant that the changes are not approved and that the project can no longer proceed.

Please note, once a project has been allocated funds, there is no scope to provide additional funds even if the project is changed significantly with NADA approval.

What if funds are not utilised or the project cannot commence?

If the total allocated grant funds are not spent within the grant period (e.g. the project costs less than was originally quoted), the grant recipient must email NADA via sectordevelopment@nada.org.au to inform them of this underspend. The grant recipient may then elect to provide NADA with a written request to utilise the extra funds for other purposes that uphold the intent of the grant. If there is no way to discharge the funds, it may result in the return of the unused portion of the funds back to NADA.

The same process should be followed for those grants that are unable to commence.

Key Contact

For questions about the application process or the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants program, please contact Jo Penhallurick, Sector Development Grants Coordinator at sectordevelopment@nada.org.au.

In the interest of equity, all questions received about the NGO Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Grants program will be logged in the **FAQ document** and made available to any interested party through the [NADA website](#).