

2026 Innovation Seed Funding Grant Guidelines

Overview


The National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and supports the Australian government's National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability. The Centre works to make sure people with intellectual disability get better health care.

The Centre is led by a Consortium of 9 organisations that includes universities and medical research institutes, advocacy organisations, and health services. Building on the work of these consortium organisations, the Centre is co-governed and co-led by people with intellectual disability, consortium leads and an independent council. Our work is informed by First Nations, Learn and Lead (lived experience), and National and International Advisory Committees and grounded in principles of collaboration and co-design.

The purpose of the Innovation Seed Funding Grants is to support:

- Innovative projects in intellectual disability health that align to the Centre's priorities
- Inclusive projects that have people with intellectual disability and their families in meaningful roles
- Collaboration in intellectual disability health

The 2026 round will prioritise evidence-to-practice projects that focus on implementation, uptake and practical change.



Focus areas

The [Centre Strategy 2025 – 2028](#) outlines the priorities, focus areas, and continued investment of the Centre. The health systems focus areas help the Centre direct resources to maximise impact. Applications must align to one of the following focus areas:

- **Improve acute care:** Make hospitals safer and more responsive to the needs of people with intellectual disability, focussing on quality, safety and effectiveness.
- **Improve access to mental healthcare:** Make sure people with intellectual disability can access the mental health care they need.
- **Improve care coordination:** Improve coordination and continuity of care, particularly for people with complex needs, including coordination with the NDIS.
- **Improve continuity of care, transitions:** Ensure greater continuity of care throughout life course, especially at key transition points (e.g., child-adult, adult-older care/geriatric).
- **Preventative care across lifespan:** Increase access to preventative care including screening, immunisation and oral health at all stages of life.

The priority populations in the work of the Centre are people with an intellectual disability who also:

- Are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Are LGBTQI+
- Are or have previously experienced homelessness
- Are or have previously experienced mental health or drug and alcohol issues
- Come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Live in rural and remote areas

- Have had contact with the justice system or at risk
- Have a complex disability

The Centre encourages applicants to identify relevant priority populations in their application, but this is not a requirement for eligibility. Projects across all age ranges are encouraged, from children and younger people, adults, and older adults.

Eligible projects and activities


This funding round supports projects that take an evidence-informed approach, tool, model or resource and put it into practice in a real service setting. The focus of this option is on implementation, uptake and practical change.

Eligible projects and activities may include, but are not limited to:

- implementing an existing tool, model or resource within a service
- supporting the uptake of an approach already shown to be effective
- implementing an evidence-informed approach in a real service setting
- identifying barriers and enablers to implementation to support ongoing use

Projects should demonstrate a clear pathway to practical use, be grounded in a real-world setting, and show how the work could improve implementation or service delivery in intellectual disability health.

This funding will not support:

- Development of new tools, models or interventions
 - Early-stage or exploratory research
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- Projects that are primarily focused on evaluation without implementation
- Projects that do not involve a real service setting where change can occur

Who can apply

Applications must be led by a health service or service provider delivering care or support to people with intellectual disability.

Applications must include:

- meaningful involvement of people with intellectual disability through co-design and throughout the project.
- At least one partner with expertise in research, implementation, or evaluation.

Funding

A total of \$200,000 is available for the 2026 Innovation Seed Funding Grants to support two grants of \$100,000 according to merit. Eligible expenses include direct project costs such as salaries, knowledge exchange activities, workshop and partner meeting costs, providing support for people with an intellectual disability to participate. Ineligible expenses include indirect or infrastructure costs and covering retrospective costs.

The funds must be spent in accordance with the budget proposed in the grant application for activities in Australia only. Grants are non-renewable and must be completed within the timeframe for which the funding is granted. No additional funding will be provided to complete the project. Any unspent funds must be returned.

Funded projects will be required to submit written progress reports and a final report during the project period. All projects must submit

a six-month progress report and a final report at the completion of the project. Projects approved for a longer duration will also be required to submit additional progress reporting, as outlined in the funding agreement. The Centre reserves the right to reallocate funding if applications do not meet a minimum quality.

Easy Read version of your submission


As part of our commitment to meaningfully including people with intellectual disability, it is important that we provide information that is consistent and accessible. Please use the template provided to complete an Easy Read version of your application. You might consider enrolling in Easy Read Training, that is offered by various organisations across Australia. When completing the Easy Read template, we expect people to adhere to the principles of Easy Read. Best practice is when Easy Read is tested with a person with intellectual disability.

If you are looking for information about Easy Read, please refer to:

- [The Easy Read Standard | Evidence-Based Framework for Accessible Information](#)
- [Australian Government Style Guide](#)
- [Inclusion Australia's Fact Sheet: What is Easy Read?](#)

Eligibility

Applications must:

- Indicate how they align to at least one of the five focus areas noted above and which of the Centre priorities the project best aligns to.
 - Include people with an intellectual disability and/or their families.
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- Not include Centre Consortium organisations as lead applicants or formal project partners.
- Consortium organisation staff may contribute in an advisory capacity only. This support must be in-kind, and Consortium organisations cannot receive funding through the grant.
- Be able to be completed within a 12 to 18-month timeframe.
- Provide an Easy Read version of their submission using the template provided.
- Provide Letters of Support from all partner organisations that clearly describe their role, contribution, and commitment to the project. Generic letters that do not specify roles and contributions may be considered insufficient.

Application Evaluations

First, applications will be reviewed for completeness and adherence to submission requirements. Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements or word limits will be deemed ineligible for review. Eligible applications will then go through shortlisting process. Shortlisted applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of two members of the Centre Learn and Lead Group, two Consortium Leads, and a member of the Centre Council. Please consider both the standard application and Easy Read application as part of the Seed Funding grant evaluation process, as each version contributes important information for assessment.

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

#	Criteria	%
1	<p>Implementation approach and feasibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear implementation plan, including key activities, roles and timeline (with a quality Easy Read version) • Project is based in a real service that is ready and able to support implementation • Project is achievable within the timeframe • Project team has the appropriate skills and experience to deliver the project 	25%
2	<p>Inclusion of people with intellectual disability and families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with intellectual disability and/or families are meaningfully involved throughout the project • Project shows clear evidence of co-design (not consultation only) • Appropriate supports and budget are included to enable participation 	25%
3	<p>Impact and practice change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and specific description of what will change in practice as a result of the project • Clearly shows how the project will lead to improvements in care, access or outcomes for people with intellectual disability • Will generate practical insights (e.g., barriers and enablers) that can be used in other settings 	30%

4	<p>Partnerships and collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate and complementary partners to support the project • Clear roles and meaningful contributions of each partner 	20%
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Timeline

Milestone	Deadline
Applications Open	Tuesday 26 th May 2026
Applications Close	Monday 13 th July 2026
Eligibility check and shortlisting	Friday 28 August 2026
Review Committee Meeting and recommendations	By Friday 25 th September 2026
Notification to successful applicants	By Tuesday 6 th October 2026
Disbursement of funds	By Friday 27 th November 2026
Project commencement	January 2027
Six-month progress report due	By Friday 30 th July 2027
Additional progress reporting (if required)	As specified in funding agreement
Project end date	Within 12-18 months of commencement

Final report due	Within 1 month of project completion
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Support

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the [Centre website](#) prior to completing an application. Please direct all questions to nceidhgrants@unsw.edu.au. The Centre will endeavour to respond within three working days. Questions received through other channels (e.g., phone or other Centre emails) or received after Thursday 9th July will not receive a response.

Submission and outcome

You must use the online form and templates that have been provided to complete your application. Applications should provide all the requested information, not exceed the word count and use Arial size 12 font. Only information provided in the application will form the basis of the review process. The maximum size of attachments is 64MB. You will receive a confirmation email. Due to the anticipated volume of applications, individual feedback will not be provided to applicants.

**Thank you for your interest in the National Centre of Excellence
in Intellectual Disability Health Innovation Seed Funding
Grants.**

