# 2025 Research Funding Round 1 – Frequently Asked Questions

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## Understanding the National Disability Research Partnership

### Q: What is the National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP)?

**A:** The NDRP funds research projects led by and - with people with disability.

Our vision is policy and practice in Australia are transformed by disability-led research.

### Q: What do you mean by projects led by and with people with disability?

**A:**The NDRP aims to create inclusive and accessible research.

Projects led by and with people with disability mean people with disability are directly involved in decision-making, leadership and carrying out the research. The perspectives, experiences and priorities of people with disability are at the heart of every activity. This ensures that they have a leading role in shaping the research and its outcomes.

### Q: What type of research does the NDRP prioritise?

**A:** We prioritise research that is done by and with people with disability, not research that is done for or to people with disability. We fund and support work that brings people, groups and organisations together to collaborate and work in partnership. We prioritise inclusive disability research that creates evidence for policy and practice. This research helps advance the rights of people with disability.

The NDRP’s research is guided by our principles which are to:

* Advance high quality research that informs disability policy and practice in Australia
* Value the knowledge of people with disability in research
* Strengthen disability research capacity
* Share research findings widely in useful and accessible ways

 [Read more about the NDRP's Principles.](https://www.ndrp.org.au/principles)

### Q: Is the NDRP part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

**A:** No, the NDRP is not part of the NDIS.
The NDRP and the NDIS have different roles and are separate organisations.

* **The NDRP:**supports research led by and with people with disability. This research helps shape policies, programs and practices that improve the lives of people with disability.
* **The NDIS:** provides funding support packages to eligible people with disability to help them achieve their personal goals and independence.

### Q: Where does the NDRP get its funding from?

**A:**The National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) is an independent not-for-profit organisation.

The NDRP is funded by the Australian Government and other sources.

The Australian Government has provided initial funding support the NDRP to get started. It will be used to fund research led by and with people with disability. We are also working to partner with other funders.

### Q: Does the NDRP work with the government?

**A:**Although the NDRP receives funding from the Australian Government, we are independent from the government.

## Guiding Disability Research: The NDRP’s Research Agenda and Funding Approach

### Q: What is NDRP’s Research Agenda?

**A:** The research we fund is guided by the [NDRP Research Agenda](https://www.ndrp.org.au/researchagenda). The agenda was developed following deep engagement with the disability community. It covers many topics that are organised into 12 major areas of research. It also outlines themes that underpin all the research we fund.

[Find more information about the Research Agenda](https://www.ndrp.org.au/researchagenda).

### Q: How was the Research Agenda developed?

**A:** The NDRP Research Agenda was developed in collaboration with people with disability and their representative organisations. This process took place over two years (2021-2023). People who contributed recognised that research is key to upholding rights and improving outcomes for people with disability.

The Research Agenda also supports the implementation of Australia’s Disability Strategy and strengthens Australia’s commitment to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

[Learn more about the NDRP Research Agenda](https://www.ndrp.org.au/researchagenda).

## Understanding the NDRP’s funding and application process

### Q: What are the grant amounts for each project in Round 1?

**A:**You can apply for up to $60,000 (excluding GST) per project. The total funding available for Round 1    is $600,000.

### Q: What are the key dates?

**A:**The key dates are:

* First funding round opens 17 March 2025
* Grant applications due 28 April 2025
* Applicants notified of funding outcomes Mid 2025

​Research projects need to be finished within 10 months of funding approval.

### Q: Why is the NDRP only funding small grants round in its first funding round?

**A:** The first funding round is designed as a small grants round because we wanted to support relationship-building and knowledge-sharing.

It is often hard to find funding for this, but it is essential for inclusive, high-quality research.

These grants will help funded research teams to:

* Deeply understand the issue by hearing different perspectives
* Locate and build on existing knowledge
* Develop relationships between people with disability, organisations, communities and researchers.

### Q: Why is the NDRP spending research money on relationship-building and knowledge-sharing?

**A:**Effective research starts with understanding the issue or opportunity correctly. If key voices are missing from the conversation, research can go in the wrong direction, leading to ineffective solutions.

Bringing together people with disability, organisations, researchers, and other key stakeholders early:

* Means there is time to get to know each other and make decisions together about ways of working
* Helps make sure different perspectives are considered before research begins
* Avoids research going off-track by identifying the real problem early in the piece
* Lays the foundation for impactful, well-informed future studies.

​Applying for funding is an important step in advancing disability research. We appreciate the time and effort that goes into each application. This funding round is designed to support projects that align with the NDRP’s priorities.

To help you navigate the process, we’ve outlined key information on eligibility, application requirements, and what makes a strong proposal. We encourage you to carefully review the funding guidelines and consider how your research aligns with this round’s focus.

If your application is not successful this time, there will be future opportunities, and we encourage you to stay involved.

### Q: Will certain topics be prioritised when it comes to receiving funding?

**A:** Yes. Our funding prioritises research that values the expertise, knowledge, skills, leadership and contribution of people with disability. This includes the perspectives of families, kin, carers and communities, and academically qualified researchers.

The research area chosen for the first round of funding is the [NDRP Research Agenda](https://www.ndrp.org.au/researchagenda)area of safety of people with disability. Applications for other topics unrelated to the safety of people with disability will not be funded in this round.

### Q: Does my application need to use the research questions identified in the NDRP Research Agenda about the safety of people with disability?

**A:**No. Your application does not need to use the research questions listed in the [NDRP Research Agenda](https://www.ndrp.org.au/researchagenda) on topic of safety of people with disability.

However, it is useful to [review the Research Agenda](https://www.ndrp.org.au/researchagenda). While the Agenda highlights important areas of need, your research questions should be specific to the issue your project aims to address.

This approach ensures your application is clear, practical, and aligned with efforts to improve safety of people with disability

## Understanding Funding Round 1 funding streams

### Q: What are the funding streams in Round 1?

**A:** Funding for Round 1 supports research projects through two streams.

**Stream 1 – Co-design of research proposals**
For some areas of the topic of safety, it will be clear that new knowledge or solutions are needed to address an issue or opportunity about safety of people with disability. Where this is the case, projects can use this funding to co-design the future research that is needed.

**Stream 2: Knowledge synthesis projects**
For other areas, there might be a lot of existing evidence, but it is not being used, or it has not been accessible to the people who need it to change policy or practice. Where this is the case, project teams will use co-design and co-production approaches to synthesize knowledge.

For more information on the two streams of funding available please read the Grant Guidelines.

## Preparing Your Grant Application

### Q: How do I apply?

**A:** Before applying for a grant, it’s important to collaborate and plan the application process carefully.
Strong applications take time to develop.

*Step 1: Preparation*
Before drafting your application, consider:

* Prioritising the people most affected: Who needs to be involved to ensure the best outcome?
* Clarifying the purpose: What challenge or opportunity does this grant address?
* Building the conditions for collaboration: How might we think about sharing power as we put together a team?

Taking the time to discuss these elements ensures the research is well-planned and collaborative from the start.

*Step 2: Key questions to discuss before writing*
Before you begin drafting the application, have several discussions with your team to explore:

* Why is this important? How do we know / what data or evidence is there / who thinks it is?
* What time do we have? What are the realistic timeframes and commitments for a project to be conducted in no more than 10 months?
* What does success for this project look like? How might we measure it?

A well-planned application doesn’t rush straight into writing. It starts with meaningful conversations.

*Step 3: Gathering information*
Gather the information you need to complete the application, including the information you need from team members and organisations you are partnering with.

## Who can apply for this grant?

### Q: Can an individual organisation or person apply for funding without any partners?

**A:**No. This grant requires collaboration. Individuals or single organisations can’t apply without partners.
The aim of the program is to encourage teamwork and the sharing of knowledge and resources.

### Q: Why is collaboration key to this grant?

**A:**Collaboration ensures research is robust, well informed and impactful. Working together allows teams to:

* Bring together different expertise to fully understand the problem
* Develop clear research questions
* Include a diverse mix of people, including people with disability, organisations and researchers.

Here’s what that means for different applicants:

* **Individuals:** You can contribute your lived experience, expertise, or research skills by joining a team.
* **Organisations:** Eligible organisations can apply as a Lead Organisation to manage the project and funding or as a partner organisation.

### Q: Who can be part of a research team?

**A:**This grant supports collaborative research teams that bring together:

* People with disability
* People with lived experience (including carers, family, and kin)
* Researchers
* Organisations

By combining skills, knowledge and lived experience research teams can make a real impact.

### Q: What key roles and expertise are needed in a research team?

**A:**There is no ‘correct’ number of partners or team members. However, all teams should include, at a minimum:

* People with disability including those with direct experience of the topic, issue or opportunity that the project will address (sometimes known as ‘consumers’)
* People with experience in conducting research
* Organisations and people who shape or affect policy and practices relevant to the safety of the people with disability the project is about. This could include Disabled Persons/Representative Organisations, consumer or advocacy organisations, capacity building organisations, service providers or other relevant organisations.

### Q: How can different groups get involved in disability research?

**A:**There are many ways to contribute, even if you’re not ready to apply for a grant yet.

If you are interested in being involved in research:

* Building and being part of a research team may take time.
* You don’t have to lead a project to make a difference. There are many ways to participate.
* Joining an existing research team could be a great way to contribute and build your skills.
* Research is always evolving. New opportunities will continue to emerge.

 If you’re in an organisation:

* You may already understand the needs, challenges, and opportunities for people with disability and understand there are gaps in research knowledge.
* Partnering with people with disability and researchers can bring evidence-based approaches to your work.
* Using existing research can help inform decisions and shape better outcomes.
Encouraging your team to participate in research initiatives strengthens both the research and your organisation.

If you’re a researcher, things to consider are:

* Should I be leading this research? Why?
* While you may be deeply invested in this topic, are others better placed to lead?
* Meaningful collaboration with the disability community and their organisations strengthen your research.
* High quality disability research is co-designed and community driven. Think about how you can make that happen.

To find out more about our Round 1 Research Funding, [join one of our online sessions](https://www.ndrp.org.au/resources/events).

### Q: Who is not eligible to apply?

**A:** Applications that don’t meet the grant objectives won’t be considered. This includes projects where:

* The project is not directly related to improving the safety of people with disability
* The applicant is an individual or organisation not working in partnership with others
* The funding is being sought to put in place services or programs that are already designed.

Other reasons an application might not be eligible:

* The research is about the safety of people with disability, but not in Australia
* The Lead Organisation or Project Lead is not based in Australia
* Any person or organisation involved in the application is under investigation for research misconduct or integrity issues, or subject to NDIS Scheme Act Banning Orders.

## Building a team

### Q: Who is eligible to be a Lead Organisation?

**A:** The Lead Organisation manages the funding agreement with the NDRP and ensures the project is successfully delivered.

To be eligible, the Lead Organisation must:

* Have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
* Not be a government organisation
* Be based in Australia
* Demonstrate capacity to receive and administer grant funding responsibly.

### Q: What does a Lead Organisation need to consider?

**A:**Minimum requirements for the Lead Organisation include:

* Financial and operational policies and procedures
* A business and/or strategic plan
* Insurance, including public liability insurance and professional indemnity
* Compliance with relevant Australian laws and standards
* Adherence to the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](https://www.arc.gov.au/about-arc/program-policies/research-integrity/codes-and-guidelines) (or a formal partnership with an organisation that does)
* Establish clear agreements with partner organisations
* Ensure the project is ethically, safely and effectively managed.

### Q: Does the Lead Organisation need to be a university or research institution?

**A:**No. We fund both community-led and university-led projects.

### Q: Who qualifies as a partner organisation?

**A:**A partner organisation must:

* Have a defined and meaningful role in the project.
* Have staff, members, or board directors actively contributing.
* Provide a letter of commitment confirming their involvement and alignment with the project’s goals.

### ​​Q: Who should not be listed as a partner organisation?

**A:**You shouldn’t list an organisation as a partner if their involvement is limited. For example, if they are:

* Raising awareness
* Joining consultations
* Participating in a one-off workshop.

These groups can still be mentioned in your application, but they do not need to provide a letter of support.

### Q: Who can be a Project Lead, and what are their responsibilities?

**A:**Your application must nominate a Project Lead responsible for managing the team and ensuring the quality of the project. This person can be any person on the project team and does not have to be an academic researcher.

To be eligible, the Project Lead must demonstrate:

* Skills, experience, and capacity to oversee the project from start to finish
* Supervision, mentorship, and organisational support to lead effectively
* Adequate time and resources to successfully deliver the project.

Individuals and researchers at all career stages can be a Project Lead.

### Q: Can a Project Lead be part of more than one application?

**A:**No. A Project Lead can be a team member on multiple applications but can only lead one project in this grant round.

If the same person is listed as Project Lead on more than one application, both applications will be withdrawn and not considered for funding.

### Q: Who should be listed as a Project Team Member?

**A:**Anyone who makes a significant contribution to the project, through their input, leadership, or expertise, should be listed as a Project Team Member.

### Q: Who can be a Project Team Member?

**A:**A Project Team Member is anyone who plays an active role in shaping and delivering the project.

This includes:

* Academic researchers or people with academic qualifications
* Project or policy officers from relevant organisations
* People with disability, including those with direct experience of the issue (sometimes called ‘consumers’), as part of organisations or independent contributors
* Family members, carers, or community members with relevant knowledge and experience
* Policymakers, practitioners, or service providers.

The NDRP recognises that team members may fit into more than one category. We encourage team members to contribute their expertise, lived experience, or qualifications to strengthen the project and team.

### Q: Who should not be listed as a Project Team Member?

**A:**You shouldn’t list people who provide only limited or one-off contributions as Project Team Members.

For example, if they are:

* Taking part in occasional project-related activities
* Sharing advice or knowledge in a one-off workshop
* Members of a reference or advisory group who are not directly involved in conducting the project.

You should only list people who are actively engaged in delivering and shaping the research as Project Team Members.

## Important considerations and ethical guidelines

### Q: What are the key ethical principles for NDRP-funded projects?

**A:**NDRP-funded projects must follow these core principles:

* Advance high quality research that informs disability policy and practice in Australia
* Value the knowledge of people with disability in research
* Strengthen disability research capacity
* Share research findings widely in useful and accessible ways

Find more information about the [NDRP guiding principles](https://www.ndrp.org.au/principles) for detailed guidance.

### Q: Do all NDRP-funded projects need to comply with ethical standards?

**A:**Yes, NDRP-funded research must follow national ethical standards, including:

* The [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2023).
* The [AIATSIS Code of Ethics (2020)](https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics)for projects involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

​Funded projects are encouraged to consult with a relevant Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to determine if they need ethics approval for their project. This does not been to be done before the application for funding is submitted.

### Q: How do I ensure my research is culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

**A:**Follow the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics](https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics) to make sure research is:

* Culturally safe
* Community-led
* Ethically conducted at all phases.

Consult with local community leaders and ensure genuine participation throughout the process.

### Q: Do I need Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval to include a person with disability on my team?

**A:**No, HREC approval is not needed to appoint a person with disability as a Project Team Member. However, your application should outline:

* Support, supervision, and mentorship for team members without prior research experience
* Accommodations if needed, to ensure all team members can contribute meaningfully.

### ​Q: Why is taking a trauma informed approach needed?

**A:**Trauma can arise from single or repeated adverse events that threaten to overwhelm a person’s ability to cope. When it is repeated and extreme, occurs over a long time, or is perpetrated in childhood by caregivers it is called complex trauma. All people from all walks of life can experience trauma and it is important that applications and funded projects take a trauma-informed approach.

Strong applications for funding will demonstrate an understanding of trauma-informed approaches that prioritise members of the team who bring direct or lived experience of this topic but also consider all members of the team. Find more information, resources and training, at the[Blue Knot Foundation website](https://blueknot.org.au/).

## How to strengthen your application and find support

### Q: How can I get support with my grant application?

**A:** We aim to make sure our funding process is transparent, ethical and accountable, so that all applicants are treated fairly, and funding decisions are based on merit.

To prepare for our 2025 Funding Rounds, we will be running online sessions to support anyone who wants to learn more about submitting strong, inclusive grant applications. [Visit our events page](https://www.ndrp.org.au/resources/events) to find out what’s coming up, or to find resources and recordings from past events.

If any part of the application is not accessible, or you have questions about applying for Round 1 Research Funding, please contact us:

**Phone:** 03 9000 3813
**SMS only:**0485 931 168
**Email:** info@ndrp.org.au

### Q: How can I submit a high quality application?

**A:**To strengthen your application:

* Align your project with NDRPs funding priorities – Show how your research fits the research area, safety of people with disability
* Follow the application process carefully – Read the Grant Guidelines, check eligibility, and meets all requirements
* Clearly explain your project’s impact – Demonstrate how your research contributes to disability-led knowledge
* Avoid common mistakes – Make sure your application complete, meets all criteria and is well structured.

Work with your team and partners to ensure your project is inclusive and collaborative.

### Q: Where can I find detailed information on NDRP funding?

**A:** Find the documentation here:

* Grant Guidelines: Covers funding priorities, eligibility and expected project outcomes (insert link)
* 2025 Research Grant Funding Overview: Explains research goals, supported methods, and the application process (insert link)
* Research Funding Policy: Details how NDRP funding is governed and managed and what support is available (insert link)

## Funding rules, agreements and reporting

### Q: Will the research funded by the NDRP be publicly available?

**A:** Yes. All NDRP-funded research be publicly available.

* Funded teams own the intellectual property for all research materials
* The NDRP holds publishing rights, sometimes known as copyright, for research outputs, except from co-designed research proposals, as the information in this report is to inform future grant funding applications and is confidential.

Before publishing, the NDRP will:

* Ensure research teams are appropriately acknowledged
* Review materials in collaboration with funded teams.

### Q: How does the NDRP respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, culture, and intellectual property?

**A:**The NDRP recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as custodians of their knowledge and cultural expressions. We respect:

* Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)
* Community-led research practices
* Traditional knowledge sharing and protocols.

For ethical guidance, refer to the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics](https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics).

### Q: How do teams need to share their research findings?

**A:**The NDRP supports open-access research to ensure findings are clear, inclusive, and useful to:

* People with disability
* Policymakers and those advocating for policy change
* Organisations working with people with disability.

Funded projects must:

* Prioritise accessibility: Make findings easy to understand and relevant to the people affected.
* Provide reports in NDRP reporting templates.

## Application review and decision process

### Q: How are applications assessed?

**A:** The Research Committee appoints Independent Review Panels to:

* Review and score applications based on assessment criteria
* Rank applications and make funding recommendations
* Oversee the performance of Independent Review Panels for each funding round.

View the [Terms of Reference and members of the NDRP Research Committee](https://www.ndrp.org.au/about/our-people/research-committee).

### Q: Who sits on the Independent Assessment Panels?

**A:** Panels include:

* Researchers with academic expertise
* People with disability and their representative organisations
* Other research end-users (e.g., policymakers, service providers).

These panels ensure applications are assessed fairly and with diverse perspectives in mind.