2025 National Disability Research Partnership Research Funding Round 1: Safety of People with Disability

Grant Guidelines

NDRP Grant Funding Round 1

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## Summary

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| **Title** | 2025 National Disability Research Partnership Research Funding Round 1: Safety of People with Disability |
| **Duration of funding** | 6 to 10 months |
| **Level of funding** | Up to $60,000  |
| **Applications due** | 28 April 2025  |
| **Support & getting ready** | Prepare for and plan your grant application with your project team and partners. It is important to do this step well, so your project will be inclusive and collaborative. You can find more guidance, answers to your questions and tips for preparing an excellent application by:* reading the [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website](https://www.ndrp.org.au/research/2025-research-funding#round-one-key-documents:~:text=Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20(FAQs))
* joining an [online learning or networking session](https://www.ndrp.org.au/resources/events)
* joining a [drop-in question and answer (Q&A) session](https://www.ndrp.org.au/resources/events)
 |
| **Submit application** | Submit applications online via our SmartyGrants [webpage](https://ndrp.smartygrants.com.au/).  |
| **Applications open** | 17 March 2025 |
| **Applications close**  | 28 April 2025  |
| **Contact officer** | Gillian Mason Head of Research Program info@ndrp.org.au 03 9000 3813 |

The National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) is inviting organisations to apply for grant funding to support research activities led by and with people with disability to advance the safety of people with disability in Australia. Projects can be community-led or university-led. A Lead Organisation and one person as Project Lead must be nominated for each application.

This grant will provide time and resources for organisations and people to work together over between six and ten months to build relationships, share knowledge and do the work of preparing to do research well. It will support the early preparation and co-design work that is rarely funded, but critical to disability-led research.

Projects must be aligned to the [NDRP Guiding Principles](https://www.ndrp.org.au/principles) and use co-design approaches.

They will be funded via two streams.

**Stream 1 – co-design of research proposals**

Work together to develop and write up a proposal for a future research project. The proposal could be used in an application for funding that we offer, or in an application to another funding body.

By research proposal, we mean a written plan that maps out the future research project that you would like to do. A proposal outlines what you want to research, including the specific question(s) your research will aim to answer, why the research is needed and how you plan to research it.

**Stream 2 – knowledge synthesis projects**

Use knowledge synthesis methods to bring together what is already known about a topic, and co-produce reports, briefs, guidelines or similar. Outputs must use formats that are accessible and useful for people who need them. These projects should deliver outputs that can immediately inform action (e.g. policy briefs, accessible evidence summaries) alongside the preparation of evidence which may take longer to complete after the project is completed (e.g. academic journal articles).

Applicants for either stream of funding must assemble a team of people and set up partnerships with other organisations. Project teams must be made up of, 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’)
* organisations and people who shape or affect policy and practices relevant to the safety of the people with disability the project is about, and
* researchers with experience in inclusive disability research.

As a group, teams must have the skills knowledge, networks and experience to co-design a high-quality project that will have a significant impact on policy and/or practice.

Applications that are competitive for funding will show there is leadership by and with people with disability, and the project will strengthen disability research capacity.

## Purpose of the Grant Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance to people who are thinking about applying for funding in this grant round. This Guidelines document includes the objectives, intended outcomes, eligibility requirements and assessment criteria for this grant.

This document should be read together with the [NDRP 2025 Research Grant Funding: Safety of People with Disability Overview.](https://www.ndrp.org.au/research/2025-research-funding#:~:text=Guide%20for%20SmartyGrants.-,Round%201%20key%20documents,-To%20apply%20for) It provides more information about our research funding for 2025. It covers information about the NDRP, our Research Agenda, definitions of terms, the principles and approaches that will underpin research that we fund and support, and the application process.

For more information on how the NDRP governs, supports and monitors its research funding program please see our [Research Funding Policy](https://www.ndrp.org.au/research/research-policy).

## About the grant

#### Objectives and intended outcomes

**The objectives of this grant round are to:**

* enable people and organisations who understand a topic relevant to safety of people with disability, to come together and develop or strengthen relationships, structures and ways of working that support genuine, inclusive co-design of research
* for Stream 1, support the development of high quality, inclusive, disability-led proposals for future research projects that are competitive for funding, and
* for Stream 2, support the genuine co-production of reports, briefs, or guidelines to make knowledge and existing evidence about a topic accessible to and useful for those who need it to influence policy and practice.

All project teams are required to show how they will work together to:

* understand a problem or opportunity better
* build relationships and test good ways of working together
* decide on the most important research questions to answer

Projects will be funded via two streams.

**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. Project teams will use co-design approaches to:

* further refine their research questions
* decide on the research methods that are most appropriate to answer these questions
* develop and write up a proposal for a longer-term disability-led inclusive research project, ready to include in a grant application for research funding either from the NDRP or another funding body.

**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:

* identify where evidence and other forms of knowledge exist on the topic
* develop clear review question(s)
* conduct the review, using rapid evidence assessment or synthesis method(s) that are most appropriate to answer the review questions
* identify the target audience(s) for the findings – the people, groups, communities and/or organisations who are directly impacted by the problem or opportunity, and those who are best placed to take action that will change policy or practice
* produce a report, brief, guidelines (or similar) that synthesises what is known about the issue or opportunity, in formats that are accessible to and useful for the target audience.

**The intended outcomes of this round of funding are:**

* new or strengthened disability-led research partnerships. Research teams, people and organisations will have worked together, shared knowledge with each other and collaboratively produced work in new ways that they would not have otherwise been able to.
* a strengthened sense of shared purpose and contribution to the NDRP’s vision for policy and practice in Australia that is transformed by disability-led research.
* for Stream 1, proposals for high-quality, inclusive, disability-led research that are used in applications for research funding, either to a future NDRP funding round, or to another funding body.
* for Stream 2, information on the current state of evidence, including evidence gaps, about key issues is made accessible to those who can change policy, practice and/or programs, and/or identify future research needed to improve safety for people with disability.

#### Grant amount and project timeframe

**Grant amount:** Up to $60,000 excluding GST.

**Total funds available for the Grant Round:** $600,000, excluding GST.

**Project timeframe:** 6 to 10 months.

**Funded projects start:** June - July 2025.

**A note on the project timeframe**

We understand that it takes time to develop genuine relationships and the conditions for inclusive, disability-led research. Some projects, in some contexts, need slower-paced work to align with community or cultural protocols, or governance structures, and to prevent harm. Some university processes can present challenges to timeframes. Applicants are encouraged to apply for funding for projects that can realistically, feasibly and safely be achieved in a timeframe of ten months or less.

Where applicants are considering applying in Stream 2 with a knowledge translation or synthesis research project that will need longer than ten months, for example because

* the context is complex, and/or
* many different people, or people with whom there are no existing relationships, need to be included and heard, and/or
* new primary data needs to be collected

they should consider applying instead for Stream 1: Co-design of research proposals. Funding awarded via this stream could:

* enable the work to start,
* support the co-design of the protocols that would be used for further engagement and data collection,
* support the preparation of applications to relevant ethics and governance committees, and
* enable the development of a proposal for the next phase of the research that can be included in a funding application to the NDRP or another funding body.

#### Project deliverables

The standard deliverables for projects funded by this grant opportunity are:

**For all projects:**

* A brief mid-project report to the NDRP, in a template provided by the NDRP, including an informal update discussion with NDRP staff.
* A brief set of recommendations to the NDRP on good ways or considerations for communicating the learnings and findings from their project to the people who most need to access them.
* Contribution to a content series that the NDRP will co-produce with all funded projects. This content will showcase the outcomes from this funding round and share lessons learned. We will work with funded teams to determine how they would like to contribute to this content series. For example, it might include presenting at a webinar, giving a talk to a community group, writing a blog post, or other ways of sharing knowledge.

**For Stream 1 co-design of research proposals:**

* A short final project report to NDRP written in Plain English (not for publication), in a template provided by the NDRP. This report will include an outline of the research proposal that has been co-designed, the team’s plan for pursuing funding to conduct the research, and the lessons learned by the team during the project.
* An executive summary written in Plain English to be published by the NDRP that can be used as a stand-alone document (no more than 2 pages).

**For Stream 2 knowledge synthesis projects:**

* A research report to be published by the NDRP written in Plain English which synthesises the existing evidence and gaps around an issue relevant to the safety of people with disability (no more than 70 pages including references and appendices. Appendices may be necessary to use more technical language to further describe methods or findings)
* An Executive Summary written in Plain English to be published by the NDRP that can be used as a stand-alone document (no more than 6 pages)

**A note on published reports:** The NDRP intends to make the outcomes of all research it funds publicly available. All funded teams own the Intellectual Property (IP) on all the research materials produced through the funding.

The NDRP holds publishing rights on the materials listed above, except for the short final project report of the co-designed research project (part a), as the information in this report is to inform future grant funding applications and is confidential. In publishing these materials, the NDRP will ensure appropriate acknowledgement of the research teams and review the materials in partnership with the funded teams before publication.

The NDRP recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the custodians of their traditional knowledge and cultural expressions and the importance of Intellectual Property (ICIP). The NDRP will respect relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander laws and protocols that guide how knowledge and culture can be shared and used.

## Eligibility Criteria

#### Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

One organisation must be nominated by the project team and partners to apply as the **Lead Organisation**. This organisation will be responsible for the funding agreement with the NDRP. Any organisation that has an Australian Business Number (ABN) and is not a government organisation can take this role. This organisation is responsible for setting up clear, and where appropriate, formal agreements with partner organisations.

The Lead Organisation, as the applicant, must demonstrate its capacity to receive and administer grant funding. They must also demonstrate their capacity to support the safe, ethical, and timely delivery of the project that is proposed in the application.

At a minimum, the Lead Organisation must:

* have documented organisational and financial policies and procedures
* have a business and/or strategic plan
* have insurances, including public liability insurance and professional indemnity
* comply with all relevant state/territory and Australian legislation and standards relevant to the project
* have in place existing policies and systems that comply with the [*Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018), or have these through a formal partnership with an organisation on the project team that does have these in place

#### Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

Applications that propose projects that do not meet the objectives of this grant opportunity will not be considered. This includes where:

* applicants are seeking funding for projects that are not directly relevant to topic of the safety of people with disability
* the applicant is an individual person or organisation not proposing to work in partnership with others
* the applicant is seeking funding to implement new services or programs that have already been designed
* projects have already been funded through other funding bodies

Applications will also be ineligible if:

* the research is about safety of people with disability but not about people in Australia
* the Lead Organisation and/or Project Lead are not based in Australia
* any persons or organisations named on the application are being investigated for a research misconduct or research integrity matter or subject to NDIS Scheme Act Banning Orders.

#### Project Leads

Applicants must nominate a person to lead and who will be ultimately responsible for the team and project quality.

This person can be, but does not need to be, an academically qualified researcher. The application must clearly show that this person has the skills, experience, time and support to lead the project as it is described in the application. Researchers and other people at all career stages are eligible to apply as the Project Lead. Project Leads must demonstrate that they have a track record that shows that they can lead the project well. Or, if they are someone with less experience to show, that they have access to supervision, mentorship and support.

Project Leads may contribute to other applications submitted for funding in this grant round as an ordinary team member but may only be a Project Lead on one application. If two applications name the same Project Lead, both applications will be withdrawn and not considered for funding.

#### Project Team Members listed on the application

A person who provides a significant contribution to the project, either through their intellectual contribution or their leadership of activities that are part of the project, should be listed as a project team member. Project Team Members can be (but are not limited to):

* academic and academically qualified researchers
* project or policy officers employed by relevant organisations
* people with disability, including those with direct experience of the topic, issue or opportunity that the project will address (sometimes known as ‘consumers’), who may be members of or associated with relevant organisations, or may be independent
* family members, kin, carers, and people who are part of communities with relevant knowledge, experience and networks
* policy makers, practitioners or program leaders, including service providers

The NDRP recognises that team members may identify with more than one of these descriptors. Project team members are encouraged to provide relevant information in the application they are comfortable to share with the NDRP and the people the NDRP engages to review applications. This information may include how their professional, lived experience and/or background training or qualifications add value to the project and to the collective capacity of the team.

**Who should *not* bea listed Project team member in the application?**

A person who takes part in occasional project-related activities, or who shares advice or knowledge in a one-off workshop or within a reference or advisory group, but has no further involvement as part of the team conducting the project. These people do not need to be named in the grant application.

#### Partner Organisations

Partner Organisations must:

* have a specific and material role or responsibility as part of the project
* have named staff, members or Board directors with specific roles as part of the project team
* provide letters of confirmation they have agreed to be involved as described in the grant application and that the research is aligned to their organisation’s objectives.

**Who *is not* listed as a Partner Organisation in the application?**

An Organisation who provides support for the project in important but less significant ways, such as raising awareness, participating in consultations or one-off workshops is not ‘counted’ as a partner organisation for the purposes of this grant opportunity. Whilst these organisations may be acknowledged in the application if it makes sense to do so, letters of support from organisations with these kinds of project involvements are not required.

## The assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against all the criteria below. The application form asks for information relating directly to these criteria.

Assessment Criterion 1 and 2 are about project impact. Project impact is the change that will happen for people with disability, organisations, the research team, communities, and/or systems during and after the project.

#### Assessment criterion 1 – Impact on policy, practice or programs (25% weighting)

*Up to 600 words.*

How important is the issue or opportunity the project will address? If funded, how will the project potentially lead to changes in policy, practice or programs that will improve the safety of people with disability?

Outline:

* why the issue the project will address is important, and to whom it is important
* why the project is needed, including how it responds to current issues or opportunities and will create evidence for action, to inform policy, practices and programs to advance the safety of people with disability
* how the needs, views and values of the group of people with disability whose safety the project is about have informed the project proposal
* how this builds on existing knowledge and evidence, and is not a duplication of something that already has been done or is known
* how the potential outputs, outcomes and/or benefits of the project will advance the safety of people with disability
* other likely future benefits or changes for organisations, systems or communities

#### Assessment Criterion 2 – Impact of the project’s process (15% weighting)

*Up to 600 words.*

If funded, what outputs, outcomes, or benefits will the project and process have?

This can include, but is not limited to, benefits for members of the research team, including people with disability, or outcomes for the organisations involved or a community, group or sector.

Outline:

* how the project will strengthen the skills of people on the team and others who are involved
* how the knowledge that will be shared during the project will strengthen individual and/or organisational capacity
* how the project will create new or strengthen partnerships and relationships for future collaborative research
* how the development of the systems, policies or resources needed for this project might make it easier for people or partners to be involved in future research
* any other benefits from undertaking the project.

#### Assessment Criterion 3 - Project methods (30% weighting)

*Up to 1000 words.*

What will be done in the project, and how? Which ways will the activities be done, or which methods will be used? Why will you take these approaches?

Outline:

* how the project team will form or build on existing partnerships between people and organisations to create the conditions for knowledge sharing, collaborative work, and co-design
* how the project team will work collaboratively to develop a research question(s)
* Stream 1 Co-design of research proposals - which co-design methods and approaches they will use to design the future research to answer the research question(s) and develop a research proposal ready to submit with an application for funding, or
* Stream 2 Knowledge synthesis projects - which evidence review and synthesis method(s) will be used to address the question(s) and how the report will be co-produced
* how these methods and approaches are appropriate, acceptable, safe and accessible for all team members and their context, taking care to demonstrate how the needs, and values of the people with disability who the project impacts most will be prioritised
* how all members of the team will be involved as active members of the research team, which key decisions they will contribute to and their role throughout the different phases of the project
* how the approach taken will strengthen disability research capacity
* how the project is realistic, feasible, appropriate and achievable in the timeframe and budget proposed
* how the project will be managed and governed

The application form includes a template to use to set out your high-level project plan, with timelines and deliverables.

#### Assessment criterion 4 - Capacity and resources to deliver the project (30% weighting)

What skills, knowledge, experience and resources will the Lead organisation, the research team members and their partners contribute to this project? Does the team have the capacity to make the project a success?

**Project Lead’s capacity to lead the project**

*Up to 400 words*

Outline:

* the Project Lead’s experience in disability-led projects, programs and/or research, by and with the specific group of people with disability who this project is about
* their experience in disability-led co-design and/or co-production, including examples of involvement in previous projects
* their leadership approach for collaborative, co-produced or user-led research
* for knowledge synthesis projects, understanding of evidence assessment, review and/or synthesis methods
* other skills and experience the Project Lead has that are relevant to leadership of this co-design project
* what supervisory, coaching or mentoring arrangements an early- or mid-career Project Lead will have in place to support their success

**Team capacity and capability to deliver the project**

*Up to 600 words*

Outline:

* the specific roles for the named members of the project team, and the skills, experience and networks they bring to the project
* why the individual team members have been chosen, and they have the time, resources and support to contribute to the project
* how the team, collectively, is well-placed to co-design / co-produce this high-quality, inclusive, disability-led research project
* the how the Lead organisation and partner organisations have the capability, experience, resources and networks to will make the project successful
* where they have identified gaps in skills, experience or knowledge in their team, and what they would do, if funded, to cover these

#### Assessment criterion 5 – Overall value and risk (unweighted)

*Up to 300 words*

This criterion is not weighted. If your application scores highly and is shortlisted for the Research Committee to consider, then they will consider your answers against this section in their decision-making.

Answer the following questions.

* What are the key risks to making sure the project is a success and is delivered on time? What steps will you take to minimise these risks?
* Is there anything else you would like to tell us to show that you believe that this project and the budget you have requested is a good investment for the NDRP?

## Budget conditions

#### What the grant money can be used for

The following provides an overview of what the grant money can be used for, including:

* salaries or wages
* other payments, for example honoraria for co-designers with lived experience who are not paid a salary or a wage for their role in the project
* reasonable travel and accommodation costs
* costs associated with hosting meetings, including providing catering
* inclusive participation costs such as Easy Read, Auslan, Captioning, interpreters or translation
* minor equipment or other items to support inclusion and accessibility or other elements of the co-design project
* learning or training activities for the project team necessary for the project success. For example, cultural competency workshops, LGBTQIA+ inclusion training, training on working with interpreters or disability confidence training
* other reasonable costs with a justification included in the budget

#### What the grant money cannot be used for

The grant funding cannot be used for:

* university or organisational administrative, infrastructure or overhead charges
* the purchase of vehicles or other major equipment
* subcontracting large parts of the project to individuals or organisations who are not listed as the Project team members or partner organisations.

#### In-kind contributions

Where support or resources are provided by people or organisations in-kind, include these as a budget line item with an approximate value, marked ‘in-kind’

## How applications will be assessed

Independent review panels will use an assessment matrix to score applications against the assessment criteria. The assessment matrix will be available on our [website](https://www.ndrp.org.au/research/2025-research-funding) from 17 March 2025.

Independent review panels will review the applications and give them a score. The Research Committee will then decide which projects will have the biggest impact. Our Board will make the final decisions.

More information on the process for assessing applications is outlined in the [NDRP Research Funding Policy](https://www.ndrp.org.au/research/research-policy).

## How to apply

The application form will open on 17March 2025. Go to <https://ndrp.smartygrants.com.au/>

For all supporting resources go to <https://www.ndrp.org.au/research/2025-research-funding>