

Section 1: 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership Program

Important information

The 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program aims to increase access to high-quality, culturally responsive early learning services by supporting eligible Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) delivering early learning services to grow and improve their service delivery.

The programs principles have been developed in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders, communities, and other partners. Projects funded through the program are expected to reflect local needs and be designed with community stakeholders. Prospective applicants are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) via the SmartyGrants platform. Each EOI will be reviewed to check for completeness and to check the applicant organisation meets the eligibility criteria, and that proposed activities are aligned to the program objectives, and activities eligible for funding. Successful EOIs will be invited to submit a Stage 2: Full Application. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via e-mail.

Total funding for this program is limited, therefore a successful EOI does not automatically guarantee funding of project proposals. Should the total funding request of eligible applicants exceed the total available funds, priority will be given to Stream 1 applicants.

Stream 1 submissions will be ranked against the following criteria and matched to available funding. Priority will be given to funding projects under Stream 1 and prioritisation will be given in the order listed below.

1. Project readiness - Demonstrated capacity to commence and deliver the project within the funding period.

2. Underserved areas - Projects that address service gaps in communities with limited or no access to existing services.

3. Regional and remote areas - Projects located in regional or remote communities, as classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA).

4. Geographic proximity to existing ACCOs - Consideration will be given to how close the proposed service is to other ACCOs, with preference given to projects that broaden geographic coverage of ACCO-led Early Learning services.

Prior to completing the EOI form, applicants must ensure they have a clear understanding of requirements of a detailed funding proposal by reviewing the two-step application process outlined in the 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership Program Guidelines.

Applicants should familiarise themselves with the following documents:

- **2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership Program Guidelines**
- **Terms of Use**
- **FAQs and Application Resources**

The submission of an EOI, will be taken as confirmation that the organisation accepts and agrees to the Terms of Use governing this funding program.

If you need help with access to the SmartyGrants application portal, please call the SmartyGrants help team at (03) 9320 6888 between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday.

Please direct all questions about the 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program to our email accoececgrowth@det.nsw.edu.au.

Please save all progress as you proceed through the form. All unsaved progress may be lost.

Privacy Notice

NSW Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund Board (Board) and NSW Department of Education (Department) are committed to protecting the privacy of personal information in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act) and the Privacy Act 1988.

What personal information is collected?

The Authorised Officer's personal information may be collected including name and contact details.

Why is the personal information collected and how is it used?

The Board collects and uses personal information to administer the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund Act 2022, including the 2026/27 ACCO-led Early Learning Sector Growth Partnership Program. Personal information may be used for application assessment, registration and referral for support services, funding administration, program monitoring and evaluation.

The Board and the Department may also use information collected through the Program to:

- administer, monitor and evaluate the Program
- undertake audit, assurance, research and reporting activities
- inform future policy and program development
- perform other functions authorised or required by law.

Where information is used for research, reporting or publication, it will generally be de-identified unless otherwise authorised or required by law, or with your consent. Information that includes Aboriginal cultural knowledge, stories, language, images or other cultural information will be managed respectfully, having regard to Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) and Indigenous Data Governance (IDG) principles.

When is the information disclosed?

The Department and the Board will disclose personal information to contracted Third Parties as set out above, but not to any other person unless authorised by any law or Act, or with further consent. From time to time, the Board and the Department may release publications based on information it has collected, but any personal information will be de-identified.

About the collected personnel person information?

Any collected personal information will be held and managed by the Department in accordance with the PPIP Act and Privacy Act, and subject to the Department's privacy policy: education.nsw.gov.au/rights-and-accountability/privacy.

More information, including the Department's Privacy Management Plan, can be found on the department's privacy webpage: education.nsw.gov.au/rights-and-accountability/privacy/privacy-information-and-forms.

Under the PPIP Act, you have a right of access, correction and amendment of your personal information. To access or amend the personal information please contact the Department via the Privacy webpage above or the contact details below.

For information on funded programs available through the Department, please speak to the Service or the Provider and/or visit: education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/grants-and-funded-programs.

If you have a concern or complaint about the way the personal information has been collected, used or disclosed, you should contact the department via the Privacy webpage above, or alternatively:

Legal Services - Privacy

NSW Department of Education GPO Box 33

Sydney NSW 2001

Email: legal.privacy@det.nsw.edu.au

[Privacy Policy](#)

This information is supplied voluntarily, but failure to provide the information may impact the Board's ability to assess the application for Program funding and the continuation of funding to successful applicants. ceofund@det.nsw.edu.au

Once personal information has been provided, you may also withdraw your consent at any time, and no further personal information will be collected or used.

For all program related inquiries please contact us at accoececgrowth@det.nsw.edu.au.

Section 2: Eligibility Check

* indicates a required field

Service Information

Organisation *

Organisation Name

Position or title of primary contact: *

Email address of primary contact: *

Must be an email address.

Phone Number *

Must be an Australian phone number.

Alternate phone number (if applicable):

Must be an Australian phone number.

Registered address of the organisation applying for this grant: *

Address

Address Line 1, Suburb/Town, State/Province, Postcode, and Country are required.

Australian Business Number (ABN): *

The ABN provided will be used to look up the following information. Click Lookup above to check that you have entered the ABN correctly.

Information from the Australian Business Register	
ABN	
Entity Name	
ABN Status	
Entity Type	
Goods & Services Tax (GST)	
DGR Endorsed	
ATO Charity Type	More information
ACNC Registration	
Tax Concessions	
Main Business Location	

Must be an ABN.

Eligibility Check (all must be met): *

- ☐ Independent, not-for-profit organisation, incorporated as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation and/ or is a registered community service.
- ☐ Controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- ☐ Connected to the community in which services are delivered.
- ☐ Operating under a governing body in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people hold the majority representation.

At least 4 choices must be selected.

Are you an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Address of the site where the project is taking place? *

Site address

ECEC Service Approval

Does your organisation hold a valid provider approval, or have you applied for one to operate an ECEC service in NSW? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Provider ID: *

If you don't have a Provider ID please answer PR-0000000

Is your organisation currently an approved ECEC service provider? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, but have applied for service approval
- ☐ No

Service ID: *

If you don't have a Service ID please answer SE-0000000

If no, but have applied for service approval please attach evidence

Attach a file:

What is the "Nature of Care" you intend to deliver under this program? *

- ☐ Centre-based day care (Preschool)
- ☐ Long day care
- ☐ Outside school hours care
- ☐ Family day care
- ☐ Occasional care
- ☐ Mobile preschool

Section 3: Project Summary

* indicates a required field

Select Stream/s

The 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program has three funding streams. Refer to the **Program Guidelines** for more information about each stream and what funding can support.

You can apply for Stream 1, Stream 2, both Streams 1 and 2, or Stream 3 through this form.

Please select the stream/s which best meet your project needs.

- ☐ Stream 1 - Establish or expand early learning services (up to \$800,000/year)
- ☐ Stream 2 - Maintain or strengthen existing early learning services (up to \$120,000/year)
- ☐ Stream 3 - Overcome barriers to become an early learning service provider (up to \$50,000 one-off)

Did you previously receive funding in the 2025/26 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Stream 1

Are you seeking funding to continue a project funded through the 2025/26 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program?

- ☐ New project
- ☐ Builds on a project funded through the 2025/26 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program

New Project - Stream 1 - Establish or expand early learning services (up to \$800,000/year)

Stream 1 applies to ACCOs that are approved early learning service providers seeking to extend operating hours, expand age ranges, or places at existing facilities, or establishing new early learning services or facilities they own or operate.

Please select each activity or activities that best describes your Stream 1 project:

- ☐ Extend service hour
- ☐ Extend age range
- ☐ Increase places
- ☐ Establish a new service

Describe what your project will deliver and why it's needed (Hint: Please see list of eligible activities listed in the program guidelines)

Please provide a brief description of the project.

Please indicate the applicable option:

- ☐ New service on a new site
- ☐ New service on an existing early learning site
- ☐ Creating additional places on an existing site

Please upload any existing plans, designs, cost estimates or other documents that may support your proposal

Attach a file:

Optional - you do not need to develop new documents for your EOI.

If your project proposes to create new early learning places, including through a new service or expansion of an existing service, how many new places do you expect the project to create?

Existing Long Day Care Places

New Long Day Care Places

Existing Preschool Places

New Preschool Places

Does the organisation have access to an appropriate land arrangement for the proposed early learning service? For lease arrangements, the Program Guidelines identify a lease of at least 10 years as an example of an appropriate land arrangement.

- ☐ Yes – we have a secured land arrangement, e.g. site, 10-year lease, partnership or owners' letter of support/consent either formalised or in principle. Please provide evidence of the arrangement.
- ☐ Yes – we have another appropriate land arrangement, such as a formal partnership agreement. Please describe the arrangement below and provide supporting evidence.

Please tell us about your land arrangement Include the length of the arrangement, where applicable.

Optional

Evidence of land arrangement. Please upload any available evidence of the arrangement (if available).

Attach a file:

Tentative Project Start Date

Must be a date.

Tentative Project End Date

Must be a date.

Total Estimated Funding Requested

Maximum funding available under Stream 1 is \$800,000 for 2026/27 AGP Program

Existing Project - Stream 1 - Establish or expand early learning services
(up to \$800,000/year)

As your project has been approved for funding through the 2025/26 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program, please upload your previous project plan and any updated information or documents relevant to the stage of the project you are seeking funding for through this EOI.

Attach a file:

Has anything changed since your previous project plan was submitted?

- ☐ No – the information in the attached project plan remains current
- ☐ Yes – some information has changed

If Yes, please tell us what has changed.

This could include changes to the project scope, design, timing, costs, land arrangements or other relevant project details.

Please briefly describe the next stage of your project and how it builds on the project approved for funding through the 2025/26 Program.

Tentative Project Start Date

Must be a date.

Tentative Project End Date

Must be a date.

Total Estimated Funding Requested

Maximum funding available under Stream 1 is \$800,000 for 2026/27 AGP Program

Stream 2 - Maintain or strengthen existing early learning services (up to \$120,000/year)

Stream 2 provides support to existing ACCO-led early learning services to maintain and improve culturally appropriate service delivery.

Please select the activity or activities that best describes your project:

- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Cultural education and language
- ☐ Workforce development and staff training pathways
- ☐ Professional learning
- ☐ Networking and mentoring
- ☐ Transport and extended hours
- ☐ Minor building works

Please provide a short description of your project.

Hint: What activities would the funds be spent on?

Tentative Project Start Date

Must be a date.

Tentative Project End Date

Must be a date.

Total Estimated Funding Requested

Must be a dollar amount.

Maximum funding available under Stream 2 is \$120,000 for 2026/27 AGP Program

Stream 3 – Overcome barriers to become an early learning service provider (up to \$50,000 one-off)

Stream 3 will provide support to accelerate ACCOs to become approved early learning-service providers.

This stream provides one-off funding to assist ACCOs in requirements necessary to access funding under Streams 1 and 2. Designed for ACCOs with clear intention to become an approved early learning service provider, but face known or practical barriers.

Have you consulted with the community and obtained endorsement for the proposed project? Please provide consultation letters of support.

Attach a file:

Hint: Letters of support from local AECG, LALC, AMS, Elders groups, Aboriginal Corporations, local Aboriginal community groups

Briefly describe the barriers you face gaining early learning provider approval. Explain how funding will be used to directly reduce or remove each identified barrier.

Tentative Project Start Date

Must be a date.

Tentative Project End Date

Must be a date.

Additional information

Use this section to share anything else you'd like us to know about your project, or supporting documents that hasn't been captured elsewhere in this form.

Optional - Upload any supporting documents relevant to your project.

Attach a file:

Such as development approvals (DA), surveyor reports, plans, permits or other documentation.

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Terms of Use and Declaration

* indicates a required field

Terms of Use and Declaration

By submitting an Expression of Interest, the Authorised Officer declares that:

- a. I agree to the **Terms of Use**
- b. I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the provided information is true and accurate.
- c. I consent to verification of application information with regulatory/program systems and other NSW Government agencies for the purpose of eligibility assessment.
- d. I confirm that I have read and understood 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership program guidelines
- e. I confirm that I am authorised to submit the application form on behalf of the service's Approved Provider
- f. I understand that if my application is successful, I will be required to participate in evaluation which may include surveys and/or case studies during and after the program
- g. I understand that the Department and/or the Board may make necessary inquiries with any organisation or individual to verify any information provided in this application to establish my identity and my eligibility for funding under the 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership Program
- h. I understand that submitting an application under the 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership Program does not guarantee any approvals from the regulatory authority, other third party and/or the local council.
- i. I understand this EOI will be assessed and pending my eligibility and budget availability I may or may not be offered the application development support.

j. I understand any work undertaken with the supplier, other experts I engage, or expenses incurred before receiving a determination on my EOI will not be funded by the Department of Education or the NSW Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund Board.

k. If offered the application development support, I understand the hours of support provided and funding available to assist with eligible expenses to prepare an application, will be capped at the NSW Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund Board's discretion. Eligible expenses must be approved in advance by the NSW Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund Board and there is no guarantee all expenses will be endorsed for funding.

l. I understand that being offered application development support does not guarantee my eligibility for the program nor the success of my application. Full applications to the 2026/27 ACCO-led ECEC Sector Growth Partnership Program will be competitively assessed on submission. To be clear, this EOI and its outcome are a separate process that does not guarantee eligibility for any grant or a successful funding recommendation.

I agree to the Terms of Use listed above *

☐ I agree to all Terms of Use listed above

Important to note: Once you have submitted your application, no further editing or uploading of support materials is possible.