

Women in Business

Foundations Program - Round 2 Program Guidelines

The South Australian Government is committed to fostering the entrepreneurial spirit and growing women-owned and led South Australian businesses to boost the economy. This program will unlock barriers and improve the success and growth prospects of women-owned and led businesses, creating new jobs and engaging women from diverse backgrounds.

The Women in Business Foundations Program (**Program**) provides women-owned businesses with support in foundational business skills, access to expert mentors and tailored plans to develop and position their business for future growth in metropolitan and regional South Australia. The Program will actively engage and support all women in business, including women from regional, rural, First Nations, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

As a key feature of the Women in Business Program, the Office for Small and Family Business within the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science (the Department) invites proposals from existing business growth providers (service providers) to deliver specialist business advisory and mentoring services to women-led small and family businesses across the State. One or more provider(s) will be selected through a competitive grant process.

Program Objectives

The Women in Business Foundations Program will:

- Position women-led businesses for growth and sustainability
- Increase understanding of business fundamental topics covered in the Program
- Improve confidence in running a business
- Improve ability to implement and embed the foundational business skills learned.

Applications

The Office for Small and Family Business is now seeking applications for proposals which will support women in business to grow their business through the provision of foundational and growth mentoring, and business skills, including but not limited to, the topics listed below:

- Financial and accounting literacy
- Human Resources
- Insurance, tax and legal
- Business planning and growth strategies
- Digital marketing strategies
- Cyber security preparation
- Securing finance for startup and growth
- Any other training as agreed between service provider and the Department.

Delivery of these skills should occur predominantly through personalised mentoring with individual women in business but may include provision of fundamentals business knowledge through a business advisory service.



Eligibility and funding

Applicants must:

- have been in operation in South Australia for more than two financial years,
- have demonstrated capacity to service more than 600 participants over the two-year delivery period across South Australia
- have demonstrated experience delivering business advisory and mentoring services to women-led businesses across the State

and can be:

- Industry/business associations and peak bodies
- Business Enterprise Centres (BECs)
- Regional Development Australia Boards (RDAs)
- Local governments (councils) in South Australia
- Co-operatives
- Corporations limited by guarantee (including not-for-profit organisations)
- Social Enterprises.

State and Commonwealth Government Agencies are not eligible to apply.

This funding is to provide support for existing providers that can deliver foundational business skills to women in business. Applicants will be required to confirm they have experience in delivering these services and provide appropriate evidence of this activity and its success. Contracted service providers must have a demonstrated track record of delivering/facilitating business advisory programs to small business owners.

Service providers will be required to monitor and provide monthly and periodic reporting on performance measures, including KPIs and metrics as agreed with the Department and stipulated in the grant agreement.

In this regard, service providers that implement deliberate measures to cater to the needs of women business owners will be highly regarded, such as:

- having in-house/affiliated qualified women facilitators/mentors;
- key staff and mentors involved in delivering the Program having completed unconscious bias training.

Eligible organisations are expected to deliver all components of the Program and may engage affiliated mentors to assist in delivery of the services. Applications must include details of any third parties that will be engaged to deliver the Program including organisation name, details of previous experience with similar work, key personnel, explanation of dispute resolution processes and evidence of costs.

Any grant funding to be provided is conditional on the recipient meeting agreed milestones and outcomes.

Funding available

Funding of up to \$1,000,000 (ex GST) over two financial years is available to support the delivery of this Program.

Delivery and expenditure must be complete by 30 June 2026 (subject to demand and budget availability).

Applicants will be required to demonstrate co-contribution(s) to the initiative. The co-contribution amount will be assessed as part of the value for money assessment criteria.

Participants to the Program are expected to make a financial co-contribution.



Eligible expenditure

Program funding can only be used to cover costs directly associated with the delivery of this Program.

These costs include:

- Salaries and consumables
- Hire of facilities to deliver the services
- Fees to professional service providers
- Costs associated with the development and production of resources directly related to the delivery of this Program
- Program administration
- Promotional activities and business engagement (directly associated with the initiative)
- Other costs outlined in the proposal document if approved by the Department.

The following expenditures are explicitly excluded:

- Costs for alcohol
- The purchase of capital equipment
- Costs for accredited training or course delivery
- Core business operations or business-as-usual activities
- Any activities not directly and wholly related to the delivery of services under this Program; and
- Any other costs as determined by the Department.

Funding will be awarded for proposals that are up to a maximum of 2 years duration.

Eligible Participants

Program participants will need to meet the eligibility criteria as agreed between the service provider and the Department and stipulated in the grant agreement to access funding under the initiative. The proposed eligibility criteria is provided below:

A 'Woman in Business' is defined as: a company director or secretary; or partner in a partnership; or sole trader of a business or organisation with a current Australian Business Number (ABN) and where the principal place of business is South Australia, and with an annual turnover not exceeding \$1 million per annum, with fewer than 20 full time equivalent employees.

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Application and Assessment

Application process

Applicants are required to contact the Program Manager via email no less than four business days before the closing date, and the Program Manager will provide a copy of the application form to the applicant upon initial review of the proposed concept.

The Program Manager can be contacted via **OSFBPM@sa.gov.au**. In your email, please provide:

- A brief description of your organisation's experience in supporting women business owners, including the number of mentoring sessions provided and content delivered through previous programs.
- A description of what outcomes the proposed initiative will deliver based on the Program objectives.
- Your phone number and email address.

The Program Manager will contact you within two business days to discuss your concept and provide you with the application form if appropriate.

Applications will be assessed against the Assessment Criteria established in the guidelines by a panel of representatives from the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science.

Applications must outline how many participants are expected to participate in the proposed initiative, and explain any assumptions made, including unit costs per participant.

Applications will not be considered where:

- Retrospective funding is sought
- Other funding sources are deemed better suited (e.g. funding under existing programs or services in the nominated region and/or for the nominated industry sector)

- The applicant has already received a grant from other sources for this activity (including funding from the South Australian Government or the Commonwealth Government)
- The application does not contribute to achieving the Program Objectives

Assessment Criteria

The assessment panel will consider the merit of applications with reference to the following factors, which must be addressed and substantiated in all applications:

- The outcomes and benefits for participants
- Demand for the initiative(s)
- Value for money (including applicant and third-party contributions including cash and in-kind or both)
- Reach and impact to diverse women in business
- Demonstrated experience and past performance supporting women in business
- The capacity and capability of the applicant (and any affiliated mentors if applicable) to identify the needs of participants to either refer them elsewhere or connect them with the most appropriate mentor, deliver the initiative to the intended audience and achieve the outcomes it has committed to in its application. This includes consideration of the applicant's financial position, and prior experience of the applicant and any mentors engaged.

The assessment panel may also consider other aspects of the application it regards as relevant when assessing applications and may request additional information if required to undertake the assessment.

All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email of the result of their application.

Contracting requirements and reporting

To access grant funding, successful applicants from eligible organisations will be required to sign an agreement in the form of a formal written contract with the South Australian Government which stipulates the obligations of the applicant and the conditions under which assistance is given. No approval of an application, nor any notification to an applicant that their application is successful, nor any invitation to negotiate will be effective to constitute a contract or to create any legitimate expectation unless the agreement is executed by both parties.

The applicant will be required to repay the funding where there is breach of the agreement.

The successful applicant will be advised of the process during negotiations to finalise the agreement.

The proposed Program will include:

- supporting participants with business essentials support including mentoring and advisory services
- up to 6 hours of mentoring for each eligible participant
- development of an implementation plan for mentoring participants to best position business owners to progress with implementing improvements post mentoring
- managing all enquiries to the Program, including redirecting applicants to the most appropriate service either within the partners offerings or to another provider or service (e.g., Women in Business Advisory Program or Small Business Fundamentals) if mentoring is not considered suitable.

The intake for the mentoring would need to be staggered to ensure the Program runs until 30 June 2026.

Monitoring and reporting

Contracted partner organisations will be required to report on the initiative's progress and performance monthly and periodically throughout the initiative and up to 12 months after conclusion of the initiative. KPIs will be negotiated for the successful application(s).

Successful applicants will be required to survey Program participants to gather data for quantitative and qualitative reporting purposes at various stages of the Program (start to post-completion).

Reporting will include the outcomes achieved, activities undertaken, summary of participant data, including demographics, evidence of expenditure of grant funding, lessons learned (analysis), case studies, business impacts, other materials and/or approaches developed for continuing the support for women in business beyond the funding period.

Public disclosure

Initiative details, estimated and actual economic outcomes, the amount of funding, case studies and other pertinent information may be made public, subject to the Government's consideration of any commercial and public interest factors.

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Additional information

The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines including application terms at any time.

Decisions on all matters relating to the awarding of grant funding and proposals under this Program is at the absolute discretion of the Minister for Small and Family Business (Minister) and/or the Department.

This includes the right not to award any grant funding, or award a lesser amount, if the Minister and/or Department deems appropriate.

The Department complies with the South Australian Government's Information Privacy Principles Instruction (Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular PC 012). The Department collects information (including personal information) as reasonably necessary for the purposes and functions of:

- Administering the Department's grants and funding programs
- Keeping applicants informed about the Program, relevant upcoming events, grant funding initiatives and outcomes, our services, special events or client feedback surveys, as well as our activities in general
- Improving the Department's websites and other services.

The collection and use of information by the Department extends to use of such information by the Minister for Small and Family Business for the purposes as outlined above.

Any information contained in or relating to an application, including information identified by an applicant as confidential information for the purposes of applying for funding under this Program, may be disclosed by the Department to, or used by the Department:

- To its employees, advisers or third parties in order to manage the Program (including but not limited to, for the purposes of evaluating and assessing the application)
- For due diligence, monitoring, reporting and audit purposes
- Within the government of South Australia where this serves the legitimate interest of the Department
- In response to a request by a House or Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or South Australia
- For training, systems testing and process improvement, including compiling statistics and reports
- If an application is successful, for promotion of initiative activities and outcomes
- Where information is authorised or required by law to be disclosed
- Where the information is already in the public domain.

