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Learner Engagement A-Frame Program 2018

Expression of Interest Guidelines

Round 1, February 2018

The Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board is seeking Expressions of Interest from Learn Local providers wanting to participate in the Learner Engagement A-Frame Program 2018 (LEAP), to design and deliver pre-accredited programs to engage hard-to-reach learners who face barriers to training.

**LEAP OVERVIEW**

This initiative follows on from the Learner Engagement A-Frame Program (LEAP) Pilot, trialled in 2017. An independent evaluation of the Pilot program undertaken by KPMG informed design of LEAP 2018.

LEAP provides funding for programs of **fewer than 20 Student Contact Hours (SCH),** designed to improve learner engagement with pre-accredited training and provide more flexible pathways to further education, training and employment, for those learners who may find longer programs a barrier to participation.

The initiative targets disadvantaged and hard-to-reach learners, learners with complex or multiple needs, learners in thin markets and remote locations, and unemployed and vulnerable workers.

LEAP will run to the end of 2018, and will involve the total delivery of up to 50,000 SCH.

It is intended that there will be two rounds of LEAP in the first half of 2018.

This Expression of Interest is for LEAP Round 1.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

The LEAP initiative aligns with the objectives of the ACFE Board Strategy 2016-2019, and the goals of Skills First and the Education State, in seeking to improve learning outcomes for adults with a particular emphasis on key cohorts of need. For details of learner groups for specific emphasis in pre-accredited programs refer to the *2018 Pre-Accredited Training Delivery Guidelines* <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/learnlocal/Pages/preaccredited.aspx>

**LEAP OBJECTIVES**

The LEAP initiative’s objectives are to:

* **provide Learn Local providers with the flexibility to facilitate improved engagement with pre-accredited training programs for adults who face barriers to training**
* **provide engagement activities linked to pathways to further training or employment**
* **strengthen pathway outcomes for learners facing barriers to training, by building the skills and capabilities necessary to participate in further pre-accredited programs or accredited education and training, and/or employment**.

Applications must demonstrate how their LEAP program(s) will improve engagement of target learners into pre-accredited programs and pathway to further education, training or employment.

**LEAP LEARNER GROUPS**

Learn Local providers are invited to submit an Expression of Interest outlining how their proposed programs intend to improve engagement in training for the following learner groups:

* + **disadvantaged and hard-to-reach learners**

Learn Local providers are encouraged to leverage linkages with other community service and support agencies, where this may improve outreach and referral pathways for disadvantaged learners.

Learn Local providers are also encouraged to engage in partnerships with other Learn Local providers, where this may strengthen engagement pathways, and enhance complimentary training delivery.

* + **learners with complex or multiple needs**

Learn Local providers should prioritise approaches that engage learners with complex or multiple needs with pathways to further training, in recognition that these learners may require additional training.

* + **learners in thin markets and remote locations**

Learn Local providers are encouraged to develop programs that provide flexible options to support engagement of learners in thin markets and remote locations. Innovative and collaborative approaches are encouraged.

* + **Unemployed/under-employed learners, and vulnerable workers within industries in transition**

Learn Local providers are encouraged to consider programs that improve employment pathways for unemployed/under-employed learners. Learn Local providers are encouraged to leverage linkages with other community support and job service agencies, and with local Skills and Jobs Centres at TAFE institutes, where this may improve engagement and training outcomes for unemployed, underemployed or vulnerable workers.

**PROGRAM DESIGN**

In designing LEAP programs, Learn Local providers should:

* + address specific barriers which limit their capacity to meet the needs of hard-to-reach learners, due to issues related to program duration. Applications should provide a **clear rationale** for using an engagement program with reduced course duration. Proposed courses which are between 15 and 20 SCH will require a strong rationale in order to be approved.
  + indicate how the proposed LEAP courses would **differ in content and approach** from pre-accredited courses of more than 20 SCH. (For example, LEAP courses may focus on specific skills rather than a broader pre-accredited training offering.) Innovative approaches are encouraged.
  + plan and develop **internal pathways** from their proposed LEAP courses into their pre-accredited or accredited training offerings, where possible. Aim to coordinate LEAP courses with broader offerings, as part of a strategy to reach new students.

**Resources and Information**

A Resource Kit will be developed, to share case studies of successful programs from the 2017 LEAP Pilot, and identify designs and approaches to delivering engagement programs for hard-to-reach learners. Further information will be provided via Participation Branch Memo.

**OUTCOMES**

Learn Local providers should use the following outcomes as a guide in developing Expression of Interest applications, Delivery Plans and A-frame Course Plans for LEAP 2018:

* Improved outreach and engagement with adults facing barriers to participating in pre-accredited training.
* Increased awareness by adults facing barriers to training, of pre-accredited training options and their value proposition.
* Delivery of high quality courses of under 20 SCH, that enable pathways to further education and training or employment.
* Increased opportunities for participation in pre-accredited and accredited training, further education, and employment pathways by adults facing barriers to training.
* Promotion of greater flexibility and more effective targeting of delivery from Learn Local providers.
* Opportunities for better connections by Learn Local providers to community-based outreach programs and employment support services funded through other agencies.

**HOW TO APPLY**

**Key Dates**

The Expression of Interest for Round 1 of LEAP will open on 6 February and close on 9 March 2018.

Providers are encouraged to submit applications before the Expression of Interest deadline if possible.

At this stage there will be 2 rounds of LEAP in the first half of 2018.

**Who is eligible to apply**

The Expression of Interest is open to all Learn Local providers:

* registered with the ACFE Board for 2018
* approved for a pre-accredited contract for 2018
* with a current satisfactory Business Governance Status Assessment or a 2018 Skills First contract.

**Funding and Payments**

* **Funding for the initiative is through a SCH subsidy rate, consistent with the existing pre-accredited rate of $8.20 per SCH.**
* **A Regional Loading of 20% will apply for LEAP programs delivered in identified postcodes (refer 2018 Pre-Accredited Training Delivery Guidelines).** <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/learnlocal/Pages/preaccredited.aspx>
* It is expected that Learn Local providers with an allocation of up to 2,000 SCH for pre-accredited training in 2018 will limit applications for LEAP programs to a maximum of 200 SCH.
* Learn Local providers with an allocation of 2,000 SCH or more for pre-accredited training in 2018, will limit applications for LEAP programs to a maximum of 10 per cent of their total pre-accredited SCH allocation.

How will payments be made:

* Payments will be made upfront at the nearest quarterly payment date after execution of the Service Agreement.

What will not be funded:

* Courses less than 5 hours and greater than 19 hours in duration.
* Courses which are not substantively different from existing pre-accredited courses, although less than 20 SCH.
* Community outreach and engagement strategies which are not explicitly linked to training pathways and education and/or employment outcomes.
* Recreational courses which have limited learner outcomes in terms of pathways to further education and training or employment.
* Capital works or equipment.
* Training which is assessed for the purpose of an award or credit.
* Training which is marketed as accredited training.
* Training which is linked in reporting to a Training Package Qualification or a nationally recognised accredited module or course by use of a nationally recognised accredited course or module code.

**Reporting requirements – data quality**

Course delivery information must be entered into SVTS using the reporting codes as follows:

* + State Funding Source code: ‘ACE’ (ie Funding Source State Code for standard ACFE pre-accredited programs).
  + Course Code: use prefix ‘**ACL**, **followed by ‘18’**, followed by your designated code (maximum 12 characters) Eg: ‘ACL18RESUME’
  + Course Name: use prefix **‘LEAP’**, followed by your designated name.  Eg: ‘LEAP Resume Preparation’
* Complete a short LEAP evaluation questionnaire to aid quality improvement and development of the initiative (a template will be provided in future).

**Variations to the LEAP Delivery Plan**

Training delivery and data reporting must match the agreed content in the LEAP Delivery Plan. Providers proposing to vary their contracted Delivery Plan must negotiate the variation and obtain prior approval through the relevant Department staff **before** making any changes and commencing delivery.

**Application process**

Learn Local providers will need to complete and submit a:

1. **LEAP 2018 Delivery Plan**
2. **A-frame Course Plan for each course proposed for delivery.**

The Delivery Plan and Course Plans must clearly outline the engagement strategy, the rationale for reduced delivery hours, and the learner outcomes and pathways to be achieved.

**Check list for applications**

* Completed Delivery Plan, including prefix codes
* Completed A-frame Course Plan for each course being offered
* Submitted all documents by email to training.participation@edumail.vic.gov.au by: **COB 9 March 2018.**

For more information please contact the Regional Office contact assigned to support your Learn Local provider.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

* Submission of all required documentation by the due date.
* Proposed programs to be a minimum of 5 SCH and less than 20 SCH.
* A clear engagement strategy and rationale for a LEAP program duration must be described in the Course Plan.
* Proposed programs aim to improve learning outcomes for adults in priority learner categories as listed in the Objectives.
* Proposed programs specify how learners will be linked to pathways to further education and training or employment.
* Maintain the rigour and integrity of the Pre-accredited Quality Framework.

**NEXT STEPS**

* Expression of Interest applications incorporating Delivery Plans and A-frame Course Plans, will be assessed by the Training Participation Regional Support Unit.
* A Service Agreement will be sent to successful applicants for execution following assessment of applications**.**
* Learn Local organisations are expected to begin delivery of programs following execution of the Service Agreement.
* A short LEAP report template will be provided in future, for Learn Local providers to indicate learner pathway outcomes.