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| Higher Education and Skills Group**Participation Branch Memo****Department of Education and Training** |

***NUMBER:*** *2017 / February / 8*

**TO:**

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| Learn Local organisations *– ALL*  | ACFE Board | ACFE Regional Councils |
|  | Learn Local Stakeholders | Participation Branch Staff |

**FROM:** Verna Kearney, Acting Director - Participation Branch

**DATE:** 8 February 2017

**SUBJECT: Funding Opportunity:** *Asylum Seeker Learning Plan Program*

**ACTIONS / CRITICAL DATES:**

* *Learn Locals who may have missed the previous release of this memo please note that funding is available through the Asylum Seeker Learning Plan Program.*
* *Round 1 Expression of Interest closes 17 February 2017.*

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**Purpose**

To advise Learn Local Organisations of the funding available to support eligible asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking through the Asylum Seeker Learning Plan program

**Background**

* From 1 January 2017 Learn Local RTOs and TAFE Institutes may directly enrol eligible asylum seekers in a *Skills First* courses.
* The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) and the Australian Red Cross (ARC) will continue to assess asylum seekers or victims of human trafficking and refer eligible individuals to Private RTOs, TAFE Institutes, and Learn Local RTOs for enrolment in *Skills First* courses as outlined in CN2016-17.
* In order to assist asylum seekers to identify courses appropriate to their ability and aspirations, additional funding is being made available through the Asylum Seeker Learning Plan (ASLP) program. Funding to implement the program will be made to Learn Local organisations (LLO) via an expression of interest process.

**Main Points**

* To be eligible to access funding through the ASLP program, suitably qualified LLOs first submit a Expression of Interest (EOI) application. The EOI will be released on 24 January 2017 at the following location: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/learnlocal/Pages/funding.aspx>
* LLOs successful shortlisted though the EOI process must send relevant staff to a one-day information and training program. The program will be coordinated and run by the VET Development Centre. Training dates and locations will be made available following the completion of the EOI process, and in accordance with need.
* Asylum Seekers eligible to receive support under the Asylum Seeker Learning Plan program must hold a valid Bridging Visa subclass E (BVE), a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV), or a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV). The visa must also specify that the individual can undertake study in Australia. Victims of human trafficking who have referrals from the Australian Red Cross are also eligible.
* LLOs must use Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) to verify asylum seeker eligibility for a Skills First course. VEVO is available at [https://www.border.gov.au/Busi/visas-and-migration/visa-entitlement-verification-online-(vevo)](https://www.border.gov.au/Busi/visas-and-migration/visa-entitlement-verification-online-%28vevo%29). If required, from 10 January 2017 the ASRC may be contacted on 03 9274 9807 for advice on the use of VEVO.

***Record keeping***

LLOs must retain copies of VEVO and concession documentation demonstrating that the student is exempt from the citizenship/residency eligibility requirement for government subsidies and hence are eligible for support through the program

As advised in the November 2016 Participation Memo the ASRC will deliver workshops to assist RTOs support their asylum seeker students. Further information is available from the ASRC Education Program on 8537 9500.

