



# Community Development Program (CDP) Overview

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## Aims of the CDP

The CDP is a community oriented program that prepares job seekers for work while contributing to the goals of the community. Through the CDP the aims of the broader community can be realised and local issues can be addressed through the development and application of local solutions, while supporting the job seeker to realise their goals and aspirations.

CDP providers tailor a package of assistance suited to each individual job seeker based on their needs and readiness for employment. CDP activities are also designed to support local communities and be responsive to available and future employment opportunities.

Finding a job in a remote community is very different to finding a job in a major city or regional area. Some communities serviced by CDP have fewer than 20 residents and are located in very isolated parts of Australia. Remote communities tend to have fewer businesses and employers, and are far away from larger jobs markets.

The CDP aims to meet the challenges faced by remote job seekers and their communities.

The main aims of CDP are to ensure:

- job seekers are skilled to meet the needs of local employers;
- work-like activities are delivered that benefit job seekers and their local community; and
- job seekers get a job and keep it.

The CDP offers job seekers a pathway to learn new skills or build upon existing skills, to increase their experience and work-readiness through work-like activities and placements in real work settings.

## Eligibility for CDP Services

No matter where someone lives in Australia, if they are a recipient of income support they are under the same eligibility criteria as set out in social security law for income support payments.

Generally, all individuals living in remote Australia receiving income support payments and looking for a job are eligible to receive CDP services. The CDP applies equally to all job seekers living in remote Australia, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. People not on income support can volunteer to participate in the CDP.

From 12 May 2021, there were changes to the Mutual Obligation Requirements as a condition of income support. CDP Participants are no longer obliged to participate in activities of up to 20 hours a week (40 hours per fortnight). CDP participants can volunteer for these activities.

Activities are designed to create a daily routine for job seekers. Where possible, activities should operate within business hours (between 7am to 7pm). However, job seekers can participate in activities outside standard daily arrangements where appropriate under flexible arrangements negotiated by the CDP provider with the job seeker. This may include participating in activities outside standard business hours or concentrating participation over a smaller number of days not exceeding 40 hours over a two week period.

CDP providers tailor activities to the needs of the individual job seeker and the community they live. CDP services assist vulnerable job seekers and job seekers with a disability, with providers taking into account their capacity to participate in the program and their specific individual needs and support requirements.



## Support for Job seekers

CDP provides a framework and pathway to help each job seeker make a positive contribution to their community and support them to be prepared and able to take up available employment opportunities. The job seeker's pathway is shaped by their individual circumstances, goals, aspirations and the opportunities available to them.

In addition to support being tailored to individual job seekers, the delivery of CDP is also shaped by each local community, through the CDP:

- being community driven – CDP providers work with their local communities to highlight the potential of the program and how it can work to the benefit of the whole community. Through liaising and working with the community, providers can listen to what the community would like CDP to deliver for them and co-design CDP activities with the community. CDP can also work in partnership with other programs and community groups to achieve better outcomes for all involved including job seekers;
- catering to individual job seeker needs – CDP services are designed to meet the needs of each job seeker, being mindful that each job seeker has different interests, aspirations and levels of work readiness. The broad range of services allows each job seeker to be supported to move along the right pathway at the right stages for them;
- tailoring to local employment opportunities – CDP providers work with local employers to understand existing opportunities and potential opportunities in the future, and the skills employers are looking for in prospective employees; and
- building partnerships – CDP providers build partnerships to improve the delivery of CDP and leverage off other programs delivered in their region(s). This may include linking in with local councils or State/Territory programs and initiatives such as infrastructure development, health and housing projects.


A CDP provider's service delivery model is influenced by all of the above. Providers recognise and respond to all these factors, from individual job seeker needs, to community, to available opportunities in the regions they service. They develop an integrated approach to build and deliver a flexible, targeted range of services to support job seekers.

Job seekers typically have access to a broad range of CDP activities. Activities can be vocationally based, for example: learning construction skills leading directly to paid employment; working in a local market garden to assist the community achieve health and wellbeing outcomes; and participation in social enterprises such as Op Shops where job seekers learn product sales, business planning and retail skills. Activities can also be non-vocational activities such as taking part in mental health support and drug and alcohol rehabilitation to help job seekers address barriers to work and increase their positive participation in the community.

Importantly, there is under the CDP the flexibility for providers to deliver activities specifically designed to enable communities and individuals to enrich and preserve culture. This includes supporting men and women in promoting, revitalising and maintaining traditions, language and cultural heritage, and through the creation of arts, crafts and bush products.

A package of support for a job seeker could include a combination of:

- vocational and non-vocational training (including on-the-job training);
- involvement in activities that support Indigenous cultural practices, such as Men's and Women's Business;
- essential skills training and assistance to overcome personal barriers to employment (for example, literacy problems);
- job search assistance;

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- work-like activities designed to boost the job seeker's skills and experience;
  - job placements and work experience placements;
  - support for job seekers and employers when a job seeker gains employment; and
  - mentoring.

The support provided under the CDP is aimed at bringing positive change to remote job seekers, families and communities.

## Opportunities for Employers

CDP providers work with local employers to understand their workforce needs and employee requirements. This enables providers to develop and deliver appropriate activities that prepare job seekers for current and future employment opportunities.

Activities are an important step in building a job seeker's skills, but they are not the end destination. CDP supports the transition from activities into employment by giving job seekers experience in real workplaces. To achieve this, providers:

- build strong links with employers to identify ongoing job opportunities, training and work experience pathways and to understand employers' workforce needs now and in the future;
- offer work experience arrangements with employers;
- regularly assess the suitability of job seekers on their caseload for job opportunities with employers;
- provide the job seeker with post-placement support from when they commence in employment up to 26 weeks; and
- support employers for the same first 26 weeks of a job seeker's employment.

Employers are encouraged to take on CDP job seekers from remote areas for up to 26 weeks in a work experience placement. A work experience placement is a long term opportunity. It can be up to 20 hours a week or 40 hours worked flexibly over a fortnight depending on the job seeker's capacity to work. During this time, job seekers remain on income support and have obligations under the CDP.



## Work Experience

Note: Work experience was previously called a hosted placement.

Work experience may be in a business, social enterprise, not-for-profit organisation, an entity related to the provider, or a state/territory or local government agency.

A work experience placement offers:

- a boost to the job seeker's employability by increasing their work experience;
- demonstration to a job seeker of what is expected in a workplace and the expectations of employers;
- a prospective employer the opportunity to see how a job seeker performs in the workplace;
- improvements to a job seeker's self-esteem; and
- encouragement to a job seeker to move into paid employment, rather than rely on welfare.

Providing job seekers with work experience is a critical link to facilitating their transition into paid employment, however, there are rules in place to ensure job seekers who take part are protected, and to make sure these placements do not displace paid jobs. For this reason, the following limits apply to the number of job seekers that can be placed in work experience in a workplace at any one time:

- Employers with up to 10 employees can offer up to two work experience placements.
- Employers with 11 to 20 employees can offer one work experience placement for every five ongoing employees.
- Employers with over 20 employees, including businesses and government agencies, can have four work experience placements plus one additional placement for every 10 ongoing employees.

The Agency may approve additional work experience placements on a case by case basis, but this will be monitored closely to ensure the work experience positions are not displacing existing jobs.

Work experience placements are a great way to help build the skills and employability of job seekers. This is why a work experience placement must be as work-like as possible. Employers will need to ensure there is a reasonable ratio of job seekers to employees. That way, job seekers will be well-supervised and are able to learn from workmates. Job seekers in work experience placements will require on-the-job training and appropriate supervision. Employers can negotiate a payment with the local CDP provider to cover these costs.

Employers can contact their local CDP provider and ask them to suggest a suitable job seeker. Details on how to find a provider can be found at the end of this document. Employers can also advertise directly and select job seekers for work experience placements, provided the job seekers are CDP participants.

Employers must enter into a contract with the CDP Provider to define work experience arrangements, including the supervision of participants and reporting of attendance. Providers can also assist the employer and job seekers with support such as mentoring and training for a job seeker in a work experience placement.

Employers are encouraged to offer employment to CDP participants at the end of their placement.



## Employer Incentive Funding

Under the CDP, Employer Incentive Funding is available for employers to help Australian businesses manage the costs of employing remote job seekers. Transitioning a remote job seeker into the workforce can offer employers many opportunities and rewards, although some job seekers may need a little more support as they settle into their new workplace.

Employers can use Employer Incentive Funding in any way they choose, including to cover additional training and supervision costs or as a wage subsidy. The incentive is paid once a remote job seeker has been employed full time for 26 weeks and is payable through the CDP provider. An employer is eligible to receive a one-off payment of up to \$10,000 (exclusive of GST) for full time employees or up to \$5,000 (exclusive of GST) for part time employees.

The 26 weeks of employment do not need to be consecutive, though they must be with the same employer. A job seeker can have a break of up to four weeks in each 13 week period. This could be for the job seeker to take cultural leave, to manage short seasonal gaps, or down time between projects. Paid annual leave or paid sick leave does not count as a break.

For more information on assistance with finding employees, work experience arrangements and Employer Incentive Funding, employers are encouraged to contact their local CDP provider. Information on how to do this is provided under *More Information* in this section.

## Partnership arrangements and linkages with CDP

The CDP is a community-driven program that works best with effective partnerships and linkages with employers, community groups, and other key organisations and programs. The various ways in which these stakeholders can become involved in CDP will vary from community to community.

CDP providers develop linkages and partnerships with local authorities, organisations and employers to maximise opportunities for job seekers and to benefit communities. For example, they may deliver an activity in partnership with the local council to planting trees to regenerate community areas. Such an activity would provide a meaningful and work-like activity for job seekers and allow them to gain valuable skills and experience.

The council may supply the trees, fertilizers, etc. and the provider would supply the tools required for the activity, a suitable supervisor and the job seekers to participate.

Such an activity benefits everyone, as the job seekers are able to attend a quality activity, the council gets the trees planted, the provider delivers a work-like activity at a reduced cost, and the community are able to enjoy a re-vegetated public space.

Partnership arrangements, including who pays for what, will vary depending on the provider involved and the activity being delivered and would need to be negotiated on a case by case basis. The general rule is that an activity should not compete with a local business or displace a real job.

CDP providers may also arrange for an organisation to host an activity for a group of job seekers on their behalf. These differ from a work experience placement with an employer as they are usually with an organisation normally staffed by volunteers, such as in a women's centre, a men's shed or a charity store, and are therefore not subject to limits on numbers or duration as work experience arrangements are with an employer.



## Supporting local employment markets

The CDP also supports local employment markets through economic and enterprise development to increase the number of employment opportunities. CDP activities can be used to generate income, establish new enterprises and keep income locally. They can also be used to build skills and develop goods and services that community members want, such as furniture, clothes lines, smoke alarm installation, outdoor shelters and other minor construction projects. Establishing sustainable enterprises can build wealth and empower remote communities to take control over their future.

A range of funding and programs are available in remote regions to support the establishment and growth of new and existing businesses. For example, while enterprise development is a recognised CDP activity in all regions, some providers may be involved in delivering a CDP business incubator pilot to provide tailored wrap-around support to Indigenous job seekers to develop their business ideas.

## How the CDP is administered

While the CDP delivers employment service in remote regions, it is only one component of Australia's social security system.

A range of Government agencies have a role in administering the policy for employment services programs.

### *National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)*

NIAA is responsible for engaging CDP Providers. Specifically, NIAA implements the CDP in accordance with social security law, and develops policy advice on the program.

NIAA also monitors and manages the performance of CDP providers to ensure remote job seekers receive a high standard of service and are provided with appropriate activities to meet their Mutual Obligation Requirements under law.

Through the NIAA Regional Network, NIAA maintains an on-the-ground presence, that supports active engagement with communities, providers and other stakeholders.

### *The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)*

DEWR is responsible for the *National Jobseeker Compliance Framework* (NJCF) and participation policies for income support payments which are activity tested. Further, DEWR is responsible for policy related to the *Job Seeker Classification Instrument* (JSCI), which is used by Services Australia and providers to assess a job seeker's barriers and work capacity.

DEWR also administers *Workforce Australia*, which operates in urban and regional areas of Australia.

### *The Department of Social Services (DSS)*

DSS is responsible for income support and participation policy for people of working age and policy for Employment Services Assessments (ESAt) and Job Capacity Assessments (JCS). DSS also administers the Disability Employment Services (DES) program, which operates alongside *Workforce Australia* in non-remote regions of Australia. This service provides employment support to people with disabilities, injuries or health conditions.



## Services Australia (SA)

SA is the service delivery agency responsible for the delivery of the overarching social security system that CDP operates in.

The policies of these individual agencies come together through SA service delivery. SA delivers services in relation to income support received by remote job seekers (including assessing eligibility and paying income support), administers the National Jobseeker Compliance Framework (penalties for non-compliance), and refers remote job seekers to the CDP.

Further, SA assesses and determines a job seeker's work capacity and Mutual Obligation Requirements, including whether exemptions for medical incapacity, undertaking cultural business, and other special circumstances should apply.

### More Information

For more information about the CDP and other opportunities for economic development in remote Australia you can visit the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) website at: <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/employment/cdp>

The NIAA Regional Network provides an on the ground presence that supports active engagement with communities, providers and other stakeholders. The Agency's website has a list of regional network office addresses at: <https://www.niaa.gov.au/contact-us/regional-network-addresses>

To find the contact details of the CDP provider in your local area, use the provider search tools on Australian Government's [Workforce Australia site](#), enter town or postcode and filter results to show CDP Providers.



# How the Community Development Programme works



Key

- Individual focus
- Community focus

## GETTING TO KNOW THE JOB SEEKER

Providers work with job seekers to understand the specific and tailored support they need

**Assessments**

- Skills and strengths
- Work capacity
- Aspirations
- Difficulties obtaining work

**Individual plans**

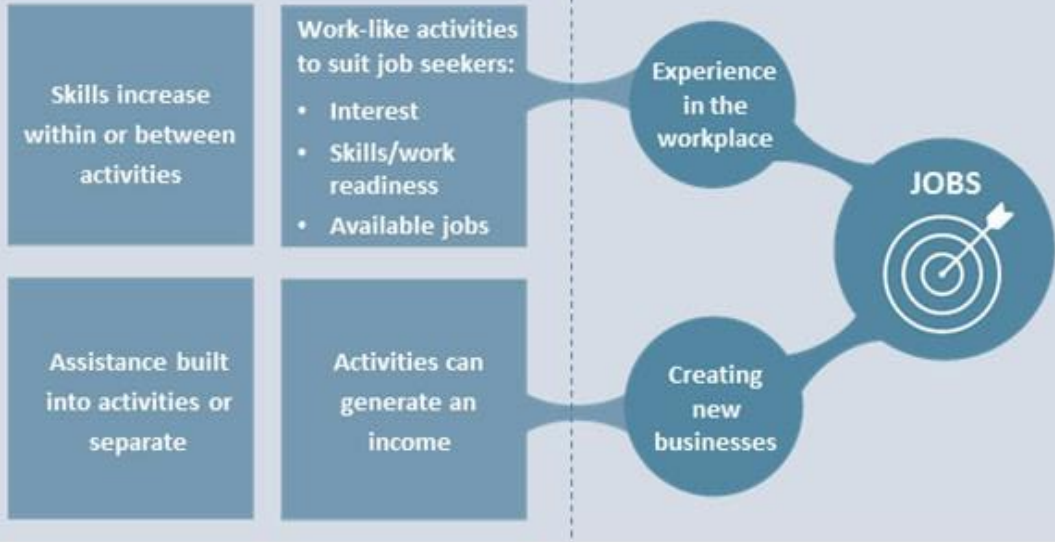
- Package of support
- Right starting point
- Pathway to a job
- Every plan and pathway is different

## CDP JOB SEEKER PATHWAYS

### BUILDING JOB READINESS | LINKING TO JOBS

Providers offer a variety of activities to suit the needs of their caseload and local employers

Providers support a transition from activities to employment in a way that suits the job seeker's individual pathway



**ONGOING SUPPORT** • Regular contact • Respond to changes • Progress along a pathway • Engage through incentives and compliance • On-the-job support