

Skill Shortage Solutions

# Guidelines 2023-24

# Released February 2024

# Introduction

The South Australian Government invests in the state’s vocational education and training (VET) system to skill South Australia’s workforce for today and the future.

South Australia faces a range of skills challenges that need to be addressed. The 2023 Skills Priority List shows 363 occupations are in shortage in South Australia, up from 149 in 2021. South Australia’s Skills Outlook 2023 shows that, over the next 5 years, just over 90,000 VET qualifications will need to be delivered to meet the skills demand of the state’s industries.

[Skill Shortage Solutions](https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/skill-shortage-solutions) supports collaboratively developed and delivered solutions to current and future skill shortages at industry and/or regional levels. Solutions will be evidence-based, industry informed, and high impact, translating to the delivery of the skills and/or training products employers need to meet sector-wide workforce needs.

Skill Shortage Solutions align to the Government of South Australia’s 2022-23 State Budget measure which provides $8.8m over 4 years. Up to $2.2m will be invested each year over 4 years for solutions that are delivered by industry bodies, professional associations and unions, regional and community organisations, employers and training organisations. Partnerships that collaboratively address shortages on a sustainable basis will be a core feature of projects supported by Skill Shortage Solutions.

Skill Shortage Solution grants opened in March 2023, resulting in 8 projects being awarded to pilot solutions for shortages in commercial cookery, bricklaying, concreting, electrician, air-conditioning and refrigeration mechanic and mechanical engineering occupations, as well as supporting women in trades.

Funding rounds are competitive. In 2023-24, eligible organisations are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) as a first step of an application.

## 2023-24 priority areas

In 2023-24, eligible organisations are invited to apply for a Skill Shortage Solutions grant targeting 1 or more of the following priority areas:

1. Priority Trade Solutions to address occupational shortages in brick and block, concreting, commercial cookery or saw technology.
2. Women in Trades Training Solutions to develop and implement evidence-based strategic approaches to support attract, retain, and upskill women in trade occupations. Solutions will identify and address challenges impacting participation and capitalise on skills demand opportunities to improve outcomes for women.
3. Strategic Skills Solutions to address skill shortages[[1]](#footnote-2) in trade and technician occupations, with moderate or strong jobs growth. See Appendix 1 for occupations in scope.

Applications targeting increased workforce diversity, improving participation of communities underrepresented in trade occupations i.e. First Nations people, women, LGBTIQA+ community, people with disability will be considered favourably in assessment.

# Who can apply

Applications are invited from organisations that:

1. have a current Australian Business Number (ABN), AND
2. are not-for-profit[[2]](#footnote-3), AND
3. are leading formal partnerships or a consortium[[3]](#footnote-4) to deliver the proposed solutions
4. TAFE SA is eligible to apply as a lead partner and partner in projects led by other organisations.

South Australian and Australian Government agencies are not eligible to apply but may participate as project partners.

The applicant is the authorised signatory to the funding agreement, and responsible for delivering agreed outcomes in collaboration with partners.

## Partners

Every Skill Shortage Solutions project must have partners.

Partners must be core to, and demonstrably involved in, the design and development of the proposed solution. Partners may include:

* industry and/or sector peak bodies (unions, industry and professional associations, industry coalitions)
* regional representative bodies and/or associations and local governments
* registered training organisations (RTOs), including TAFE SA[[4]](#footnote-5)
* Adult Community Education (ACE) providers
* universities and other organisations with education and training as a key focus of their business
* group training organisations (GTOs)
* South Australian and Australian Government agencies.

At a minimum, applications must include 1 industry sector partner.

# How to apply

There are 2 stages:

1. Expression of Interest
2. Application.

## Stage 1. Expression of Interest (EOI)

The EOI provides applicants with the opportunity to provide a summary of the project and its scope, test concepts and receive feedback from Skills SA before progressing to a full application which will be competitively assessed.

EOIs open on **Thursday 15 February 2024** at [education.smartygrants.com.au/ssseoi](https://education.smartygrants.com.au/ssseoi) and close **Friday 29 March 2024, 5:00pm Australian Central Daylight Time (ACDT)**.

Before commencing an EOI, you should read and understand these [guidelines](https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/skill-shortage-solutions-additional-info), watch the [information session](https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/skill-shortage-solutions-additional-info) and read the frequently asked questions ([FAQ](https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/skill-shortage-solutions-additional-info)). If you have any questions, submit these [here](https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/skill-shortage-solutions-additional-info).

To submit an EOI, you will need to set up an account in *SmartyGrants* or log in to an existing account.

Before submitting your EOI, make sure it is accurate and complete.

When the EOI is submitted, the nominated contact person will receive an automated email confirming receipt and a copy of their submission.

Skills SA will review EOIs against Skill Shortage Solutions guidelines and provide feedback to applicants in 7 business days. Eligible EOI applications will then be invited to complete a full application.

## Stage 2. Application

Following the EOI, eligible applicants will receive an email from Skills SA with the link to the online application form in *SmartyGrants* to complete a full application.

Before submitting your application, make sure it is accurate and complete. You will also need to complete a budget template and attach this to your application.

Keep your responses to the questions clear and concise and ensure the most critical information is in a prominent position. As your application will be de-identified during the assessment process, it is important to assume the reader is not familiar with your context.

Section 4 details how applications will be assessed by Skills SA.

When the application is submitted, the nominated contact person will receive an automated email confirming receipt and a copy of their submission.

Applications must be submitted by **Friday 3 May 2024, 5:00pm** **Australian Central Standard Time (ACST).** You will not be able to submit an application after this time.

# What can you apply for

Examples of what funding can be used for:

* professionally-led workforce planning and development
* implementing integrated attraction, retention, and skilling strategies to grow total workforce aligned to target occupations
* developing and trialling new skills and training products, pathways and delivery models at post trade technician occupational levels to address skill shortages for immediate and long term impact
* purchasing infrastructure and technology accessible to a sector (on a co-contributory basis)
* delivering accredited[[5]](#footnote-6) and non-accredited[[6]](#footnote-7) training
* industry exposure and hardening activities[[7]](#footnote-8)
* peer supports and networks, formal industry mentorship initiatives, workplace coaching
* project and partner coordination and governance
* professional project management and/or evaluation
* project administration and reporting.

Significant investment propositions involving multiple and integrated strategies to solve complex and cross-sectorial issues can be supported.

**Projects must conclude by 31 May 2025**. Projects with a long-term focus should be phased and may be supported by Skills SA on that understanding, over several grant rounds.

## What cannot be funded

Funding will not be provided for:

* repeat projects or activities funded in 2022-23[[8]](#footnote-9)
* enterprise or employer specific projects
* wage subsidises, student course fee waivers[[9]](#footnote-10) and pre-employment activities such as security clearances, medicals and personal protective equipment[[10]](#footnote-11)
* activities targeting school-enrolled students
* purchase of land or property
* institutional training in lieu of trade training contracts
* recurrent costs and business as usual activities
* duplication or substitution of funding received via other grant programs or activities already supported or funded by Skills SA (for example, Learner Support Services). Proposed Skill Shortage Solutions funding that duplicates existing funding from other sources but amplifies scope and/or impact may be considered by Skills SA
* project activities that commence prior to both parties executing the Funded Activities Agreement (FAA) and/or Project Annexure
* accredited training delivered by TAFE SA[[11]](#footnote-12) or an RTO that does not have an FAA with Skills SA. RTOs who do not have a current FAA can apply at: [www.providers.skills.sa.gov.au/apply](http://www.providers.skills.sa.gov.au/apply) .

# How applications will be assessed

The assessment criteria are:

1. partnership governance and co-contribution (including financial)
2. rationale and evidence for the solution
3. project design
4. project outcomes, impact and sustainability
5. evaluation approach
6. past performance
7. value for money.

Each of the selection criteria must be addressed in applications.

Full applications will be de-identified and assessed via a competitive process. Information and evidence provided for each assessment criterion will be merit ranked by an assessment panel.

## Partnership governance and co-contribution

Strong partnership (and/or consortia) arrangements are a core feature of successful applications and should reflect a range of relevant organisational partners.

Applicants should clearly identify:

* who the partners are and what their roles and responsibilities are in developing, designing and implementing the project, including financial and in-kind support
* proposed governance framework arrangements
* evidence of partnership commitments
* how project outcomes will be maintained and used by project partners, and who will own and manage any assets or liabilities.

Applications that actively build ongoing collaboration and commitment between partners beyond the life of the grant will be highly regarded.

## Rationale and evidence for the solution

Applicants must provide a clear rationale and evidence for the approach and its impact on addressing the shortage, the immediate-, short-, medium- and long-term impacts of the proposed solutions and its relationship to meeting occupational skill need at a systemic level.

Applicants should clearly identify:

* occupational skill shortage being targeted
* issues and factors contributing to the shortage, including any workforce, or training related considerations impacting the occupation
* how it will impact the shortage, including the size of the project and predicted outcomes
* the proposed solution/s, including the specific skill needs being addressed or method for identifying requirements
* how the proposed solution responds to the issues and how it is additional to existing solutions
* existing research and/or clear linkages to related regional, sector, industry or workforce planning, and evidence of consultation undertaken with key stakeholders.

Applications targeting groups and communities traditionally under-represented in trade and technical occupations (such as First Nations people, women, LBGTIQA+ community, people with disability) must include consultation and testing of solutions with appropriate relevant stakeholders.

## Project design

Applications must demonstrate that the applicant and project partners are capable and have capacity to deliver the proposed solution through sound project design.

Applicants should clearly identify:

* scope, key project activities and timeframes that are reasonable, realistic and will support the delivery of the funded solution and realisation of benefits following implementation
* how much funding is being requested, for what and how the cost has been calculated
* what the risks are, and what steps will be taken to mitigate them
* engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders in development and delivery of the project and how they will be involved in ensuring sustainability when the project ends.

## Project outcomes

Assessment will consider the outcomes the project will achieve, with a focus on the intent and impact of the solution in addressing the shortage, as well as the governance and supports in place to support success. This includes consideration of the project management, partner roles, and engagement mechanisms in place to support the sustainability of delivery of solutions and ongoing impact on addressing the occupational shortage.

Applicants should clearly identify:

* what parts of the occupational workforce the project is targeting, its relationship to workforce and industrial demand, how the focus will address need now and over time
* if and where the solution supports existing and proposed workforce specific interventions to address the industry, sector, regions occupational shortage
* what the anticipated project outcomes are
* how project outcomes will benefit the existing occupational workforce and or new entrants, the relationship to meeting sector, employer, industry, regional or economic need in the immediate, short medium and long term
* the extent to which the skill shortage will be addressed
* proposed mechanisms to embed and sustain solutions with partners, industry, sectors and/or regions.

## Evaluation approach

A commitment to sharing findings that contribute to the body of knowledge about responding to industry need and addressing occupational shortages is a key feature of Skill Shortage Solutions.

Applicants should clearly identify:

* the proposed evaluation methodology and approach; this should be identified in the project design and management and involve key stakeholders and project partners
* key performance indicators and measures, and the continuous improvement approach
* how evaluation findings will be shared with partners and stakeholders.

## Past performance

Past performance of applicants will be considered where the applicant has received funding from Skills SA in the past 3 years. This will include contract compliance and the achievement of contracted outcomes.

For applicants with no performance history, Skills SA will take a managed risk approach, which may involve supporting a smaller scale project in the first instance.

For projects that include RTOs delivering training, outcomes including completions will be considered.

## Value for money

Skills SA will consider the value for money for each application based on project complexity, achievable outcomes and regional delivery.

Factors such as public value, use of professional services, demand, industry and partner contributions and fee for service market activity will also be considered.

Skills SA will assess whether the project creates dependency on ongoing government investment beyond the life of the project.

Proposed project costs will be benchmarked against similarly funded projects to support the value for money assessment.

# How grants will be paid

Successful applicants will be offered a Funded Activities Agreement project annexure, which will include the funding value, payment structure and reporting milestones.

If accredited training is part of a successful application, Skills SA will contract the RTO directly via their Funded Activity Agreement.

Payment will be made against agreed key milestones negotiated during contract development. Where contract milestones are not achieved, Skills SA may utilise claw-back arrangements.

Applicants that receive a grant will be assigned a Skills SA project manager, and receive detailed information on reporting requirements, claim templates and marketing supports.

# Timeframes

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| **Expression of Interest (EOI) opens** | Thursday 15 February 2024Skills SA will provide feedback on eligible EOI applications within 7 business days, along with the link to the project application form. |
| **Online information session** | Thursday 15 February 2024The recording is available [here](https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/skill-shortage-solutions-additional-info) |
| **EOI closes** | Friday 29 March 2024, 5:00pm Australian Central Daylight Time (ACDT).No EOIs will be accepted after this time. |
| **Applications close** | Friday 3 May 2024, 5:00pm Australian Central Standard Time (ACST).No applications will be accepted after this time. |
| **Outcome of applications** | Applicants will be advised of the outcome by end of May 2024. This timeframe is a guide and subject to change. |
| **Grants completed** | Grant activities and reporting must be completed by 31 May 2025. |

# Appendix 1: Trade and technician occupations in scope for Strategic Skills Solution applications

The following trade and technician occupations have been assessed in shortage[[12]](#footnote-13) and having strong or moderate jobs growth.

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| **ANZCO code** | **Occupational Group** |
| 3122 | Civil Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians |
| 3125 | Mechanical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians |
| 3212 | Motor Mechanics |
| 3222 | Sheetmetal Trades Workers |
| 3223 | Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers |
| 3231 | Aircraft Maintenance Engineers |
| 3232 | Metal Fitters and Machinists |
| 3311 | Bricklayers and Stonemasons |
| 3312 | Carpenters and Joiners |
| 3321 | Floor Finishers |
| 3322 | Painting Trades Workers |
| 3331 | Glaziers |
| 3332 | Plasterers |
| 3333 | Roof Tilers |
| 3334 | Wall and Floor Tilers |
| 3341 | Plumbers |
| 3411 | Electricians |
| 3421 | Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics |
| 3511 | Bakers and Pastrycooks |
| 3513 | Chefs |
| 3514 | Cooks |
| 3613 | Veterinary Nurses |
| 3622 | Gardeners |
| 3624 | Nurserypersons |
| 3911 | Hairdressers |
| 3941 | Cabinetmakers |
| 3991 | Boat Builders and Shipwrights |
| 7212 | Earth Moving Plant Operators |

# DOCUMENT ENDS

1. [Skills Priority List 2023 | Jobs and Skills Australia](https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data/skills-priority-list) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1985* (SA), on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission register or holds a comparable legal status. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. A consortium allows two or more businesses to combine their capabilities when developing and delivering a tender. The primary driver of a consortium approach is that it allows for greater economies of scale, efficiency and effectiveness. A consortium can be made up of delivery partners from different industry sectors or occupations who partner to share relevant skills, experience and expertise that complement each other and shares roles and responsibilities to deliver a joint project. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Applicants partnering with TAFE SA must ensure the authorised TAFE SA executive or delegate has endorsed the application. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Accredited training refers to any course or skill set on the national register of VET and identified on the South Australian Subsidised Training List (STL), or microcredential comprising accredited units endorsed by the South Australian Skills Commission (SASC) or supported through Skills SA course development funding. Short-form training including multiple units of competency versus a complete course will be examined by Skill SA in the context of best outcomes for students. Accredited training must be delivered by an RTO with a current Funded Activities Agreement (FAA) with Skills SA, or TAFE SA. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Non-accredited training refers to endorsed micro credentials that include non-accredited components, industry-specific and/or foundation skills training, particularly where there is clear alignment or mapping to accredited VET learning outcomes or an identified skill gap in an industry or sector workforce development plan. Funding for non-accredited training will be informed by benchmarking against the South Australian Vocational Education and Training Fee Framework and budgets of similar funded projects. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Projects that target work-based experiences for institutionally qualified graduates in trade occupations to address gaps, develop and apply their competencies in industrial settings to industry (pace) standards to address trade skill shortage areas where skills recognition processes are supported by the South Australian Training and Skills Act. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Projects that build incrementally on planned solutions that were supported in previous grant rounds as part of a medium to long-term approach are not considered repeat projects. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Except skills recognition and skill gap training under the Act and SASC fee waiver policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Except unemployed students on pre-vocational pathways facing complex disadvantage not supported by a Workforce Australia provider. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Delivery of accredited training already on TAFE SA’s scope will be funded through TAFE SA’s existing funding arrangements and will not result in additional funds. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. [Skills Priority List 2023 | Jobs and Skills Australia](https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data/skills-priority-list) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)