



DEP Program Guidelines

2017

Providing entry level employment, training and development opportunities for people with disability

Context

The Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) recognises the advantages of having a workforce that reflects and draws on the full diversity of the community it serves and is committed to increasing employment opportunities for people with disability within the Northern Territory.

The *EmployAbility Strategy 2013-2017* commits the NTPS to increase the representation of people with disability in the NTPS staffing profile as well as nurturing an inclusive workplace culture, promoting accessibility and supporting skills acquisition and career development for people with disability. The Disability Employment Program (DEP) is a core component of the *EmployAbility Strategy 2013-2017*. Agency participation in the program satisfies a number of agencies' obligations under the strategy.

Definitions

Participant: For the purpose of this program, a participant is a person with any disability who has been assessed by a Disability Employment Service (DES) Provider and deemed eligible for employment under the DEP.

Available DEP positions: DEP places are for entry level positions. DEP participants receive the full award wage and employment conditions of an Administrative Officer 1 or 2, Physical 1 or 2 or Technical 1 or 2, depending on the position offered.

Employment Contract: An employment contract is a legal document in which the employee is offered, and accepts, employment in the NTPS for a specified period.

The contract details the designation (level), employment dates (start date / end date) and remuneration package. There may be other unique information relevant to the employment.

Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO): The underlying principles of EEO in the NTPS include:

- The identification and elimination of all forms of discrimination and harassment in recruitment selection, professional development, personnel practices, job evaluation and conditions of service.
- Action necessary to remedy the effects of past discrimination.
- The promotion of fair and equitable treatment for all employees in all operational policies and procedures.
- Reflecting the diverse nature of the Territory community and its needs in the composition of the workforce.

DES Provider: Disability Employment Service (DES) Providers promote and assist the employment of people with disability. They:

- Assist people with disability to find work in open employment situations
- Assist employers to employ people with disability
- Support the ongoing employment of people with disability

Disability Employment Services sits within the federal government's Department of Social Services. Services are provided nationally through contracted arrangements with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

Program Description

The Disability Employment Program (DEP) has been operating since 1994 with all agencies contributing annually through an apportioned levy. This levy is used to fund the direct wage costs of agencies that employ people through the DEP.

The DEP provides temporary employment for a maximum of 2 years where people with disability are employed with a particular agency and undertake duties or tasks considered suitable for an entry level position for a person who is unable to compete for a job on merit due to their disability. The program is open to people with any disability.

Applicants for the DEP must:

- Be an Australian citizen, hold Australian permanent residency status or an appropriate visa, and;
- Be registered with a DES Provider

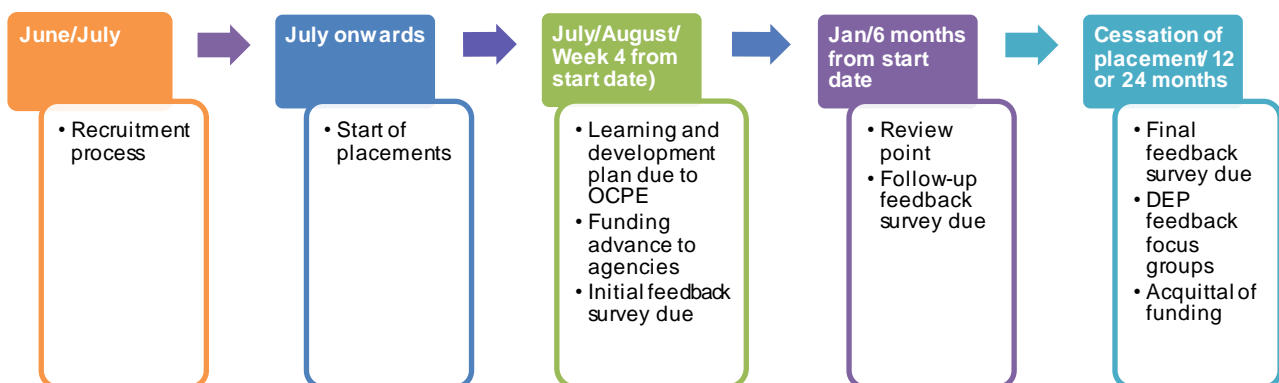
Aims of the DEP

The DEP aims to:

- Provide temporary employment for eligible people with disability to support increased skill acquisition and workplace exposure
- Provide potential pathways into ongoing employment for DEP participants

Participants are employed under [Determination 2 of 2015](#).

Program timeline/Key points



Funding

Under the DEP, OCPE provides an advance for the direct wage of employing the participant. This includes actual salary plus 21% of on- costs to cover associated allowances (eg: NT Allowance), payroll tax and employer superannuation contributions. In addition, funding of up to \$2000¹ for the 2 year employment period is available from OCPE to support training and development activities for the DEP employee.

¹ Training funds are determined by OCPE on an annual basis.

Direct wage cost **does not** include:

- the payment of higher duties allowance,
- accommodation,
- consumables, office stationery and general expenses,
- information technology charges, hardware and software expenses,
- other equipment expenses, including workplace adjustment equipment

A participant of the DEP receives the full award wage and employment conditions of an Administrative Officer 1/2, Physical 1/2/3 and or Technical 1/2. The host agency is advanced the direct wage costs by OCPE and pays the participant their fortnightly wage. Acquittal of funding is required at the end of the financial year. Funds not expended at the end of the financial year for their participant will not be carried to subsequent years.

DEP Process

There are very clear roles and responsibilities for DEP stakeholders, including agencies, DES Providers and OCPE. It is important to note that OCPE administers the DEP and coordinates the process, but does not become involved in the matching of positions to participants, placements or other matters relating to the employment of the DEP participant.

Program management: roles and responsibilities

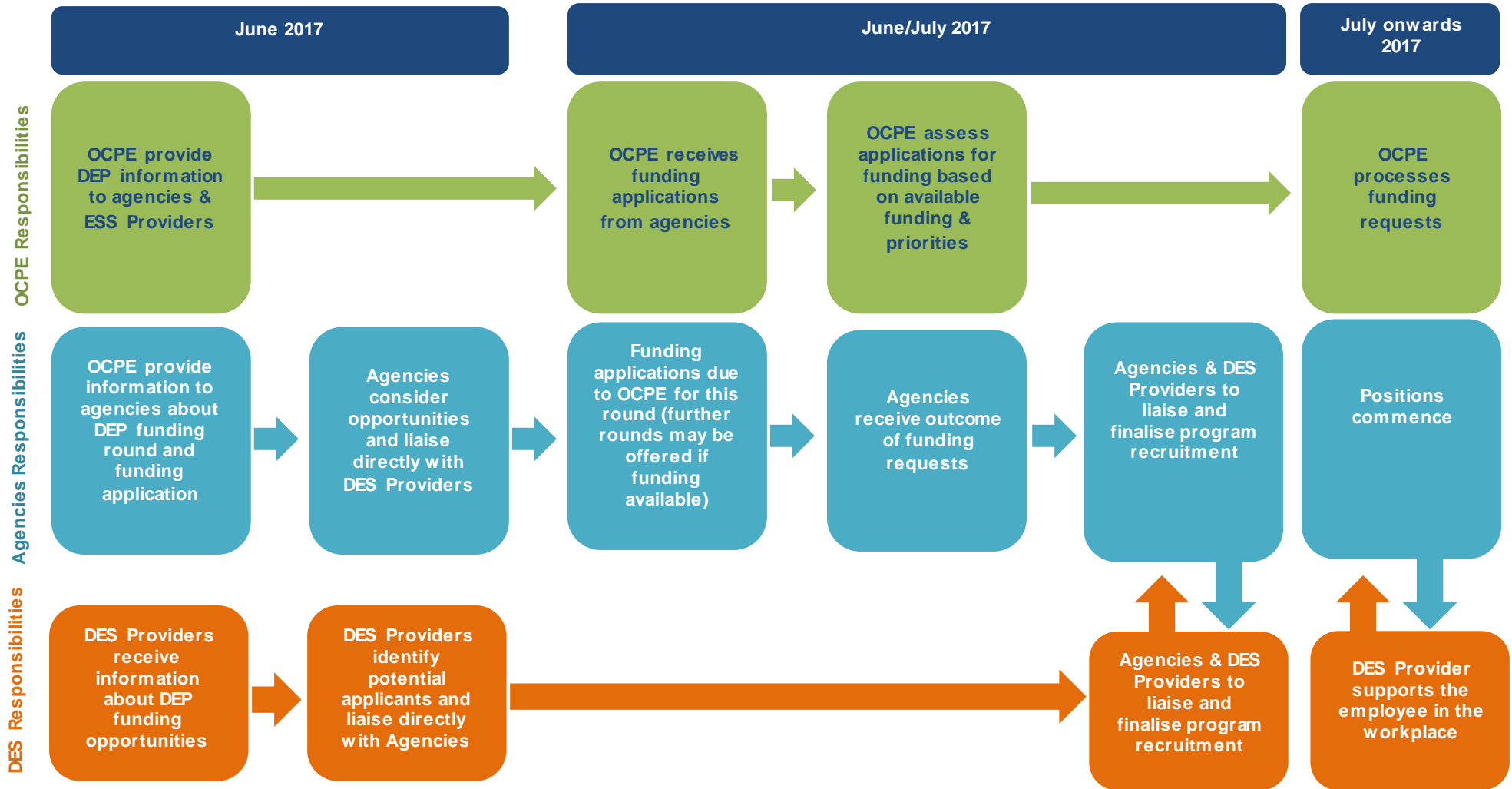
NTG Agency	DES Provider	OCPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage employment of DEP participant • Communicate with the employee • Liaise with the DES Provider regarding supports for the employee in the workplace for the duration of the placement • Develop a training and development plan with the employee • Advice at the conclusion of the placement period regarding ongoing employment possibility • Participate in program evaluation and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the NTG Agency regarding support needs of participants • Support job design for employees with disability • Provide training information and awareness activities for employers and colleagues • Assistance with contract discussions and finalisation for DEP employees • Induction support to ensure new employee with disability settle into his/her workplace and role • Provide any relevant ongoing support that an employee might require • Participate in program evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of program information to NTG Agencies • Provision of program information to DES Providers • Administration of funding for employment placements • Assessment of placements based on available funding • Lead program evaluation and reporting

Financial processes

Agencies wishing to utilise the funding under the DEP program are required to complete the DEP Request for Funding form (see appendix).

At the conclusion of the financial year there will be an acquittal process for funding. If funding allows, extensions of placements may be approved.

Recruitment timeline 2017



Program evaluation

From this iteration of the DEP, there will be an evaluation process aimed to gather data for continuous quality improvement of the program. Agencies, participants and DES Providers will be asked to complete surveys at specific points in the program cycle and focus groups will occur at the end of the DEP program cycle. **OCPE will make contact when the evaluation points are reached and will provide further details at that time.** The evaluation process is being developed with a view to capturing appropriate information without significant time impost on any stakeholder. See section below on records and reporting for further details.

Records and Reporting

Agency

Agencies are required to maintain records and data relating to engagement and progress of DEP participants. Reports on number of participants, progress and employment status to be reported annually, with OCPE providing the reporting templates and framework. This reporting is undertaken in the Annual Reports and the State of the Service Report.

Immediate supervisor

During the employment of the DEP participant, the following monitoring and reporting is required to be undertaken by the participant's supervisor:

- Completion of an agency Learning and Development Plan with the participant. It is important that support and training is planned for DEP participants. **This Plan must be forwarded to OCPE by week 4 of the placement.**
- Short online survey for initial feedback – Link will be provided to the supervisor once the DEP participant commences in the position. **This survey is to be completed by the supervisor at the end of week 4 of employment.**
- Review – an email will be sent to the supervisor seeking information about the participant's progress and pattern of work to gauge any variations to the initial employment contract. **This information is to be supplied at the end of 6 months of employment.**
- Short online survey for follow-up feedback – Link will be provided to the supervisor by OCPE 2 weeks before the survey is due. **This survey is to be completed at the end of 6 months of employment.**
- Final feedback survey - Distributed to supervisors for completion of employment or at 12 month point.
- Focus group held at the conclusion of the program.

Participant/employee

Surveys for the participant are designed primarily to gather qualitative data about their experiences working in the NTPS and their transition to work and skill development. It is important that supervisors ensure the appropriate support is provided to participants to enable them to effectively participate in evaluation surveys. This may involve participation and support by the DES Provider. Surveys include:

- Short online survey for initial feedback – Link will be provided to the supervisor once the DEP participant commences in the position. This survey is to be completed by the participant at the end of week 4 of employment.

- Short online survey for follow-up feedback – Link will be provided to the supervisor by OCPE 2 weeks before the survey is due. **This survey is to be completed at the end of 6 months of employment.**
- Final feedback survey - Link will be provided to the supervisor by OCPE 2 weeks before the survey is due. This survey is for completion by participants at completion of employment or at 12 month point/ cessation of the program/employment.
- Focus group held at the conclusion of the program.

DES Providers

Surveys for DES Provider are designed to seek feedback on the program process and general engagement with the NTPS through the program. Feedback mechanisms include

- Short online survey for initial feedback – Link will be provided to the DES Prvider once the DEP participant commences in the position. This survey is to be completed by the DES Provider at the end of week 4 of employment.
- Focus group held at the conclusion of the program.

Employment Considerations

Hours of duty

Ideally, a participant needs to work enough hours to benefit from the opportunity and develop their workplace skills in line with the aims of the DEP. Agency discretion is applied to the minimum number of hours worked for DEP participants taking into account the participant's capacity and tasks available. **The maximum hours a participant may work is 30 hours per week to ensure protection of any Centrelink funding the participant may receive.**

Before deciding on the number of hours per week the participant works, there should be negotiation between the NT Government Agency, the DES Provider and the participant, taking into account the specific capacity of the participant and the Agency's needs.

Workplace adjustments/ Personalisation

While the majority of employees with disability won't require any workplace adjustments, workplace adjustments may be required to accommodate a DEP participant into the workplace. Assistance is available through [JobAccess](#), an Australian Government initiative for:

- Advice on workplace adjustments or personalisation of the workspace and other matters in relation to employment of a person with disability.
- Funding through the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) to help with the cost of workplace adjustments needed to accommodate an employee with disability. The EAF pays for the cost involved (up to certain limits) in modifying the workplace or purchasing special or adaptive equipment for eligible employees with disability.

Host Agencies may apply directly to JobAccess to access the EAF, however it is recommended that an application is made through the DES Provider. It is important to note that pre-approval from JobAccess is required for any purchases of modification equipment.

In addition, it may be necessary for JobAccess to arrange for a free workplace assessor to visit the workplace and complete an assessment before approval of the application for a workplace modification is given. The host agency can then purchase the modification or equipment and seek reimbursement from the EAF.

Assistance and advice on these matters should be sought from the participant's DES Provider or JobAccess.

Induction of DEP participants

Induction into the workplace should be undertaken with the assistance of the participant's DES Provider. This is an opportunity to ensure that the employee settles into employment with support and understand employment and role expectations. It is also a good opportunity for the supervisor to understand the individual needs of the employee and to consider reasonable adjustments to support the employee perform their role. The DES Provider is also available to provide disability awareness sessions to supervisors, managers and work teams and ongoing support to the employee, should he or she request it. OCPE has Disability Confidence training available to support an increased confidence for all NTPS staff (link to the training calendar).

Training and development of DEP participants

During the employment period, it is expected that a participant will be exposed to training and development opportunities appropriate to their capabilities. **A training and development plan is a condition of DEP funding** to ensure structured skills development occurs that is tailored to each participant and their abilities. The individual training and development plan should be developed no later than four (4) weeks after employment commences. While it is anticipated that the majority of training and development needs for an entry level employee will be provided for in-house, there is funding available to aid this delivery. OCPE will request a copy of this plan as part of the 4 weeks reporting process. Funding of up to \$2000² for the 2 year employment period is available from OCPE to support training and development activities for the DEP employee.

Performance monitoring

All DEP participants are required to participate in performance conversations on a regular basis to ensure they are working towards achieving their assigned tasks and are receiving the support and training they need to do their job well. This is an ongoing conversation to monitor performance, identify knowledge and skills requiring further development and to plan for that development. Performance conversations open communication between the supervisor and the participant and assist to improve the participant's work performance and achieve individual growth in job knowledge and skills. Performance conversations should be undertaken in line with an individual's training and development plan.

Completion

Although there is no guarantee of ongoing employment upon completion of the 2 year fixed period under the DEP, agencies are encouraged to offer suitable participants further employment where possible. Agencies may apply for direct appointment under the [Public Sector Employment and Management Act \(PSEMA\) s30\(1\)\(b\)](#).

Further Information

For further information, please visit the [OCPE website](#) or contact 08 8999 4137 / swpd.ocpe@nt.gov.au.

² Training funds are determined by OCPE on an annual basis.

Appendix: Request for Funding

Disability Employment Program

This request should be completed and forwarded to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment prior to the issuing of an offer of employment as funding is limited. Please forward completed request to:

Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, Strategic Workforce Planning and Development

Email: swpd.ocpe@nt.gov.au

Phone: 08 8999 4137

Postal: GPO Box 4371, Darwin NT 0801

1.1 Host Agency Details						
Agency:						
Manager's Name:						
Work Unit:						
Title:				Phone:		
HR Contact:				Email:		
1.2 Nomination Details						
Nominee Name:	Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/>					
	First Name					
	Surname					
Classification of position:	AO1	<input type="checkbox"/>	AO2	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Ph1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ph2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ph3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	T1	<input type="checkbox"/>	T2	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hours/Placement:	Hours Per Week:					
	Length of placement (months):					
Job Description Attached: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						
Please Note:						
Agencies are required to provide OCPE with a copy of the Training and Development Plan for each DEP participant no later than four (4) weeks from the date of funding approval. Please indicate if you require assistance from OCPE to develop a plan.						
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						

1.3 Disability Employment Service Provider			
DES Provider:			
Contact Name:			
1.4 Agency Declaration (please tick confirming the following)			
The nominee meets the eligibility criteria under the DEP.			<input type="checkbox"/>
The nominee has not previously received funding under the DEP, including in another agency.			<input type="checkbox"/>
The Manager has read the following documents and is aware of, and agrees to, their obligations under this program. The DEP Guidelines(attached to this form)			<input type="checkbox"/>
The EmployAbility Strategy			<input type="checkbox"/>
Determination 2 of 2015			<input type="checkbox"/>
Signed:			
1.5 Office Use Only			
Nomination/s received at OCPE:			
Nomination meets Eligibility Criteria	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment:	
Approved:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment:	
Agreed Salary:		Contract Dates:	
		Hours per week:	
Approved Director SWPD		Date:	
Approved Program Manager		Date:	