



ACT  
Down Syndrome  
Association

# Government Supports

## For Employment



There are two main supports available to people with disability in their employment journey.

1. Supports funded via the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
2. Supports provided by Disability Employment Services (DES)

To determine which support best fits your persons employment journey, goals and needs, you can undertake a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) or an Employment Services Assessment. A JCA Assessment is conducted by an Australian Government appointed Medical professional via Centrelink. If you want to undertake the JCA, you will need to make an appointment at your local Centrelink Office. The Assessment can be conducted via phone, video conference or in person.

The Assessments will look at:

- Health
- Capacity to work solo or assisted
- Hours you can work
- Any other factors that could impact your ability to carry out your work.

Depending on the outcome of the assessment, if you can work 8 hours per week or more (benchmark), people will have access to Disability Employment Services (DES) through one of the following services:

- Disability Management Services (DMS) is for people with a disability, injury or health condition who may occasionally need ongoing support to retain a job
- Employment Support Service (DSS) is for people with a permanent disability who will need regular ongoing support to retain a job.

If your person is assessed as not having the ability to work 8 hours or more a week and you are working towards that goal, the NDIS can offer supports if they are considered “reasonable and necessary”. This will be different for each person, and it is best to contact your LAC or Planner to discuss.



## **What is Disability Employment Services (DES)?**

Disability Employment Services (DES) is the Australian Government's employment service to assist people living with disability to find work and keep a job in the open employment market.

A DES provider should assist people by:

- Providing career advice
- Preparing people for employment (i.e. work uniforms/clothes, assisting in developing a bus map, etc.)
- Assisting in developing a resume
- Assisting in sourcing appropriate training

If your young person requires it, they can also assist with job searching and ongoing support at work. This can also include funding for any necessary workplace modifications and financial assistance for employers via wage subsidies.

When a person has obtained employment, their DES provider should provide them with ongoing employment support for at least 52 weeks. In some instances, the provider will offer support for both the employee and employer beyond 52 weeks.

## **What is School Leaver Employment Support (SLES)?**

School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) are there to assist participants to move from school to work. SLES funding is built into your young person's NDIS plan under "Finding and Keeping a Job" and can be accessed whilst your young person is still in school. The NDIS can fund SLES for up to two years, depending on the participants circumstances.

The main aim of SLES is to help school leavers explore and understand their work potential while focusing on capacity building, developing skills, independence and confidence for the workplace.

Every young person's supports will be different, the following skills may be part funded by SLES:

- Money handling skills
- Time management skills
- Communication skills
- Job ready skills
- Travel skills
- Personal development skills

Providers who deliver SLES supports are there to help your young person prepare, look for and gain employment. SLES providers should provide meaningful, individualised capacity building activities so that young people can achieve their open employment goals.

The supports offered by SLES providers would typically include:

- Work experience
- Employability and/or vocational specific skills
- Other foundation skill training (i.e. travel training or money handling)



## **Can the NDIS help me find a job?**

The NDIS cannot help your young person find the actual job, however, the NDIS can assist in removing certain barriers preventing employment. This funding is usually under the Capacity Building Support “Finding and Keeping a Job” (School Leaver Employment Scheme – SLES). However, depending on your young persons goals, in some instances the support category “Increased Social and Community Participation” funding can be used.

Main supports funded through NDIS include:

- Workplace assessments
- Resume writing assistance
- Assistance in overcoming employment barriers
- Counselling to successfully engage in employment
- Support before and during a job interview

To successfully receive the funding support, you will need to discuss your young person's employment goals during their planning meeting.

Reports and information that can assist in obtaining the funding requested are:

- Recent school reports
- Any work experience reports/references including where the young person requires assistance
- References or reports from any part-time work or volunteering activities (including where the young person requires assistance)
- School career transition plan
- Reports or assessments from professionals (such as a Functional Capacity Assessment completed by an Occupational Therapist or a Vocational Interest Report from a Counsellor).

Ideally, conversations around “what next” should happen while the young person is still in school, with the funding to be made available during the last semester/term of their education to assist in the transition to leaving school.



## **Employment Assistance Fund (EAF)**

Another form of Government Support is the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF). The EAF assists in covering the costs of making any workplace changes that are deemed necessary for a person with a disability to perform their job.

Items covered under the EAF include:

- Assistive technology
- Disability awareness training for the workplace
- Physical workplace adjustments and building modifications
- Auslan interpretation
- Specialised Support and Training packages for people with mental health conditions and/or specific learning disorders

While you can access workplace assessments through NDIS, all eligible people with disability are able to access free workplace assessments through the EAF. This is called a Workplace Modification Assessment. The Workplace Modification Assessment is conducted by a qualified professional, and the assessor will look at the workplace and any barriers that may exist. If there are any barriers identified, you can begin the conversation with the employer to find solutions that are mutually beneficial.

In most instances, the person with disability will need to have an assessment when applying for EAF if the assistance being purchased is over \$1,000.00. If your person is linked to a Government Employment Service such as a DES provider, and they submit the EAF application, they may waive the assessment if the items cost less than \$10,000.00.

### **What are the eligibility requirements for the EAF?**

To be eligible for the EAF, your person must:

- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Are currently employed in a job that is expected to continue for 13 weeks or more
- Are currently working at least 8 hours per week (in private or public employment)
- If self-employed, they must be working at least 20 hours per week over the last 13 weeks and earning an hourly income that is at least equivalent to the National Minimum Wage
- Have an ongoing disability that has lasted, or will last at least two years and the disability must limit, restrict or impair their ability to work

## **My EAF application was declined, why did this happen?**

There are several instances that the EAF application may be denied. These include:

- Your person does not meet the eligibility criteria
- The application is not complete
- The required supporting information was not provided
- There is not enough evidence that the requested modification will help your person do their job or improve productivity
- You have already purchased the modification or service without having the EAF application approved
- The cost of the modification is unreasonable and there are other ways to help your person do the job
- Your person can access funding for workplace modifications through another Government source or state, territory or local government bodies
- Your person received a compensation payment from their employer or someone else in the last seven years
- The application is for repairs or maintenance.

You can find more information on the EAF and Frequently Asked Questions on the EAF website: **<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employment-assistance-fund-eaf>**

# Government Financial Support for Employers:

There are two main ways the Government provide financial support for employers who employ people with disability. In most instances, the initial outlay of funds to support and train people with disability can be daunting to many private enterprises.

The Government aims to reduce this barrier by two main programs:

- Subsidised wages for people with disability
- Supported Wage System (SWS)



## **Subsidised Wages**

Wage subsidies can be available to employers to assist in the initial training period of people with disabilities. Wage subsidies are generally paid to an employer, so long as the employer intends to offer jobseeker sustainable and ongoing work after the subsidy period has ended. Wage subsidies do NOT cost the employee. There are multiple types of wage subsidies offered by the Australian Government.

To access subsidised wages, the employee must be linked to a DES provider. The DES provider will:

- Determine the need for wage subsidy assistance
- Confirm jobseeker, employer and job placement eligibility
- Negotiate the wage subsidy with the employer prior to the job starting
- Complete and sign a wage subsidy agreement with the employer
- Monitor and collect evidence of employment
- Pay the employer
- Claim reimbursement from the Department

## **Supported Wage System (SWS)**

Supported Wage System (SWS) is a government program designed to support employers employ people with disabilities who are not able to perform jobs at the same capacity as a “typical” employee. Under SWS, special workplace arrangements are created so that employers can pay wages to a person based on how “productive” they are in their job.

Before an agreement is in place, the employee with disability will need to have a SWS assessment with a qualified assessor.

The assessment will:

- Be done with the employer, employee and the Employment Services provider
- Take place on the employee’s regular work day and they will be required to perform their usual tasks

The assessor will consider the employees job description, time spent on each duty, regular hours and days worked, break times and the level of supervision required.

To access SWS, the employee must meet the following criteria:

- Be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident
- Be at least 15 years of age
- Have no outstanding workers' compensation claim against the current employer
- Meet the criteria for the Disability Support Pension (DSP), as confirmed by Centrelink
- Ensure the job under consideration is covered by an industrial instrument or legislative provision that permits employment under the SES provisions
- Check that the job being offered is for a minimum of eight hours per week

**For further information on the Supported Wage System, please visit <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/supported-wage-system-sws>**

*Supporting people (Parents/Carers) should be aware of your young persons capacity to develop skills and improve making them more productive. A new SWS assessment should be undertaken to take these improvements in "productivity" into consideration.*

# Additional Resources

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**JobAccess** - <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/downloads>

## **Down Syndrome Australia:**

**Right to Work website** - <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/right-to-work/>

**Supporting our family member with Down syndrome to find meaningful**

**employment** - [https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wp-](https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Supplementary-resource-for-parents-carers.pdf)

[content/uploads/2022/04/Supplementary-resource-for-parents-carers.pdf](https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Supplementary-resource-for-parents-carers.pdf)

## **NDIS Links**

**Employment (NDIS resource)** - [https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/how-ndis-](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/how-ndis-supports-work-menu/mainstream-and-community-supports/who-responsible-supports-you-need/employment)

[supports-work-menu/mainstream-and-community-supports/who-](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/how-ndis-supports-work-menu/mainstream-and-community-supports/who-responsible-supports-you-need/employment)

[responsible-supports-you-need/employment](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/how-ndis-supports-work-menu/mainstream-and-community-supports/who-responsible-supports-you-need/employment)

**Finding, keeping and changing jobs** -

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/finding-keeping-and-changing-jobs>

**Inclusion Australia, Everyone Can Work** -

<https://www.everyonecanwork.org.au/>