

## ACT Prototyping Voucher Pilot Guidelines

**Project Overview:** The ACT Prototyping Voucher Pilot provides vouchers of up to \$10,000 to entrepreneurs, innovators, and businesses who need access to specialised prototyping capabilities but cannot otherwise access or afford them. The program supports innovative prototype development by providing access to equipment, facilities, expertise, and training across Canberra's leading higher education institutions. The program aims to accelerate product development for entrepreneurs and businesses in the ACT, to diversify and amplify the ACT economy.

## Eligibility Criteria

**Applicant Requirement:** The program supports innovators, entrepreneurs, and early-stage businesses who can demonstrate how their project will introduce new or significantly improve existing products, processes, or solutions. Commercial viability forms part of the assessment, but the primary focus is on innovation that benefits the ACT region.

**Location Requirement:** Applicants must be based within the Australian Capital Territory or within the immediate neighbouring regions of the ACT border to ensure benefits are realised within the ACT. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the expectation that applicants are based in the ACT or developing a project focused on impacting the ACT.

**Project Requirement:** The proposed project must involve the development of an innovative prototype requiring access to specialised equipment, tools, and expertise available through the voucher program. Applicants must demonstrate they cannot access these resources through other means.

**Innovation Requirement:** The program supports innovative projects. This includes developing new solutions or improving existing ones in ways that benefit people or the planet.

**Not Eligible:** The program does not support student coursework, thesis projects, academic research, or projects that can already access these facilities through existing institutional affiliations. The program does not support mass production, manufacturing existing products, or scaling current designs - all projects must focus on developing and testing new prototypes. The program will not support companies who manufacture or trade with complete weapon systems, tobacco products, fossil fuel products, gambling, and/or illegal activities or substances are also not eligible.

## Application Process

**Initial Inquiry:** Contact the Project Coordinator to discuss your needs and understand the prototyping facilities and expertise available across Canberra's institutions. Consult the program's website to book a meeting, learn about how the voucher can be used, view the resource map, and submit an Expression of Interest.

**Application Form:** [<https://podio.com/webforms/29783323/2477415>]

**Evaluation Criteria:** Applications will be assessed using the following evaluation criteria.

1. **Innovation:** Clear demonstration of an innovative solution to a well-defined problem
2. **Impact:** Support of the project can lead to a positive impact on the ACT economy, people and/or sustainability (planet), addresses a previously unmet or under-resourced need in the ecosystem
3. **Readiness:** Evidence of a well-prepared project that can benefit from the program (it does not have requirements that the network cannot support), applicant ready to collaborate with both project team and network partners, applicant ready to execute the project.

**Project Description:** Provide a detailed description of the project, including objectives, expected outcomes, and how the prototype contributes to innovation and sustainability.

**Resource Needs:** To the best of your ability, clearly specify the equipment, facilities, and expertise needed from the prototyping network.

**Impact Statement:** Describe how your prototype will create positive change. How can people, organisations, or the environment benefit from this prototype? What are the next steps needed to lead to this impact? Include both the direct impact of your innovation and its potential benefits for the ACT community.

**Previous Experience:** Outline any prototype development work completed to date and what you learned from it. Include relevant skills and capabilities you or your team have.

**Budget Outline:** Submit your budget using our template. Include:

- Your cash contribution for materials
- Any in-kind contributions
- Existing sources of project funding
- How you will maintain project benefits after the voucher

**Timeline:** Provide a project timeline, including the following: (note: projects must be completed within 6 months or by 30 June 2026)

- Key development milestones
- Dates for accessing specific equipment
- When you expect to complete your prototype

**Supporting Documentation:** Submit documentation you believe is important for deciding your application. This might include initial designs, proof of concept work, or letters of support.

## Grant Conditions

**Accessing Resources:** Coordinate with the facilities and experts provided through the voucher to plan and execute prototyping activities.

**Collaboration:** Work collaboratively with facility staff and other recipients to maximise learning and resource use.

**Booking and Usage:** Follow all protocols for booking equipment and facilities and adhere to usage guidelines to ensure safety and efficiency.

**Intellectual Property:** Respect intellectual property rights and confidentiality agreements with all parties involved. The project's intellectual property is yours and your responsibility to protect.

**Reporting and Evaluation:** As a voucher recipient, you are required to submit project updates through our online portal via surveys. For projects over 3 months, applicants will be required to fill out an interim report covering:

- Progress highlights
- Equipment and facilities used
- Any challenges or changes

For shorter projects or service workshop jobs, only a final report is required (see the following section).

**Final Reporting:** Within two weeks of completing your project, recipients are required to fill out the final report survey covering:

- How you spent the allocated funds (written summary and financial acquittal table)
- What you created and how it works
- How it differs from your intended outcome
- Photos
- Receipts
- Next steps for your innovation
- Program feedback

Your reports help us improve the program and demonstrate its value. Clear, accurate, and timely reporting is a condition of receiving the voucher.

These guidelines outline the requirements for applying for and using the prototyping vouchers. Meeting these requirements, including the eligibility criteria, reporting, and feedback, is a condition of receiving funding and aims to maximise the benefits of the initiative for both individual projects and the broader ACT innovation ecosystem.