# Community connections

This factsheet explains:

* what community connections are
* what types of community connections you can choose
* how to get community connections.

## What are community connections?

The NDIS can support all people with disability, even if you aren’t an NDIS participant. If you’re between 9 and 64, we can connect you to information and supports in your community, and also support you to apply for the NDIS. We call this community connections.

If you need support for a child younger than 9, we can offer [early connections](https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/6401/download?attachment). For more information, go to [Our Guidelines - Early connections](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/early-childhood/early-connections) on the NDIS website.

If you’re 65 or older, we can give you information on aged care services that can support you.

**Community connections are optional.** You don’t need to be eligible for the NDIS to receive community connections. And you don’t need to have received community connections to apply to the NDIS. Information gathered from community connections may help if you decide later to apply for the NDIS.

Community connections can support you to:

* find practical information about your disability or condition
* access the support you need through mainstream and community services
* connect with people with similar experiences
* apply to the NDIS. This includes helping you to submit your access request.

We understand it can be difficult to know who to talk with to understand what supports are available in your local community and how to access these supports.

Connecting with a local area coordinator (LAC) is a good first step. They will help you understand the different ways we can support you to make community connections. You might only want one type of support, or a combination of these. It’s up to you.

Community connections are generally delivered by LAC’s. They have strong connections in their local community and can help support you to make connections. If you live in an area that doesn’t have a LAC, you can contact the NDIA and we’ll support you.

Community connections aren’t funded NDIS supports but they can help you take part in your community and do the things that are important to you. Depending on your situation, this might be all the support you need.

For more information, go to [Our Guideline – Community connections](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/home/community-connections) on the NDIS website.

## What types of community connections can you choose?

### Connections to information relevant to you

We can help you find practical information that’s relevant to you. Depending on your situation, this could include information about:

* different disabilities and conditions
* accessibility in your community
* your rights, and organisations that can help you advocate for your rights
* supports and services you might find helpful.

### Connections to mainstream and community supports

[Mainstream supports](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/how-ndis-supports-work-menu/mainstream-and-community-supports/what-are-mainstream-and-community-supports#what-are-mainstream-supports) are the supports you can get from other government-funded services, like health, mental health, and education.

[Community supports](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/how-ndis-supports-work-menu/mainstream-and-community-supports/what-are-mainstream-and-community-supports#what-are-community-supports) are support services available through community organisations, like social groups, non-profit organisations, or from local councils.

Community and mainstream supports can be used by all Australians, including people with disability.

We can suggest mainstream and community supports near you. We can explain what these systems and organisations are responsible for, and what reasonable adjustments you can ask for, so the supports are accessible to you.

### Connections to other people for peer support

We can help connect you to people in your community who have similar situations or experiences. This could be one-on-one or in groups. For your privacy, we’ll only help you connect to people in your community if you want us to.

Peer supports can help you learn from other people’s experiences, share practical information, and build your support networks.

### Support to apply to the NDIS

You can apply to the NDIS without exploring community connections. Your LAC will discuss with you what type of assistance you need to apply to the NDIS and explain your options. Your LAC can help you navigate the application process and complete your application.

Your LAC will help you understand the [eligibility requirements](https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/home/becoming-participant/applying-ndis/what-do-we-mean-applying-ndis#:~:text=You%20will%20need%20to%20meet%20either%20the%20disability%20requirements%20or%20the%20early%20intervention%20requirements.) and work out what information and evidence you’ll need to give us when you apply. This includes the types of identification you’ll need.

If you don’t want a LAC to help, you can apply directly [here](https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis). We’ll still ask you to meet with a LAC to verify your identity information after we’ve received your application.

If you do become an NDIS participant, we can use the information you’ve shared as a starting point when we work with you to develop your first NDIS plan. This means you won’t have to tell your story twice. This can include information about yourself, your goals, current supports and future support needs.

Find out more about [Applying to the NDIS](https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/booklets-and-factsheets#:~:text=to%20the%20NDIS-,Applying%20to%20the%20NDIS,-Factsheet%3A%20Applying%20to) in our fact sheet on the NDIS website.

### Community connections plan

A **community connections plan is completely optional**. You don’t have to create a community connections plan with a LAC unless you want to, and it isn’t needed to apply to the NDIS.

You can decide how to use the information we discuss with you. If you want, we can put this information in a community connections plan. This lets you record your goals and the supports that can help you work towards them.

A community connections plan might be helpful if:

* you’re happy to give us information, like your address and date of birth
* you want the information we talk about written down
* you need more support than one or two conversations
* you don’t want to be a participant of the NDIS but would like to record your support needs and options in a document we can give to you.

## How to get community connections

To get community connections, you can contact us or a local area coordinator:

* visit the [office location](https://ndis.gov.au/contact/locations) page on the NDIS website
* call us on 1800 800 110, or
* send us an email at [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au).

For more information about community connections, visit [ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au/).

## National Disability Insurance Scheme

[ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au/)

Telephone 1800 800 110

Webchat [ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au/)

Follow us on our social channels [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NDISAus), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ndis_australia/), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/DisabilityCare), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-disability-insurance-agency)

**For people who need help with English**

**TIS:** 131 450

**For people who are deaf or hard of hearing**

**TTY:** 1800 555 677

**Voice relay:** 1800 555 727

**National Relay Service:** [accesshub.gov.au](https://www.accesshub.gov.au/)

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