



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Families and Communities Programme

Families and Children Access Strategy Guidelines



Overview

Organisations funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) are no longer required to complete a Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Client Access Strategy (VADCAS).

In line with the Government's commitment to reduce red tape and reporting obligations, the VADCAS is being replaced with a less onerous Access Strategy.

From 1 July 2014, agencies will be required to develop and implement an Access Strategy to increase access for vulnerable children and families to their services as part of their funding requirements.

Aims and objectives

The Access Strategy aims to support and encourage service providers to ensure their services are inclusive and appropriate to assist the most vulnerable members of the community through:

- understanding their communities better and identifying vulnerable groups within them;
- reflecting on how they do business and what they could do better (including developing staff to work with new client groups); and
- working better with other agencies in their community.

The Access Strategy is intended to be a living document, owned at all levels of an organisation, to support cultural change in the way an organisation operates. Its broader purpose is to encourage innovation and creativity in reaching out to 'new' client groups in different ways.

Reporting Requirements

Organisations will no longer be required to complete a comprehensive form and submit it to the Department and there will no longer be specific Indigenous targets.

Documentation should be brief and concise (two page maximum). Rather than submitting a written report at the end of a designated reporting period, Grant Agreement Managers (GAMs) will discuss the organisation's Access Strategy during regular site visits.

This discussion will cover issues such as any changing needs in the community, actions the organisation intends to take to improve organisational capacity or service delivery, and progress against goals identified in the access strategy. Agencies will only need to provide the documentation if requested by their GAM.

For more information refer to the [DSS website](#).