



Community Mental Health

Feedback summary

Overview

This grant funding is part of the Community Mental Health activity and supports vulnerable families with children and young people who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing mental illness. The funding is for organisations that provide valuable intensive, long-term, early intervention support based on a Family Action Plan specifically for children and young people up to the age of 18, and their families. The activity also includes short-term information, referral and assistance for families and community outreach and group work.

DSS is seeking new Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) providers to deliver community-based mental health services and early-intervention support to vulnerable families with children and young people. DSS has a strong commitment to improving the lives of people with mental illness, their families and carers.

Selection results

The selected organisations will provide services which support vulnerable children and their families, including: Indigenous Australians; people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds; families experiencing homelessness; unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, or domestic violence; children in contact with the child protection system; and, young people leaving out-of-home-care.

Selection process

DSS received 220 applications for the Community Mental Health grant funding round. The organisations that applied demonstrated the breadth and depth of civil society organisations in the community mental health sector. Organisations committed to supporting early intervention and community-based initiatives to assist families with children and young people affected by, or at risk of, mental illness.

DSS considered each proposal against five equally weighted selection criteria which are listed below. Only organisations which rated highly in all aspects of the selection criteria were identified as preferred applicants.

The Department also emphasised that in responding to any of the selection criteria for funding rounds, applicants needed to provide evidence to support claims about how they meet each of the criteria. During the application process, the Department provided assistance for applicants in providing evidence, including a fact sheet on the types of evidence that could be used for addressing selection criteria as well as guidance on what strong evidence looks like.

Criteria 1: Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity in the chosen community/communities.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a range of strengths in relation to Criteria 1, as shown in the table below.

| Strength | Example |
|---|---|
| The applicant was familiar with the services available to the group as well as potential service gaps. | Mental health services available and service gaps were identified as referenced in relevant reports, studies and other evidence. |
| The applicant demonstrated the importance of a particular service gap for mental health services. | Qualitative evidence of the impact of the service gap on the wellbeing of the group detailed. |
| The applicant identified and demonstrated a good understanding of the vulnerable groups that access its services. | Identified children and young people from CALD backgrounds as a vulnerable group and provided detailed information on the specific needs of that group. |

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 1 in a number of ways:

- supporting their application with specific and relevant data (e.g. census, survey, academic or other research)
- identifying particularly vulnerable but under-serviced groups
- identifying pockets of higher need within the coverage area.

Criteria 2: Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the grant funding.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 2, as shown in the table below.

| Strength | Example |
|--|---|
| The applicant clearly described the activity to be conducted. | Comprehensive description of the intensive, long-term, early intervention support that the organisation will provide and all of its constituent elements. |
| The applicant demonstrated a strong understanding of the Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) operational guidelines. | Discussion of FMHSS guidelines and proposal of a delivery model that aligns with them. |
| The applicant proposed a sensible delivery model for the activity. | Information on the service and its delivery to market was included. |
| The applicant convincingly explained how the activity would fill an identified service gap. | Description of the expected outcomes of the short-term information, referral and assistance activities and their relevance to the identified service gap. |
| The proposal represented value for money. | Detailed budget which outlined how community mental health services would be efficiently delivered. |

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 2 in a number of ways:

- explicitly identifying and describing the connection between the activity and its expected outcomes, including the service gap it will fill
- demonstrating value for money
- providing information and evidence that is specific to the identified coverage area.

Criteria 3: Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring activities to achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 3, as shown in the table below.

| Strength | Example |
|--|--|
| The organisation had demonstrated experience in developing and delivering similar activities to children, young people and their families. | Specific examples of similar long-term mental health or children's activities developed and delivered for the target community or similar communities in the past were included. |
| The applicant had previously received and effectively administered government funding in the past. | Details were provided of funding previously received and outcomes achieved, demonstrating capacity to meet reporting and funding requirements. |
| The applicant proposed comprehensive strategies for risk management, customer feedback and workplace health and safety (WHS). | Detailed description of risk management, customer feedback and WHS strategies already in place in the organisation. |

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 3 in a number of ways:

- demonstrating outcomes of similar activities delivered to children, young people and their families
- providing specific examples of government funding received and administered in the past
- describing key stakeholders and their involvement in the activity.

Criteria 4: Demonstrate your organisation’s capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the activity’s objectives in the chosen community/communities.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 4, as shown in the table below.

| Strength | Example |
|--|---|
| The organisation’s structure will support delivery of the activity. | Inclusion of a detailed organisational chart highlighting capabilities. |
| The applicant had strong governance processes for the activity. | Deliverables and outcomes were clearly specified, with a robust and established governance structure. |
| The organisation has mechanisms in place to train, support and develop staff. | Details of support mechanisms and training and development activities to which staff have access. |
| The applicant outlined its strategy for marketing and promotion in the identified coverage area. | Detailed description of the proposed marketing strategy. |

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 4 in a number of ways:

- explaining how staff skills and experience translate to service delivery
- providing information on the resources and infrastructure available to support the delivery of services
- demonstrating or describing how children, young people and their families have been, or will be, involved in service design and improvement.

Criteria 5: Demonstrate your connection with relevant service networks and social infrastructure operating in the chosen community/communities.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 5, as shown in the table below.

| Strength | Example |
|---|---|
| The organisation provided evidence of its connection with relevant service networks and social infrastructure in the identified coverage area. | Evidence of involvement with mental healthcare, primary healthcare, children's and family services, and other relevant providers. |
| The organisation demonstrated it will translate its connection with relevant service networks and social infrastructure into better outcomes for children and young people with or at risk of mental illness, and their families. | Identification of links between specific connections and outcomes for children, young people and their families. |
| The organisation explained how the proposed activity will complement existing services within the coverage area. | Examples of the positive impact the organisation's services will have on other services provided in the community. |

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 5 in a number of ways:

- providing specific examples of the connection with relevant service networks and social infrastructure (e.g. consortium arrangements, staff membership of community organisations, staff involvement with community activities)
- demonstrating their knowledge of services available to children, young people and their families in the identified coverage area/s
- maintaining an outcomes focus.

Further Feedback

To register to receive further feedback, please email grants@dss.gov.au providing all of the following details:

- Organisation name, as used on the application for funding (legal name or trading name, if different from the legal name);
- The Application ID issued by DSS upon receipt of the application for which feedback is sought;
- The name of the funding round(s) as per the application pack materials and application form (feedback for more than one funding application can be requested in the one email);
- A contact name and telephone number; and
- A contact email address.

To be eligible to receive feedback for the Community Mental Health round you must register by **Friday 13 February 2015**.

The Department will undertake to provide individual feedback to organisations within 12 weeks of the closing date for registrations. Please refer to the [DSS Feedback Policy](#) for more information.