



Red Tape Reduction in Grant Programmes

Reducing the administrative burden by streamlining our programmes and simplifying funding arrangements.

Overview

The Government is implementing significant improvements to grant programmes. These improvements recognise and respect the valuable work that civil society organisations do to support vulnerable Australians to become self-sufficient and build sustainable communities. The Department of Social Services (DSS), in line with the Government's Deregulation agenda, is reducing red tape for grant recipients.

Many organisations are funded to provide services across a range of activities which can tie them up in a variety of different application and reporting requirements. The implementation of streamlined, simplified and consistent application and reporting processes will reduce the administrative burden and costs on grant recipients. This will lead to positive flow on effects as providers spend less time on paperwork and more time focusing on important service delivery. Additionally, service providers will have greater flexibility to tailor their services to respond to issues in their communities.

DSS has implemented a number of short term initiatives which came into effect from 2014, with the continued development of longer term initiatives to be implemented over time.

Streamlined Programme Structure

DSS's new grant arrangements bring together 18 programmes into seven to align social policy functions that span people's entire lives.

The new programmes have been designed to streamline existing services to capitalise on common client needs, reduce duplication and ensure the most effective and efficient approaches are used to address community needs in line with Government priorities.

The new arrangements include the creation of the Families and Communities Programme; Disability, Mental Health and Carers Programme; and the Housing and Homelessness Programme; in addition to the existing Home Support Programme; Residential and Flexible Care Programme; Workforce and Quality Programme; and Ageing and Service Improvement Programme.

These improvements bring together similar services and will result in red tape reduction for grant recipients, as it will provide greater flexibility in how services are funded and provide opportunities for collaboration in the delivery of services. This will lead to better outcomes for communities and individuals by effectively targeting community needs and priorities.

More information on the new arrangements is available on the **DSS grants website**.

One Grant Agreement per Provider

Where possible, service providers will have a single grant agreement with DSS covering all their funded programmes and activities. This will simplify provider's interactions with the Department and streamline their own record keeping practices. Additionally, a single agreement means that providers will be subject to a single set of terms and conditions which will be standardised across the DSS programme suite, further reducing complexity for providers.

Longer Term Grant Agreements

The introduction of longer term grant agreements will mean greater assurance of funding for service providers and reduce the frequency and time spent on completing applications for funding. These arrangements will extend the typical duration of a DSS grant from three years to five years where possible.

Longer term agreements will be introduced for select programmes as appropriate. Starting 1 July 2014, five year agreements will be introduced under the Families and Communities programme for most providers of Family and Relationship Services, Communities for Children Facilitating Partners and Family Law Services.

A New Approach to Programme Reporting

DSS is improving the way administrative data is collected and used, by asking service providers to report on fewer data items, streamlining reporting arrangements and providing access to a simple and easy to use IT system, the *DSS Data Exchange*, for recording outcomes focused data.

This means grant recipients only need to collect and report on a consistent set of priority requirements for many of the DSS programmes for which they are funded.

Service providers that already collect additional information may wish to voluntarily share this with DSS as part of Partnership Approach to building the evidence base about the effectiveness of DSS programmes and service delivery approaches. DSS will share this knowledge back with providers through the provision of regular and relevant reports that include de-identified matched data from other service providers as well as government data sets and data from follow-up client surveys. More information on the new approach to programme reporting is available on the DSS grants website [programme reporting pages](#).

Simplified Financial Acquittal Reporting

Service providers now have reduced and simplified financial acquittal reporting requirements in new grant agreements commencing from 1 July 2014. Service providers funded for low value grants may only be required to submit a financial declaration to acquit their funding, while the thresholds for submission of non-audited and audited financial acquittals have risen. These requirements align with the revised Commonwealth Grant Guidelines.

Service providers will be able to submit a single financial acquittal that covers all grants for which they are funded.