



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

**Disability, Mental Health and Carers
Program**

**Community Mental Health Guidelines
Overview**

March 2017

Preface

The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) has a suite of Program Guidelines which provides information about each Program that provides grants funding, and the suite of Activities that contribute to that Program. They provide the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in a Program and form the basis for the business relationship between DSS and the grant recipient.

DSS recognises and supports the work of civil society organisations. The DSS approach to working with civil society is based on reducing red tape, providing greater flexibility and respecting the independence of the sector. This approach recognises that civil society organisations should be supported to self-manage the delivery of support to our communities rather than being burdened with unnecessary government requirements.

Program Guidelines are provided to applicants for each grant funding round. The approach to grants funding described in the Guidelines aims to foster collaboration and innovation in the community across civil society freeing up resources to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

The Program Guidelines for each grant funding round include:

- a Program Guidelines Overview document (this document) that provides an overview of how funding rounds may be conducted for each Activity (PBS administered line item) that contribute to the overall outcome, and
- an Application Pack – a suite of documents with information specific to each grant funding round conducted within the Activity.

The simplified Program arrangements establish the framework for the DSS to move towards a single Grant Agreement per provider, implement new and improved financial reporting systems, and reduce reporting and regulation, consolidate funding rounds and support greater service delivery innovation to meet the needs of participants.

DSS reserves the right to amend these documents from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

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1 Disability, Mental Health and Carers – Program Overview

1.1 Program outcomes

DSS funds community organisations to develop and maintain a cohesive Australian community with improved independence and self-sufficiency.

The Disability, Mental Health and Carers Program (Program) provides:

- support and advocacy for people with a disability and carers
- disability employment
- community mental health services.

The following four priority areas, which sit within the Program, have been identified as capturing DSS business, in line with the Australian Government's priorities and responsibilities:

- Disability Employment
- Disability and Carer Support
- Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support
- Community Mental Health (CMH).

1.2 Program objectives

The Program provides support and community-based initiatives for people with disability, mental illness and carers, so they can develop their capabilities and actively participate in community and economic life.

The Program aims to provide a foundation for integrated, community-led program delivery that understands and meets local needs and promotes innovation and collaboration. This will include the establishment of a platform for continued improvement in the way DSS does its business, clarifying and strengthening Commonwealth and state/territory government responsibilities and fostering stronger relationships with civil society and partnering with service providers.

2 Community Mental Health

2.1 Overview

The Department of Social Services (DSS) funds eligible non-government organisations to deliver the following Community Mental Health (CMH) programs:

- Family Mental Health Support Services
- Carers and Work
- The Individual Placement and Support Trial
- A Better Life.

Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMS) and Mental Health Respite: Carers Support (MHR:CS), which were previously funded under the CMH program, are transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

2.2 Aims and objectives

Programs funded under CMH aim to provide early intervention and other support through community-based initiatives to assist people with mental illness and their families and carers to develop their capabilities, increase their wellbeing and actively participate in community and economic life.

The objective of programs funded under CMH is to provide accessible, responsive, high quality and integrated community mental health services. The current CMH programs aim to:

- Intervene early to assist children and young people showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness, with the support of their families and carers
- Provide support for carers of people with mental illness to achieve employment goals
- Assist young people with mental illness, aged up to 25, to achieve and maintain sustainable participation in vocational education and employment
- Support recovery for people with mental health conditions that involve drug and alcohol use disorders and/or gambling disorders, in areas where the cashless debit card is being trialled.

2.3 Eligibility – participants

Eligibility to access services varies between program components. However, for all components formal diagnoses of mental illness are not required to access services.

Funded service providers may encourage people to seek assistance through clinical mental health services if appropriate, but cannot exclude participants who decide not to engage with clinical services.

Basic eligibility criteria are listed in the following program components. Further information about eligibility, ineligibility, target and priority groups, can be found in respective Operational Guidelines.

3 Program components

Under CMH, the DSS funds eligible non-government organisations to deliver the following services:

- **Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS):** assists children and young people, aged up to 18, who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness. Services work with the children and young people with the support of their families and carers. FMHSS services are focused on the child noting that they cannot be delivered to a child without the support and cooperation of the family.
- **Carers and Work (CaW):** assists carers of people with mental illness to achieve their employment participation goals while maintaining, or transitioning from their caring role.
- The **Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Trial:** will test whether the IPS model can improve educational and employment outcomes of young people with mental illness up to the age of 25, who are at risk of disengaging from education or employment.
- **A Better Life (ABLE):** provides increased opportunities for recovery and support for people with mental health conditions that include drug and alcohol use disorders and/or gambling disorders.

3.1 Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS)

The aim of FMHSS is to support children and young people, up to the age of 18, who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness, to improve their well-being and enable them to better participate in their communities and reach their full potential.

The FMHSS support is provided to children and young people with the support of their families and carers.

The Department seeks the following outcomes through FMHSS:

- children and young people have improved mental health and wellbeing
- children and young people are better able to manage the impact of mental illness on their lives
- families and carers are better able to support their children and young people with mental illness.

The objective of FMHSS is to provide flexible and responsive services to address the social and environmental factors that lead to, or exacerbate mental health conditions for children and young people when the signs or symptoms of poor mental health first appear.

3.1.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to access FMHSS services, a person must be:

- a child or young person (up to and including 18 years of age)¹
- affected by, or showing early signs of mental illness
- accompanied by a family member or significant adult willing to engage and work with the FMHSS provider and be willing to participate in the service
- a child or young person who has the consent of a parent or other responsible adult to participate in FMHSS²
- living in the geographic catchment for the particular service.

3.2 Carers and Work (CaW)

The aim of the Carers and Work initiative is to assist carers of people with mental illness to gain employment while maintaining, or transitioning from their caring roles.

The objectives of Carers and Work are to assist carers to:

- develop skills and knowledge to independently achieve their employment goals
- re-engage and be better prepared to start work
- enter or return to employment
- increase their employment participation.

¹ A young person accepted into FMHSS at 18 years of age can be supported for up to 12 months despite having turned 19 years of age.

² Funded services are required to have procedures in place to ensure appropriate consent that aligns with the legislative requirements for Age of Consent applicable in each state or territory.

3.2.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to access CaW services, a person must:

- be aged 16 to 65 years
- be currently caring for a person with a mental illness OR have ceased long-term caring for a person with mental illness within the past 2 years
- be seeking employment, or increased employment, and be available to take employment or undertake pre-employment education or training
- need support to transition from being a carer while seeking to achieve their employment goals.

3.3 IPS Trial

The aim of the IPS Trial is to improve the educational and employment outcomes of young people with mental illness up to the age of 25, who face significant barriers to accessing and maintaining long term education, training or employment opportunities, and are at risk of long-term welfare dependency.

The objectives of the IPS Trial are to:

- implement the Trial in up to 14 sites nationally
- deliver the IPS model of vocational assistance to young people with mental illness up to the age of 25 within the Trial sites
- provide specialist vocational assistance that adheres to the eight core IPS Practice Principles to around 2,000 participants per year at full capacity
- improve the educational and employment outcomes for young people with mental illness up to the age of 25
- evaluate the effectiveness of the IPS model within the Trial site setting and gain an understanding of the key elements of the model required for successful outcomes.

3.3.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the IPS Trial, people must:

- be a young person with mental illness aged up to 25
- be an eligible client of the service provider in the participating Trial site
- have employment, education or training goals and be facing barriers to achieving these goals
- be willing to participate in the service and able to make an informed decision to participate.

3.4 A Better Life

A Better Life (ABLE) is being delivered as part of the support package for the cashless debit card trial and aims to improve the independence, participation and lifetime wellbeing of people affected by mental illness that involves drug and alcohol misuse and/or gambling disorders. This includes building personal resilience and supporting participants to sustainably manage the impacts of their mental illnesses.

The objectives of ABLe are to:

- support recovery for people impacted by mental illness that involves conditions such as alcohol and drug misuse and/or problem gambling disorders
- reduce the social isolation of participants
- build resilience within individuals, families and communities living in trial locations
- increase personal capacity, confidence and self-reliance
- improve participants' ability to manage daily activities.

3.4.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to access ABLe services, people must:

- reside in a cashless debit card trial location, and have a mental illness that involves drug and alcohol misuse and/or gambling disorders (a formal diagnosis is not required)
- be aged 16 to 65 years
- be willing to participate in the service voluntarily and able to make an informed decision to participate
- agree to address drug and/or alcohol misuse and/or gambling disorders during the course of participation, through an Individual Recovery Plan
- not be restricted in their ability to fully and actively participate in the community because of their residential settings (e.g. be in prison or a psychiatric facility³)
- not be receiving non-clinical community support similar to ABLe through state or territory government programs.

4 Funding for the Activity

Funding of around \$216 million has been allocated over four years from 1 July 2016⁴ by the Australian Government for the CMH Activity.

Funding amounts are inclusive of discretionary grants awarded under these Program Guidelines and funding provided through other process such as procurement. Funding amounts included in these Program Guidelines are estimates and may change in the course of the Budget year as Government priorities change.

The Minister for Social Services has overall responsibility for the CMH Activity.

Where DSS has invited applications for grants, the final decision about service delivery areas, sites and proposals for service delivery will be made by the departmental delegate.

DSS may negotiate grant agreements ranging up to a five-year term based on the grant purpose, degree of risk, and priorities for funding.

Under the CMH Activity, distribution of funding is based on Government policy priorities and the needs of individuals and families. A number of factors can be considered, including the number of recipients receiving certain Australian Government payments or allowances (e.g. Carer Allowance, Disability Support Pension), statistical data on vulnerable populations (e.g. Indigenous populations, numbers of children rated as developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)), and indices of disadvantage (e.g. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)).

³ This does not preclude participants who undergo short-term residential rehabilitation or detoxification

⁴ As published in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2016-17, Budget related paper no. 1.15A – Social Services Portfolio

In accordance with the Fair Work Australia decision of 1 February 2012 to increase wages in the Social and Community Services (SACS) sector, DSS will provide supplementation funding to organisations employing SACS workers delivering the CMH Activity. To be eligible for supplementation funding organisations must be delivering in-scope Australian Government funded programs and have employed staff under the *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010* (SACS Modern Award), specifically under one of the following Schedules:

- Schedule B – Classification Definitions - Social and Community Services Employees
- Schedule C – Classification Definitions - Crisis Accommodation Employees.

Organisations affected by the Western Australia Industrial Relation Commission (WAIRC) SACS Decision of 29 August 2013 may also be entitled to SACS supplementation.

5 Applicant eligibility

The following entity types meet the eligibility requirements to be invited to apply for a grant funding under the CMH Activity:

- Incorporated Associations (incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc.' in their legal name)
- Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Cooperative' in their legal names)
- Companies (incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* – may be a not-for-profit or for-profit proprietary companies (limited by shares or by guarantee) or public companies)
- Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*)
- Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or state/territory legislation (public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions, etc.)
- Partnerships
- Trustees on behalf of a Trust.

The following entity types may be invited in special circumstances:

- State and territory governments
- Local governments.

6 Eligible and ineligible activities

Funded organisations are required to enter into legally binding grant agreements with DSS, which specify a range of contractual obligations, including in relation to record keeping and retention, performance reporting and financial expenditure and acquittal.

Funding for the CMH Activity may be used for:

- staff salaries and on-costs which can be directly attributed to the provision of CMH services in the identified service area or areas as per the grant agreement
- employee training for paid and unpaid staff including Committee and Board members, that is relevant, appropriate and in line with CMH services
- operating and administration expenses directly related to the delivery of services, such as:
 - materials and equipment directly relating to service delivery
 - marketing of services
 - costs of service evaluation
 - telephones

- rent and outgoings
- computer/ICT/website/software
- insurance
- utilities
- postage
- stationery and printing
- accounting and auditing
- travel/accommodation costs
- assets as defined in the Grant Conditions that can be reasonably attributed to meeting agreement deliverables.

The Grant Conditions outline how funds must be spent, acquitted and repaid (if necessary).

Ineligible activities under the CMH Activity are:

- purchase of land
- funding to cover retrospective costs
- costs incurred in the preparation of a funding application or related documentation
- major construction/capital works
- overseas travel
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

7 Activity links and working with other agencies and services

The CMH Activity is designed to provide holistic and flexible support and therefore organisations applying to deliver under this Activity must demonstrate how well established they are in local community networks.

8 Specialist requirements (e.g. Legislative requirements)

Service Providers funded under the CMH Activity are to ensure that services are delivered in accordance with all relevant Commonwealth and state and territory legislation.

These include, but are not limited to:

- State and territory mental health Acts
- State and territory child protection acts and the *Family Law Act 1975*
- *Privacy Act 2012* and the National Privacy Principles (NPPs)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of Racial Discrimination Act) Act 2010*
- *Disability Services Act 1986*
- *Social Security Act 1991*
- *National Health Act 1953*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 2013*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*
- National Standards for Disability Services 2013
- National Standards for Mental Health Services 2013
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- Any applicable state or territory law relating to discrimination
- Any state or territory laws regarding young people who are under 18 years of age.

In delivering the Activity, organisations are required to:

- comply with all relevant laws
- comply with DSS Policies as specified at [Doing Business with DSS](#)
- ensure that workers (paid and voluntary) undertake training appropriate to the service they deliver.

Service providers should also be aware of any case-based law that may apply or has an effect on their service delivery. Providers must also ensure that the services meet health and safety requirements and all licence, certification and/or registration requirements in the area in which they are providing services.

Australia's *Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting diversity. Improving responsiveness* obliges Australian government agencies to ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity is not a barrier for people engaging with government and accessing services to which they are entitled, for example, by providing access to language services where appropriate. Grant applicants should consider whether services, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with non-English speakers. If required, based on an assessment of the target group, costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into grant applications. For further information on the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy please refer to [the DSS website](#).

9 Information technology

Community Mental Health Activity grant recipients must have systems* in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their Schedule.

Performance information (e.g. participant characteristics and service delivery information) will be required to be collected by service providers at the participant level and entered directly into the department's participant data capture system, its predecessor or via a DSS approved alternative mechanism.

Where collection of Participant level data is not appropriate for instance due to the Activity involving a large group, aggregate reporting will be permitted.

The Data System protocols and requirements are available at [the DSS website](#). The new application will:

- Be a web-based portal
- Allow submission of data through external approved third-party applications
- Support submission of data through other approved methods.

Performance information required to be collected may include (but is not limited to):

- Participant consent (where required)
- Participant identity characteristics
- Participant demographic characteristics
- Service delivery information
- Participant outcomes.

*Please note there are no minimum Information Technology requirements for grant recipients.

10 Activity performance and reporting

DSS focuses on outcomes however, other information, not related to outcomes includes information that can be used to monitor ongoing operation of the grant recipient's service delivery/project and track issues that may affect the operation of the grant recipient's service delivery/project.

DSS Performance Indicators focus on three key questions:

- 1) Are we achieving what we expected?
- 2) How well is it being done?
- 3) How much is being done?

Performance Indicators based on these questions may be included in the grant agreement for the grant recipient.

Grant recipient performance will be measured against benchmarking of other organisations funded for this program and compare a grant recipient's service delivery performance against national benchmarks. Benchmarking will take into consideration the delivery of similar services, scale of funding, locality of service location and other relevant characteristics.

Full details of reporting requirements will be listed in the grant agreement for each grant recipient.

11 Financial reporting

The CMH Activity will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles the DSS grant agreement and will aim to maintain viable services and act to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth.

Acquittal documents must be provided to DSS as outlined in the grant agreement.

Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided.

12 DSS responsibilities and accountabilities under the Activity

The Minister for Social Services has overall responsibility for the Disability, Mental Health and Carers Program.

DSS will:

- meet the Australian Governments terms and conditions of the grant agreement established with organisations
- ensure that services provided under the Activity are accountable to the Australian Government under the terms and conditions agreed in the grant agreement
- administer the operation of the Activity in a timely manner
- identify suitable providers to deliver the activities required as per the grant agreement
- work in partnership with the provider to ensure the Activity is implemented and will provide the service provider with constructive feedback
- ensure that the outcomes contained within the Program Guidelines are being met and evaluate the provider's performance against the Activity outcomes
- information on the successful grants will be published on the [DSS website](#) within the required timeframes.

13 Grant recipients responsibilities and accountabilities under the Activity

In entering into a grant agreement with DSS, the grant recipient must comply with all requirements outlined in the suite of documents that comprise the agreement including these Program Guidelines, the [grant agreement and the Standard Agreement Terms and Conditions](#) (available at the DSS website).

Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring:

- the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted
- highest standards of duty of care are applied
- services are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all state and territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations
- Indigenous Australians have equal and equitable access to services
- they work collaboratively to deliver the program
- they contribute to the overall development and improvement of the program such as sharing best practice.

14 Risk management strategy

All DSS grant agreements are managed according to their level of risk. Organisations will be subject to a Provider Capacity Risk Assessment prior to the negotiation of grant agreements. Organisations may also be required to participate in a Financial Viability Assessment during the Assessment process of an application. A periodic monitoring process is undertaken during the term of an agreement which monitors service delivery and is used to provide evidence for ongoing risk assessments.

15 Special conditions applying to this Activity

Not applicable.

16 Application process

16.1 Overview of the application process

All grant processes will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines 1 July 2014 and will be for purposes that are consistent with the objectives and priorities of the CMH Activity.

16.2 Program guidelines

Applicants for grants funding rounds conducted for this Activity will be provided with the Program Guidelines suite of documents comprising:

- the Program Guidelines Overview (this document)
- an Application Pack - a suite of documents with information specific to each grant funding round conducted within the Activity.

16.3 Application pack

The Application pack will comprise the following documents:

Funding round summary

This document includes the following information:

- objectives and requirements of the funding round
- the type of selection process being used
- opening and closing dates
- the value of the funding round
- how to submit an application
- selection criteria
- eligibility criteria.

Application form

This document asks you to address selection criteria relating to the particular funding round you are applying for and also requires you to complete general information about you as the provider applying for funding.

DSS streamlined grant agreement template – General grant conditions

The signed grant agreement will include information relating to the grant objectives, the activities to be undertaken, the duration of the grant, payment, reporting requirements, supplementary terms and conditions, and signatures of DSS and providers.

Applicants for funding rounds may also be provided with the following additional information as part of the Application pack including:

Questions and answers

This document aims to answer any questions and provide additional information relating to the program and the application process for each individual component that you are applying for funding. This will include operational guidelines if applicable.

16.4 Achieving value for money

In assessing the extent to which the application represents value for money, DSS will have regard to the following:

- the relative merit of each application
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the funding
- the relative cost of the proposal, or of elements of the proposal
- the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated a capacity to fund the proposal taking into consideration all possible sources of finance, including debt finance
- the geographic location of the proposal
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that the proposal will be located in a community with one or more of the following features:
 - the community is identified as a priority community by DSS
 - the community has high levels of the target population or of a special needs group
 - the community has high population growth in the target population or has anticipated high population growth in the target population.

16.5 Choice of selection process

When undertaking a selection process DSS will consider the proportionality of scale, nature, funding amount, complexity and risks involved in the funding round. DSS will consider proportionality to inform the choice of the application and selection process, the type of grant agreement to be used and the reporting and acquittal requirements.

The CMH Activity funds a diverse range of service types and other activities. Due to the size and complexity of the CMH Activity,, access to funding will be available through a variety of means and at various times throughout the funding period. DSS proposes to undertake a mix of the following selection processes to achieve the objectives and priorities for the CMH Activity..

16.5.1 Open competitive selection process

An open competitive selection process is open to all providers operating in the market place. Open processes are advertised through the media, the DSS website and other sources in order to attract as much interest as possible. Open competitive grant rounds have open and closed nominated dates, with eligible applications being assessed against the nominated selection criteria.

16.5.2 Restricted competitive selection process

A restricted (or targeted) selection process is used where there are few providers available due to highly specialised services being required, there are geographical considerations, specific expertise is required or there are time constraints. A restricted grant round is still competitive, but only opens to a small number of potential grant recipients based on the specialised requirements of the granting activity or project under consideration. Potential grant recipients are invited to apply and will still need to be assessed against nominated selection criteria.

16.5.3 Direct selection process

A direct selection process is a closed non-competitive process, where an approach is made directly to an existing, high performing provider to expand their current service delivery activities or deliver new services. It involves assessment of a provider's capacity to deliver an expanded service or capability to deliver a new service through use of selection criteria and/or an assessment of a provider's current performance.

16.5.4 Expressions of Interest (EOI) process

DSS may call for EOIs to test the market to ascertain the extent of potential applicants. An EOI will be advertised as the first in a two stage process. The second stage involves applicants selected through the EOI process applying in either a targeted or direct process. DSS may advertise any funding process:

- in major national newspapers and other selected newspapers
- on the [DSS website](#)
- on the [Government grants website](#).

Any advertisement will inform potential applicants of where to obtain application information for the relevant process. Processes will be provided on the DSS website under the Grants tab.

DSS from time to time may conduct a direct selection in the event that there is a change in government policy, a shift in demographics, unforeseen circumstances or due to service provider failure.

16.6 Service delivery areas

It is expected that if a service area changes, the grant recipient will be able to meet the cost of delivering the Activity in the revised area through its own efficiencies and within the funding provided.

Service delivery areas or catchment areas designated within the grant agreement must not change without prior written agreement from DSS. However, grant recipients are encouraged to monitor demographic changes in their broader region and discuss varying their catchment areas with DSS if this helps address an emerging need not being met in that area. Where service delivery areas or catchment areas require definition, this will be provided in the Application pack.

DSS may also, at its discretion, facilitate flexible grants in circumstances where grant recipients have met grant agreement requirements within a specified service area and wish to reallocate all or part of any remaining funds to another service they are funded to deliver in another service delivery area under the same grant agreement.

16.7 Selection criteria

This section sets out the full suite of selection criteria that may be used for any funding process under the CMH Activity. Some components with the CMH program may have specialist criteria applied.

Depending on the Activity/Sub-Activity and type of funding process, a reduced set of assessment criteria may be set by the appropriate departmental delegate exercising their ability to waive certain criteria. The final set of selection criteria will be reflected in the Application pack.

The equally-weighted selection criteria are:

1. Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded Activity in specified community and/or specified target group.
2. Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the grant funding.
3. Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring activities to achieve Activity objectives for all stakeholders.
4. Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the Activity objectives in the specified community and/or specified target group.

When applying for grant funding the following specialist criterion may apply.

5. Demonstrated connection with relevant service networks and social infrastructure operating in the specified area.

16.8 How to submit an application

To apply under this process, applicants will need to complete the Application form and respond to selection criteria as detailed above. Applications must be received electronically by the closing date and time as stated in the Application pack.

All applicants including current service providers will need to respond fully to the selection criteria in the Application form and provide the information required in the format and to the extent specified.

Applications can only be submitted during the application round for the Activity and for the locations or sites as defined in the Application form.

Your application is not an agreement or contract. Meeting the selection criteria does not guarantee funding. Funding is limited and applications will be assessed and prioritised according to the extent to which they meet the selection criteria. Only applications meeting the selection criteria to a high degree are likely to be considered for funding. All information requested on the application must be provided to enable your application to be fully considered.

DSS will **not** issue Application forms or accept completed applications by fax or mail.

16.8.1 Applicant's responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information to DSS is a serious offence, applicants or their partners who do so may be prosecuted under section 137.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Make sure you keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers, either electronically or in hard copy, for your own records.

Only one application per organisation/region will be assessed. If more than one application is submitted, only the latest application will be considered.

16.8.2 What needs to be included?

DSS will not assess applications that do not contain all required attachments (see Application form checklist) outlined in the Application form where an Application form is provided for completion by applicants.

16.8.3 What should not be included?

Any attachments to the Application form which are not specifically requested in the Application form will not be considered as part of the assessment process.

16.8.4 What happens if you provide more than the specified number of words?

The Application form specifies a word limit for each selection criteria. Text beyond the word limits will not be considered as a part of the assessment process.

16.8.5 Closing date and time

The timeframe for submission of applications for any funding process will be set out in the Application pack.

In order to be received by DSS, the application must be submitted in full via the method prescribed in the Application pack.

The applications must be received by DSS within the application period to be considered.

16.8.6 Late applications

DSS may reject any application lodged after the closing date. If an application is late, DSS may determine that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control that meant the deadline could not be met. The applicant will need to supply documentary evidence to support any exceptional circumstances. DSS has no obligation to accept a late application. Any decision by DSS to accept or not accept a late application will be final.

16.8.7 Questions and answers during the application period

Details of 'Questions and Answers' facilities and contact details will be provided on the DSS website under the Grants tab. DSS will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

Note: A list of 'Frequently Asked Questions' is available on DSS's website. Responses to questions of interest to all applicants may be added to the list during the application period.

DSS will only respond to requests for information that seek clarification of issues to allow them to better understand the requirements of the Application Form and Program Guidelines.

16.8.8 Questions after the application period

DSS will not accept or respond to any applicant requests for information or correspondence about the status or progress of their application during the assessment phase.

16.8.9 Application acknowledgement

Unless prior agreement has been reached with DSS an application will not be considered lodged until it is received by DSS. The applicant will receive email notification from DSS within 48 hours of an application being lodged correctly. If the applicant has not received notification in this timeframe, the applicant should contact DSS to confirm that the form has been lodged correctly.

16.9 Conflicts of Interest

Applicants must identify, in their application, any potential or actual conflicts of interest they believe will or may arise from submitting the application. This should address their responsibilities to the Australian Government and other parties in the course of the CMH Activity.

A conflict of interest can arise when an applicant's integrity, objectivity or fairness in performing the services is at risk due to a pecuniary interest of a person or organisation associated with the applicant or a conflicting business arrangement. Applicants must specify

in their applications how any actual or perceived conflict of interest will be addressed and monitored to ensure it does not compromise the outcomes desired for this grant process.

DSS reserves the right to assess the potential impact of the conflict or perceived conflict and what plans, if any, are proposed to address the conflict of interest in relation to the application for funding.

DSS may reject an application if DSS is not satisfied that there are arrangements in place to appropriately address/manage a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

DSS also has mechanisms in place for identifying and managing potential or actual conflicts of interest such as requiring assessment staff to sign conflict of interest declarations prior to undertaking the assessment of applications.

Follow this link for more information on the [Conflict of Interest Policy for DSS](#) employees and contractors (who are treated as agency staff and required to abide by this policy and the APS Values and Code of Conduct).

17 Terms and conditions applying to selection/s

17.1 Liability issues

DSS is not liable to the applicant in relation to the selection process, including without limitation, when DSS:

- varies or terminates all or any part of the selection process or any negotiations with the applicant
- decides not to acquire any or all of the services sought through the selection process
- varies the selection process
- exercises or fails to exercise any of its other rights under, or in relation to the Program Guidelines.

17.2 DSS's rights

DSS reserves the right to amend the Program Guidelines by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

17.3 Disclaimer

DSS, its officers, agents and advisers:

- are not, and will not be, responsible or liable for the accuracy or completeness of any information in or provided in connection with the Program Guidelines
- make no express or implied representation or warranty that any statement as to future matters will prove correct
- disclaim any and all liability arising from any information provided to the applicant, including, without limitation, errors in, or omissions contained in, that information
- except so far as liability under any statute applies, accept no responsibility arising from errors or omissions contained in any information in this document and the Application form
- accept no liability for any loss or damage suffered by any person as a result of that person, or any other person, placing reliance on the contents of these documents, or any other information provided by DSS.

17.4 Fraud

DSS is committed to the Commonwealth Fraud Control Policy and Guidelines. Applicants should familiarise themselves with [the DSS Fraud Control Policy Statement](#). The Fraud Control Policy Statement also underpins an applicant's respective fraud and risk minimisation responsibilities when dealing with DSS.

One key responsibility outlined in the DSS Fraud Control Policy Statement is to report all fraud concerns by:

- leaving an anonymous voicemail message on the DSS Fraud Hotline (1800 133 611) or
- emailing fraud@DSS.gov.au.

17.5 Personal information

Any personal information you provide is protected under the *Privacy Act 1988*. It can only be disclosed to someone else if you have been given reasonable notice of the disclosure where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health or if you have consented to the disclosure.

If you have questions or concerns about how your personal information is handled you can contact the Privacy Officer at DSS on 02 6244 1449, the Privacy Commissioner on 1300 363 992 (local call cost, but calls from mobile and pay phones may incur higher charges) or the Australian Government Privacy Officer by emailing: privacy@privacy.gov.au.

17.6 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of DSS including those in relation to the Activity are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

The FOI Act creates a general right of access to documents in the possession of DSS and this right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary for the protection of essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

Decisions regarding requests for access under the FOI Act will be made by an authorised decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

All FOI requests are to be referred to the FOI Coordinator, Public Law Branch, in DSS.

By mail:

FOI Coordinator
The Department of Social Services
Public Law Branch
GPO Box 9820
CANBERRA
ACT 2601

By email:

foi@DSS.gov.au

For more information on making a request for access to documents in the possession of DSS under the FOI Act, please visit the [Freedom of Information](#) page on the DSS website.

18 Financial and other arrangements

DSS uses standard grant agreements. Grants will only be provided in accordance with an executed grant agreement. The terms and conditions of DSS's grant agreements cannot be changed.

The grant agreement will contain the entire agreement between the parties. There is no binding agreement on any parties until the grant agreement is agreed to and signed by the delegate and the applicant's authorised representative.

The grant agreement is the legal agreement between DSS and the grant recipient over the grant period. In managing the grant provided, the grant recipient must comply with all the requirements of the grant agreement.

Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring that:

- the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted
- highest standards of duty of care are applied
- services are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all state and territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations.

Grant recipients should also be aware of any case based law that may apply or affect their service delivery.

The Terms and Conditions of the grant agreement [are available at this link on the DSS website](#).

19 Complaints

19.1 Applicants/grant recipients

Applicants and grant recipients can contact the complaints service with complaints about DSS's service(s), the selection process or the service of another of DSS grant recipients.

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by DSS. Applicants and grant recipients can lodge complaints through the following channels:

Telephone: 1800 634 035

Fax: (02) 6204 4587

Mail:

The Department of Social Services Complaints
GPO Box 9820
Canberra
ACT 2601

If an applicant or grant recipient is at any time dissatisfied with DSS's handling of a complaint, they can contact DSS Ombudsman [via this link to the Ombudsman Website](#) or on 1300 362 072.

19.2 Participant

It is a requirement of your grant agreement to have a transparent and accessible complaints handling policy. This policy should acknowledge the complainant's right to complain directly to you, outline the process for both dealing with the complaint and provide options for escalation both within your organisation and to DSS if necessary. Ensure that you provide information about your complaints handling policy and processes in all correspondence to guarantee it is readily available to the public.

20 Contact information

Contact information for the Community Mental Health Activity:

- Address:
The Department of Social Services
Community Mental Health
Tuggeranong Office Park
Soward Way (cnr Athllon Drive)
Greenway ACT 2900

- Mail:
The Department of Social Services
Community Mental Health
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601
- Phone: 1800 625 136. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can use the [National Relay Service](#) to contact any of DSS's listed phone numbers.
- Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au

21 Glossary

Not applicable.