



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Families and Communities Programme

**Family and Relationship Services to support
Intercountry Adoption Australia**

Funding Round Summary

August 2015

Families and Communities Programme

The Families and Communities Programme aims to strengthen relationships, support families, improve children's wellbeing and increase participation in community life to strengthen family and community functioning and reduce the costs of family breakdown. The Programme will provide a range of services, focussed on strengthening relationships, and building parenting and financial management skills, providing support for better community connections, as well as services to help newly-arrived migrants in their transition to life in Australia.

Selection type

This selection is a restricted process. We are inviting existing providers who are already receiving funding under the Family and Relationship Services (FaRS) Sub-Activity of the Commonwealth Families and Communities Programme.

Eligibility

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

- a) Incorporated Associations (incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc.' in their legal name)
- b) Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Cooperative' in their legal name)
- c) Companies (incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* – may be a proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or a public company)
- d) Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*)
- e) Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or state/territory legislation (public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions etc.)
- f) Partnerships
- g) Trustees on behalf of a Trust.

Not-for-profit entity types specified above meet the eligibility requirements.

Local Government entities may be invited in special circumstances.

Specific eligibility requirements:

To satisfy eligibility requirements applicants must be currently funded under the Family and Relationship Services (FaRS) Sub-Activity of the Commonwealth Families and Communities Programme and have a demonstrated capacity to deliver a service nationally to the target client group. As potential clients are likely to be distributed across all Australian states and territories, applications are welcome from:

- A single FaRS provider that can demonstrate how it will deliver services nationally; and/or
- more than one FaRS provider that will use a consortia, partnership or sub-contracting arrangement to provide services to clients across the country.

How much?

Up to \$3.5 million is available to 30 June 2019.

Closing Date and Time

Applications should be submitted by 2:00pm AEST, Thursday, 1 October 2015.

Who to contact?

Please email your enquiries to grants@dss.gov.au

Grant objectives

Family and Relationship Services (FaRS) are a Sub-Activity under the Families and Children Activity of the Families and Communities Programme. Family and Relationship Services aim to strengthen family relationships, prevent breakdown and ensure the wellbeing and safety of children through the provision of broad-based counselling and education to families of different forms and sizes. These services are primarily early intervention and prevention and are targeted to critical family transition points including formation, extension, and separation.

Intercountry Adoption Australia will provide services to support the adoption of a child/children from countries other than Australia, who may be legally placed for adoption, but who generally have had no previous contact with the adoptive parent/s. Further information is provided in Client eligibility below.

The objective of this grant is to provide broad-based counselling and education services throughout Australia to support families, couples and individuals formally engaged in the intercountry adoption process. This may include those families who have commenced the intercountry adoption process through a state or territory government, those who have adopted a child from overseas or transitional support for those who have been adopted themselves. Transitional support includes assistance to identify needs and provision of services to meet the immediate needs of the client. It also includes appropriate referral pathways, including to post adoption support services.

The support services are associated with the Australian Government's Intercountry Adoption Australia service. The service was created in 2015 to help guide people wanting to adopt a child from overseas. Intercountry Adoption Australia will provide a national service and a central point of contact for people at all stages of the intercountry adoption process. For more information on Intercountry Adoption Australia go to [Intercountry Adoption](#).

Statement of Requirement

Proposals are being sought from existing Family and Relationship Services providers to deliver services nationally to support families, couples and individuals formally engaged in the intercountry adoption process or for children and their families after the adoption is finalised. Organisations must be able to deliver the services outlined in their proposal for the full term of the funding period.

The target groups for the service live across all Australian states and territories. Therefore, applicants will need to demonstrate how they will deliver services to dispersed clients, or alternatively, what consortia, partnership or sub-contracting arrangement they will use to ensure face to face service delivery is available across all states and territories. For information regarding the expected number of clients refer to Chapter 3 (pp 12 to 33) of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's *Adoptions Australia 2013-14* report [AIHW Report](#)

Funded services will include:

- broad-based relationship education and counselling
- intensive, long-term, early intervention support
- information and warm referrals to other support services as required
- responsive support tailored to meet the presenting needs of the client
- parenting education and training
- distance and outreach services (including online and Skype)
- training and education for families to prepare them to support children with special needs
- training and education for families to prepare them to respond to issues commonly associated with intercountry adoption (including family formation, cultural identity, mental health, trauma and grief, and social issues)
- transitional support for children who have completed the intercountry adoption process and their families including connecting them to appropriate support services.

The successful applicant/s may be required to undertake training provided by an external training provider before commencing service delivery. Applicants should indicate any training requirements needed to deliver the service as part of their application. Training requirements will then be negotiated between the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the successful service provider based on need. This training should not be costed as part of the application.

Client eligibility

Eligibility to access these services will be open to families, couples and individuals who have commenced the intercountry adoption process through a state or territory government. For the purposes of this activity intercountry adoption will be defined using the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) definition. Under this definition, intercountry adoption is the adoption of a child/children from countries other than Australia, who may be legally placed for adoption, but who generally have had no previous contact with the adoptive parent/s.

Further information is available on the [Intercountry Adoption Australia website](#).

Transitional support will be available to families and adoptees where the adoption has been finalised.

Selection Criteria

The equally weighted selection criteria are:

1. Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the grant funding.
2. Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring Activities to achieve the Activity objectives and the statement of requirement for the target client group.

3. Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capability (including prior experience) to deliver the Activity objectives in the specified community and/or target group.
4. Demonstrate how your organisation will manage any potential conflicts of interest, including a conflict of interest management strategy. Conflicts of interest that may arise include (but are not limited to):
 - if your organisation currently receives DSS funding to provide forced adoption support services;
 - if your organisation was involved in past adoption practices;
 - if any members of staff or executive have links or affiliations with organisations that provide forced adoption support services.

Multicultural Access and Equity policy

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 your Application Form states that a budget is required, costs for translating and interpreting services should be included in your application.

Assessment

The Assessment Team will be led by DSS officers. Teams will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment for all applications received. The Assessment Team will be bound by the APS Code of Conduct and the Department's Secretary's Instructions.

Probity

The selection of funding recipients must be fair, open and demonstrate the highest level of integrity.

The following probity principles will be applied through all stages of the selection process:

- a. fairness and impartiality;
- b. consistency, accountability and transparency of process;
- c. security and confidentiality of information;
- d. identification and resolution of conflicts of interest; and
- e. compliance with legislative obligations and government policy.

These principles are intended to achieve an equitable, justifiable and sound process.

Adherence to the probity principles means that everyone involved with the selection process will act:

- f. impartially; and
- g. with integrity, including avoiding actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

A Probity Advisor may be appointed for the Activity. The role of the Probity Advisor is to assist DSS meet its probity obligations in relation to the Activity by ensuring that the selection processes are defensible and will withstand external and internal scrutiny.

The role of the Probity Advisor is to independently monitor procedural aspects of the selection process to ensure compliance with the published relevant Programme Guidelines

and to advise DSS in relation to such matters. The Probity Advisor plays no part in the assessment of applications.

Programme Guidelines

The Programme Guidelines Overview provides the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in the activity and forms the basis for the business relationship between DSS and the funding recipient. Applicants are strongly advised to read the Programme Guidelines Overview prior to completing an Application Form.

How to Apply

Please read and complete the declaration part of the Application Form carefully. Ensure all responses are true and accurate. Click the **Submit Application** button and follow the instructions provided. All questions will be verified. Any incorrect or unanswered responses will be displayed for your correction. The Application Form will not submit until all responses have been verified.

Upon successful submission you will be issued with a confirmation receipt and email. Submission may take several minutes. **Please be patient and do not close the Application Form before receiving confirmation. Do not attempt to submit the application more than once.** If you do not receive confirmation or you experience difficulties submitting the Application Form, please call 1800 020 283.

Grant Agreement Information

The Grant Agreement is a performance-based, legally enforceable agreement between the Commonwealth (represented by DSS) and the successful applicant that sets out the Terms and Conditions governing the funding to be provided.

The type of Grant Agreement entered into will be influenced by the nature of the Activity, the assessed Activity risk level, the length of the Activity and the value of the Activity.

The executed Grant Agreement represents each grant provided within it and the relevant Activity and supersedes all prior representations, communications, agreements, statements and understandings, whether oral or in writing.

Questions

Questions can be submitted via email to grants@dss.gov.au.

Responses to questions will be provided to all invitees. DSS will only respond to requests for information that seek clarification of issues to allow applicants a better understanding of the requirements of the Application Form and Programme Guidelines e.g. DSS will not provide advice on how to respond to specific Selection Criteria.

DSS will not respond to any questions, requests for information or correspondence about the status or progress of applications from **Thursday, 24 September 2015** till the conclusion of the selection process.