



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Frequently Asked Questions

Children and Family Support program

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Note: This document will be updated regularly





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CaFS program and recommissioning process

Why is the Australian Government making changes?

We know families are facing more complex challenges. The way we deliver supports requires a better, more coordinated response.

We have also heard that complex and duplicative grant requirements take organisations too long to complete and report on. This takes away from their ability to deliver services to the families and children who need support the most.

The government is committed to improving outcomes for children and their families and cutting red tape for community organisations. This is why the government is ceasing 5 programs under the Families and Children activity and replacing them with the Children and Family Support (CaFS) program.

CaFS aims to:

- strengthen the way we support children, their families, and the communities around them
- make grant arrangements and reporting easier and simpler for organisations, so that they can spend more time delivering services to families
- align funding and contracting to outcomes, allowing flexibility in service delivery to deliver meaningful outcomes for children and families.
- prioritise funding to organisations and supports which have shown to have the greatest benefit for families and children.

The program will be implemented through an Outcomes Contracting approach, which supports longer-term, streamlined partnership agreements with organisations that focus on improving outcomes for children and families.

The CaFS program is informed by public consultation undertaken in 2025, where over 1,000 stakeholders welcomed the focus on flexible, responsive grant funding that allows organisations to meet the needs of individual clients as well as the broader needs of their community. You can read more about the consultation, including a summary of what we heard, on DSS Engage: [A new approach to programs for families and children – engage.dss.gov.au](https://engage.dss.gov.au).

Further information will be provided to eligible organisations shortly. We expect to release the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs) and open submissions in the afternoon of 18 September 2026 on GrantConnect.

Will the new program provide services for adults without dependent children?

No. Activities must be prioritised to families with children aged 0–17 years, and young people up to age 25 and their families, where appropriate. Additionally, expectant parents and people preparing for parenthood will be eligible.



The Department of Social Services (DSS) will apply a broad and modern definition of family to ensure adults who are kin, extended family members and other adults important in children's lives, remain eligible for support through the program.

We will work with organisations to refocus and realign their existing activities, where necessary.

When will we release the GOGs for the CaFS program?

The GOGs will be released in the afternoon of 18 September 2026 and will close on 29 October 2026.

Who is eligible to apply for the CaFS program?

The CaFS program will replace the following 5 programs:

- Children and Parenting Support
- Communities for Children – Facilitating Partners
- Family and Relationship Services
- Family Mental Health Support Services
- Specialised Family Violence Services

Through the consultation process we heard that an open and competitive grants process might disrupt trusted, long-established community relationships.

At the commencement of the CaFS program, these 5 programs will cease. Previous program-specific Grant Guidelines, outcomes frameworks, service delivery frameworks and related documentation will no longer apply and will be superseded by CaFS program requirements.

To ensure there is continuity for the families and children who access services, and to minimise disruption to existing organisations, submissions for the CaFS program will generally be organisations who currently deliver services under the 5 programs, through an Outcomes Contracting 'recommissioning' approach. Recommissioning means that organisations currently delivering services under the 5 programs CaFS will replace, will be invited to reapply for a new grant.

Organisations who are currently funded under the 5 ceasing programs and wish to deliver services under the new CaFS program MUST apply through the Grant Opportunity. CaFS is a new program and rollover of existing contracts is not possible.

A recommissioning approach will ensure there is continuity for the families and children who access services and minimise disruption to existing organisations.

Further information will be provided to eligible organisations shortly.

A key objective of the grant opportunity will also support transition to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO)-led delivery, particularly in areas where there is a high First Nations population and/or where there is evidence that an identified ACCO has the capacity and capability to deliver services and could deliver that with the right support and transition plan.



Did DSS consult on the new GOGs prior to finalisation?

Yes. As part of implementation planning for the CaFS program, DSS undertook targeted consultation in July 2026 on the draft GOGs, and the new draft Impact Placemat to ensure these products were clear, practical and fit-for-purpose ahead of the release of the final GOGs in September 2026.

Targeted consultation was undertaken with current Families and Children Activity providers, peak bodies and key advisory and partnership bodies, including Empowered Communities, Stronger Places, Stronger People, the Aboriginal Leadership Group and the Community Services Advisory Group.

DSS also held a webinar with over 220 stakeholders and responded to live questions from attendees.

At the end of the consultation process, DSS had received 51 survey responses and 6 detailed written submissions on the draft GOGs. Overall, consultation validated the policy direction of the CaFS program, with feedback largely focused on practical implementation and clarification issues. Feedback directly informed refinement of the GOGs, resulting in several key changes, including:

- **Expanded age range for eligible clients** - The program will prioritise families with children aged 0-17. It will also allow providers to support young people up to age 25 and their families, where appropriate. Additionally, expectant parents and people preparing for parenthood will be eligible.
- **Simpler service structure** - Reducing the program from three service streams to two:
 - National digital support services and information websites, and
 - Prevention, early intervention and intensive family supports.
- **Dedicated ACCO transition support** - A separate grant opportunity process, supported by stand-alone GOGs, will open later this year to distribute time-limited funding for the transition to the new program.
- **Clearer transition arrangements** - Explicitly confirming that previous program documentation does not apply to the new program.
- **Increased application word limits** - To give providers more opportunity to describe their service model, partnerships, experience and proposed activities.
- **Further strengthen Outcomes Contracting guidance, supporting materials and operational detail** - Working with the sector on capacity-building activities to support implementation.

Feedback on the draft Impact Placemat can be provided until **1 October 2026** and can be submitted to families@dss.gov.au.

What will the application process involve?

We will share more information on the recommissioning process and the shift to Outcomes Contracting soon. It will broadly involve:

- new GOGs published on GrantConnect on 18 September 2026
- eligible organisations received a Provider Preview Workbook, which outlined DSS' understanding of their current funded activities under the five in-scope Families and Children (FaC) programs, to support planning and preparation for the grant opportunity



- organisations must review and update the Provider Preview Workbook where required, and attach one completed workbook per organisation as part of their formal CaFS submission, which closes on 29 October 2026
- an organisation submitting a short submission to demonstrate how their proposed activity/ies aligns with the new program settings
- DSS is using information already known about organisations to pre-populate submissions, where possible
- Further support is available by contacting your Funding Arrangement Manager (FAM).

All organisations will have to deliver services that align to the new program's investment priorities. Investment priorities are outlined on the [Children and Family Support Program](#) webpage.

The recommissioning process will give existing organisations an opportunity to refocus their activity in line with the investment priorities. In some cases, this may mean:

- introducing new service types or redesigning existing services
- realigning service locations to areas with high levels of community need
- supporting transition to ACCO-led services
- in locations where the Australian Government has a formal partnership with a community, including through Empowered Communities (EC) or Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP), organisations must engage with the EC and/or SPSP community partners before lodging their submission (see from Page 10).

The application process will be designed to be as streamlined and straightforward as possible, while allowing enough space for applicants to show the following without requiring unnecessary duplication:

- the range of services they may provide
- local knowledge
- community connections, including with ACCOs.

We don't expect organisations will need the support of a third party to support writing a submission.

How many grants will a provider hold?

Providers will only hold one Outcomes Contracting grant agreement for the CaFS program, regardless of the number of activities they intend to deliver with the total funding provided.

Are Communities for Children – Facilitating Partners (CfC FP) eligible for funding under the new program?

The recommissioning process is only open to those organisations who hold a direct contract with DSS under one of the 5 programs.

Under CaFS, all funded organisations must deliver services directly to clients, and/or be providing national coordination or capability uplift to improve service delivery. Funded services must not be wholly subcontracted. Subcontracting may be used to support some elements of service delivery, specialist functions, or transition to ACCO-led models.



Existing CfC FP organisations will be able to redesign their funded services as part of the recommissioning approach.

Will reducing 5 programs to one mean you will be cutting services?

No. This reform is about cutting red tape, not cutting funding for services.

The extra funding for the new program is a 12% increase on the existing funding allocated to the 5 programs being replaced by CaFS.

We expect this increase to support up to 26,000 extra children and their families each year. This means the program can reach up to 270,000 children and families each year.

Can the sector expect new or significantly altered activities under the single program?

DSS anticipates that some of the activities currently funded under one of the 5 existing programs have alignment to the new program's outcomes and at least one investment priority area.

The program has been designed to allow flexibility for providers to deliver altered or new activities within the new program settings. The GOGs will provide further detail.

Will there still be options for delivering a single activity with a corresponding contract under the CaFS?

Yes. Providers can deliver one or multiple activities under the CaFS program. However, only one Outcomes Contracting grant agreement will be issued.

Will providers be required to deliver in consortia arrangements to meet the activity requirements of a single program contract?

No. However, consortia and subcontracting arrangements can be undertaken by the lead contract holder to facilitate service delivery, provided service delivery is not 100% through consortia or subcontracting arrangements.

How will community need be identified?

In their submission, we will ask eligible organisations to show how their activities:

- align with the program's 2 outcomes, and the 4 investment priorities
- meet needs within the community
- in locations where the Australian Government has a formal partnership with a community, including through EC or SPSP, organisations must engage with the EC and/or SPSP community partners before lodging their submission (see from Page 10).

We have published a [Community Needs Mapping Tool](#) to help organisations understand community need in the areas they are delivering services. This tool will allow an organisation to enter their postcode and see a snapshot of the 'relative need' of their community, including but not limited to:

- Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
- Australian Early Development Census



- If that community has a high First Nations population.

Organisations will be encouraged to provide additional evidence of local need in their submissions, recognising that population-level data may not always capture localised disadvantage.

Depending on the results of the recommissioning process, we will provide further advice to the government if we believe more action is needed to address service gaps or unmet needs.

How should organisations show services are informed by what the local community needs?

Organisations should show how their proposed services respond to local community need and work with existing services, including through triage and referrals where needed. We encourage community-led approaches, so activities reflect local priorities and deliver local solutions.

Submissions should also explain how proposed activities align with any existing community-led initiatives, partnerships, local strategies or shared focus areas.

In locations where the Australian Government has a formal partnership with a community, including through EC or SPSP, organisations must engage with the EC and/or SPSP community partners before lodging their submission. More information for organisations in these locations is included below.

Organisations should show how their proposed service connects to at least one priority in the local community plan and acknowledge that the EC and SPSP community partners' views will inform the recommissioning process.

Will there be an opportunity to apply for additional funding?

The submission will include mandatory questions for eligible organisations to demonstrate how their current and any proposed new activities align with the 4 investment priorities, that are achievable within current funding levels.

Organisations will also be able to apply for additional funding where they can demonstrate how this would increase their impact under the new program settings, including through new or expanded activities.

Targeted time-limited funding will also be available to support the transition to new program arrangements. This funding could also support ACCOs to prepare to receive contracts which are being transitioned from mainstream organisations.

Where an organisation seeks to apply for time-limited transition funding, including for ACCO transition, a separate grant opportunity process, supported by stand-alone GOGs, will open later this year. This grant opportunity will support the transition of services to ACCOs, capability building, service readiness and community-led planning for future transitions.



Measuring impact and improving outcomes

How will program impact be measured?

A focus of the program is measuring impact, so that DSS can see where and how activities are making a difference, and to identify where a change in approach might be required.

Organisations funded under CaFS must be able to show how each activity is led by evidence and will achieve outcomes.

Evidence-led activities are informed by a clear understanding of what works, for whom, and in what circumstances. This may include drawing on research, program evaluations, practice expertise, community knowledge, client data and the lived experiences of children, families and communities. Evidence-led delivery also involves monitoring outcomes over time and using data, feedback and learning to refine activities so they remain responsive to community need and contribute to the CaFS program outcomes and investment priorities.

DSS has released a draft Impact Placemat for comment up until 1 October 2026 (refer **Appendix A**). The Impact Placemat identifies potential areas of outcome measurement that are most important to measure and report on to understand the impact of the investment made in the CaFS program.

The Impact Placemat replaces the previous Families and Children Activity Outcomes Framework and includes potential indicators that require organisations to collect from clients to contribute to the measurement of impact. The final Impact Placemat and detailed quality indicators will be released before the end of 2026.

DEX reporting, including client outcome reporting, will be adjusted over time to streamline reporting and support improvement. This will support outcome measurement and quality improvement over the long-term agreement.

How will the program support improved outcomes for First Nations children?

One of the new program's investment priorities is to uplift the number of ACCO-delivered services, particularly in communities where there are significant numbers of First Nations children and families.

We will drive this through new contracting arrangements. These will encourage organisations to enter into partnership arrangements with ACCOs for the delivery of services. In some cases, these will mandate transition to ACCOs as the lead organisation over time.

At a high level, for organisations who are in locations with a significant number of First Nations children and families, DSS anticipates this may look like:

- **Before the grant round opens:** organisations who have long-standing and mature partnerships with ACCOs agree with their partners that the existing funding should be transferred to the ACCO, should contact DSS immediately so that the ACCO can be named in the GOGs and considered for funding and service provision in their own right.



- **At contract establishment:** organisations who know they want to transition during the term of the contract will be invited to name a transition date within their contract.
- **Year 1 of the grant period (2027-28):** as part of Outcomes Contracting, DSS will lead intentional conversations with mainstream organisations where existing partnerships are already in place and there needs to be additional action or support to transition
- **Year 2 (2028-29):** a larger number of services transition to ACCOs by the end of the financial year
- **Year 3 (2029-30):** Where there has been no genuine effort from the organisation to support transition to an ACCO in an area where there is an appropriate ACCO to transfer to, DSS may move to mandate that transition.

All CaFS organisations must be able to deliver services that are respectful, culturally appropriate, and safe for First Nations children and their families.

How does the new program deliver on the Community Sector Grants Engagement Framework?

The CaFS program design and Outcomes Contracting approach is placing people at the centre of all grant-funded policy and service design, and delivering on sector expectations through:

- Building stronger partnerships between government and the community sector, through ongoing engagement
- Continuing to provide greater funding certainty and sustainability through long-term agreements
- Reducing unnecessary red tape, including more streamlined and outcome-focused reporting to drive performance and high-quality service delivery
- Encouraging diverse, flexible, community-led but evidence-based service delivery to optimise outcomes for individuals and communities
- Building capability and innovation across government and the sector, including the use of data to drive improvement at a service and system level.



Place Partnership communities and CaFS

What will be different about the CaFS program in the 18 EC/SPSP locations?

EC and SPSP community partners will provide advice on local priorities, participate in Partnership Tables and Community Panel discussions, contribute to assessment advice, and support ongoing governance and accountability arrangements under the DSS Outcomes Contracting model.

EC and SPSP community partners will bring a direct community perspective about what is needed for children and families in each of their communities and how DSS, using available funding, can get the most impact under the CaFS program objectives.

What does this mean for recommissioned organisations delivering CaFS-funded services in EC and SPSP locations?

Organisations delivering CaFS program-funded services will need to:

- Recognise EC and SPSP community partners' role to help achieve better outcomes for their local communities.
- Engage formally with EC and SPSP community partners prior to submitting an application, through local backbone teams or organisations, to discuss local community priorities and plans that relate to CaFS service delivery.
- Demonstrate delivery of services aligned with local community priorities and plans.

EC and SPSP community partners can also input and contribute to the development of delivery plans and ongoing monitoring of service delivery in their communities as part of Outcomes Contracting mechanisms (over life of the grant).

What are Partnership Tables?

Partnership Tables are held at a local community level and bring together EC and SPSP community partners, prospective local CaFS organisations, and DSS representatives to develop a shared understanding of local needs, priorities, and opportunities.

The Partnership Tables provide a forum to:

- Share local data, community knowledge and service insights.
- Identify priority areas and opportunities to improve outcomes for children and families, including those identified in community plans.
- Inform the design and delivery of recommissioned CaFS services, including proposed ACCO transition arrangements.
- Strengthen partnerships and ongoing collaboration between community partners and organisations.
- Support continuous improvement and locally responsive service delivery over the life of the program.

Through the CaFS recommissioning process, Partnership Tables will be held online or in person, depending on the location. Invitations will be sent to relevant organisations and EC/SPSP community partners shortly.



Why are recommissioned organisations being invited to Partnership Tables?

Each EC and SPSP community partner (supported by local backbone organisations) is hosting a Partnership Table with DSS to support discussions about local community priorities and plans prior to the CaFS grant round opening. This will support each organisation in the development of their CaFS proposal as it relates to services in specific EC and SPSP locations.

If an organisation has been invited to a Partnership Table who does not provide services within the 18 priority regions, this could be for a number of reasons:

1. The details in the Grant Payment System (GPS) are not reflective of their current service delivery
2. The Provider Preview process has indicated through a conversion of updated service delivery areas from previous (and historical) service areas, to updated 2021 SA3s, their conversion has unintendedly picked up more SA3s than are currently serviced.
 - This is largely due to conversions from SA4s, or Local Government Areas in current agreements.

Should this be the case for the organisation, please be assured that there is no expectation from DSS that they attend a Partnership Table, if they do not provide services within these regions.

Are recommissioned organisations required to attend local Partnership Tables?

For organisations operating, or intending to operate in EC and SPSP locations, active engagement with EC and SPSP community partners, including through Partnership Tables, is expected before applying for funding and throughout the funding period.

Who will convene Partnership Tables?

Partnership Tables will be convened jointly by EC and SPSP backbone organisations and DSS.

What outcomes are expected at each Partnership Table?

Outcomes will vary according to local context and service delivery environments. Each Partnership Table will take a different approach to discussing how the CaFS program can achieve the most impact in each EC and SPSP location. Broadly, Partnership Tables are expected to deliver **one or more** of the following outcomes:

- Shared understanding of local evidence, community perspectives and service needs, including ACCO transition arrangements.
- Shared approach to key priorities, target cohorts and service delivery approaches, aligned to community plans.
- Identification of short-term improvements and longer-term innovation opportunities.
- Stronger partnerships to support place-based, community-led solutions.



What preparation are recommissioned organisations required to complete prior to Partnership Tables?

Further information about preparation for local Partnership Tables will be provided as part of the invitation. Organisations are encouraged to consider what currently funded FaC program activities are provided in respective EC and SPSP locations as this information will most likely be discussed at each Partnership Table.

My organisation will most likely deliver CaFS program services across multiple EC and SPSP locations, do I need to attend all Partnership Tables?

Representation from recommissioning organisations is strongly encouraged at each local Partnership Table (where the organisation intends to deliver CaFS services). This will ensure recommissioned organisations, as well as those proposing expansion into these communities, understand local perspectives and the best approach to demonstrate delivery of services aligned with the local EC/SPSP community priorities and plans in their CaFS grant application.

When will Partnership Tables be held?

From late August to approximately mid-September, before the grant round opens for submissions.

Please find currently scheduled Partnership Table dates below:

- Gladstone (QLD) – 28 August 2026 – In person
- Cape York (QLD) – 31 August 2026 – (virtual)
- Rockhampton (QLD) – 1 September 2026 (virtual)
- Logan (QLD) – 3 September 2026
- Far West Region (SA) – 4 September 2026 (virtual)
- Ngarrindjeri Ruwe (SA) – 4 September 2026 (virtual)
- Goulburn-Murray (VIC) – 8 September 2026 (virtual)
- Kempsey (NSW) – 9 September 2026 (virtual)
- Tennant Creek (NT) – 9 September 2026 (virtual)
- East Kimberly (WA) – 10 September 2026 (virtual)
- West Kimberly (WA) – 10 September 2026 (virtual)
- Inner Sydney (NSW) – 11 September 2026 (virtual)
- Central Coast (NSW) – 11 September 2026 (virtual)
- Barkly (NT) – 14 September 2026 (virtual)
- NPY Lands (SA/NT/WA) – 14 September 2026 (virtual)
- Burnie (TAS) – 15 September 2026
- Mildura (VIC) – 17 September 2026
- Bourke (NSW) – 18 September 2026
- North East Arnhem (NT) – no Partnership Table



How can recommissioned organisations find out more information about specific Partnership Tables in an EC or SPSP location?

Organisations can contact the local EC or SPSP backbone directly (see a list of these below). Further information about local Partnership Tables will be provided as part of the invitation, including any requested preparation to support collaboration and engagement.

Empowered Communities location/backbone organisations	Stronger Places, Stronger People location/backbone organisations
Cape York / Pama Futures	Logan / Logan Together
Central Coast / Barang Regional Alliance	Gladstone / Gladstone Region in Action Together (auspiced by CQU)
Inner Sydney / ISEC	Rockhampton / Capricornia SPSP (auspiced by CQU)
Goulburn-Murray	Bourke / Maranguka Backbone
Ngarrindjeri Ruwe / NREC	Macleay Valley (incl Kempsey) / Learning the Macleay
NPY Lands / Kulintja Kutju - Tristate Empowered Communities	Mildura / Hands up Mallee
West Kimberley / West Kimberley Futures Empowered Communities (WK FEC)	Burnie / Burnie Works
East Kimberley / Binarri-binyja yarrowoo Aboriginal Corporation (BBY)	Barkly (incl Tennant Creek) / Barkly Backbone Team (auspiced by Anglicare NT)
Far West (incl Ceduna) / Far West Community Partnerships	
Far West is also a SPSP community	

NB: Further detail about North East Arnhem Land Empowered Communities / SPSP will be provided directly to relevant providers.

Can engagement continue with local community representatives and/or backbone organisations after the grant round opens?

Yes, any recommissioned organisation intending to deliver CaFS program-funded services in an EC and SPSP location is encouraged to continue engagement after the grant round opens.

Outcomes Contracting

What will an Outcomes Contracting approach look like?

Under the CaFS program, funding will be delivered through an Outcomes Contracting approach. This means DSS, organisations and communities will work together to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families.



Under this approach, organisations can expect:

- longer-term funding agreements that provide greater certainty and stability for service delivery
- a stronger focus on the outcomes that services achieve for children, families and communities, rather than on activities alone
- greater flexibility to adapt services over time in response to community need, local priorities and emerging evidence
- streamlined processes, including a simplified recommissioning process and a reduced focus on activity and output reporting
- ongoing collaboration between DSS, organisations and communities to support continuous improvement and better outcomes.

The approach is designed to build on organisations' local knowledge, community relationships and experience, while creating greater opportunities to learn, adapt and improve impact over time.

For more information, visit the [DSS Engage website](#).

What is the difference between Relational Contracting and Outcomes Contracting?

There is no difference in the approach. DSS now refers to Relational Contracting as Outcomes Contracting. The name change reflects our shared commitment to delivering better outcomes for families and children. It does not change the approach we have been discussing and should not be confused with outcomes-based funding.

Provider Preview Workbook

What is the Provider Preview Workbook

The Provider Preview Workbook is a planning and submission tool provided to eligible organisations ahead of the CaFS Grant Opportunity to support early planning and preparation. It includes information about an organisations' current FaC service footprint and funding arrangements and assists organisations to develop their proposed CaFS service footprint, recommissioning funding allocations or request additional funding. Organisations can update the workbook over time prior to submitting. The workbook will be a mandatory attachment to the online CaFS application during the grant opportunity submission period, which opens on 18 September 2026.

The workbook is provided ahead of the grant opportunity to allow organisations to review current service footprint information and begin planning proposed future service delivery under CaFS.

The Provider Preview Workbook is not intended to represent a funding decision and does not guarantee future funding.

What is the difference between Tab 2 and Tab 3 in the Provider Preview Workbook?

Tab 2 and Tab 3 serve different purposes.



Tab 2 provides a snapshot of your organisation's current FaC service footprint and funding arrangements. This information is populated by DSS and is provided as the baseline for developing any proposed future service footprint under CaFS.

If there are any inaccuracies with your organisation's current FaC footprint, please contact your Funding Arrangement Manager at FamilyWellbeing.Manage@CommunityGrants.gov.au as soon as possible. If needed, an updated Provider Preview Workbook will be reissued to your organisation. Please do not amend the information in Tab 2.

Tab 3 is where organisations can develop their proposed future service footprint under the CaFS program. Using the information in Tab 2 as a starting point, organisations can:

- review and update proposed service areas
- reallocate recommissioning funding across service areas
- request additional funding, where applicable
- select the service categories they propose to deliver.

The information entered in Tab 3 should reflect the organisation's proposed future service delivery and will form part of the Provider Preview Workbook submitted with the online CaFS application during the grant opportunity submission period.

What is recommissioning funding?

Recommissioning funding is a pre-determined amount based on your organisation's current FaC funding arrangements, including your 2026-27 annual base funding allocation, excluding GST. Where applicable, any future indexation and Community Service Obligation (CSO) supplementation will be applied separately.

DSS reviewed your organisation's current service footprint and funding arrangements and used this information to develop a proposed starting point for your organisation to consider how your existing services may transition into the CaFS program. This is reflected in Tab 3 of the Provider Preview Workbook.

The recommissioning funding amounts shown in Tab 3 are based on your organisation's current funding and service footprint and are provided to support planning. The funding amounts listed do not represent a funding decision, guarantee future funding, or indicate DSS' preference about where services should be delivered.

Recommissioning funding is available to support future service delivery under the CaFS program. This funding is assessed on a non-competitive basis and separately from any additional funding requests.

What should organisations do when they receive a Provider Preview Workbook?

When organisations receive the Provider Preview Workbook, they should:

- Review Tab 2 to confirm the DSS' understanding of your organisation's current service footprint across the five in-scope FaC programs.



- If your organisation identifies inaccuracies in Tab 2, notify the Funding Arrangement Manager as soon as possible. DSS will review the information and, if needed, will issue an updated Provider Preview Workbook.
- Begin planning your proposed CaFS service footprint using Tab 3, including:
 - adding or removing service areas
 - selecting relevant service categories
 - allocating recommissioning funding across SA3s
 - identifying any requests for additional funding.

Organisations need to retain the completed workbook for submission with the online CaFS application during the grant opportunity submission period. Funding allocations shown in Tab 3 are indicative and are provided as a starting point to support your organisation's planning. Organisations should determine their proposed funding allocations that align with their proposed CaFS service footprint.

The Provider Preview Workbook is submitted with the online CaFS application during the grant opportunity submission period which opens on 18 September 2026. The workbook must be submitted in a readable format without draft comments or strike-through text. Organisations do not need to submit the workbook prior to the submission period.

How do organisations allocate recommissioning funding in the Provider Preview Workbook?

The recommissioning funding allocations pre-populated in Tab 3 were generated as part of a mapping exercise. Organisations' Annual Base Allocations were evenly distributed across the mapped SA3 service areas. These amounts are provided as a starting point and do not indicate DSS' funding allocation preference.

Organisations should review and amend the allocations to reflect their proposed service delivery footprint under the CaFS program. Recommissioning funding may be reallocated between service areas to better reflect your organisation's proposed service delivery and community need. The total recommissioning funding allocation cannot exceed your organisation's available recommissioning funding allocation.

Before submitting the workbook with the online CaFS application during the grant opportunity submission period, organisations must ensure recommissioning funding is allocated across the proposed service areas. The funding summary at the top of Tab 3 will identify where funding remains unallocated, where funding may be over-allocated, and will confirm when the available funding allocation is aligned.

What is additional funding and how do organisations request it?

Additional funding is the amount requested above an organisation's recommissioning funding allocation to respond to an identified community need, service demand, or identified service gap. Requests for additional funding are optional and will be assessed through a competitive process.



To request additional funding, organisations should enter the amount sought in the Total CaFS Annual Additional Funding Allocation (Ex. GST) column in Tab 3 for the relevant service area. A service area can include both recommissioning funding and an additional funding request.

Organisations seeking additional funding will also be required to respond to Assessment Criterion 3 in the CaFS GOGs when submissions open.

How should organisations use the mapped service areas in the Provider Preview Workbook?

To support the transition to the CaFS program, DSS has mapped historical service areas to current SA3 2021 boundaries. As a result, some historical service areas may now align to multiple SA3s or different geographic boundaries than those previously used in your current FaC agreements.

The mapped service areas in Tab 3 are a starting point and do not represent DSS direction or expectations about where services should be delivered. Organisations should review the pre-populated information and update it to reflect their proposed future service footprint under the CaFS program. If an organisation does not propose to deliver services in a mapped SA3, it can allocate \$0 to that service area.

The SA2 and Priority SA2 information is provided for planning purposes to help organisations understand the communities within each SA3 and consider areas of higher need. There is no expectation that services will be delivered across every SA2 listed in the workbook.

When developing a proposed CaFS program service footprint, organisations should consider community need, service demand, existing service coverage, local delivery capability, Priority SA2 information and the [Community Needs Mapping Tool](#).

What assistance can DSS provide when completing the Provider Preview Workbook?

DSS can explain how the Provider Preview Workbook works, the purpose of the information being requested, and how to complete individual fields. DSS can also answer process and technical questions relating to the workbook.

However, to ensure all organisations are treated fairly and consistently, DSS cannot provide advice or recommendations about the content of a Provider Preview Workbook or CaFS application. This includes advice on:

- which SA3 service areas to include or exclude
- how recommissioning funding should be allocated
- whether additional funding should be requested
- the amount of any additional funding request
- which service categories should be selected
- how a proposed service delivery model should be designed.

Organisations are responsible for determining the content of their Provider Preview Workbook and CaFS application.



Who should organisations contact if they need assistance or identify an error in their Provider Preview?

If an organisation requires assistance completing the Provider Preview Workbook, have process or technical questions, or identify an error in the Provider Preview information, contact the Funding Arrangement Manager at FamilyWellbeing.Manage@CommunityGrants.gov.au.

If an error is identified in an organisation's current FaC service footprint or funding information, DSS will review the issue and, where required, issue an updated Provider Preview Workbook.

ACCO Transition Form

What is the purpose of the ACCO Transition Form?

The form is for current FaC organisations who want to transition funded service delivery to an ACCO that is ready to hold a direct funding agreement with DSS on 1 July 2027. It helps identify ACCOs that may be invited to participate in the CaFS grant opportunity.

Can organisations use this information to identify subcontracting or consortia arrangements?

No. The ACCO Transition Form is only for transferring some or all funding and service delivery directly to an ACCO. Subcontracting and consortia arrangements will be captured through the online application process.

What information is required in the ACCO Transition Form?

Organisations must identify the ACCO, indicate the type of existing relationship (if any), specify the services and funding proposed for transition, and submit a separate form for each ACCO being nominated.

Does the ACCO need to be aware they are being nominated?

Yes. Existing FaC organisations should confirm they have discussed the proposal with the ACCO and that the ACCO is aware they may be contacted regarding the CaFS grant opportunity.

What happens after the form is submitted?

DSS will assess the nomination and determine whether the ACCO should be invited to participate in the CaFS grant round. If approved, Provider Previews will be updated and issued to both the nominating organisation and the ACCO. Eligible FaC organisations and ACCOs invited to participate in the CaFS grant opportunity will be advised of the outcome following the completion of the assessment process.



If services are transitioned to an ACCO, will the original organisation's obligations change?

Potentially yes. The organisation's future agreement and expectations may change because the ACCO would become directly responsible for delivering those services. This would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Questions about the FaC consultation process

What consultation was undertaken to establish this new program?

Consultation on the proposed reforms occurred from 3 November to 8 December 2025. A summary of key themes heard throughout consultation has been published on DSS Engage (see [A new approach to programs for families and children Consultation Report – engage.dss.gov.au](https://engage.dss.gov.au)).

The consultation process included a public submission process to a Discussion Paper, a Pulse Survey for service providers, and a series of interactive townhalls:

- 5 online townhalls facilitated by DSS (two mainstream, one for regional and remote providers, and one for First Nations providers)
- 8 in-person townhalls in every state and territory, facilitated by DSS
- three in-person roundtables hosted by the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP (two general, and one for ACCOs)
- two key stakeholder meetings hosted by DSS.

We heard from over 1,000 stakeholders and received almost 400 written submissions or survey responses.

Submissions are available to view on DSS Engage where consent to publish was provided (see [A new approach to programs for families and children submissions – engage.dss.gov.au](https://engage.dss.gov.au)).

What did you hear through the consultation process?

The findings of the consultation showed:

- Strong support for a single national program that improves child and family wellbeing.
- A focus on outcomes, evidence-informed practice, prevention and early intervention is worthwhile and welcome.
- While priority focus groups in a new national program should remain broad, strengthening services for First Nations children and families should be a priority, including supporting the role of ACCOs.
- For the community services sector, there was support for a shift towards more collaborative ways of working.
- Funding arrangements should be flexible to improve efficiency and respond to local needs, with adequate and sustained funding to support integrated service delivery and a capable workforce.
- There was support for grant administration, including reporting processes, to be simpler.



Are all submissions or survey responses published?

Submissions are available to view on DSS Engage where consent to publish was provided (see [A new approach to programs for families and children submissions – engage.dss.gov.au](#)).

Were First Nations communities consulted on the proposed changes?

In addition to our general consultation on the proposed changes, we undertook a series of consultations dedicated to First Nations providers. DSS hosted two dedicated First Nations online townhall meetings, co-facilitated by a First Nations facilitator from ETM Perspectives, and met with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders. The Minister for Social Services, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, also hosted a roundtable for ACCOs as part of the consultation process.

These sessions were for ACCOs and First Nations organisations who deliver services predominately for First Nations participants.

If you have questions about the Children and Family Support Program, contact your Funding Arrangement Manager or email families@dss.gov.au

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Problem definition	Service types	Data collection	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes	Impact statements			
1. Children’s wellbeing outcomes are flatlining or declining 2. Parents are reporting higher levels of parenting stress 3. Too many children are removed from their families and placed in Out of Home Care	<i>Service types could include:</i> • Online information and resources • Parenting programs • Services to strengthen child social wellbeing • Intensive family support • Parent/ caregiver peer support • Children counselling • Family counselling	<i>Providers will be asked to record:</i> • Demographic details of who received a service (e.g. name/ date of birth/ household postcode/ gender/ First Nations, CALD, disability, LGBTQIA+) • Family & household composition • Service type • Service dosage (e.g. number of sessions, length of engagement) • Consent for department to link de-identified person level data to administrative data sets to measure impact	Parents and caregivers			CaFS Program Outcomes			
			Parents/care givers are equipped with knowledge and tools to support their children	Parents/care givers feel more confident in their parenting skills Parents/caregivers report increased confidence in their parenting skills <i>Source: SCORE</i>	Family relationships are strengthened				
			Parents/care givers report using the tools and knowledge they have learnt <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>	Parents/care givers have the skills and capacity to support their children Parents/caregivers report increased ability to support their children <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>			Parents/care givers report improved family relationships <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>		
			Parental capability supports children’s outcomes						Parents and caregivers receive support to guide children’s social and emotional growth in families and communities that are safe and strong
			Children and young people			Children are developmentally on track to start school	Children are engaged at school		
			Children’s developmental and wellbeing needs are met	Children are developmentally on track to start school	To be discussed with state and territory education data custodians <i>Proposed source: de-identified DEX data linked to administrative data by DSS</i>				
			Children and parents report improvement in wellbeing <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>	Improved AEDC scores in Social and Emotional domains <i>Proposed source: de-identified DEX data linked to administrative data by DSS</i>	Children and their parents/ caregivers have stable and supportive relationships	Children remain with their parents/ caregivers, where it is safe to do so	Children and young people receive the social and emotional support they need to reach their full potential		
			Proportion of children who report high levels of emotional and social support (5-17 years) <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>	Rate of children and young people at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) per 1,000 of population <i>Proposed source: de-identified DEX data linked to state and territory data</i>	Reduced rate of children entering care per 1,000 population <i>Proposed source: de-identified DEX data linked to state and territory data</i>				
			A system focused on early, appropriate services helps children’s outcomes						
			System			Families access support earlier (early intervention / prevention)	Family needs are addressed before escalation to crisis	Families do not require crisis intervention services	Parents and carers support their children to be safe and develop
			Increase in families accessing support pre-ROSH report /crisis <i>Proposed source: de-identified DEX data linked to state and territory data</i>	% of families whose presenting needs are resolved without escalation to crisis or statutory authority <i>Proposed source: de-identified DEX data linked to state and territory data</i>	Decreased rates of families accessing crisis services or statutory intervention services <i>Proposed source: de-identified DEX data linked to state and territory data</i>				
			People feel the importance of their culture is recognised, respected and understood	Families from diverse backgrounds engage with support services	Families of all backgrounds experience improved outcomes				
Recorded in DEX			% of services meeting defined cultural safety standards <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>	% of families from diverse backgrounds engaged with support services <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>	Decreased disparities between key demographic groups <i>Proposed source: SCORE</i>	(DSS Impact Strategy)			

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Narrative theory

How change happens

How to connect your activity to the impact placemat

Investing upstream helps families build a safe and stable environment and support children and develop and thrive

Because children's wellbeing is flatlining and too many families meet the system at crisis point, the framework shifts effort earlier.

Services are the mechanism: they build parent and caregiver capability, strengthen child social and emotional support, and create safer relationships at home and in community.

Intended impact: fewer children experience declining social and wellbeing outcomes and children at risk experience better outcomes.

IF Families can access the right support earlier

Trusted, culturally safe services meet practical, relational and wellbeing needs before escalation.



THEN Parents and children experience immediate shifts

Caregivers gain confidence, tools and capacity; children receive social and emotional support.



SO THAT Relationships and family relationships strengthen

Families become more stable; children are engaged and supported.



ULTIMATELY Parents and carers support their children to be safe and develop

Fewer crisis interventions and entries to care, with outcomes improving across different backgrounds.

Evidence: service loop, family experience and linked data test whether early support reaches the right families and reduces escalation including reduction in children entering out of home care.