

Additional Respite for Carers 2025–27

Program guidelines

OFFICIAL

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right and recognise the hard work of many generations of First Peoples.

We are committed to safe and inclusive workplaces, policies, and services for people from LGBTIQA+ communities and their families.

To receive this document in another format, email the Carers team at: VictorianCarerStrategy@dffh.vic.gov.au.

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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# Message from the Minister for Carers and Volunteers

Carers play an important role in Victoria, not only improving the lives of those they care for, but also benefiting the wider community.

The Victorian Government recognises that caring roles can be highly rewarding, but they can also be challenging and isolating at times.

To support the wellbeing of Victoria’s unpaid carers, I am proud to announce the opening of the Additional Respite for Carers program 2025–27.

This program funds respite opportunities for unpaid carers, allowing them to rest and recharge when needed.

Respite is not just about taking a break, it’s about ensuring carers can continue to thrive in their role while also focusing on their own wellbeing.

This funding is an investment in Victoria’s carers, their loved ones and the organisations that support them. By working together, we can create a real difference in the lives of unpaid carers across our state.

I strongly encourage all eligible organisations to apply for this funding to help us build a stronger, more resilient and supportive environment for carers in our communities.

I look forward to seeing diverse and innovative support provided by organisations that make our carers feel valued and cared for, just as they care for others.





**The Hon. Ros Spence MP**

Minister for Carers and Volunteers

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# Program overview

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing is seeking applications from eligible organisations to provide respite for unpaid carers. Respite timeframes are:

* over 2 years
* from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2027.

Applicants must apply for the following (excluding GST):

* a **minimum of $30,000 funding each year** (minimum $60,000 across 2 financial years)
* up to **a maximum of $1,000,000 each year** (maximum of $2,000,000 across 2 financial years).

The Additional Respite for Carers program increases opportunities for unpaid carers across Victoria to access respite support. This includes support for the people they care for.

Respite enables carers to:

* take a break from their caring responsibilities
* rest or take part in activities that support their health and wellbeing
* take part in work or study, or to make social and community connections.

Organisations that deliver support to unpaid carers can apply. But they must have demonstrated:

* experience
* capacity
* capability.

The department highly regards innovative and flexible service delivery activities which meet the emerging and local needs of carers.

The department will conduct a merit-based assessment of applications that meet the eligibility criteria.

Organisations interested in applying can attend virtual information sessions. These sessions are optional. But attending one of the sessions will help you understand the application requirements.

## Background

The Victorian Government recognises how important carers are. Not only to the people they care for – the people whose lives they improve every day – but to the whole community.

In 2018, the Victorian Government released, *Recognising and supporting Victoria’s carers: Victorian carer strategy* (the carer strategy). This was Victoria’s first strategy for unpaid carers.

The carer strategy aims to:

* improve carers’ health and wellbeing
* support carers in:
	+ school
	+ study
	+ work environments
* ensure carers can access support and services that meet their needs
* reduce carers’ financial stress
* recognise, acknowledge and respect the important role of carers.

Currently, the carer strategy is being refreshed. Although, these existing aims remain important for carers. You can find the current version of the [carer strategy](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/recognising-and-supporting-victorias-carers-victorian-carer-strategy-2018-22)[[2]](#footnote-3) on the department’s website.

Victorian organisations funded to support carers have responsibilities under the Carers Recognition Act 2012 (Vic)[[3]](#footnote-4).

Responsibilities include to:

* reflect the Carer Recognition Act’s principles in developing, providing and evaluating support and help for people in care relationships.
* engage with people in care relationships when assessing, planning, providing, managing and reviewing services affecting them and the care relationship
* report carer support activities and the organisation’s compliance with section 11 of the Act in their annual report.

More information and resources to help organisations meet these responsibilities are on the department’s website[[4]](#footnote-5).

## Who is an unpaid carer?

A ‘unpaid’ carer is anyone who gives essential and **unpaid** care, support and help to someone. They may provide this care anywhere from:

* a couple of hours a day
* to around-the-clock help.

Every unpaid carer is different. A carer could be a:

* partner
* family member
* friend
* neighbour.

They may provide care for a child or adult with:

* disability
* mental illness
* drug or alcohol dependency
* terminal illness
* chronic illness
* aged care needs.

An unpaid carer may still receive

* a carer payment, allowance or pension
* other Commonwealth and state supports. For example:
	+ Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC-PYP)
	+ National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
	+ My Aged Care
	+ Home Support Programme or Home Care Packages
	+ Carer Gateway
	+ other disability or mental health support programs.

These carers are still considered to be ‘unpaid carers’.

### Not in scope for respite support

The following are **not** the focus of this specific funding:

* People undertaking regular care of children, where the children do not have additional support needs due to:
	+ disability
	+ medical conditions
	+ mental ill health.
* Also people who are:
	+ foster carers
	+ statutory-registered kinship carers
	+ permanent carers.

In some cases, kinship and foster carers may also be undertaking extra unpaid caring responsibilities. They may be eligible for respite support in their unpaid caring capacity.

## Funding available and timeframes

Applicants must apply for the following (excluding GST):

* a **minimum of $30,000 funding each year** (minimum $60,000 across 2 financial years)
* up to a **maximum of $1,000,000 each year** (maximum of $2,000,000 across 2 financial years),

Successful organisations must provide services across both financial years, 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Funding provided to successful organisations will be the same in each financial year.

Organisations must spend funding for each financial year within that financial year. The department may recoup unspent funding.

Successful organisations that are not registered for GST will receive payments exclusive of GST.

From 1 January 2025, organisations not registered for GST can use funds to cover the cost of GST from goods and services purchased with the department’s funds. More information, including what this means for your application, is available on the DFFH Grants Gateway. See the [How to Apply](#_How_to_apply) section for details on accessing the Grants Gateway.

Applicants must:

* attach a detailed project plan and project budget to their application clearly setting out the activities to be delivered, and how these will meet the identified needs of carers. See [Mandatory attachments](#_Mandatory_documentation) for more information; and
* carefully consider and demonstrate their capacity to meet the targets associated with the funding they are requesting. See [Costing respite and targets](#_Costing_respite_and) section for more information.

**Note: Funding for respite services under this program ends on 30 June 2027.**

## Costing respite and targets

The Additional Respite for Carers funding allocation and annual targets are based on costings of:

* around $100 for every hour of respite support
* up to $2,000 for each carer per financial year.

Types of services and level of support will differ. This depends on each carer’s individual needs. Funding can be used flexibly to meet annual targets. For example, an organisation funded $100,000 per annum will have targets of 1,000 hours of respite service delivery ($100 per hour) to support 50 carers ($2,000 per carer) per year.

We encourage organisations to tailor the level of support and funding provided to each carer. You need to take into account their level of need. For example, some carers may receive more or less than $2,000 of respite within the overall funding allocation.

Successful organisations need to report against their targets, including:

* number of hours of carer respite provided each financial year through the Additional Respite for Carers program, that is to:
	+ 30 June 2026 for year 1
	+ 30 June 2027 for year 2.
* number of carers supported each financial year through the Additional Respite for Carers funding, that is to:
	+ 30 June 2026 for year 1
	+ 30 June 2027 for year 2.

Successful organisations also need to report on the carers they support and the type of respite provided. For more information, see the [Data collection and reporting](#_Data_collection_and) section.

### Funding for program administration

Where appropriate, organisation may allocate a percentage of funding sought to program management and administration (including contributing to any additional staff costs) to directly support delivery of the program.

If you are applying for $125,000 (excluding GST) per annum or less, you may use **up to 7.5%** of funding sought for program administration costs.

If you are applying for between $125,001 and $1,000,000 (excluding GST) per annum, you may use **up to 5%** of funding sought for program administration costs.

You must account for these costs in the detailed program budget you submit as part of your application.

Program administration does not include funding used to pay staff for delivering activities, for example facilitators or support workers, which can form a greater part of the budget.

# Program objectives

The Additional Respite for Carers program aims to increase the reach, flexibility and access of respite services to carers across Victoria. The program seeks to improve access and remove barriers to respite for unpaid Victorian carers.

This includes carers who may be experiencing exclusion, isolation and marginalisation such as:

* carers in regional and rural areas
* First Peoples carers
* carers from multicultural backgrounds
* young people (under the age of 25) who are carers
* LGBTIQA+ carers
* carers with disability
* older carers (over the age of 65).

The program also seeks to reach carers who do not self-identify as carers.

The department wants to engage a broad range of organisations from across Victoria to offer respite for carers with a diversity of experiences and needs. We encourage organisations to partner together to increase the range of respite services they can provide to carers from all:

* backgrounds
* ages
* circumstances.

The program supports more carers to:

* take a break
* work
* study
* improve their own health and wellbeing through other life-enriching activities.

Also, the program supports people with care needs to access high-quality respite services and opportunities to take part in activities that support their health and wellbeing.

We specifically recognise the valuable role of First Peoples carers. Applications from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver respite support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and their families are highly encouraged.[[5]](#footnote-6)

# How to apply

A representative from an eligible organisation must complete the application form. This must be done with the support of the Chief Executive Officer or authorised person.

Applications **must** be submitted via the [DFFH Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/s/login/)[[6]](#footnote-7) by **4:00pm Friday 25 March 2025**. Extensions will **not** be granted.

## Steps to apply

Table 1: Steps to apply

| Key dates | Tasks |
| --- | --- |
| Applications open18 February 2025 | * Make sure your organisation and proposed activity meets the eligibility criteria (see the [Eligibility criteria](#_Eligibility_criteria) section).
* Read the program guidelines (this document).
* Make sure you understand the selection criteria (see the [Selection criteria](#_Merit_assessment) section) and attend an information session if possible.
 |
| Prepare and submit application | * Register or log in to the DFFH Grants Gateway.
* Complete the online application form via the DFFH Grants Gateway. **Note:**
	+ draft forms will be saved and can be returned to throughout the application period
	+ answer all questions in the application form.
* Upload the mandatory attachments to your application form:
	+ attach your completed project plan. The project plan template is available on the [department’s website](https://www.vic.gov.au/additional-respite-funding)[[7]](#footnote-8)
	+ attach a detailed budget in a clear accessible format, including any program administration funding sought (see [Eligible Activities and Costs](#_Who_is_not) for more information)
	+ attach your insurance certificate/s of currency, if you do not hold insurance with the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA).
	+ attach documents confirming [consortium](#_Auspice_arrangements_1) arrangements (if applicable)
* Submit the application by the due date and time.
* Each organisation may only submit one individual application and/or one [consortium application](#_Partnerships).
	+ An organisation may choose to submit both an individual application and an additional consortium application.
* No more than one of each type of application will be assessed per organisation.
 |
| Applications close4:00pm 25 March 2025 | * Incomplete or late applications will **not** be accepted.
* In some cases, applicants may be contacted to clarify or give more information about their application.
 |

## Key dates

Table 2: Key dates for Additional Respite for Carers 2025–27 funding round

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Dates |
| Applications open | 18 February 2025 |
| Information sessions | Dates provided on the department website |
| Applications close  | 25 March 2025 |
| Application outcome notification | June 2025 (see **Note** at the end of this table) |

**Note:** Dates for application outcome notification and payments are indicative and subject to change.

# Eligibility criteria

We encourage a broad range of potential respite organisations that support unpaid carers to apply.

## Organisation eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a grant, your organisation must be an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation (or other form of legal entity) and have:

* a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
* no overdue reports and met performance targets for previous or current funding with the Victorian Government.

Eligible organisation types include:

* an organisation incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic), *Corporations Act 2001*(Cth) or equivalent state legislation, or
* a company incorporated under the Corporations Act and registered as a not-for-profit through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, or
* an Aboriginal entity, be incorporated, including Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Traditional Owner groups and land trusts, or
* a local government entity.

How to check your Australian Business Number (ABN)

* To check your ABN, visit the [Australian Business Register (ABR)](https://abr.business.gov.au/)[[8]](#footnote-9).

How to check your organisation type:

* For incorporated associations, co-operatives or organisations incorporated through other means go to [Consumer Affairs Victoria](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/)[[9]](#footnote-10).
* For a Company Limited by Guarantee go to [ASIC Connectonline](https://connectonline.asic.gov.au/RegistrySearch/)[[10]](#footnote-11).
* For registered charities go to [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)](https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities)[[11]](#footnote-12).
* For Aboriginal corporations go to [Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)](https://www.oric.gov.au/)[[12]](#footnote-13).

To check if your organisation is up to date on grant reporting requirements, please view your current grants in the [DFFH Grants Gateway](https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au)[[13]](#footnote-14).

Any report which is showing as red is overdue. These reports must be completed before you submit your application to this grant program to avoid disappointment.

Your organisation may also have other funding agreements with the Victorian Government, which are not captured on the DFFH Grants Gateway. You should check that your organisation has met targets and reporting requirements as per your individual funding agreements.

Or, email the Carers team if you are unsure whether your organisation is up to date with reporting requirements: VictorianCarerStrategy@dffh.vic.gov.au.

### Current Victorian carer support program providers

To apply, organisations **do not** **need** to be, but **can** be current:

* Victorian Support for Carers Program, or
* Additional Respite for Carers providers.

## Consortium applications

Organisations can choose to apply individually and/or as a consortium. Consortium applications are where two or more organisations work in partnership to deliver respite.

An organisation may submit a separate [consortium application](#_Partnerships) in addition to an individual application. In this case, the organisation should ensure these applications do not overlap or duplicate services.

The lead organisation must:

* meet the eligibility criteria
* submit **one application on behalf of the consortium**.

Through consortiums, organisations can bring together their strengths, knowledge and experiences to give carers tailored, high-quality respite support. We encourage consortium applications which improve system linkage and broad access to respite.

The same funding cap applies to consortium applications as to individual applications. That is, funding between $30,000 to $1,000,000 (excluding GST) per annum, over two years.

If applying for a consortium arrangement:

* **attach evidence to your application confirming this arrangement**. Evidence may include Memoranda of Understanding, letter of support, letter of intent or equivalent.
* set out the **roles and responsibilities of each organisation in** the mandatory project plan attached to your application. Applications should also outline the relevant capability and experience of each organisation.
* outine **how funds will be allocated between consortium organisations** in the mandatory detailed budget attached to your application.

If successful, the lead organisation will enter into a service agreement with the department. The lead organisation will be responsible for:

* coordinating the distribution of funding to other organisations within their consortium
* ensuring delivery of the respite activities
* reporting to the department under the program requirements.

**All organisations which form part of the consortium must comply with the requirements of the service agreement.**

## Mandatory attachments

Applicants **must** attach mandatory documentation to their application, including:

* A **completed project plan** using the template provided.
	+ The template is available to download on the [department’s website](https://www.vic.gov.au/additional-respite-funding)[[14]](#footnote-15).
	+ If you are submitting an application on behalf of a consortium between 2 or more organisations, your project plan must clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of each organisation.
* A detailed **project budget** setting out the proposed breakdown of funds, including any program administration costs and co-contributions or in-kind contributions. Applicants can choose the format of this attachment, but it should be clear and accessible. See [eligible activities and costs](#_Who_is_not) for more information.
	+ If you are submitting a [consortium application](#_Partnerships), your project budget must outline the proposed funding split between organisations.
* Insurance certificates of currency, if your organisation does **not** hold insurance through the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) (**note:** this funding does not include insurance cover).
	+ Please refer to the [insurance requirements](#_Insurance_requirements) section for more information.
	+ For [consortium applications](#_Partnerships), please attach insurance certificates of currency for each organisation that does not hold VMIA insurance.
* Evidence of consortium arrangements (if applicable).
	+ Please refer to the [Consortium applications](#_Consortium_applications) section.

Applications without mandatory documentation attached are assessed as ineligible and will **not** proceed for merit assessment against the selection criteria.

## Eligible activities and costs

Under the Additional Respite for Carers program, the department will allocate funding **for respite delivery from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2027**.

The purpose of this funding is to provide respite services to unpaid carers across Victoria who support people with care needs. Respite services provide direct support to carers and the people they care for, so carers can take a break from their caring responsibilities.

For example, providing a day of in-home care so the carer can have a day to:

* rest
* socialise
* attend appointments
* undertake employment or study.

The following is highly regarded:

* experience in delivering effective supports for carers that takes into account their views and needs
* respite service delivery that meet the needs of Victorian carers from all ages, backgrounds and circumstances, which are:
	+ innovative
	+ flexible
	+ creative
* approaches that provide access to a range of respite options for people who may be experiencing:
	+ discrimination
	+ exclusion
	+ marginalisation
* approaches that promote available respite supports in the community and actively engage people who may not self-identify as carers.

Applicants must carefully read the [Selection criteria](#_Merit_assessment) section, which is used to assess applications for funding.

Where appropriate, **funding sought may include program administration costs (including additional staff costs)** to directly support program delivery, capped as follows:

* For applications between $30,000 and $125,000 per annum (excluding GST), **up to 7.5%** of total funding sought can be for program administration.
* For applications between $125,001 and $1,000,000 per annum (excluding GST), **up to 5%** of total funding sought can be for program administration.

### Eligible respite support approaches

Respite can be provided in a range of innovative and flexible ways tailored to meet each carer’s respite needs.

Respite can be provided in a range of locations, including in:

* the home
* the community
* purpose-built facilities.

Respite support services can be for:

* carers
* a person with care needs
* all parties in a care relationship.

Respite should provide a short-term break in the care relationship. For example, to:

* relax and rest
* take a holiday
* spend time with others
* complete household tasks
* study or train
* engage in paid employment or volunteering
* engage in cultural or community activities
* get healthcare (including mental health care) or self-care.

Applications that can offer emergency respite are considered favourably. Such as, respite services needed:

* at short notice
* outside of office hours.

For example, emergency respite may be required when a carer is:

* ill
* injured
* experiences a sudden change in circumstances.

For examples of eligible respite approaches, please see the following table.

Table 3: Example respite approaches

| Respite type | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Facility respite | This provides a person receiving care time in a residential care facility:* during the day
* overnight
* for several nights.
 |
| Individual (one-to-one) respite in a person’s home or community | Individual respite supports a carer to take a break or participate in activities that interest them. It may involve activities for:* a carer
* a person receiving care
* or both.

For example, a worker may support a person receiving care:* with an activity in the home
* to attend an outing or a local event.

The person’s carer may then:* attend a separate activity
* engage in a hobby
* take time out for themselves.

This could be for:* a few hours
* a whole day.

Innovative service delivery activities are encouraged.Accessible virtual (online) options are considered. However, face-to-face activities are prioritised. |
| Overnight respite | This happens in a person’s home where a worker stays overnight. |
| Emergency respite | This may take place:* at home
* in a residential facility.

It may be for:* a few hours
* a whole day
* overnight
* over several days.
 |
| Respite in a group setting | This includes activities of choice where a worker is supporting people receiving care, such as:* at a centre
* an outing
* an online group activity.

There may be separate activities for carers and people receiving care. |
| Camps, holidays, resorts or weekends away | This may be to support:* the carer
* the person receiving care
* or both.
 |
| Regular short sessions of respite with activities for carers at the same time | This includes an exercise class for a carer and, at the same time, a separate group activity for the person receiving care.This enables both people to take part in routine health and wellbeing activities. |
| Participation in cultural activities | This could support connection with communities, for:* the carer
* the person receiving care
* or both.

It could be a regular activity or an occasional event. |
| Brokered services | Successful organisations can broker another agency to deliver carer respite services on their behalf. |

**Note**: Approaches are not limited to the examples listed in Table 3.

## Ineligible activities and costs

The following will **not** be funded as part of the Additional Respite for Carers program:

* program management or administration costs exceeding the caps outlined in these guidelines (see [Eligible activities and costs](#_Who_is_not) for more information)
* costs, including:
	+ building
	+ rental
	+ overheads
	+ other core operational expenses
* activities already funded by the Victorian Government, including:
	+ respite service delivery through the Victorian Support for Carers Program
	+ other government-funded grant programs
* activities already funded through other programs, including:
	+ local
	+ state
	+ Commonwealth government
* retrospective costs for activities that were delivered or started before funding approval
* activities outside Victoria
* using public funds in a way that is inappropriate or inconsistent with the objectives of the program. This includes (but not limited to) the purchase of alcohol and gambling.

# Assessment process

Applications for additional respite funding in 2025–27 are assessed against set eligibility and selection criteria, including:

* experience
* capacity
* performance.

The need and demand for respite support across Victoria, as determined through data analysis, is also a key consideration.

All applications will undergo the following review and assessment process.

Table 4: Assessment process overview

| Process | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Eligibility check | * All applications are reviewed against the [eligibility criteria](#_Eligibility_criteria):
	+ The eligibility check determines whether the application will proceed to further assessment.
	+ Ineligible applications will **not** proceed for further assessment.
 |
| Merit assessment against selection criteria | * Eligible applications are assessed for merit against the [selection criteria](#_Merit_assessment), based on responses provided in the application form.
 |
| Review of past performance (if applicable) | * The department will review past performance of applicant organisations in previous funding agreements with the Victorian Government, including:
	+ history of compliance with funding requirements (e.g. meeting reporting requirements and targets).
 |
| Funding recommendations | * The final selection of highly rated applications are further reviewed to consider:
	+ geographic spread and targeting to areas and communities in need
	+ supporting carers from a broad range of diverse backgrounds
 |
| Application outcome | * The Minister for Carers and Volunteers makes the final decision based on recommendations from the department’s assessment.
* All applicants are notified of the outcome of their application by email.
 |

**Note**: Not all applications are successful. Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee your organisation will receive program funding. Organisations may be approved for a different funding amount than was sought in their application.

## Selection criteria

We use the following selection criteria to assess applications and allocate funding based on merit.

Table 5: Selection criteria

| Criteria | Weighting |
| --- | --- |
| **Demonstrated effectiveness and efficiency*** Demonstrates understanding of carers’ support needs (including reference to specific data and research) and clearly shows how proposed activities will address those needs.
* Proposed activities appear viable. There is a credible and efficient plan for delivery, and a substantial component of the proposed activities includes face-to-face service provision.
* Project plan has been completed on the approved template and includes sufficient detail in each section, including information on the role of consortium organisations if relevant.
* Project budget outlines all costs and provides sufficient detail of what funding will deliver (including funding allocations to consortium organisations if relevant).
* Approach addresses one or more priorities outlined in the Victorian Carer Strategy[[15]](#footnote-16).
 | 30% |
| **Organisational capacity and readiness*** Capacity to deliver carer respite support that is:
	+ high quality
	+ flexible
	+ responsive. With reference to previous relevant experience.
* Capacity to provide appropriate and flexible respite options to meet:
	+ carers’ varied needs, preferences and circumstances
	+ the needs, preferences and circumstances of the person with care needs.
* Demonstrated capacity to meet service delivery targets equal to the amount of funding sought and [reporting requirements](#_Data_collection_and) in line with program guidelines.
* Experience, suitability and capability of proposed consortium organisations (if proposing a consortium).
* Inclusion of carer voices in service design and mechanisms for carers to provide feedback about services provided.
 | 30% |
| **Equity and inclusion*** Demonstrated ability to provide inclusive respite services to carers from a range of:
	+ ages
	+ backgrounds
	+ circumstances.
* Demonstrated ability to provide respite support to carers who may face systemic barriers to accessing support is highly regarded, such as:
	+ carers from multicultural communities, disadvantaged or low socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTIQA+ carers, carers with disability, young carers and other groups
	+ carers with high or complex support needs
	+ carers in rural or regional areas. Or other geographic areas with high need and current service gaps.
	+ First peoples carers (***Important note:*** in alignment with the Victorian Government’s commitment to self-determination, First Peoples-led organisations with be prioritised for projects designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers
 | 25% |
| **Service system linkage and innovation*** Demonstrated innovation in service delivery, for example:
	+ inclusion of evidence-informed, flexible activities and modes of support to meet diverse carer needs.
* Demonstrated ability to connect carers with other relevant supports, such as:
	+ existing partnerships or referral pathways with other key services or local community supports.
* Experience and willingness to collaborate with other providers and services to share lessons learned.
* Existing organisational policies or procedures to monitor program delivery, assess program impact, and capture service delivery data.
 | 15% |

## Extra assessment considerations

The assessment process will consider the past performance of applicant organisations in previous funding agreements with the Victorian Government.

To ensure fair access to respite for carers across Victoria, the final selection of highly rated applications is further reviewed to consider:

* geographic spread and targeting to areas and communities in need, as determined through data analysis
* support for carers from a broad range of:
	+ ages
	+ circumstances
	+ backgrounds.

# Notification of application outcomes

All applicants receive written notification of the outcome of their application.

You can request feedback on your application after notification of the outcome. To request feedback, email the Carers team: VictorianCarerStrategy@dffh.vic.gov.au.

All decisions in relation to the program are final and no discussion or review is entered into. This includes any aspect of the application, eligibility and assessment process, and any decision in relation to offering a funding agreement.

# Conditions of funding

## Service agreement

Successful applicants must enter into a service agreement with the department and follow reporting requirements. Service agreements set out:

* the parties’ commitments and obligations to each other
* the general terms and conditions of funding.

Successful applicants may already be:

* Victorian Support for Carers program service providers
* Additional Respite for Carers program providers.

In this case, their existing funding and service agreements are amended to include the:

* additional funding
* revised targets
* additional reporting requirements.

Organisations entering a service agreement with the department for the first time must:

* meet the due diligence requirements to hold a service agreement.
* work with the department to complete this due diligence, if required.

Not meeting these requirements may mean an organisation is ineligible to receive funding.

## Obligations of funded organisations

Successful applicants receiving funding **must** meet the following obligations:

* Enter into or vary a current service agreement with the department for the funded services.
	+ For [consortium applications](#_Partnerships), the lead organisation will enter into or vary a service agreement with the department for the funded services. The lead organisation is responsible for the delivery of all funded activities, including those delivered by other consortium members. Each organisation in the consortium will be a signatory to the service agreement and must comply with the requirements.
* Deliver activities and services as per the project plan and budget submitted during the application process. Any changes to proposed activities or timelines need to be in writing to the department and are subject to approval.
* Ensure that funding is used and acquitted in line with the activities described in their application and the funding agreement. Any proposed variation to the approved activity should be discussed with and agreed to by the department before implementation.
* Respond promptly to any requests for information deemed appropriate by the department.
* Provide an Australian Business Number (ABN) so tax is not withheld from payments to registered organisations.
* Be aware that payments made to recipients not registered for GST are exclusive of GST.
* Have a bank account in the name of the applicant.
* Comply with data collection and reporting requirements (see the [Data collection and reporting](#_Data_collection_and) section).

Successful applicants should also be aware that the department:

* will provide further information, including about agreements, payment and reporting.
* may recoup funds from organisations that do not meet targets or have underspent funds. Further information about targets is available in the [Costing respite and targets](#_Costing_respite_and) section of these guidelines.

Funded organisations (and other organisations in their consortium, if applicable) may be named and required to take part in media opportunities and events.

## Insurance requirements

Successful applicants **must**:

* hold appropriate insurance coverage for respite service delivery
* have public liability insurance and any other insurance that is relevant to the activities of your project.

Non-government organisations that are funded to deliver services for children must be:

* incorporated separate legal entities that can be sued in child abuse proceedings
* appropriately insured against child abuse.

If you do not hold insurance with the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA), you must attach insurance certificate/s of currency to your application. They must be from the original insurer and in the name of the bidding organisation. We do not accept certificates from insurance brokers or agents.

For consortium applications, you must attach certificate/s of currency for each organisation in the consortium that does not have insurance through the VMIA.

Your application will be ineligible if:

* you do not hold VMIA insurance, and
* relevant certificates are not attached.

For more information, see the [Department of Justice and Community Safety website](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/organisations-providing-services-to-children-new)[[16]](#footnote-17).

The Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA) can tell you more about public and product liability insurance for community and non-profit organisations:

* [ICDA’s Insurance and risk management web page](https://communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/insurance-and-risk-management)[[17]](#footnote-18)
* Telephone: 03 9230 6880.

## Payment of funds

Successful funding recipients are paid through the department’s Service Agreement Management System (SAMS).

Before payment is made, a service agreement **must** be signed by an authorised representative of the organisation and department.

The department reserves the right to recall funds if reporting or other obligations are not met, or in other circumstances deemed appropriate by the department.

If you engage another organisation to deliver goods and services needed for the funded activity, you must pay that organisation directly without involving third parties.

## Data collection and reporting

The department will advise successful applicants of the specific reporting requirements against service delivery. The reporting requirements aim to measure the reach and impact of the services provided.

Organisations are **required to collect and report basic demographic data on both carers and care recipients** they have supported within each financial year. This includes, but is not limited to:

* local government area of residence
* gender
* age
* cultural background.

The department is exploring ways to streamline and improve reporting processes. We will consult with successful organisations and provided enough notice on any changes to reporting requirements outlined in the [Quarterly reporting requirements](#_Quarterly_reporting_requirements) section.

Failure to report data and program performance may result in withdrawal or suspension of funding. Funding recipients must provide information or updates on program delivery as requested by the department.

### Quarterly reporting requirements

Quarterly reporting is required against performance measures and service delivery targets through the department’s reporting system. Reporting includes (but is not limited to):

* number of respite events provided by type
* hours and minutes of respite provided and by type
* number of carers provided with respite by local government area and by type

Continuation of funding depends on timely reporting against targets through the department’s reporting system.

### Annual qualitative reporting and financial acquittals

Successful organisations need to provide a progress report in July 2026, covering the period from commencement to 30 June 2026. The report should be submitted in a template provided by the department and will include (but is not limited to):

* an overview of services and activities delivered
* qualitative feedback you have received from carers about the services provided
* financial acquittals – a detailed breakdown of funding expenditure and any unexpended funds.

An end of project report, including financial acquittals, is required in July 2027, following the end of the funding period.

# More information and help

## Advice on writing a grant application

The Victorian Government website has useful advice on writing a funding application:

* [Victorian Government's How to write a grant application web page](https://www.vic.gov.au/how-write-good-grant-application)[[18]](#footnote-19)
* [Victorian Government's Grant terminology explained web page](https://www.vic.gov.au/grant-terminology-explained)[[19]](#footnote-20)

## Help with applications

If you have:

* difficulties accessing or submitting the online application form
* queries about these guidelines of application requirements

Contact the Carers team via email: VictorianCarerStrategy@dffh.vic.gov.au

1. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/recognising-and-supporting-victorias-carers-victorian-carer-strategy-2018-22 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/carers-recognition-act-2012/003 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/carers-recognition-act-2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. The Department acknowledges the impacts of colonisation which continue to influence the department’s systems and structures. We are deeply committed to addressing these impacts by embedding cultural safety and self-determination principles in all we do. Further information on the department’s approach to embedding these principles is [available in the department’s strategic plan](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/advocating-self-determination) https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/advocating-self-determination [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au/s/login/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. https://www.vic.gov.au/additional-respite-funding [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. https://abr.business.gov.au/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/ [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. https://connectonline.asic.gov.au/RegistrySearch/ [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. https://www.oric.gov.au/ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. https://grantsgateway.dffh.vic.gov.au [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. https://www.vic.gov.au/additional-respite-funding [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/recognising-and-supporting-victorias-carers-victorian-carer-strategy-2018-22> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/organisations-providing-services-to-children-new [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. https://communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/insurance-and-risk-management. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. https://www.vic.gov.au/how-write-good-grant-application [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. https://www.vic.gov.au/grant-terminology-explained [↑](#footnote-ref-20)