

# Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grant Program BEST Round 20 (2018-19) Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date:	<b>14 March 2018</b>
Closing date and time:	<b>2:00 pm AEST on 19 April 2018</b>
Commonwealth policy entity:	<b>Department of Veterans' Affairs</b>
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please contact Phone: 1800 020 283 Email: <a href="mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au">support@communitygrants.gov.au</a>
Date guidelines released:	14 March 2018
Type of grant opportunity:	<b>Restricted non-competitive</b>

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# 1. Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grant Program: BEST Round 20 (2018-19) Processes

## **The Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives**

This grant opportunity is part of the above Grant Program, which contributes to Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Program 1.4 - Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependents. DVA works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)*.



## **The grant opportunity opens**

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) publish the grant guidelines and advertise on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.



## **You complete and submit a grant application**

You must read these grant guidelines before you submit your application. These guidelines can be found on GrantConnect, the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system. Note: Any addenda for this grant opportunity will be published on GrantConnect, and by registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes.



## **The Hub assesses all grant applications**

The Hub assesses the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. The Hub will then calculate a recommended grant amount for each eligible organisation based on the amount you requested, the information provided in your grant application and the total amount of funding available.



## **DVA will make grant recommendations**

The DVA provide advice to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs on the recommended grants for each applicant.



## **Grant Decisions are made**

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs decides which grant applications are successful.



### **The Hub will notify you of the outcome**

The Hub will advise you of the outcome of your application. The Hub may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



### **The Hub enters into a grant agreement or a letter of agreement**

The Hub, on behalf of DVA, will enter into a grant agreement or letter of agreement with successful applicants. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and is proportional to the risks involved.



### **Delivery of the grant**

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. The Hub manages the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



### **Evaluation of the Building Excellence in Support and Training program**

DVA will evaluate the specific grant activity and Building Excellence in Support and Training program as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

## **1.1 Role of the Community Grants Hub**

This grant opportunity will be administered by the Hub on behalf of DVA under a Whole-of-Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.

## **1.2 About the grant program**

The Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program (the Program) forms part of the Government's commitment to support the role of ex-service organisation (ESO) pension and welfare practitioners and advocates, who provide advice and assistance to the veteran and defence communities. It also links closely to the [Advocacy Training and Development Program \(ATDP\)](#), which provides the essential skills for claims, advocacy and welfare work.

The BEST Round 20 grant program will run over one year, from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. The program is funded through DVA Program 1.4 - Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependents and sub-program payments to Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs).

The Program will be undertaken according to the [CGRGs](#).

## 1.3 About the grant opportunity

The Program is intended to assist the veteran and defence communities by providing support and resources to ESO practitioners for pensions, advocacy and/or welfare work.

The Program assists ESOs by providing a contribution to the work of these practitioners. It does not fully fund an organisation.

Grants under this grant opportunity must assist in meeting the objectives and outcomes of Program.

The objectives of the Program are to assist ESOs to:

- improve the quality of claims received by the DVA at the primary determining level
- reduce the rate of appeals to the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and/or
- promote the provision of welfare services to the veteran and defence community.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are checked and monitored
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

You must read this document before filling out an application.

### **Grant opportunity outcomes**

The expected outcomes of the Program are to ensure:

- the veteran and defence communities are able to benefit from having better informed ESO practitioners who can ensure claims lodged with DVA are of a high standard and contain all required information to enable timely and quality decisions
- ESO practitioners will assist in improving claims assessment efficiency and
- the veteran and defence communities will have access to appropriate compensation and welfare advocacy services.

## 2. Grant amount

A total of \$3.8m is available for this grant opportunity for the 2018-19 financial year.

The grant amount available for each organisation will be determined on the basis of the total funds available and the workload information provided in your application.

## 3. Grant eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

### 3.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

#### **Only bona fide ESOs are eligible to apply for a grant.**

For the purposes of BEST grants, a bona fide ESO is considered to be an organisation:

- whose membership consists primarily of veterans, past and present members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and/or their dependants
- which is established primarily to provide pensions, advocacy and/or welfare assistance to veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants and
- which does not operate as a business or charge any fee for acting on behalf of the veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants in the provision of claims or welfare services.

ESOs can choose to apply as one of two applicant types:

#### **An ESO applying in their own right for funding for their own organisation.**

To be eligible, an ESO must be one of the following entity types as stated in the dropdown list in the application form:

- Company
- Cooperative
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Indigenous Corporation
- Incorporated Association
- Partnership
- Statutory Entity
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust.

#### **An ESO applying for funding as a sponsor on behalf of one or more ESOs that may or may not be incorporated.**

Whether or not an ESO meets the eligibility criteria to apply for funding in their own right, another ESO may apply as a sponsor on their behalf. Funding is managed by the sponsor but any recommended grant amount will be assessed on the basis of the sponsored organisation's activity as provided in the application. A sponsor may apply on behalf of more than one ESO.

To be eligible, a sponsoring ESO must be one of the following entity types as stated in the dropdown list in the application form:

- Company
- Cooperative
- Corporate State or Territory Entity

- Indigenous Corporation
- Incorporated Association
- Partnership
- Statutory Entity
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust.

### **Responsibilities of a sponsor**

The sponsor's responsibilities are to:

- bear executive management responsibility and be accountable to the DVA for the appropriate use of grant funds by the sponsored organisation in accordance with the terms of the grant
- take responsibility for the receipt and distribution of grant funds and
- take responsibility for the collection, collation and provision of all audit, reporting and acquittal documentation for the grant.

The sponsoring applicant must submit a separate grant application for each sponsored organisation.

## **3.2 Assessing Eligibility**

The Hub assesses your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. To be considered for a grant, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- the organisational eligibility criteria
- the amount requested must be for eligible grant activities and items as outlined at 4.1 and 4.2
- all identified workload is undertaken by practitioners with up to date Training and Information Program (TIP) / ATDP training
- the applicant has acquitted all previous grants (if applicable).

## **4. Eligible grant activities**

### **4.1 Activities within scope of the Program**

The Program funding is available to support the work of military compensation and welfare advocates, and administrative assistants supporting that work.

#### **Military Compensation Advocates**

A military compensation advocate assists veteran and defence community members and their dependants to prepare and lodge compensation and benefits claims with the DVA.

Advocates must either obtain, and maintain, appropriate levels of training under the ATDP or have already completed appropriate training through the previous TIP. They must also be accredited by their ESO.

Military compensation advocates with higher level training may also be involved in preparing cases for review before the VRB and/or the AAT.

### **Welfare Advocate**

A welfare advocate provides veteran and defence community members with information on, and assists with, access to health, housing and other community services and benefits.

A welfare advocate officer must also obtain and maintain appropriate levels of training under the ATDP or have previous qualifications under TIP and be accredited by their ESO.

ESOs requesting a BEST grant must provide workload statistics for paid and volunteer advocates for the previous calendar year. These workload statistics provide the basis for calculating grant offers.

### **Administrative Assistant**

An administrative assistant provides general secretarial and administrative assistance and/or office management services to support the work of compensation and welfare advocates.

## **4.2 What can the grant money be used for?**

Grant assistance is available for two categories of expenses incurred by ESOs undertaking compensation and welfare work:

- salary assistance and
- equipment and administrative expenses assistance.

These categories are outlined below:

### **Salary Assistance**

BEST salary assistance is provided as a contribution to the salary of full-time and part-time military compensation advocates who help applicants with claims for compensation or benefits. Salary assistance is also available as a contribution to the salary of administrative officers who support advocates undertaking military compensation work.

Military compensation work consists of the following claim types:

- primary level DVA pension claims
- successful Veterans' Entitlement Act Section 31 Review applications
- review applications to the VRB
- reconsiderations under the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (SRCA) or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA) and
- appeals to the AAT.

Each ESO is responsible for determining how it remunerates its paid practitioners.

## **Equipment and Administrative Expense Assistance**

BEST administrative expense grants are provided to assist with the purchase, and ongoing expense, of capital equipment, office consumables and local travel (calculate local travel by multiplying total local kilometres travelled by 38.4c).

Unlike salary assistance, grants to support administrative expenses are available for items supporting compensation and/or welfare work. Grants for these items will therefore be calculated based on an organisation's compensation AND welfare workload.

### **Eligible Equipment Items**

BEST funding is available as a contribution to expenses which can be shown to be directly related to the support required by pension and welfare practitioners and advocates in providing advice to the veteran and defence communities.

Examples of expenses that would be eligible for BEST funding include:

- answering machines, bookcases, brochure holders, chairs, tables
- filing cabinets, compactus
- computer hardware, scanners, tablets, appropriate computer software and
- white boards, printing and printer supplies.

## **4.3 What the grant money cannot be used for?**

You cannot use the grant for employee on-costs such as superannuation, leave entitlements, redundancy payments or other salary related expenses.

Sponsoring organisations must pass on the full value of the grant to the sponsored organisation.

Administrative expenses which would not be eligible for funding include:

- honoraria
- utility costs covering electricity, gas, water etc.
- the cost of leasing premises (including rent) or purchase of property
- council rates
- office expenses and fees including insurance, advertising expenses, audit fees and bank fees
- any travel costs beyond the local district where the organisation operates or has its usual place of business
- legal consultation costs, including litigation or
- air conditioning units, televisions or refrigerators.

For more information on eligible and ineligible expenditure, see Appendix A. We may update the guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when your grant agreement takes effect will be the version that applies to your project.

## 5. The grant selection process

There is **one (1)** BEST funding round each year.

Grants are not guaranteed in any year. An ESO should not consider that any funding received is ongoing or indicates a likely outcome for subsequent applications. All applicants must reapply for funding in each funding round.

The grant amount offered to each eligible applicant will be calculated using a formula which has been determined in conjunction with the ESO community, through the ESO Round Table (ESORT).

This formula is applied uniformly to all eligible applicants. As long as an organisation meets the eligibility criteria they will be considered for a grant.

The formula takes into account:

- the amount of salary and administrative grant funding requested
- compensation and welfare workload information provided in the completed grant application
- the total amount of funding available for the grant funding round and
- the total number of eligible applicants.

## 6. The grant application process

### 6.1 Overview of application process

You must read these grant guidelines, the application form, Questions and Answers and the grant agreement terms and conditions before you submit an application.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Please note that the workload information in the form is essential to the accurate calculation of grant amounts. Giving false or misleading information will exclude your application from further consideration. Providing false or misleading information may also result in action to recover monies and may impact on your eligibility for future grants.

Please complete each section of the application form and make sure you provide all information requested.

Please keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers.

### 6.2 Application process timing

Submit your application by the closing time and date below. Late applications will not be accepted. If an application is late or the Community Grants Hub is requested to approve a lodgement after the closing date, the Community Grants Hub may determine that there were

exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control that meant they could not meet the deadline. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include, but may not be limited to:

- Community Grants Hub infrastructure failures
- natural disasters
- power outages affecting the ability of the applicant to submit their application by the deadline and
- death or disability of key personnel.

Information on the Community Grants Hub [late application policy](#) is available on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

The expected commencement date for the granting activities is 1 July 2018 and the expected completion date is 30 June 2019. You must spend the grant by the end date.

**Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity**

Activity	Timeframe
Application period	Open: 14/03/2018 Close: 2:00 pm AEST 19/04/2018
Assessment of applications	4-6 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4-6 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	1-3 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Activity commences	07/2018
End date	30/06/2019

## 6.3 Completing the grant application

You must submit your grant application using the application form, which is available on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. The application form includes help information.

This is an online application form that you must submit electronically. If you have any technical difficulties please contact 1800 020 283 or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au).

The Hub will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

You must make sure that your application is complete and accurate and submitted in accordance with these guidelines.

If you find a mistake in your application after it has been submitted, you should contact the Hub by phone on 1800 020 283 or by email at [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au) straight away.

The Hub may ask you for more information, as long as it does not change the substance of your application. The Hub does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from applicants to correct applications after the closing time.

**Please note the requirements specific to each applicant type:**

### **Applicant in your own right**

If you are applying in your own right you can also apply as a sponsoring applicant. The same application form can be used for either type of application, you just need to nominate in what capacity you are applying. A separate form is required for each type of application.

### **Sponsoring Applicant**

If you are applying as a sponsoring applicant, you can also apply as an applicant in your own right.

The sponsoring applicant must submit a separate grant application for each sponsored organisation.

Your application must include a Letter of Declaration confirming sponsorship – completed by the sponsored organisation on the template provided in the Grant Opportunity Documents which are available on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

## 6.4 Attachments to the application

The following document must be included with your application:

### **A Sponsoring Applicant**

Letter of Declaration confirming sponsorship – completed by the sponsored organisation on the template provided in the Grant Opportunity Documents.

Your Letter of Declaration, if applicable, should be attached to the application form. There will be instructions in the application form to help you. Only attach the documents you have been asked to include. If the selection process identifies errors in your attachment, you may be contacted to correct or explain the information.

**Please note:** There is a 2mb limit for each attachment.

## 6.5 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact the Hub on 1800 020 283 or email to [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au). The Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

Answers to questions may be posted on [GrantConnect](#) and on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

The question period will close at 5:00 pm AEST on 12 April 2018. Following this time, only questions relating to using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

## 7. Assessment of grant applications

### 7.1 Who will assess applications?

An assessment team will assess all eligible and compliant applications based on their merits. The assessment team will be comprised of departmental staff. The Assessment team will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, you may be contacted to correct or explain the information.

The Assessment team will then apply the grant calculation formula to all eligible applications.

The Assessment Report will make recommendations in regards to:

- overall objectives for the Program
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- outcome of the application of the grant calculation formula.

The Assessment team may seek information about you or your application. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The expert panel may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

### 7.2 Grant Calculation

The grant amount offered to eligible applicants is calculated based on:

- an applicant's requested grant amount and workload information provided in the completed grant application
- the total amount of funding available and

- the BEST grant calculation formula.

A comparative analysis is made of all eligible applications and grant offers determined by applying the grant calculation formula to each applicant's workload statistics.

The formula calculates each organisation's workload as a percentage of the work undertaken nationally in the previous calendar year. This percentage is then applied to the available BEST monies to calculate each eligible applicant's grant offer.

As the formula is based on workload, it provides a transparent, equitable, and repeatable way to calculate grants. The formula is reviewed on a regular basis in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the funding provided continues to meet the needs of ESOs and the veteran and defence communities as well as aligning with overall government objectives.

The workload formula and how it is applied is explained in detail at Appendix B.

## 7.3 Who will approve grants?

The Expert Panel, comprising of DVA staff, will make recommendations to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs through a briefing process. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs will make the final decision to approve a grant.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs must not approve funding if they reasonably consider the program funding available across financial years will not accommodate the funding offer, and/or the application does not represent value for money.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs' decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded and
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

As the overall amount applied for is often in excess of the available grant funds the calculation formula may result in some applications being approved for a reduced amount.

## 8. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcomes of your application in writing, following a decision by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. If you are successful, you will also be advised about any specific conditions attached to the grant.

## 9. Successful grant applications

### 9.1 The grant agreement

If you are successful, you must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth as represented by the DVA. The DVA will use a Whole-of-Government

Grant Agreement (Commonwealth Standard or Simple Grant Agreement), depending on availability at the time.

A schedule may be used to outline the specific grant requirements. Any additional conditions attached to the grant will be identified in the grant offer or during the grant agreement negotiations.

You will be required to provide a progress report at the end of six and twelve months and to acquit the use of the grant funds at the end of the project period.

The Agreement also notes that:

- funds cannot be used for purposes other than those specified in the agreement
- unspent funds must be returned to the DVA within a reasonable time and in line with the set acquittal period for expending grant funds
- the applicant must ensure they have professional indemnity insurance available through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc. (VITA), or a similar insurance provider and
- the grantee is required to ensure that practitioners in its organisation and organisations it may be sponsoring will:
  - undertake the appropriate levels of ATDP training and
  - abide by the ATDP Code of Conduct.

If there are unreasonable delays in finalising a grant agreement, the grant offer may be withdrawn and the grant may be awarded to a different applicant.

You should not make financial commitments until a grant agreement has been executed by the Commonwealth.

## 9.2 How the grant will be paid

The grant agreement will state the maximum grant amount to be paid. If you incur extra eligible expenditure, you must meet these costs yourself.

Grant funding may be paid:

- annually or
- at agreed intervals.

We will make an initial payment on execution of the grant agreement. If subsequent payments have been agreed these will be released progressively based on your eligible expenditure.

## 9.3 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect the progress of a project. In these circumstances, you can request a project variation, including:

- changing project milestones

- changing the purpose for which funds have been granted.

The program does not allow for:

- an increase to the agreed amount of grant funds
- changes to the grant period.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the grant agreement end date. Contact your Grant Agreement manager for further information. Changes cannot be considered after the grant agreement end date.

Only the Minister for Veterans' Affairs can approve a request to vary the terms of a grant once it has been approved.

Your request will be considered based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective and any relevant policies of the Department
- changes to the timing of grant payments.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. If grant funds are spent on purposes other than those specified in the grant agreement before a variation is approved, the funds may be required to be repaid.

## 10. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on GrantConnect within 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.3 of the CGRGs.

## 11. Delivery of grant activities

### 11.1 Your responsibilities

Applicants must ensure that all BEST funded equipment:

- is used primarily for pensions and/or welfare work
- is secured in a suitable and safe manner
- is configured to ensure the confidentiality of any client information or files stored on or in that equipment
- is insured by the grantee and
- is listed on an equipment register which is available to the DVA on request.

After the grant period, any capital equipment purchased under the funding agreement belongs to the ESO. The ESO is responsible for this equipment, any ancillary operational costs, and any ongoing costs or repairs to that equipment.

You will also be responsible for:

- meeting the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and managing the activity efficiently and effectively
- complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements as set out in the grant agreement
- participating in any grant program evaluation where specified in the grant agreement.

## 11.2 The Community Grants Hub's responsibilities

The Community Grants Hub will:

- meet the terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement
- provide timely administration of the grant
- evaluate the grantee's performance.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

## 11.3 Grant payments and GST

Grants made by the DVA under the BEST Program are financial assistance payments. As such, BEST grants are provided on a GST exclusive basis and there is no GST liability arising for successful applicants in receipt of a BEST grant because there is no taxable supply made by the Grantee to the DVA. This means that, if your organisation is registered for GST, your organisation does not need to remit any GST to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) as the BEST grant you receive from the DVA is not consideration for a taxable supply.

If you have any queries in relation to the transactions you enter into with third parties as a result of a grant received under the BEST Program, you may wish to speak with the ATO or your financial advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement. You can also visit the [Australian Taxation Office website](#) for more information.

## 11.4 Reporting

BEST grantees must have systems in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their grant agreement.

All ESOs that receive BEST funding are required to record and maintain information supporting the details they provide on their application and their use and expenditure of grant funds.

This information must be made available upon request from the DVA. It may be required for the purposes of acquittal of the BEST funds and/or departmental or external audit or evaluation of the BEST Program.

The information required will depend on the components of the grant, but may include:

- records detailing the individual compensation cases and welfare work referred to on the application form

- an Equipment Register for all capital equipment purchases funded under the grant
- a Travel Log for all travel expenses claimed and funded under the grant
- invoices, receipts or other information for capital equipment purchases
- invoices, receipts or other information for any office consumables where the single purchase was \$100 or more
- if salary assistance is provided, evidence of who has been paid, the number of hours worked and in respect of what activities and/or
- any additional information outlined in the Grant Agreement.

It is anticipated that into the future BEST grantees have systems and processes in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their grant agreement.

Performance information (e.g. client characteristics and service delivery information) will be required to be collected by service providers at the client level and if applicable, entered directly into the Department's performance reporting solution, the Data Exchange.

Data Exchange information must be provided in accordance with the Data Exchange Protocols available on the [Department of Social Services' website](#).

## 11.5 Evaluation

The DVA will evaluate the BEST grant program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

## 12. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

**Note:** These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the DVA. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

### 12.1 Complaints process

#### Complaints about the Program

The [Department of Veterans' Affairs Feedback Management Policy](#) applies to complaints about the Program. All complaints about the program, including grant decisions, must be lodged in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for the Program should be sent to [DVA.Grants.Processing.Team@dva.gov.au](mailto:DVA.Grants.Processing.Team@dva.gov.au).

## Complaints about the Process

Applicants can contact the complaints service with complaints about Community Grants Hub's service(s) or the application process.

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can lodge complaints using the [complaints form](#) on the Department's website or by phone or mail.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Mail: Complaints  
GPO Box 9820  
Canberra ACT 2601

## Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way DVA or the Community Grants Hub has handled your complaint, you can refer your complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the DVA or the Community Grants Hub.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)

## 12.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the DVA and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer
- has a relationship with an organisation, or in an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives funding under the Program.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to a grant application, you must inform the Hub in writing immediately. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

The chair of the Expert Panel will be made aware of any conflicts of interest and will handle them as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. Conflicts of interest for

Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (Section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. We publish our conflict of interest policy available on the [Community Grant Hub](#) website.

## 12.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

We treat your personal information according to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information and
- who we give your personal information to.

You are required, as part of your application, to declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors you engage to assist with the activity. You must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else if you are given reasonable notice of the disclosure; where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if you have consented to the disclosure.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grantees under the Program in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may reveal confidential information to:

- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes including government administration, research or service delivery and according to Australian laws, including the:

- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Public Service Regulations 1999*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act*

- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Crimes Act 1914*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995.*

The Hub will treat the information you provide as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the four conditions below:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- if revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

The grant agreement will include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

## 12.4 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act)*.

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail:           Freedom of Information Coordinator  
                      The Department of Social Services  
                      Government and Executive Services Branch  
                      GPO Box 9820  
                      Canberra ACT 2601

By email:         [foi@dss.gov.au](mailto:foi@dss.gov.au)

## 13. Glossary

Term	Definition
AAT	Administrative Appeals Tribunal
ATDP - Advocacy Training and Development Program	The ATDP provides training in Military Advocacy, for members of Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) which offer advocacy services to serving and ex-serving members of the armed forces and their dependants.
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting activity, to determine applicant rankings.
Bona fide ESO – Ex-service organisation	<p>A bona fide ex-service organisation is considered to be an organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whose membership consists primarily of veterans, past and present members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and/or their dependants</li> <li>• which is established primarily to provide pensions, advocacy and/or welfare assistance to veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants and</li> <li>• which does not operate as a business or charge any fee for acting on behalf of the veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants in the provision of claims or welfare services.</li> </ul>
commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Commonwealth entity	A Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth.
cost shifting	Involves 'substitution of effort' by the Commonwealth for activities of another organisation or level of government. For example, cost shifting occurs where the Commonwealth provides a grant for an activity that would usually be paid for by a state, territory, or local government, such as municipal services.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date in which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
double dipping	Double dipping occurs where a grantee is able to obtain a grant for the same project or activity from more than one source.
DVA	Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant. Eligibility criteria may apply in addition to assessment criteria.
ESO	Ex-Service Organisation – a volunteer organisation established to support serving and ex-serving members of the defence forces and their dependents.
ESO Practitioner	Refers to both Military Compensation and Welfare Advocates.

Term	Definition
ESORT	Ex-Service Organisation Round Table - This forum comprises senior representatives of the Repatriation Commission, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and ESOs. The forum is intended to enhance the capacity of the Commissions to address issues of strategic importance to the ex-service and defence communities and assist in setting strategic directions for the medium to long term.
grant	A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) under which relevant money or other Commonwealth Revenue Fund money, is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth</li> <li>b) which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ul>
grant activity	Is the project /tasks /services that the Grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the Grant Agreement.
grant agreement	A grant agreement is the contract template used by Australian Government entities to set out the mutual obligations relating to the provision of the grant. The Australian Government is standardising and streamlining grant agreements between the Commonwealth and grantees to allow grantees to engage more easily and efficiently with the Commonwealth.
grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.

Term	Definition
grant program	May be advertised within the 'Forecast Opportunity' (FO) section of GrantConnect to provide a consolidated view of associated grant opportunities and provide strategic context for specific grant opportunities.
grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant (including sponsors).
MRCA	<i>Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004</i>
PBS Program	Described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS). PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
selection criteria	Comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
selection process	The method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
SRCA	<i>Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence Related Claims) Act 1988</i>
TIP - Training and Information Program	TIP provided training for Compensation and Welfare advocates prior to the commencement of the ATDP.
VITA - Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc.	VITA provides access to professional indemnity insurance at an affordable cost for members of ex-service organisations

Term	Definition
	(ESOs) and incorporated groups who provide advice and advocacy services to members of the ex-service community about government pensions, benefits and community support services.
VEA	<i>Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986</i>
VRB – Veterans Review Board	The VRB is a tribunal created by Parliament to review decisions about disability pensions, war widow(er)'s pensions, and attendant allowance under the <i>Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA)</i> ; and rehabilitation, compensation and other benefits under the <i>Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)</i> .

# 14. Appendix A: Summary of Eligible and Ineligible BEST Expenses

## **Salary Expenses**

Eligible salary expenses only include the base salary component for:

- Administrative Assistants – involved in the provision of support for compensation advocates
- Compensation Advocates – may also be known as Pension Officer, Case Officer or Advocate.

Ineligible salary expenses include:

- Salaries for welfare advocates
- Salary related payments/expenses, including:
  - Honoraria/Volunteer Expenses
  - Work Cover
  - Salary On-costs such as superannuation, leave entitlements, leave loadings.

## **Equipment and Administration Expenses**

Two categories of administrative expenses are eligible for grants. These categories, and the items which fall within these categories, are listed below.

All requested items must clearly address the Program Objectives in order to be considered eligible for funding.

### Equipment Expenses

Computer equipment related to compensation and welfare advocacy work.

- Desktop, laptop (each with 3 year warranty), DVD burner, printer, Multi-Function Device (MFD), Fax Machine, scanner, surge protector, computer network equipment.

Computer Software:

- Anti-virus and security software annual licence, Microsoft Version Upgrades (with DVA approval), application tools (e.g. MS Office), fire wall software. Note: ESOs are entitled to purchase education versions of software.

Office Equipment and Office Furniture:

- Filing cabinet, desk and chair, meeting table, visitor chairs, bookcase.

Reference Material:

- Related reference books and medical information that is available via print and online (e.g. MIMS).

### Administration Expenses

Internet Infrastructure:

- Based on network setup, number of stand-alone PCs, laptops, wireless for laptops being used remotely. Internet modems for Dial Up, Broadband and wireless.

#### Internet Access:

- Establishment fees and ongoing access costs.

#### Office Supplies:

- General stationery, postage, paper, toner, ink, folders, tapes, cleaning products, read/write DVDs, brochure holder, flash drives.

#### Telephone Costs:

- Landline and mobile phone calls related to the provision of pension and welfare services.

#### Travel:

- Reimbursement for travel, only within the local area for any of the following reasons; pensions, welfare and advocacy work, travel to nearby VRB and AAT hearings and travel to TIP training courses.
- Travel should be calculated at the rate of cents per kilometre when practitioners use their own motor vehicles (subject to the travel exclusions listed in the Grant Opportunities Guidelines). A Travel Log detailing the kilometres travelled, purpose of journey, date(s) of travel and attributed costs for each journey will be required.

### **Ineligible Items**

You cannot use the grant for the following:

- utility costs covering electricity, gas, water etc.
- the cost of leasing premises (including rent) or purchase of real property
- council rates
- office expenses and fees including insurance, advertising expenses, audit fees and bank fees
- any travel costs beyond the local district where the organisation operates or has its usual place of business
- legal consultation costs, including litigation and
- air conditioning units, televisions or refrigerators.

# 15. Appendix B: Explanation of the BEST Grant Calculation Formula

## Summary of the Funding Formula Used to Calculate Grants

A formula is used to calculate BEST grants. The formula is based on the compensation and welfare work that an organisation has undertaken in the most recent calendar year. The formula has been developed to provide a more transparent, equitable, and repeatable way to calculate grants.

In consultation with the ex-service community, this formula is reviewed following each funding round to ensure that it most effectively meet the aims and objectives of the ESO community and the BEST program.

### Principles Underpinning the Formula

Each applicant's recommended grant is based on the volume and complexity of the work it has done as a percentage of the total amount of work undertaken nationally by all applicants.

A maximum of 60% of available BEST funds are allocated to meet applications for salary funds, with the remaining 40% allocated to claims for administrative funds.

An organisation's entire contribution to assisting the veteran community is recognised by taking into account the work done by both paid and volunteer officers.

Grants to support salary are only available for practitioners providing, and supporting, compensation advocacy. Only workload directly related to claims and appeals will be used in the calculation of these salary grants.

Grants for administrative costs (computer equipment, travel costs etc.) will be available for items supporting both compensation AND welfare work. Grants for these items will therefore be calculated based on an organisation's compensation AND welfare workload.

An amount of supplementary administrative funding, up to \$200,000 will be available for eligible organisations whose workload is overwhelmingly welfare based and/or who received welfare salary support in BEST Round 14.

Regardless of workload, an organisation cannot receive a grant in excess of the amount requested for either salary or administrative costs.

### Workload Ratings

The differences in the complexity of certain types of work, and the variations in the time that needs to be spent on these, is represented by a rating for each relevant type of work. These ratings are as follows:

<b>Type of Work</b>	<b>Workload Rating</b>	<b>Measure Type</b>
Welfare Hour	0.50	Welfare Work
SRCA primary claim	1.0	Compensation Work
VEA primary claim (includes single or multiple conditions)	2.0	

MRCA primary claim (includes single or multiple conditions)	3.0
Multi-Act claims (must include MRCA and cannot also be counted as a MRCA, SRCA or VEA claim)	4.0
Successful VEA S31 claim (includes single or multiple conditions)	2.0
MRCA Internal Reviews	3.0
VRB Appeals	15.0
AAT Appeals	20.0
Service Pensions	3.0
Applications For Increase (AFI)	1.0

An organisation must undertake at least a minimum amount of work (a workload rating of 30) to be eligible to be offered a grant.

#### Grant Calculation

The recommended amount of an organisation's salary and administrative grant is determined by calculating, in the following order:

- separate workload totals for compensation and welfare activity for each applicant, by multiplying the amount of each type of work done with the workload rating for that type of work
- a total national workload figure for salaries by combining all the individual compensation workloads and a total national workload for administrative support by adding the total welfare workloads to the total compensation workload
- each applicant's percentage of the national total workload for both salaries and administrative support
- the organisation's maximum grant amount by applying this percentage to the available national funds for that grant component (salary or administrative) and
- where an organisation has requested less than its maximum grant, excess funds are reallocated across the remaining organisations, this process may need to be repeated a number of times until all funds have been allocated.