



Australian Government

Community
Grants Hub
Improving your grant experience



Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST)

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the BEST grant opportunity.

Overview

The objective of the BEST program is to assist ex-service organisations (ESO) to improve the quality of claims received by DVA at the primary determining level, reduce the rate of appeals to the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and promote the provision of wellbeing services to the veteran and defence community.

The intended outcomes of the program are to deliver projects that:

- 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
- the veteran and defence communities will have access to appropriate compensation and wellbeing advocacy services.

The grant opportunity application period opened on 17 January 2023 and closed on 23 February 2023.

The grant opportunity received 112 applications. Following the decision maker's decision, 109 applications were selected for funding, to a value of \$4.551 million.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand the eligibility criteria and application requirements for this grant opportunity.

Selection process

The Community Grants Hub (Hub) undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This information was then provided to DVA, who provided the final decision on whether an application did not meet the eligibility and/or compliance criteria. DVA assessed and considered all eligible applications using a demand driven model to select the successful providers to deliver the BEST program.

For applications which did not meet the requirements within the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, applicants were notified of this outcome in writing.

The grant amount offered to each eligible applicant was calculated using a formula which was determined in conjunction with the ESO community. The formula was applied uniformly to all eligible applications. If an organisation met the eligibility criteria, they were considered for a grant.

The formula took into account:

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

Following preliminary assessment by DVA using the above formula, all outcomes were referred to a DVA Grants Advisory Committee (GAC), who made funding recommendations to the decision maker. The GAC made recommendations in regards to:

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

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs approved the funding to the successful grant recipients.

Selection results

One hundred and nine organisations were selected to deliver the BEST grant.

The selected organisations demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

General feedback

The successful applications were eligible and met the objectives of the program. As per section 7.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, 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
 - the BEST grant calculation formula.
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Guidance for future BEST grant applications

The following guidance may assist applicants in completing applications for future BEST grant funding.

Read the supporting information before applying

- It is important to read all available information provided about BEST grants when applying for funding, especially the Grant Opportunity documentation provided on the [Hub's website](#) when the round is open
- The grant opportunity documentation is specific to each BEST round and contains important information about the purpose of the program, changes since the previous round, eligibility and compliance requirements, timeframes, and how to apply
- The application form includes helpful information and details on questions relating to mandatory information required by the Hub and DVA for the selection process
- If you're a sponsored organisation, your application must be completed and signed by your sponsoring organisation. A current Letter of Declaration must be signed by both the sponsored and sponsoring organisation, and uploaded as supporting documentation
- As funding is distributed using a formula, the full amount available is shared among all applicants. It is very important that the reporting of workload is consistent among all applicants to ensure the distribution is fair
- Do not include VRB and the AAT appeals referred to other organisations to complete. Many organisations have claimed VRBs and AATs without appropriately qualified CL3 or CL4 Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) advocates. While the outreach work is often initiated at lower levels, the item should only be claimed by the organisation representing the veteran at the Board or Tribunal. This will avoid the same work being counted by 2 applicants and disadvantaging other organisations
- Do not include workload completed by trainee advocates. This workload must be attributed to their ATDP qualified mentor
- When considering your Wellbeing Support hours, the [DVA website](#) provides a Wellbeing Activity Workload Definition.

Eligibility and compliance

To be considered for a grant, you must ensure your application meets the following requirements:

- Check the ATDP register to ensure that advocates recorded on your application are listed in the register with the correct qualification.
- Ensure trainee advocates are recorded in the designated Trainee section of the form and not in the ATDP advocate list.
- You must have an ATDP qualified Wellbeing Advocate to complete the wellbeing activities listed as wellbeing advocacy such as support for funerals, housing/accommodation or assisting with a crisis. Wellbeing support officers provide transport and visit veterans, they can only count the work associated with this support.
- All reported workload is undertaken by practitioners with up-to-date ATDP qualifications.
- When recording advocate workloads, ensure each claim is counted as a single claim regardless of the number of conditions. For example, if a claim is submitted for 6 conditions, record it as one claim only. It is important all applicants use this method to ensure consistency in workload reporting. Please note, the formula takes into consideration the volume and complexity of the work through workload ratings.
- Salary expenses and equipment/administration expenses claimed must be for eligible expenditure as outlined in Appendix A of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.
- Possess professional indemnity insurance available through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc., or a similar insurance provider and be able to provide a current Certificate of Currency as supporting documentation.
- All previous DVA grants have been acquitted (if applicable). We cannot fund applications from an organisation that has overdue acquittals for any previous DVA grant funding at the closing date and time for this grant opportunity.
- An organisation must complete at least 30 compensation or wellbeing workload units to be eligible to be offered a grant. Please see the guidelines for more information.

Eligible entity types

To be eligible, an ESO must have an eligible entity type. If your organisation is not listed as an eligible entity type you may still be eligible to apply under a sponsorship arrangement with another ESO who is an eligible entity type. If you are applying as a sponsored organisation, you must ensure the sponsor completes the application form on your behalf.

Definition of an ESO

To be eligible for the purposes of BEST grants, an ESO is considered to be an organisation:

- whose membership consists primarily of Australian 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 wellbeing assistance to Australian veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants
- which does not operate as a business or charge any fee for acting on behalf of the Australian veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants in the provision of claims or wellbeing services.

Applicant types

ESOs can choose to apply as one of 2 applicant types:

1. an ESO applying in their own right for funding for their own organisation
2. an ESO applying for funding as a sponsoring applicant on behalf of one or more ESOs that may or may not be an eligible entity type.

Applying in your own right

To be eligible to apply in your own right, you must be an ESO and one of the following eligible entity types:

- Company
- Cooperative
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association
- Indigenous Corporation
- Statutory Entity.

If you applied as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust, the Trustee must have an eligible entity type as listed above.

Applying as a sponsoring applicant

Whether or not an ESO has an eligible entity type, another eligible ESO may apply as a sponsor on their behalf. Funding is managed by the sponsoring applicant but any recommended grant amount will be assessed on the basis of the sponsored organisation's activity as provided in the application. A sponsoring applicant may apply on behalf of more than one ESO. The sponsoring applicant must submit a separate grant application for each sponsored organisation.



To be eligible, a sponsoring applicant must be an ESO and one of the following eligible entity types:

- Company
- Cooperative
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association
- Indigenous Corporation
- Statutory Entity.

Responsibilities of a sponsor

The sponsoring applicant's responsibilities are to:

- bear executive management responsibility and be accountable to 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
- take responsibility for the collection, collation and provision of all audit, reporting and acquittal documentation for the grant
- provide the contact information and the contact person for the sponsored organisation in the application where required
- complete a current signed Letter of Declaration on the mandatory template provided.