Families and Children Activity

Budget Based Funded Program Operational Guidelines

Effective 1 July 2021

Version Control

This table confirms timing of revisions and endorsement of these Operational Guidelines.

Version	Changes	Date
1.0	Approved Operational Guidelines	3 May 2021
1.1	• Section 3.2 - Further guidance on adjustment of service areas. • Section 4.1 – Further guidance on obtaining parental consent. • Section 6.1 – removed reference to Review Point in table as this does not relate to BBF providers • Section 8.3 – further guidance on the Data Exchange Partnership Approach requirements. • Section 8.6 – update to program logic information. • Appendix – Outcomes Framework for the Families and Children Activity. Final version inserted.	TBD

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1. Preface

These Operational Guidelines relate to the Budget Based Funded (BBF) program, funded by the Department of Social Services (the department). The primary purpose of the Operational Guidelines is to assist BBF providers to work in a nationally consistent, coordinated and cooperative way. This document outlines the key elements of service delivery and seeks to clarify policy and process questions that may arise during the delivery of the BBF sub-activity.

The Operational Guidelines are a living document. As additional issues arise, and policy clarifications are developed, these will be included in an updated version of these Operational Guidelines. Updates to the Operational Guidelines will be emailed to the program schedule level contact listed in the department's Grant Payment System (GPS).

Please ensure this contact detail is kept up-to-date with your Funding Arrangement Manager (FAM). Copies of the most current Operational Guidelines can be found on the Families and Children Activity pages on the department's website.

BBF providers have a responsibility to ensure they are familiar with all contractual obligations including where these may change as the Operational Guidelines are amended.

BBF providers should engage with their FAM as the first point of contact with the department. The FAM will provide guidance and assist you with reporting, accountability and contractual obligations.

The Operational Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the:

- Budget Based Funded Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement/s
- Commonwealth Standard Grant Conditions (Schedule 1)
- Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement Supplementary Provisions
- Families and Children Administrative Approval Requirements.

2. Families and Children's Activity – Budget Based Funded program

2.1. Overview

BBF is a sub-activity under the Families and Children (FaC) Activity of the Families and Communities Program.

The FaC Activity aims to support families, strengthen relationships, improve the wellbeing of children and young people and increase participation of people in community life to enhance family and community functioning.

The objectives of the Families and Communities Program and the FaC Activity align with objectives in the:

- National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010-2022.

The department strongly encourages service providers to understand these initiatives and their successor plans and consider how the design and delivery of their services can contribute to achieving the intended outcomes.

2.2. Aims and Objectives

The BBF sub-activity contributes to the achievement of the Families and Communities Program. The BBF sub-activity focuses on providing Australian families with flexible, affordable and accessible adjunct care and early learning services. Early learning services should be responsive to the needs of today's families, who do not always work the traditional nine-to-five, five-day working week to ensure that all Australian children are fully prepared for learning and life.

The objective of the BBF sub-activity is:

- the provision of, and availability and access to, quality services for families that both promote positive learning and development outcomes for school readiness and allow parents to access educational and training opportunities.

The expected outcome of the grant activity is:

- to support the delivery of a range of quality services for families in a limited number of approved locations where the market would otherwise fail to deliver services to meet the needs of children and families.

3. Service Delivery

3.1. Service Areas

Grant recipients must deliver BBF services in the service areas specified in their grant agreements. Grant recipients cannot change their service areas without prior written agreement from the department.

Grant recipients may be able to vary their service areas to meet changing demands in consultation and agreement with the department. Grant recipients are encouraged to monitor demographic changes in their broader region and discuss varying their service areas with the department if this helps address an emerging need that is not met in an area. The department may ask grant recipients to vary their existing service areas to meet changing demands.

Each service area has a geographical boundary based on the Australian Statistical Geographical Standard. If the organisation seeks to change the boundary of a service area, the department expects the grant recipient to be able to meet the cost of delivering BBF services in the revised area within the funding provided.

In accordance with grant agreement requirements, BBF providers must advise the department of their outlet locations in service areas within three months of the execution of their grant agreements. Thereafter, providers must advise the department of any changes to outlet locations annually through the AWP Report.

In summary:

- changes to service areas cannot occur without prior written agreement from the department; and
- changes to outlet locations within service areas can be adjusted as required by the organisation and updates reported annually through the AWP Report.

Grant recipients are required to deliver services to clients from outside service areas when they present to services. Grant recipients should consider the most appropriate type of service delivery to these clients (for example, referral or standard service delivery) by considering questions such as:

- What is in the best interest of the client in the longer term?
- Is there another provider, or appropriate community service, that could support the client?
- What is the grant recipient's capacity to service the client and what impact, if any, could this have on servicing participants from within the service area?
- What are the barriers to support the client? (for example, will service delivery staff have to travel long distances to service the client; will the client receive the quality of service expected; would the client be better supported by another provider?)

3.2. Flexibility

The department expects service providers, in mutual agreement with the department, to monitor changes in their communities and adjust the services they deliver to meet the changing needs of families and children. The department may ask service providers to vary their existing service type/s to meet changing demands.

If there is identified community need in other areas, service providers can request to adjust their service delivery footprint in order to meet identified need in communities where a BBF (or equivalent) service is unavailable or not accessible to the client/s. In these cases, requests must demonstrate:

- the organisation has sufficient funds to deliver in both new and existing service areas;
- that an expansion of the service area will not result in a reduction in service to the existing client base;
- there are no alternative Commonwealth or state/territory governments funded services, or existing services cannot meet the identified need.

Providers that wish to vary a service area should discuss this with their FAM who can provide advice on how to seek approval for the change.

3.3. Using grant funding

Funding is provided as a contribution to assist with the costs of operating BBF services in approved locations. Funding is not intended to cover the full cost of providing services.

The funding can be used for the following grant activities:

- **Support Services**

Crèches and adjunct care for families that allow parents or carers to access educational and training opportunities or other types of community programs and support. These services provide care and early learning sessions for less than full-time hours. This may include occasional care and other services provided for less than full-time hours.

- **Outside School Hours Care**

Outside School Hours Care services provide After School Care, Before School Care and/or Vacation Care services for primary school-aged children in which enrichment programs such as cultural activities, life skills or sporting activities may be provided.

- **Mobile Services**

Mobile services are where early learning staff travel to visit areas to provide care and early learning sessions and support. This may include vacation care, playgroups, on-farm care, parenting support, toy libraries and parent resource libraries.

Further detail on what is an appropriate use of grant funding can be found at Section 7 of these Operational Guidelines.

3.4. Fees

Service users participating in BBF-funded activities should be able to access these activities free of charge.

Where fees are charged, service providers must liaise with their FAM to seek an exemption from this rule. However clients must not be refused services or referred to other organisations on the basis of incapacity to pay fees.

Where fees are charged, service providers must:

- publically display their fee policy, and
- inform clients of their fee policy.

3.5. Subcontracting

Service providers cannot subcontract any part of their grant activities without the department's prior written consent.

Service providers are responsible for the performance of their obligations under their grant agreements, including in relation to any tasks undertaken by subcontractors.

Requests for departmental consent should first be discussed with the service provider's FAM.

3.6. Collaboration with other agencies and services

Grant recipients must work collaboratively with each other and with relevant government and non-government agencies to provide an integrated suite of local services that address the needs of the target group. To ensure effective integration with appropriate services, grant recipients must build and maintain effective relationships with a broad network of relevant services, which may include:

- other providers under the Families and Communities Program, particularly those funded under the Families and Children Sub-Activity;
- services funded by state and territory governments that service the target group/s;
- Services Australia;
- family support services;
- medical services such as general practitioners;
- mental health services;
- alcohol and other drug services;
- family violence services
- legal assistance services;
- family law courts;
- domestic and family violence services;
- homelessness services;
- education services;
- housing services, and
- any other relevant services, such as financial counselling and health services.

Grant recipients must also abide by the following set of principles that encourages providers to work with local community initiatives (for example Stronger Places Stronger People or other existing collective impact initiatives). Grant recipients are to work in ways that:

- recognise, support and work with community-led change initiatives (in places where they are being or have been established);
- recognise and support local and cultural leaders and governance arrangements;
- support and participate in the design and implementation of community-led change strategy;
- align service provision and communication to the community's strategy, including-community needs, goals and solutions;
- share data, evidence and learnings to improve outcomes for children, families and communities;

- are fair, open and transparent in engaging with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations;
- participate in work that examines the system (beyond programs) to create better outcomes; and
- build relationships, collaboration and leverage investments and impacts.

3.7. Communication and Promotion

Service providers are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information about their services (where relevant) on the [Family Relationships Online website](#).

- For requests to update the Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner Register email practitionerregistration@ag.gov.au.

- For website changes or queries email familylawservices@ag.gov.au.

Providers should list their services on free online community service directories where applicable. The department maintains a [list of service directories](#) that providers should consider. If you think this list should include other directories, please contact your FAM.

The department encourages providers to list their services on local service directories where possible. For example, some local and regional councils maintain online service directories.

The department also encourages service providers to promote their services in multiple locations that families visit and through a variety of mediums that families use. For example, shopping centres, childcare, preschool, medical practices, social media, radio, newspapers etc.

Please refer to the [DSS Communication Policy for Services, Activities and Events](#) for further information on promoting services.

4. Working with Clients

BBF services should identify and target those in the community who are most in need of support including hard-to-reach families. The targeting of services should be underpinned by effective needs assessment and culturally competent practice.

4.1. Client eligibility and accessibility

The BBF program is a universal service that provides prevention, early intervention and support for families, couples, children and individuals.

Some of the key client characteristics may include people:

- who have arrived in Australia in the last five years;
- from a cultural and linguistically diverse background;
- identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- residing in low Socio-Economic Indexes for Area (SEIFA);
- residing in rural or remote areas;
- receiving government payments, pensions allowances and/or cashless debit card holders;
- (and families) who are unemployed, ill, studying and/or experiencing financial distress; and
- unable to access services catering for traditional nine-to-five, five-day working week.

As a general guide, BBF providers should not be working with children and young people without either the involvement of their families, carers or guardians, or their written consent.

It is expected that BBF providers will have their own systems in place to ensure they obtain written consent from parents or guardians to work individually with the child or young person, and can provide evidence of this if requested by the department.

BBF services must be accessible to all eligible families and children in accordance with the following requirements, policies and guidelines (unless otherwise exempted by legislation):

- Families and Children Activity Administrative Approval Requirements (https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/family-support-program/families-and-children-activity-administrative-approval-requirements)
- Access and Equity Policy (https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/information-recipients/access-and-equity-policy)
- Families and Children Access Strategy Guidelines (https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/family-support-program/families-and-children-access-strategy-guidelines)

BBF services should be responsive to the needs of today's families, who do not always work traditional nine-to-five days or five-day working weeks, and should deliver equitable outcomes.

Service providers must ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity is not a barrier for participants by providing access to language services where appropriate.

Service providers are required to deliver services to participants from outside service areas when they present to services.

4.2. Priority target groups

The child is the primary client for this program where activities either target infant to primary school age children at risk, or where activities assist disadvantaged parents or migrant families with caring responsibilities for children.

The parents of children are also primary clients for this program where activities target training for parents, parental capacity building and family counselling sessions.

4.3. Referral practices

Providers funded under the department's Families and Children Activity must work collaboratively with each other and relevant government and non-government agencies that provide services to families and children.

If a BBF provider lacks capacity or capability to support a client, or thinks a client would benefit from additional types of support, the department expects the provider to offer the client a timely referral to one or more appropriate services. The department expects BBF providers to have accurate knowledge of the services to which they are referring clients, and recommends that providers develop clear referral protocols with one another.

Effective referral practices are critical to minimising service system fragmentation and preventing families and children 'falling through the gaps'. The table at **Appendix A** outlines different types of referral practices.

The department expects that staff who make referrals have or receive the knowledge and skills they need to support families and children to access other services, including negotiating ways to overcome barriers to access, and ensuring cultural competency in their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

The checklist at **Appendix B** may assist staff to make effective referrals.

Service providers must employ and adequately train, support and supervise staff in accordance with their grant agreements and the Families and Children Administrative Approval Requirements.

4.4. Required qualifications

There are no minimum requirements for qualifications of staff required to deliver BBF services. However, service providers are encouraged to employ staff with a range of backgrounds, qualifications, skills and knowledge relevant to the service.

All BBF providers must comply with the relevant State, Territory or Commonwealth law relating to the employment or engagement of people who work or volunteer with children in relation to the Activity, including mandatory reporting and complying with the National Standards for Working with Children Checks.

Service providers must adhere to requirements specified in grant agreements in relation to working with vulnerable persons. More information on the department's policy regarding vulnerable persons, police checks and criminal offences is available on the DSS website.

4.5. Clients Exiting the Service

Participation in BBF services is voluntary and clients may exit the service at a time they choose or as agreed with the service provider. There is an expectation that client information is updated accordingly in the data collection system. In addition, there is an expectation that service providers, when delivering direct services to individuals, will ensure that these clients have adequate alternative supports in place should they require them. This may include additional support they are referred to, family supports and strategies developed to support their needs.

4.6. Refusal of service

Service providers can refuse services, where there are safety concerns, or there is evidence to suggest that participants are not eligible for the BBF service.

4.7. Safety

The safety of all children, young people, their families and carers who visit or work for BBF services is paramount.

Service providers must ensure the safety of their staff and should:

- give their staff clear safety policies and procedures in writing and provide staff with adequate support, training and resources to comply with those policies and procedures; and
- report critical incidents to the department (refer to Section9.7).

5. Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for organisations to adopt child safe practices including appropriate screening of staff, mandatory reporting and adoption of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles).

In response, the Australian Government introduced the *Commonwealth Child Safe Framework* (the Framework), a whole-of-government policy that sets minimum standards for creating and embedding a child safe culture and practice in Commonwealth entities and Commonwealth funded third parties.

In line with clause CB9 of the Supplementary Provisions in your grant agreement, all services funded under the Budget Based Funded activity must ensure activities conducted comply with the National Principles and other action for the safety of children, and relevant checks and authority. Under this clause, you are required to:

- submit an annual Statement of Compliance stating you have implemented the National Principles;
- complete an updated risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for children and level of risk of harm to children;
- have an updated risk management strategy; and
- provide training and a compliance regime.

It is the organisation's responsibility to understand their requirements and evidence their compliance with the National Principles.

Further information on the National Principles and providers' obligations is available on the [National Office for Child Safety website](#) and the Australian Human Rights Commission's [Child Safe Organisations website](#).

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions relating to DSS funded organisations are available on the [DSS website](#). Any additional questions regarding the Statement of Compliance Process should be directed to your FAMs.

6. Governance and Support

The department expects providers to have an effective governance framework that includes:

- explicit information on roles, responsibilities, rights, and remuneration;
- procedures for quality assurance, risk management and issues management;
- procedures for supervision, performance management and information management;
- financial systems that support effective management and accountability; and
- clear effective arrangements for internal control and transparent decision making.

6.1. Support available to providers

This table outlines sources of support for different aspects of the BBF grant activity:

Topic	Support
Grant agreement	• FAM
Activity Work Plan (AWP)	• AWP templates and guidance (https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programs-services-parenting-families-and-children-activity/families-and-children-activity-work-plan-reports) • FAM
Data Exchange	• Data Exchange Training Resources (https://dex.dss.gov.au/training) • Data Exchange Helpdesk (https://dex.dss.gov.au/helpdesk/) • FAM
Program logic and theory of change	• FAM • Families and Children AIFS Evidence and Evaluation Support (https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/expert-panel-project)
Planning, implementing and evaluating grant activities	• Families and Children AIFS Evidence and Evaluation Support (https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/expert-panel-project)
Grant Recipient Portal	• Community Grants Hub (https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/contact)
General feedback on policy	• FAM

Topic	Support
Complaints	- DSS Feedback and Complaints (https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries) - FAM

6.2. Compliance with Activity requirements

All BBF service providers must comply with the Families and Children Administrative Approval Requirements. The Families and Children Administrative Approval Requirements is a departmental policy that sets out mandatory service standards for key aspects of service design and delivery including, but not limited to, governance, financial management, staffing, accessibility and safety.

7. Funding

7.1. Eligible and ineligible expenses

Grant funding may be used for:

- staff salaries and on-costs that can be directly attributed to the provision of BBF services in the identified service area/s as per the grant agreement
- training for paid and unpaid staff including Committee and Board members that is relevant, appropriate and in line with the Families and Children Activity and BBF services.
- operating and administration expenses directly related to the delivery of BBF services, such as:
  - telephones
  - rent and outgoings
  - computer / IT / website / software
  - insurance
  - utilities
  - postage
  - stationery and printing
  - accounting and auditing
  - travel/accommodation costs
  - materials and equipment, including assets as defined in the Standard Supplementary Provisions, that can be reasonably attributed to meeting deliverables in the grant agreement
  - evaluation costs
  - marketing BBF services.

Grant funding cannot be used for:

- purchase of land
- paying retrospective costs
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- major construction/capital works
- overseas travel
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

The Commonwealth Standard Grant Conditions for BBF services set out clauses on spending, reporting and repaying grant funding.

7.2. Funding innovation

The department encourages service providers to pursue innovative ideas to enhance service delivery outcomes. Service providers may utilise up to 10 per cent of their grant funding for undertaking an innovative program/activity or development of innovative concepts in consultation and agreement with the department.

7.3. Long-term sustainability

The department encourages service providers to actively plan and develop strategies to ensure long-term sustainability. Providers are encouraged to explore opportunities to reduce reliance on Government support through increased inter-organisational collaboration, and by identifying supplementary sources of funding through partnerships with business and philanthropy.

8. Reporting

8.1. Data reporting

BBF service providers must have systems in place to allow them to meet the data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their grant agreement.

FAMs monitor and evaluate program performance to ensure activities and service providers have a focus on outcomes for their clients.

8.2. Data Exchange

Service providers are required to report client data and service delivery information for all clients of BBF services in accordance with the Data Exchange Protocols (https://dex.dss.gov.au/data-exchange-protocols/) and BBF specific guidance in the Program Specific Guidance for Commonwealth Agencies in the Data Exchange (https://dex.dss.gov.au/document/466).

The Data Exchange Protocols provides operational guidance to users of the Data Exchange. The Program Specific Guidance for Commonwealth Agencies assists managers and front-line staff to understand the data they must report in the Data Exchange for BBF.

The department publishes fact sheets, task cards, webinars and e-learning modules on the Data Exchange website to help service providers set up and perform different functions in the Data Exchange (https://dex.dss.gov.au/training).

For additional support, service providers can contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk (https://dex.dss.gov.au/helpdesk/).

8.3. Data Exchange Partnership Approach

Service providers are required to participate in the Data Exchange Partnership Approach. By participating, service providers report client and community outcomes for clients of BBF services and receive access to additional self-service reports. The department requires service providers to report outcomes using its Standard Client/Community Outcomes Reporting (SCORE) framework, which is a methodology for standardised reporting of outcomes data. Please note the department does **not** require BBF providers to report extended demographics data (e.g. household composition, education, employment status, income, etc.) under the DEX partnership approach, but providers may choose to do so for their own purposes.

For further information on the Partnership Approach and SCORE, please refer to the Data Exchange Protocols (https://dex.dss.gov.au/data-exchange-protocols/)

For further information on the requirements of the Data Exchange Partnership Approach for BBF providers, please refer to the Data Exchange Partnership Approach Fact Sheet.

For additional support, service providers can contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk (https://dex.dss.gov.au/helpdesk/).

8.4. Guidance on measuring client and community outcomes

The department encourages all service providers to use validated outcomes measurement tools to measure client and community outcomes.

A 'validated tool' is an instrument that has been formally evaluated and psychometrically tested for:

- reliability (the ability of the instrument to produce consistent results)
- validity (the ability of the instrument to produce true results)
- sensitivity (the probability of correctly identifying a client with the condition).

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has published an article outlining how to choose an outcomes measurement tool (https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/2016/04/14/how-choose-outcomes-measurement-tool). The article includes links to established tools for measuring child and family outcomes.

The department has developed a Translation Matrix to help organisations convert results from commonly used outcomes measurement tools into SCORE data (https://dex.dss.gov.au/document/121). The Translation Matrix also contains a generic template that service providers can use to translate proprietary outcomes measurement tools or tools that they have developed internally into SCORE data.

For additional support, service providers can contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk (https://dex.dss.gov.au/helpdesk/).

8.5. Activity Work Plans (AWP) and AWP reports

The AWP is a mandatory document that all providers must complete in consultation and agreement with the department. Using the 'standardised AWP template' on the department's website, providers must set out deliverables, timeframes, measures of achievement, grant expenditure and other key requirements of their grant agreements that they plan to complete within a period of time specified in the AWP template. The department expects AWPs to align with the Outcomes Framework for the FaC Activity at **Appendix C**.

Once mutually agreed, the AWP forms part of the grant agreement. Providers must report progress against their AWPs annually as specified in their grant agreements. Your FAM is usually authorised to approve the AWP and AWP report on behalf of the department.

The AWP is a living document that providers can update at any time in consultation and agreement with the department.

Providers can download the AWP template for BBFs from the Families and Children Activity Work Plan Reports webpage on the DSS website The webpage also has a guidance document to assist providers develop their AWPs.

The department uses information in AWPs to better understand the activities and progress of individual providers as well as broader trends within and across programs. FAMs use AWPs to understand the progress of grant activities and facilitate

conversations with providers about service delivery. Policy teams read AWPs to identify common themes and issues to inform future policy development.

8.6. Program logics and theories of change

Providers will be required to develop a program logic for each funded activity.

A template for program logics and theories of change is available on the DSS website at [Families and Children Activity – Program logic requirements for FaC service providers.](#)

The first draft of program logics will be required by 31 March 2022, followed by a final version in June 2023.

Additional guidance and supporting information will be provided to assist with this process.

8.7. Financial acquittal reports

Service providers are required to submit a financial declaration for each financial year in their grant agreements. The financial declaration is a certification from the service provider stating that funds were spent for the purpose provided as outlined in the grant agreement and in-which the service provider must declare any unexpended funds. The financial declaration must be certified by your Board, the Chief Executive Officer or other officer with appropriate authority to verify that grant funding has been spent in accordance with the grant agreement.

Please refer to your grant agreement to ensure you meet the stipulated timeframes.

Further information on financial declarations can be found at https://www.dss.gov.au/grants/information-for-grant-recipients/financial-declaration on the department's website.

8.8. Unexpended funds

The department expects grant funding to be fully expended in the financial year in which it is allocated.

If service providers do not expend all grant funding received in a financial year, the department will either approve a roll-over of the funds for use in the next financial year or recover the funds. FAMs will liaise with providers on the treatment of unexpended funds after the department has reviewed financial acquittal reports.

9. Grant Administration

9.1. Grant recipients' responsibilities and accountabilities under the Activity

In entering into a grant agreement with the department, the grant recipient must comply with all requirements outlined in the suite of documents that comprise the agreement including:

- the Supplementary terms and conditions outlined in the grant agreement;
- the Commonwealth standard terms and conditions at Schedule 1 of the grant agreement;
- the Families and Children Program Guidelines; and
- these Operational Guidelines.

Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring:

- the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted
- highest standards of duty of care are applied
- services are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all state and territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal and equitable access to services
- they work collaboratively to deliver the program, and
- they contribute to the overall development and improvement of the program such as sharing best practice.

9.2. Other key requirements, policies, information & factsheets

All service providers must comply with the:

- [Families and Children Programme Guidelines Overview](#), which providers overarching guidance for all programs under the Families and Children Activity, including BBF.

- [Families and Children Administrative Approval Requirements](#), which are a set of quality service standards, covering the key risk areas of governance, financial management, viability, people, performance management and issues management.

The following policies on the DSS and Community Grants Hub websites also apply to BBF:

- [Access and Equity Policy](#)
- [Communication Policy for Services, Activities and Events](#)
- [Complaints Process for Grant Recipients](#)
- [Grant Recipient Complaints and Whistleblower Provisions](#)
- [National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy](#)
- [Online Safety](#)

- Vulnerable Persons, Police Checks and Criminal Offences

The Community Grants Hub website also has some helpful factsheets for service providers:

- Factsheet on business processes
- Factsheet on strategic planning
- Factsheet on workforce design

The department strongly encourages service providers to visit the Australian Institute of Family Studies' Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) webpage for free research and information for service providers that work in the child, family and community welfare sector.

9.3. Privacy

In accordance with the grant agreement general conditions, all BBF services must comply with their obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act).

9.4. Grant Recipient Portal

The Grant Recipient Portal is a platform where grant recipients interact with the department's systems and services to self-manage their grant information. The Portal has been designed to make grant management simple and easy. The Portal allows grant recipients to:

- access their grants information in one place
- view their activities and milestones
- download copies of their payment advices
- update their organisational details and adding additional organisational users
- update their organisation's bank account details
- submit financial acquittals
- submit Activity Work Plans.

The department encourages all grant recipients to use the Grant Recipient Portal. For further information on accessing and using the Portal, please visit the Community Grants Hub website or contact the Community Grants Hub.

9.5. Complaints

BBF service providers must manage complaints in accordance with the minimum standards of the Families and Children Activity Administrative Approval Requirements. Providers should also maintain appropriate whistle blower provisions.

The department expects service providers to make their complaints policies and processes readily available to staff, participants and the public. A complaints policy should include options for escalation both within an organisation and to the department if necessary (e.g. a participant is unhappy with a provider's handling of their complaint). The department expects providers to inform participants of their right to lodge complaints directly to the department via the DSS Feedback and Complaints webpage.

A complaint made by a participant should not adversely affect the relationship between a service provider and the participant.

Please refer to the following webpages for further information:

- [DSS Feedback and Complaints](#) processes
- [Grant Recipient Complaints and Whistle-blower Provisions](#)
- [Contacting DSS](#).

9.6. Hot Issues and Media

Demand for, and increased public, media or political interest/scrutiny will periodically spike due to a variety of issues, including:

- something that is of interest to the target group;
- launches of new initiatives; and
- parliamentary proceedings, including senate estimate hearings and question time.

Identifying these issues and sharing the information with the department will enable more proactive service delivery responses.

Service providers must also alert the department of any less urgent issues, particularly where they affect services to clients.

The department must be informed if service providers are planning to engage with the media. It is important that the department is made aware in advance of what issues will be raised as this will allow the department time to prepare for any follow-up enquiries and/or to brief relevant stakeholders as necessary. For further information, please refer to the [DSS Communication Policy for Services, Activities and Events](#).

9.7. Critical Incidents

BBF service providers must notify the department of critical incidents *as soon as possible* within 48 hours of incidents occurring or within 48 hours of becoming aware of incidents.

To notify the department, a service provider must complete the [critical incident reporting template](#) on page 4-6, which is available on the department's website, and email it to their FAM. The service provider should telephone their FAM to advise the email is coming, and should confirm the department has received the email via telephone or an email read receipt.

[The Critical incident reporting guideline](#) includes guidance, a checklist, examples of critical incidents and factors to consider when reporting a critical incident. The department expects all service providers to be familiar with the critical incident reporting template.

> Reports to DSS should only be prepared after immediate duty of care and reporting requirements have been addressed. For example, if someone is in immediate danger please call 000. If an incident is a matter for police or child protection, liaison and resolution with these authorities is always the priority.

10. Glossary

Activity Work Plan (AWP) – is the document that details the activities that will be implemented under the Grant Agreement.

Clients – a client is an individual who receives or has received support or assistance from a service funded by a BBF provider.

The department – The Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

Families and Children (FaC) Activity - is delivered under the Families and Communities Program and aims to support families, strengthen relationships, improve the wellbeing of children and young people and increase participation of people in community life to enhance family and community functioning.

Families and Communities Program – provides a range of services, focused on strengthening relationships, support families, improve wellbeing of children and young people, reduce the cost of family breakdown, strengthen family and community functioning and facilitate the settlement of migrants and humanitarian entrants into the community.

Funding arrangement manager (FAM) (formerly called grant agreement manager) – departmental officer responsible for the ongoing management of the grant recipient and their compliance with the grant agreement.

11. Appendices

11.1. Appendix A – Referral practice table

A provider's choice of referral practice will depend on a client's needs, what arrangements have been agreed with the service/s to which the client is to be referred and the capacity of both the provider and the service/s to which the client is to be referred. The department encourages service providers to use facilitated, warm and/or active referral processes whenever possible.

Possible term	Characteristics	Possible advantages and disadvantages
Passive referral	The client is given contact information for one or more other services and is left to make their own contact at a time that best suits the client.	This process gives responsibility to the client to take action on their own behalf. There is a greater likelihood that the client will not follow through with the referral if, for example, they lack confidence. The client may feel let down by the service and less inclined to reach out for help again.
Cold referral	The client is transferred to another service without any immediate communication between the referring organisation and the service. For example, the client is transferred to a call centre queue.	The other service may be unaware of the nature of the call or any information or services that the client has already received. The client may be frustrated that they have to re-tell their story and may not communicate their needs in a way that helps the other service understand why the client has been referred.
Facilitated referral	The referring organisation helps the client access another service. For example, the referring organisation makes an appointment with another service on the client's behalf or asks the other service to contact the client.	The other service is made aware of the client and the client is helped to access that service. The client may need to wait for a response from the other service. There is a risk that the other service forgets to contact the client.
Active referral	The referring organisation helps the client access another service. With the client's consent, the referring organisation shares information it has collected about the client and/or its professional assessment of the	The client does not need to repeat all of their story and the service to which the client is referred has relevant information about the client. There is a risk that the referring organisation communicates the client's information in such a way that it is misinterpreted by the service receiving the referral.

| Possible term	Characteristics	Possible advantages and disadvantages
	client's needs with another service.	
Warm referral	The referring organisation and the client contact another service together (e.g. in person, by telephone or virtual meeting, etc.). The referring organisation introduces the client, explains what has already been done to assist the client and why the client is being referred.	This provides an open and transparent process in which information can be exchanged between the referring organisation, the client and the other service. All parties can clarify issues immediately and the client does not need to repeat all of their story. The client may feel more comfortable and be more willing to engage with the other service. This process relies on someone at the other service being available to talk with the referring organisation and the client when they contact the other service.

11.2.   Appendix B – Referrals checklist

The following checklist may assist staff to make effective referrals:

- I understand the client's situation and perceived needs.
- The client and I have discussed how to prioritise their needs and what options exist to help address their needs.
- The client is willing and ready to be referred.
- I have discussed what issues might make it difficult for the client to follow through with the referral.
- I am comfortable the service to which I am referring the individual is an appropriate service.
- To assist the client in attending a referral appointment, I have discussed issues such as:
  - Name, phone number, and address of the referral service.
  - Directions and transportation to and from the service appointment.
  - What the client can expect upon arrival at the service, along with the nature, purpose and value of the referral.
  - Written material about the service (if available).

Some additional points for staff to consider are:

- I have considered whether a facilitated, warm or active referral would be desirable, based on the client's:
  - ability to negotiate complex social situations
  - ability to provide and receive information
  - ability to tolerate waiting
  - level of ambivalence about seeking help
  - interpersonal style (e.g. passive or argumentative)
- If the referral is a passive or cold referral, I have provided sufficient information and 'coaching' to help make the referral successful.
- (Where appropriate) I have made a plan to follow up with the client to see how things went and to determine next steps.

11.3. Appendix C - Outcomes Framework for the Families and Children Activity
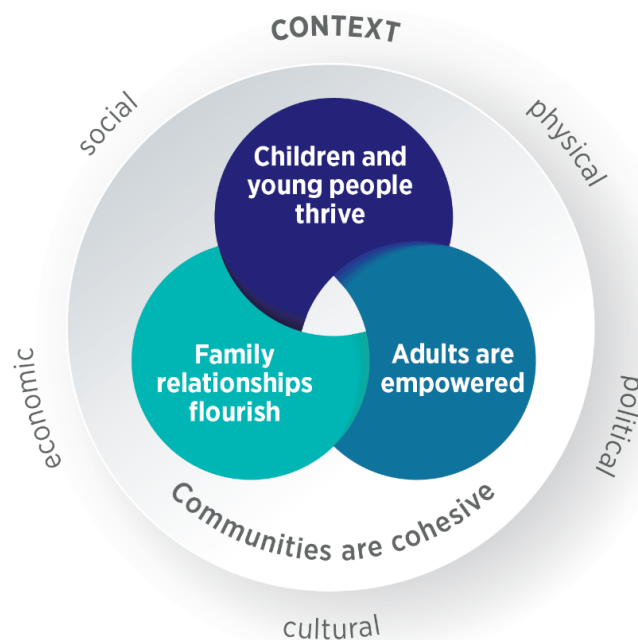
AIM: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE

OUTCOMES:
Positive mental health and wellbeing
Increased resilience
Positive relationships
Safe at home and in the community
Strong connections to social supports and community
Strong connection to culture
Greater participation in decision making
Positive development
Positive engagement in education and training

AIM: FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS FLOURISH
OUTCOMES:
Positive parenting/caregiver practice
Positive caregiver–child relationship
Respectful relationships
Family cohesion
Effective conflict management

AIM: ADULTS ARE EMPOWERED

OUTCOMES:
Positive mental health and wellbeing
Increased resilience
Positive relationships
Safe at home and in the community
Strong connections to social supports and community
Strong connection to culture
Greater participation in decision making
Sense of self-efficacy and confidence

AIM: COMMUNITIES ARE COHESIVE
OUTCOMES:
Communities are safe
Communities are inclusive
Communities understand issues facing children, young people and families
All community members are able to participate in decision making
Services are accessible and appropriate
Services are safe and inclusive
Services work together to support families

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY FAMILY?
A family can be made up of anyone a person considers to be their family. Families can include children, but they may not. Family members contribute significantly to the wellbeing of each other and play essential roles in supporting each other through life's transitions, stresses and celebrations.

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY CONTEXT?
The context is the physical, social, cultural, economic and political environment that clients are located within. It can influence the extent to which clients' basic needs, such as stable housing and food security, are met and, in turn, can affect their ability to engage consistently and effectively with services.