



Families and Children Activity

July 2021 grant extensions

When will I know if my organisation will receive an offer for an extension of funding?

At the end of November 2020, the Department of Social Services (the department) notified in-scope service providers about funding extensions commencing on 1 July 2021 for the following programs:

Five-year grant extensions to 30 June 2026 for:

- Communities for Children Facilitating Partners (CfC FPs)
- Family and Relationship Services (FaRS)*
- Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) and
- five national Children and Parenting Support (CaPS) providers

* Future funding arrangements for FaRS Specialised Family Violence Services who have funding until 30 June 2022 will be considered under the next National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

Two-year grant extensions to 30 June 2023 for other providers delivering CaPS or Budget Based Funded (BBF) services.

On 26 March 2021, the department emailed a letter to eligible service providers notifying them of the intent to offer an extension to their funding. If your organisation has not received this letter and you believe it should have, you should contact families@dss.gov.au or your Funding Arrangement Manager.

Grant agreements for each provider are currently being developed. A formal letter of offer is expected to be sent to organisations from the end of April 2021.

Why isn't the department extending all funding agreements by five years?

Two-year extensions for providers of CaPS and BBF services will ensure funding certainty and allow time to consult with providers on opportunities for improved collaboration.

Why are only five CaPS services being extended for five years?

These five CaPS services are not delivered on a community basis like other CaPS services. Instead, they are delivered at a national level and may include services delivered online.

Is the funding extension being offered to all services providers who deliver a service under the Families and Children Activity?

No. While the department continues to support the broader range of services funded under the Families and Children Activity, the extension applies only to the in-scope programs identified above.

Ongoing grant arrangements and funding for the following activities is being managed separately and is out of scope of this extension process.

- Children and Parenting one-off or time limited services
- Intensive Family Support Services
- The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)
- Adult Specialist Support Services
 - Find and Connect
 - Forced Adoption Support Services
- Royal Commission Community Based Support Services
- Some Family and Relationship Services including:
 - Intercountry Adoption Support Services
 - Specialised Family Violence Services which have funding until 30 June 2022 and where future funding will be considered under the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.
 - Family Law Services (which transitioned to the Attorney General's Department on 1 July 2020)
- Youth Homelessness Reconnect

Why does my grant agreement look different and why does it have different terms and conditions?

The offer of extended funding will require transition to the Standard Commonwealth Grant Agreement, Terms and Conditions and Supplementary Terms and Conditions for some providers. This is to bring funding arrangements in line with standardised administrative arrangements for Commonwealth grants.

Further information about government grants administration can be found on the Australian Government Department of Finance website at [Commonwealth grants | Department of Finance](#).

Can my organisation apply for additional funding?

No. The funding amount will remain consistent with current funding levels, providing continuity of service provision.

Annual indexation will be applied for the funded activities.

Will my organisation continue to receive SACS payments?

If your organisation is receiving funding under this extension process and SACS applies to your current grant, an equivalent amount of SACS (plus indexation) will be provided as part of your base funding in your grant commencing from 1 July 2021.

In the 2020-21 Budget, the government announced \$132.6 million from 2021-22 to support social services impacted by the legislated cessation of the Social and Community Services Special Account.

Will I be able to roll over unexpended funds into the new grant agreement?

The Supplementary Terms and Conditions at CB27 of the grant agreement provides for the rollover of surplus and uncommitted funds in accordance with normal processes.

If you have questions regarding this process, please contact your Funding Arrangement Manager.

Is there anything new in my funding agreement?

Yes. Building on previous and current consultation, the department is making changes to some operational requirements under the funding agreements with service providers.

The grant agreements commencing 1 July 2021 incorporate some of the policy and service improvement measures discussed as part of the consultation process, including:

- provider certainty through longer-term grants
- requiring participation in the Data Exchange Partnership Approach
- development of program logics to outline the causal links between the funded activity and intended outcomes
- introduction of an outcomes framework for the Families and Children Activity and
- implementation of a review point to ensure reporting requirements are being met and that grants are achieving their desired outcomes.

The department is committed to ongoing consultation with service providers on the implementation of these measures, including further guidance and support to implement changes.

What support will the department provide, including with reporting requirements under the Data Exchange Partnership Approach?

The department understands that some providers may require support in transitioning to these new reporting requirements and that the support required may differ across the different programs and services across the Families and Children Activity.

The first 12 months under new grant agreements will be a transition period where the department will work with you to resolve any issues or barriers. The department is also developing a package of support, based on the feedback we received through the consultation, which will continue to assist providers who require support.

My service already has a developed program logic and theory of change so do I need to prepare another one?

The department is committed to supporting service providers to undertake this new requirement.

All service providers (with the exception of CfC FP) will be required to develop a program logic for each funded activity. CfC FPs have existing Community Strategic Plans and evidence based program requirements.

If you already have a program logic that adequately shows the causal links between the funded activity and intended outcomes, then this will be sufficient.

A template for program logics and theories of change is being developed by AIFS and is expected to be available later in 2021.

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

Guidance and supporting information will be provided to assist.

Why is the department implementing a review point for activities funded for five-years?

The review point will commence from 1 September 2023. The aim is to undertake an assessment of whether relevant performance standards are being met. Further detail will be provided in Operational Guidelines, but is likely to include SCORE data, client numbers, demographics, program logics and reporting requirements.

The department will work to update the Activity Work Plan template so further context to the DEX data can be provided if needed.

Review points offer an opportunity to check in during grants to see how things are progressing and the department will take into consideration providers differing environments and operating circumstances. There will be opportunities to work collaboratively with providers at the review point.

When will Operational Guidelines be available?

Operational Guidelines are anticipated to be circulated to providers and made publicly available on the [department's website](#) as close as possible to the letter of offer being circulated.

The department is currently updating existing and newly developed Operational Guidelines to address items raised by stakeholders during the consultation process.

Will my service be required to provide a new Activity Work Plan (AWP)?

Yes. The grant extensions will include requirements for AWP. These requirements will be listed in the reporting milestones table of your new grant agreement. The department will provide you with an updated AWP template. The updated AWP templates are anticipated to be circulated to providers and made publicly available on the [department's website](#) in late May/early June 2021.