



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Long Day Care Capital Funding

Exceptional Circumstances Grant Guidelines

2015

Foreword

The Australian Government is committed to supporting child care services to provide quality care and early learning opportunities for all children.

The Child Care Services Support Program (CCSSP) is funded by the Australian Government to support and promote access to quality child care and early learning for children, families and communities through strategies that complement the significant assistance provided to families through Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Child Care Rebate (CCR).

The Community Support Program (CSP) is a part of the CCSSP and includes a range of payments designed to support access to child care for children and families in areas or in circumstances where child care services would not otherwise be available.

The Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant is one of the range of payments available under the CSP.

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1 About the Guidelines

1.1 Purpose of Guidelines

These Guidelines provide the framework for the implementation and administration of Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant and only address issues pertaining to the Grant. These Guidelines must be read in conjunction with the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant Funding Agreement.

The Guidelines include:

- an overview of Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant, including its purpose
- the Department of Social Services expectations of Long Day Care service providers in receipt of the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant, and
- other relevant information pertinent to the successful delivery of Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant.

The Department of Social Services reserves the right to amend these guidelines from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion. Such amendments may be necessary to reflect Australian Government priorities. Social Services Funding Recipients are advised that any changes to the Guidelines and their subsequent effects will be advised online on the [Department of Social Services website](http://www.dss.gov.au) at: www.dss.gov.au.

1.2 Target Audience

Communities or service providers interested in applying for or, in receipt of, the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant.

2 About the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant

2.1 What is the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant?

The Australian Government introduced the *Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant* program to assist rural and remote communities to establish or continue to operate centre-based child care in exceptional circumstances.

The funding involves a one-off discretionary grant to assist rural and remote communities to provide access to centre-based Long Day Care services where there is evidence of market failure and where there is documented unmet demand for centre-based child care. In this context, “exceptional circumstances” are those in which the failure of an existing service provider or the inability of a community to establish a Long Day Care would lead to circumstances where no formal centre-based child care is available to the community.

To be eligible, service providers or community-based groups seeking funding need to be able to demonstrate that they have considered all potentially viable alternative child care options, including non-centre-based care options.

Proposals involving co-location with existing facilities and/or sourcing of other funding streams (such as state government funding) will be prioritised. This recognises the desirability of shared funding responsibilities and the increased scope to deliver more integrated local services for families.

Requests for funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Community Support Program Delegate in the National Office of the Department of Social Services. As the funding available for these grants is limited, it is anticipated that it will not be possible to grant funding to all eligible applicants.

2.2 What is the purpose of the Grant?

The Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant is intended to assist eligible rural and remote communities to:

- expand or extend existing facilities to enable them to continue to operate a centre-based Long Day Care; or
- construct a facility to provide centre-based Long Day Care.

The resultant expansion/construction is intended to assist these communities to meet the local demand for child care and ensure existing services remain viable. The funding will also assist rural and remote communities to develop innovative, place-based solutions such as co-locating child care with the local preschool/school to ensure continued community access to child care.

This grant program ensures the Community Support Programme (CSP) maintains currency with the objectives of the early childhood education and care agenda.

2.3 How much funding is available under the Grant?

A maximum amount of up to **\$500 000.00** (GST Excl) will be available to successful applicants.

No single funding request will be approved for more than \$500 000.

2.4 What may be purchased with the Grant?

The Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant may be used to:

- extend or modify existing community facilities to meet the child care needs of the community, including through the installation of appropriate bathroom facilities, additional learning environments or outdoor play areas
- extend an existing community facility through the co-location of a demountable building
- construct a free-standing child care facility that will create a positive early childhood environment to meet the needs of the local community.

Any modification, extension or construction must meet the relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory licensing regulations required for CCB approved Long Day Care services.

2.5 What must not be purchased with the Grant?

Requests for funding to support the rebuilding of facilities damaged by a man-made or natural disaster (i.e. fire, floods or cyclone) will not be supported if insurance covers these costs, unless otherwise agreed to by the Program Delegate.

The grant must not be used to pay for the following:

- purchase of land unless otherwise agreed by the Department of Social Services
- rent
- employment of staff or staff training requirements
- purchase of televisions or non-educational based gaming equipment
- purchase of audio/visual equipment (e.g. cameras and video cameras)
- insurances, membership fees, or
- purchase of motor vehicles.

2.6 Who is eligible for the Grant?

Eligible applicants must be:

- located in an area identified as 'Outer Regional', 'Remote' or 'Very Remote' as determined by the Department of Social Services using the Accessibility and Remoteness Index Australia (ARIA Plus)
- have an existing or intending sole provider of centre-based Long Day Care in an area of need identified by the Department of Social Services, where there is evidence of market failure

- facing difficulties in extending/expanding their facilities to operate centre-based Long Day Care, with documented evidence of unmet demand for centre-based Long Day Care in that area
- eligible for Long Day Care Sustainability Assistance funding under the CSP; and
- CCB approved or eligible to be CCB approved.

2.7 Who will not be eligible for funding under the Grant?

Applications to receive funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant will not be accepted in cases where:

- there is an existing centre-based Long Day Care service in the area
- a prospective applicant would not be eligible to receive Long Day Care Sustainability Assistance Funding under the CSP
- a service in the area has previously received capital funding from the Australian Government under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Program
- the area is classified as “Inner Regional” or “Major City” on ARIA PLUS.

2.8 How can applicants apply for funding under the Grant?

Communities or service providers with demonstrated difficulty establishing or continuing to operate centre-based Long Day Care with demonstrated unmet demand for centre-based Long Day Care may apply for consideration for capital funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant.

The first step is to contact the relevant State or Territory Office of the Department of Social Services to discuss whether exceptional circumstances exist.

Following discussion with the State or Territory Office of the Department of Social Services, an application for funding may be made in writing to Department of Social Services. This must include:

- an outline of the current provision of child care in the area
- the difficulties experienced in establishing or expanding child care in the area including evidence of viability or unmet demand
- options considered and explored prior to applying for the grant
- an outline of the proposal to continue the operation of or to establish child care in the area including the existing community facilities that will be used, the expected cost and timeframe for completion
- any interim strategies identified for the provision of child care; and
- all potential funding sources explored, together with information on other funding and the type of support they are offering.

This application for funding should be sent to the Child Care Business Manager in the relevant State and Territory Office of Department of Social Services. If the Child Care Business Manager supports the request for funding they will inform the applicant and may request other additional information, if required.

The Child Care Business Manager will then complete the Template at: **8. Request for funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant** and attach the applicant's documentation (the 'application'), before forwarding it to National Office for consideration.

If the Child Care Business Manager does not support the application, s/he will contact the applicant and explain why the application is not supported.

All requests for funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant will be considered by the National Office Program Delegate for the Community Support Program.

The process for approval of funding under the program is specified at **3.1, How will a request for funding under the Grant be progressed?**

Further information about applying for funding under this grant, contact the Department on 1300 653 227 and request the child care office in your State or Territory.

3 The process for assessing a request for funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant

3.1 What is the role of the Department of Social Services in assessing requests for funding under the Grant?

Departmental Officers of the Department of Social Services are based in National Office in Canberra and in each State and Territory. In conjunction with National Office, officers in each State and Territory Office administer the funding under the Community Support Program by:

- assessing and approving a service provider's eligibility for funding
- negotiating, offering and finalising funding agreements
- calculating and processing payments to service providers
- monitoring service provider performance including compliance with the reporting requirements in a funding agreement and with the relevant child care legislation
- reviewing a service provider's ongoing eligibility for funding
- conducting site visits; and
- managing relations with service providers which may include issues management relating to debt recovery, requests for variations and requests for funding in exceptional circumstances.

The National Office Program Branch Manager is responsible for considering any issues that are non-standard including issues classified as being 'exceptional'. The State and Territory Office is responsible for making an initial assessment in relation to a request from a service provider or community in respect of exceptional circumstances.

3.2 How will National Office be advised of an application?

If the State and Territory Office Child Care Business Manager supports an application as falling within these Guidelines, s/he will:

- 1) contact the National Office and advise of the possible issue
- 2) complete an **Initial Request for funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant** at **8**, outlining the exceptional circumstances of the service provider/community and attach the supporting documentation provided by the service provider/community; and
- 3) forward the application for funding to National Office for initial consideration by the Program Delegate.

3.3 How will an application for funding ‘in exceptional circumstances’ be progressed?

Applications for funding in ‘exceptional circumstances’ will be assessed through a three stage process:

1. Consideration of initial application
2. In-principle agreement and offer of funding (if supported)
3. Agreement and formal offer of funding (if supported).

As the funding available is limited, it is anticipated that not all eligible applications may receive a Grant.

1. Consideration of application.

National Office will assess the application, the attached supporting documentation and the form referred to at **3.2 (2)**, for funding under ‘exceptional circumstances’. This will include determining whether the circumstances outlined in the application meets the circumstances specified at **2.1** and **2.6**, i.e.:

- in relation to a sole provider of approved centre-based Long Day Care service or the establishment of such a service
- in an area identified as ‘Outer Regional’, ‘Remote’ or ‘Very Remote’ as determined by Department of Social Services using the Accessibility and Remoteness Index Australia (ARIA Plus)
- with evidence of market failure and documented unmet demand for centre-based child care
- where without assistance there would be no formal centre-based child care available to the community
- other options for child care have been excluded for outlined reasons
- all potentially viable alternative child care options, including non-centre-based care options have been considered; and
- the proposed option involves co-location with existing facilities and/or sourcing of other funding streams (such as state government funding).

If the National Office Program Delegate agrees the application has merit and is worth progressing, the applicant will be advised that National Office has given **in-principle agreement** to its request.

If the National Office Program Delegate decides not to progress the application, the applicant will be advised by phone and in writing that their application has not received in-principle support and the reasons for this decision. The process will proceed no further.

In-principle agreement and initial offer of funding:

If required, applicants with in-principle agreement for their proposal may be offered a first stage funding offer agreement, to enable them to seek and provide:

- a. formal quotes from contractors
- b. architectural plans
- c. a financial viability assessment of the proposed service
- d. data to support the expected utilisation
- e. a proposed timeframe for completion of the activity including a start date, completion dates for each stage of development and an end date
- f. information about the management committee including, qualifications, experience, roles and responsibilities
- g. a risk analysis.

NB: The specific documentation required and the amount of first stage funding (if any) will be specified in the initial letter of offer and funding agreement.

National Office will conduct a formal assessment of the documentation provided.

2. Agreement and formal offer of funding:

If the Department of Social Services decides to grant funding, a **formal offer of funding** as outlined in **3.4** , will be made to the successful applicant.

If the Department of Social Services decides not to grant funding, the unsuccessful applicant will be advised of the outcome and the reasons for this decision in writing.

3.4 How will a formal offer of funding be made to a successful applicant?

Successful applicants will be given a formal offer of funding. This formal offer of funding includes a Letter of Offer, a Funding Agreement Schedule and the relevant Terms and Conditions.

The Funding Agreement and related Terms and Conditions will specify the details of the offer including the amount and the responsibilities and accountabilities of both parties. It will also specify the start date and end date for the activity and the reporting requirements.

The successful applicant will need to consider the draft agreement. If the applicant decides to accept the offer of funding they will need to sign and return the Funding Agreement to the relevant State and Territory Office of the Department of Social Services within the timeframe specified in the letter of offer.

Further details on the Funding Agreement process are at **5 Funding Agreement**.

4. Responsibilities and accountabilities under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant

4.1 What is the role of a Long Day Care Service Provider?

Child Care Benefit approved Long Day Care services are responsible for providing the best possible care for all children at all times. It is conditional to funding that Long Day Care services comply with the eligibility rules (set out in the *Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2007*), and be approved for the purposes of Child Care Benefit. For further information please refer to the *Child Care Service Handbook* available at the [Department of Social Services](http://www.dss.gov.au) website located at: www.dss.gov.au

Additionally, under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant, grant recipients must:

- ensure that the discretionary Grant is only used for the purposes as stated in these Guidelines and Item B2.2 of the Funding Agreement
- expend all of the funds allocated under the discretionary Grant by the date specified in the Funding Agreement, and
- submit to the Department of Social Services all reports as specified at Item E of the Funding Agreement.

4.2 What is the role of the Department of Social Services?

The department of Social Services is expected to:

- consult with and provide information and advice to grant recipient in relation to the *Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant*
- provide all reasonable assistance to grant recipients to help them understand their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities under the Funding Agreement
- ensure all acquittals, accountability and reporting requirements are met, and
- monitor the effectiveness of the *Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant*.

5. Funding Agreement

5.1 What are the Funding Agreement requirements?

The Funding Agreement details the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the Department of Social Services [representing the Commonwealth of Australia] and of grant recipients. This Agreement may include a designated use period. Prior to receiving funds under the Agreement, successful applicants must agree to the terms and conditions and sign the agreement.

The Department of Social Services requires successful applicants to meet reporting and accountability requirements as specified in the schedule to the Agreement. The Agreement must be signed and returned to the Department of Social Services within specified timeframe as per the Letter of Offer.

It is very important to note that the Funding Agreement is a legally binding document between the successful applicants and the Department of Social Services.

5.2 What are the reporting requirements?

Reporting provisions are specified in the Funding Agreement and include but are not limited to:

- Progress Report (s)
- Completion Report, and
- Certified or Audited Final Acquittal Report.

5.3 What is the purpose of the Progress Report?

The Progress Report (s) provides the Department of Social Services with a summary of how the funds have been expended in accordance with the Guidelines and Funding Agreement. Successful applicants are required to provide the Progress Report (s) on the date(s) specified in the Funding Agreement.

5.4 What is the purpose of the Completion Report?

The Completion Report provides the Department of Social Services with a description of how the entire funds have been expended in accordance with Funding Agreement over the whole Activity Period of the Agreement.

The Completion Report must include relevant documentation including receipts and invoices, quotes (if applicable) and a statement that identifies what Activity (ies) were completed and the outcomes achieved. Grant recipients are required to provide the Completion Report on the date as specified in the Funding Agreement.

5.5 What is the purpose of the Audited or Certified Financial Acquittal Report?

Successful applicants in receipt of funding less than \$100 000 (GST excl) may provide a Certified Financial Acquittal report instead of an Audited Financial Acquittal Report, while those in receipt of more than \$100 000 (GST excl) must provide an Audited Financial Acquittal Report.

The Acquittal Report provides the Department of Social Services with information about how the allocated funding was expended and whether the funding was expended in accordance with the Funding Agreement. Successful applicants are required to provide the relevant report on the date specified in the Funding Agreement.

The specified Acquittal Report must comply with the information set out in the accompanying Terms and Conditions.

3. Privacy and confidentiality

6.1 Privacy and confidentiality

In accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*, the Department of Social Services undertakes to use any information obtained from applicants strictly for the purposes of administering the Community Support Program. The Department of Social Services requires Funding Recipients, in accordance with their Funding Agreements, to comply with the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs). Further information on the IPPs can be found on the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner's website at <http://www.privacy.gov.au>.

6.2 Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) gives the community the right to access information in the possession of the Department of Social Services. Information collected or held by the Department of Social Services may be released on request, unless exempted under the relevant provisions of the Act or under specific legislation that provides for the confidentiality of that information. Individuals or bodies wishing to obtain information under the FOI Act should write to the Department of Social Services Program Contact Officer indicating clearly which information they would like access to.

Successful applicants are not directly subject to the provisions of the FOI Act. However, information which the Department of Social Services holds in relation to the funding recipient in relation to a funding agreement is subject to the FOI Act, subject to any applicable exemptions.

6.3 Security of Information

Successful applicants are required to store records relating to administration of the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant in a secure place and dispose of them in an appropriate manner. The Department of Social Services is required to maintain all records (hard copy and electronic) in accordance with the *Archives Act 1983* and the Department's Records and Document Management Policy and Guidelines.

4. Complaints

7.1 Complaints – service provider

The Department of Social Services has a formal complaints service and the service provider can lodge a complaint by telephoning 1300 653 227.

A complaint is defined as:

‘Any expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service offered or provided’ [Australian Standard AS4269–1995]

The Department of Social Services has a ‘complaints recording system’ to capture complaints to the department about any of its services or those delivered by funded service providers.

For the purposes of the Department’s complaints recording system, a ‘complaint’ does not include:

- Ministerial correspondence
- Freedom of Information requests or
- Complaints made to service providers, as these will be covered their own complaints mechanisms required under funding agreements.

If the service provider is dissatisfied at any time with our handling of their complaint, they can also contact the [Australian Ombudsman](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au) at www.ombudsman.gov.au.

5. Initial Request for Funding under the Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant

**Please note this is the first step in a twostep application process. If the Program Delegate gives in-principle support for this proposal, the applicant may receive a first stage offer of funding agreement, to enable them to seek and provide more formal plans including a financial viability assessment, formal quotes from contractors, architectural plans etc. For further information refer to the [Long Day Care Capital Funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant Guidelines](#) on the [Department of Social Services](#) website at www.dss.gov.au.*

TO BE COMPLETED BY Department of Social Services STATE AND TERRITORY OFFICE

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE / NOT APPROVE

TOWN/CITY:	
STATE:	
CONTACT PERSON:	
ORGANISATION:	
ROLE:	
PHONE NUMBER:	
EMAIL:	

PROPOSAL: (Brief summary –indicate if proposal will involve co-location with existing facilities and/or sourcing of other funding streams such as state government funding.)

REASON FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

(Please provide a brief outline of the exceptional circumstances facing the applicant)

- i. Unmet demand for centre-based Long Day Care.
- ii. Viability issues
- iii. Other

OTHER CHILD CARE OPTIONS IN THE AREA (Provide details i.e. capacity etc.)

- iv. FDC
- v. IHC
- vi. OCC
- vii. OSHC

ALTERNATE OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

(Include reasons why they could not be pursued.)

1.

2.

3.

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION: (including any action by State/Territory Office and previous National Office/Legal advice.)

1.

2.

3.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Correspondence with/from applicant and any documentation such as:

Funding Agreements

Terms and Conditions

Budget Template (Use template below or attach copy of Template below)

Other (Specify):

PROPOSED BUDGET TEMPLATE:

Major Funding Source: _____

Total amount:

\$

Other Funding Source: _____

Total amount:

\$

Item of expenditure	Department of Social Services Capital Funding contribution	OTHER FUNDING
<i>Example: Labour/sub-contractors</i>	\$5,000	
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
Total	\$	

COMPLETE IF SERVICE IS CURRENTLY IN RECEIPT OF CSP FUNDING:

Operator Name:	
Service Name:	
Address:	
Operating since:	
Service care type provided:	
Electorate:	
Approved service:	
Approved places:	
Actual EFT utilisation:	
ARIA Plus classification	
SEIFA Index	

TYPE OF FUNDING:

- Set Up Assistance LDC OSHC FDC IHC
Sustainability Assistance LDC OSHC
Operational Support FDC IHC OCC

Financial Year	Set Up Assistance	Sustainability Assistance/ Operational Support	Capital Funding	LDCIS	Budget Based Funding or Non-formula Funding
2009-2010					
2008-09					

IF A NEW SERVICE IS PROPOSED, PLEASE ASSESS ITS ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER CSP

Sole Provider: **YES / NO** (not eligible)

CCB Approved: **YES / NO** (not eligible)

Number of EFT Utilised places:

Number of Baby Places:

A service is assigned a score for each of the four criteria below.

To be eligible, a service must achieve a combined score **equal to or exceeding** the cut-off score of 46. Further information is provided in the Operational Guide.

Remoteness Category (ARIA Plus)	Score	Service Score
Major City	0	
Inner Regional	10	
Outer Regional	20	
Remote	30	
Very Remote	40	
% of places licensed for babies (under 24 months)	Score	
No baby places	0	
Up to and including 10% of places	5	
Over 10% and up to and including 25%	10	
Over 25% and up to and including 50%	15	
Over 50%	20	

EFT Utilised places	Score	Service Score
Up to 25	40	
26 – 35	30	
36 – 50	15	
Over 50	0	
Socio-economic Index (SEIFA)	Score	
Under 880 (lowest 10%)	46	

CUT-OFF SCORE	46	
ELIGIBLE?		YES/NO

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Quality Issues?

Is the service currently Accredited?

What part of the Accreditation cycle are they in?

Next assessment due?

Accreditation history

Compliance Issues?

Is there CCB compliance activities with the service?

Has the service been assessed by Compliance? What is the current rating?

Inclusion and Professional Support

Has the service accessed a Professional Support Coordinator? If so, provide information about this support.

RECOMMENDATION & DECISION:

Prepared by:

Name

Position

Date

For Delegate: Cleared for forwarding to National Office **yes/no**

Name

Position
(Child Care Business Manager or Above)

Date