

Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives

Workforce Relocation and Incentive Grants

Area Mental Health Service Guidelines – July 2022

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Introduction

The Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives aim to:

- Support the attraction, recruitment, and retention of new workers to priority positions across state funded mental health and alcohol and other drug services in rural and regional Victoria
- Support individuals and their dependents to move, settle and integrate into rural and regional Victorian communities.

The incentives include the following elements:

- Regional mental health workforce incentive grants that will encourage and support mental health workers to relocate, settle and remain in rural and regional areas.
- Navigator roles that will ensure all new workers are well supported prior to employment, during relocation, settlement and integration into local communities.
- Support for the promotion of jobs and the broader incentives to attract workers with the appropriate skills from metropolitan areas, interstate, and/or overseas to rural and regional services across Victoria.

The incentives are supported by a Victorian Government investment of \$13.7m over four years.

Background

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System highlighted ongoing workforce challenges experienced by rural and regional areas identifying that these areas struggle to attract and retain mental health workforce across all disciplines.

The Royal Commission recommended the Victorian Government address mental health and wellbeing workforce supply needs in rural and regional areas and establish an incentive scheme to:

- a) attract mental health and wellbeing workers to rural and regional mental health and wellbeing services
- b) retain mental health and wellbeing workers in such services.

Workforce relocation and incentive grants

The Victorian Government has allocated funds to support rural and regional Area Mental Health Services to provide incentives to attract workers to roles that are difficult to fill.

Purpose

The purpose of the workforce relocation and incentive grants is to:

- support the attraction, recruitment, and retention of new workers to priority mental health positions across publicly funded mental health and wellbeing services.
- support individuals (and their dependents) to move, settle and integrate into rural and regional Victoria.
- reduce living expenses incurred by employees whilst living in rural and regional areas such as childcare costs, school fees, rental costs, and access to shared care arrangements.
- facilitate enhanced work-life balance and the lifestyle to which recipients aspire to.

Grants scope

The workforce relocation and incentive grants will support Area Mental Health Services (AMHS) workers relocating to rural and regional areas with expenses associated with the initial move, settling and integration into rural and regional areas.

Service eligibility

Workers being recruited to AMHS across rural and regional Victoria will be eligible to access the workforce relocation and incentive grants. For services to qualify they must be based in MMM2 – MMM6, under the Modified Monash Model.

The following AMHS are in scope:

- Albury Wodonga Health
- Ballarat Health Services
- Barwon Health – where role is based in MMM2 – MMM6
- Bendigo Health
- Goulburn Valley Health
- La Trobe Regional Hospital
- Mildura Base Hospital
- South West Healthcare

Candidate eligibility

To be eligible for the grants, workers will need to meet the following criteria:

- the role should be aligned with the Royal Commission's priority to attract a workforce with advanced skills that can provide care to people with the most complex needs
- the candidates must have minimum of 0.6 FTE guaranteed employment contract with an eligible organisation for a minimum of 24 months
- candidates who are recruited into specialist roles such as psychiatrist training positions and have employment contracts less than 24 months will be eligible to access grants at the discretion of the employing organisation.

Items covered by grants

Services will negotiate with candidates regarding eligible expenses. Below are some examples of expenses employees can claim. Note, this list is not exhaustive and other expenses may be considered by agreement with the Department of Health (the department).

Relocations and travel costs	Settlement and integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relocation costs, e.g., removalist fees• Travel costs associated with cost of relocation only. Flights must be economy and most direct route• Initial rental costs e.g., bond• Costs associated with setting up home in a new location, e.g., purchase of white goods, furniture, utilities connection fees• Annual travel costs to reunite with family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School fees and childcare costs• Accommodation costs, e.g. home buying and rental costs• Vehicle purchasing or leasing costs

The grant cannot cover expenses that are:

- ordinarily paid by the employer
- expenses that have already been funded by other Commonwealth, State, Territory or Local Government initiatives.

Additional items covered

In addition to the items above, rural and regional services can access their allocated pool of grant funding to secure accommodation for new workers. AMHS can also access funding to pay for services from recruitment agents from their allocated funding.

International travel allowance

In addition to the Workforce Relocation and Incentive Grants, new international and returning Australian healthcare workers who have secured a role in a regional or rural Victorian public health service, will continue to be able to access relocation packages of up to \$13,000 per recruit from 1 July 2022 to 30 Jun 2023. This includes international mental health workers who have secured a position directly with a public health service. The relocation packages could cover costs such as flights, professional registration expenses, temporary accommodation, freight, professional advice and family member visa applications.

Services recruiting international candidates should first claim the international travel allowance and then make a claim for any additional costs up to a total of \$20,000 through the Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives. Whilst services and candidates can access support through both initiatives, services and candidates must not claim reimbursement for the same relocation costs.

For further information about the department's international travel allowance visit www.health.vic.gov.au/medical-workforce-in-victoria/international-recruitment

Administration of the grants

Grants will be centrally administered by the Rural Agency Workforce Victoria (RWAV). Further information and the application form are available from the RWAV website rwav.com.au.

Conditions associated with the grants

The following conditions apply to workforce relocation and incentive grants:

- Grants will have a nominal value of up to \$20,000 (GST incl.) per employee. Services will negotiate the exact value and details of the package with eligible employees.
- Candidates can only seek reimbursement for eligible items once a grant application has been signed by the service and returned to RWAV.
- Essential expenses incurred before a candidate commences with an organisation will be considered at the health service and administering organisation's discretion.
- In accordance with public funding guidelines, original receipts must accompany all funding claims.
- Candidates who have received initial funding approval must notify the administering organisation immediately of any changes in contract or employment details.

- The candidate must agree to repay any grant funds received should they leave the organisation within 24 months of commencement of employment (unless extenuating circumstances apply).
- All candidates and services involved must commit to participating in monitoring and evaluation activities.
- By submitting an application, applicants are committing to the terms and conditions of these guidelines.

Workforce relocation and incentive grants process

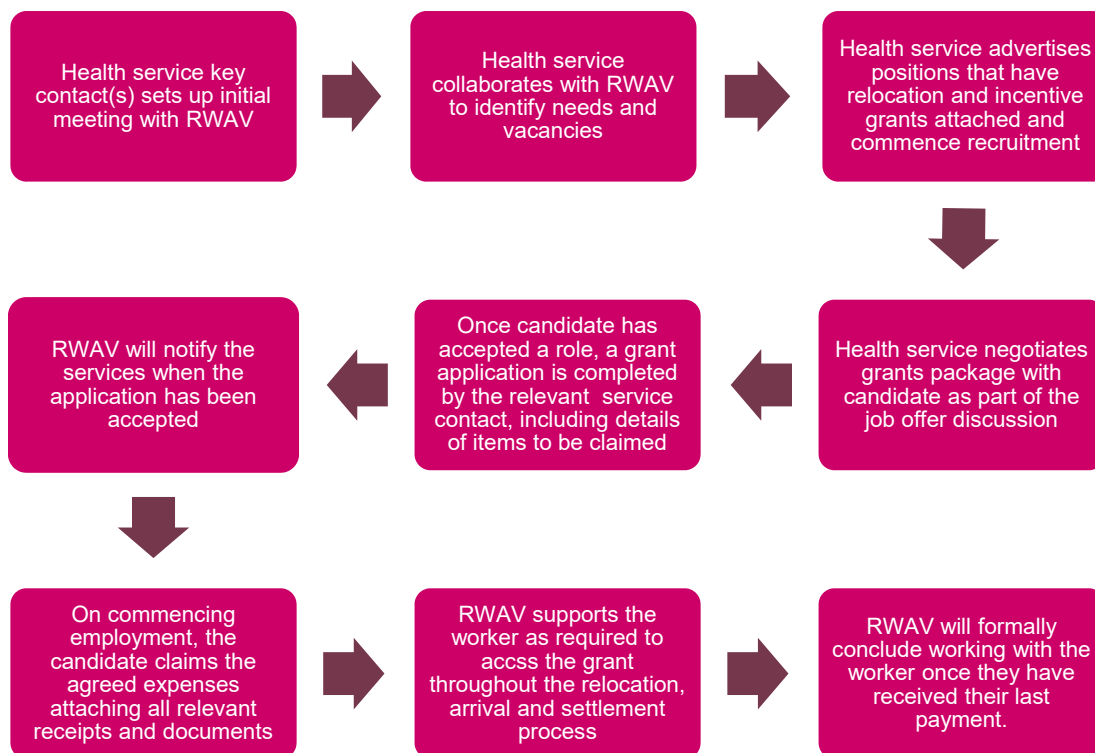
Accessing the grants will follow a prescribed process which will allow supporting, monitoring and evaluation activities.

The process will generally follow the steps below:

1. Health service key contact sets up initial meeting with RWAV.
2. Health service collaborates with RWAV to identify needs and vacancies.
3. Health service advertises positions that have relocation and incentive grants attached and commence recruitment.
4. Health service negotiates grants package with candidate as part of the job offer discussion.
5. Once candidate has accepted a role, a grants application is completed by the relevant manager and the service key contact, including details of items to be claimed.
6. RWAV will notify the services when the application has been accepted.
7. On commencing employment, the candidate claims the agreed expenses attaching all relevant receipts and documents.
8. RWAV supports the worker as required to access the grant throughout the relocation, arrival and settlement process.
9. RWAV will formally conclude working with the worker once they have received their last payment.

Figure 1. below provides a flow chart that sets out the process for applying and accessing rural and regional workforce incentive grants

Figure 1. Flow Process for applying and accessing rural and regional workforce incentive grants



Service key contact - responsibilities

Services are required to have key contact for the relocation and incentive grants program. The responsibilities of the health service key contact for the program are:

- Engaging with RWAV on a regular basis and keeping them updated of service needs and vacancies.
- Inform RWAV of relocation needs and how decisions have been reached to assign a package to a particular vacancy.
- Keep an up-to-date record of all service grants allocations and the grant balance held by RWAV.
- Ensure that eligibility criteria and funding conditions are met.
- Identify candidates support needs and ensure that the candidates are referred to available pre and post relocation supports that are appropriately tailored.
- Participate and promote data collection activities associated with the evaluation of the program. This may include but not be limited to direct participation in surveys and interviews and ensuring that other stakeholders and grant recipients are engaged in similar activities.
- Promote and disseminate evaluation findings at their service.

Further information

If you have any questions or queries about the workforce relocation and incentive grants program, please email recruitment@rwav.com.au.

Appendix 1. Frequently asked questions

1. Who is responsible for completing and submitting the grant application?

The key contact(s) at the Area Mental Health Service are responsible for completing and submitting the application form.

2. What information will be required to complete the application form?

The following information will be asked:

- Grant recipient details (where relevant)
- Role details, including classification and outline
- Recruitment difficulties experienced to date
- How incentive grant will support recruitment and retention
- The items that will be funded and their cost.

3. What attachments will be required when applying for the grant?

The following will be required where relevant:

- Copy of the position description
- Candidate's resume
- Employment contract or letter of offer.

4. How much can I receive from the relocation and incentive grants?

Grants will have a nominal value of up to \$20,000 (GST incl.) per employee however services will negotiate the exact value and details of the package with eligible employee.

5. What will be required to claim the grant?

In accordance with public funding guidelines, AMHS or grant recipient will need to attach, original receipts must accompany all funding claims.

6. Can the relocation be within rural and regional Victoria or is it just for metro to rural/regional?

People relocating within rural and regional Victoria can be eligible, however this will generally be in instances where the MMM number increases.

See: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/health-workforce-locator/health-workforce-locator> to determine MMM for a particular location.

7. Can a recipient of the international travel allowance of up to \$13,000 through the Department of Health also access the relocation and incentive grants?

Yes - services recruiting international candidates should first claim the international travel allowance. See <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/medical-workforce-in-victoria/international-recruitment> Services can then make a claim for any additional costs up to a total of \$20,000 through the Regional MH Workforce Incentives.

8. Where to I find more information about the Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives including roles that are attracting relocation and incentive grants?

For more information about the incentives and current vacancies visit www.rwav.com.au/

9. Who can I contact for more information about grants?

If you have any questions or queries about the workforce relocation and incentive grants program, please email recruitment@rwav.com.au or call (03) 9349 7800 (Option1).