

Rural Allied Health Support Program

Guidelines 2020-21

Introduction

The Rural Allied Health Support Program (the program) supports allied health practitioners working in public primary and community health services in rural Victoria to access educational, professional and skill development opportunities that are relevant to the development and provision of rural health and human services and meet the needs of the community.

The program aims to improve access to health and human services for rural and regional Victorians through:

- improved access to professional development and education for allied health practitioners
- building allied health workforce capabilities and quality
- increased recruitment, retention and career progression opportunities for allied health practitioners, and
- improved provision of allied health services that meet the health and wellbeing needs of the community.

The program is administered by the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) on behalf of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (the department). RWAV is responsible for the management of program funding and ensuring that education/training accessed by program recipients addresses the needs of Victorian rural and regional communities.

Program funding

The program consists of two funding streams;

- Professional development, and
- Postgraduate study.

The program is designed to support and subsidise practitioners undertaking professional development and postgraduate study, as opposed to providing full cost recovery, which is reflected in these program guidelines.

In accordance with public funding guidelines, original receipts must accompany all program applications and subsequent funding claims.

The total funding pool available in 2020-21 is capped. In the event that program funding is exhausted before the end of the financial year, a notification will be posted on RWAV's website advising of this outcome.

Professional development

Applications for professional development funding must be aligned to:

- a) Attendance at the annual conference of the professional association aligned to the applicant's discipline background and/or professional role, or
- b) Activities that contribute to the provision of the high quality and safe care prescribed by the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards, specifically:
 - preventing and managing pressure injuries
 - preventing falls and harm from falls
 - nutrition and hydration
 - preventing delirium and managing cognitive impairment
 - predicting, preventing and managing self-harm and suicide
 - predicting, preventing and managing behaviours of concern

In the context of ongoing physical distancing restrictions associated with COVID-19, there are no restrictions on eligibility for attendance at 'virtual' conferences, or courses and educational activities offered via teleconference or webinar.

Applicants may apply for program funding to subsidise one or more of the following expenses:

Item	Eligible claim amount	Ineligible claim amount
Registration / course fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 100% of the fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary or VET qualification fees
Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculated at \$0.66 per kilometre based on a return trip from the applicant's place of residence to the respective training location (and return). • Travel subsidies are calculated via the most direct and practical route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopovers or additional journeys are not covered.
Air travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full cost of the cheapest economy airfare via the most direct route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with car hire, parking, tolls, taxis, ride shares are not covered.
Accommodation expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$140 per night irrespective of location (rural or metropolitan) • Accommodation must be sourced via a registered commercial premise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private accommodation or accommodation sourced via non-commercial premises will not be covered (e.g. Airbnb).
Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$60 per day • For a maximum of five days per year at a registered organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private childcare accessed via non-commercial premises will not be covered.

Funding conditions:

- Professional development funding is limited to \$1,000 per person in a single financial year.
- Professional development activities undertaken outside of Australia are ineligible for funding.
- Stand-alone requests for reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs (i.e. where registration/course fees have been funded separately) are ineligible for funding.
- Where a professional development activity was provided free of charge, the provision of subsidies for travel and accommodation costs will be contingent upon demonstration of clear learning outcomes and benefit to the community.

Postgraduate study

Applicants can apply for funding to subsidise the following postgraduate study costs:

Item	Eligible claim amount
Graduate Certificate/Diploma	\$2,500
Masters	\$5,000

Funding conditions:

- Funding is available for both discipline specific and non-discipline specific (e.g. health management, health promotion, public health studies) courses where they relate to the applicant's role and community need.
- Funding is only available for the first 12 months of study.
- Funding will be provided in two equal payments; 50% on successful completion of Semester 1 studies, 50% upon successful completion of Semester 2 studies.
- Funding is not available for professional-entry level (i.e. undergraduate) qualifications.

Eligibility

Individual applicants can only apply for funding under one program stream within the same financial year.

Applicants must be Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents working in:

- public primary and/or community health services
- a rural and remote area of Victoria (MMM 2-7)
- permanent or contract roles who intend to commence an eligible postgraduate course in 2020-21.

Applicants must be employed in one of the following allied health professions:

Therapy Disciplines	Science Disciplines
Allied Health Assistant	Audiology
Art Therapy	Biomedical Science
Dietetics and Nutrition	Medical Physics
Exercise Physiology	Medical Laboratory Science
Music Therapy	Nuclear Medicine
Occupational Therapy	Optometry
Oral Health (not dentistry)	Orthoptics
Osteopathy	Pharmacy
Orthotics and Prosthetics	Radiation Therapy
Physiotherapy	Radiography
Podiatry	Sonography
Psychology	Social Work
Speech Pathology	

Applicants are not eligible for funding if they have already received funding support for the same professional development or postgraduate study activity from another source (for example, their employing organisation or the Commonwealth Government's Health Workforce Scholarship Program - HWSP).

Application process

	Professional development	Postgraduate study
Initial Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must apply for initial approval prior to commencing the professional development activity • Applications must be submitted via the RWAV website online application portal • Where the exact cost of expenses (e.g. travel costs) are still be established, approval will be granted on estimated costs, with the final funding amount to be determined following submission of supporting documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must apply for initial approval prior to commencing postgraduate study • Applications must be submitted via the RWAV website online application portal • Applicants must provide the following documentation; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curriculum Vitae - Letter of professional reference on organisational letterhead, which also confirms employment status - 100 points of ID including a certified copy of birth certificate and/or passport <p>Note: please not submit ID documents via the online portal. Proof of ID must be emailed to alliedworkforce@rwav.com.au</p>
Approval Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application for funding within two weeks of the application closing date 	
Submission of supporting documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon completion of the professional development activity, applicants must submit the following documents; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proof of attendance - Tax invoices demonstrating expenditure - Travel itinerary specifying flight details (where relevant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must submit the following documents at the end of each semester for the funded year of course enrolment; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies of receipts for course fee payments - Evidence of successful completion of each semester within one month of results being released
Change of details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants who have received initial funding approval must notify RWAV immediately of any changes in contact or employment details, and/or withdrawal from, or any changes to, the professional development or postgraduate study activity 	

By submitting an application, you are committing to the terms and conditions of these guidelines.

Successful applicants must repay funding in full if they fail to comply with the conditions of these guidelines.

Assessment

Applications are assessed against the funding conditions and eligibility criteria as outlined within these guidelines.

Applications must be deemed to be 'complete' to be considered for program funding – including provision of all relevant supporting documents.

Evaluation

By applying for and receiving funding via the Rural Allied Health Support Program, practitioners consent to participate in all program evaluation activities.

Applicants must complete the evaluation questions outlined in the application form.

RWAV may also contact applicants to obtain further evaluation data after receipt of funding support.

Contact

Rural Workforce Agency of Victoria

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Please be advised that these program guidelines are subject to revision without notice by the department.

Changes to these guidelines may only be made by, or with the approval of, the department.