



Australian Government
Department of Defence

Community Support Coordination Program guidelines

Defence Community Organisation



Financial Year 2020–21
www.defence.gov.au/dco/



Preface

Defence community groups and centres play a vital role in accommodating Defence members and their families meeting and engaging with each other in a supportive, safe environment, and providing a rally point for this community including at times of deployment and absence from home with a connection to Command.

They connect people in local communities through the vast volunteering opportunities they provide and the wide range of activities on offer.

The success of any Defence community group and centre is contingent on the commitment, skills and hard work of committees of management, coordinators, staff, and volunteers.

The Community Support Coordination Program Guidelines provide valuable information to committees of management and coordinators about funding and reporting requirements, and ways to strengthen the governance and capacity of Defence community groups running these centres.

The Department of Defence continues to be a proud supporter of Defence community groups and the centres that they operate out of, that support Defence families.

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About the program

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Support Coordination Program (CSCP) is to provide funding support to eligible Defence community groups to enable the employment of a community support coordinator within their organisation, who is responsible for coordinating the delivery of services and valuable support to Defence families in their local community.

The Defence Community Organisation (DCO) is the administering and governing authority of the program. Management of the CSCP and components under the program are the responsibility of the Community Support Program (CSP) team, under the Directorate of Community Engagement (DCE).

Principles

DCO acknowledges that:

- a paid coordinator is essential to the successful running of a Defence community centre/organisation
- adequate time, hours and funding needs to be allocated to allow for event management, stakeholder engagement, planning and administration
- significant effort needs to be put into the supervision, training and management of the paid position and the committees that employ them.

These principles help shape the type of working environment DCO provides to Defence community groups as employers of a paid position. They help set the right conditions for productive and harmonious working relationships by ensuring that employers feel supported financially with governance provisions, employees are treated fairly, have access to learning opportunities and can safely raise their concerns.

Aims

The CSCP aims to assist Defence community groups to:

- establish networks with other groups to share ideas, information and innovation for the benefit of the community
- enhance the quality, skills and knowledge of committees and coordinators
- competently administer the centre to operate efficiently and ensure financial accountability
- establish a skilled team of volunteers to function as an essential support for the centre's operations
- strengthen the pay conditions of paid employees
- ensure the sustainability of Defence community groups
- support groups in accessing appropriate resources, information and advice to maintain their services.

Objectives

The overall objective of the CSCP is to strengthen the groups and provide greater community stability and communication networks. Other program objectives include:

- working in collaboration with other Defence community groups, community-based services and networks to develop programs and strategies that promote the health and wellbeing of Defence families, achieving a coordinated response to community need
- offering governance and compliance support for the coordinators and the committees that employ them, along with networking and training opportunities
- support the development of a diverse range of volunteer opportunities, building human resource and governance structure support for committees and their community organisation
- facilitating and strengthening partnerships with the community and other local and regional stakeholders to ensure that all voices are heard, including those that are harder to reach, in order to provide more responsive, diverse and coordinated services for Defence families
- identifying, documenting and responding to emerging wellbeing needs of Defence families and priorities through strategies and supported by strong evaluation techniques.

Outcomes

Broadly, the desired outcome for the CSCP is to create a community asset attractive to Defence families, coordinators and committees that employ them. These community centres must offer a variety of community driven activities and opportunities that are inclusive for all Defence members and families.

Specifically, the CSCP aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- a strengthened and socially connected inclusive Defence community that is supported by a highly professional organisation driven by a well-supported committee
- improved sense of belonging, identity and integration for families within the Defence and local community
- sustainable and vibrant community organisations operating efficiently and effectively delivering community driven programs and activities for individuals, partners and families
- increased volunteer awareness and participation through the promotion of a diverse range of volunteer options to foster and build community participation and engagement
- developed partnerships across various sectors to maximise the effectiveness of delivering a greater range and better community services for Defence families
- an appropriately governed community organisation that can address clearly defined needs of Defence families and evaluate community driven programs effectively.

Defence community groups should also develop tailored outcomes that are specific to the needs of the Defence community where they are located.

Eligibility criteria for funding support

The Department of Defence will only enter into a funding agreement with an organisation that is a legal entity. The organisation must meet all the criteria below in order to qualify for community support coordinator funding. Applicants must:

- be an incorporated not-for-profit organisation
- be a Defence community group with connections to, and positive working relationships with, DCO

- accept the minimum standard requirements in accordance with this agreement
- provide a balanced mix of community development planning and activities that achieve each of the program aims and objectives
- be available for at least as many hours as the Community Support Coordination Program provides coordination funding
- demonstrate the capacity and capability to manage a paid employee and Commonwealth funds
- agree to participate in Defence-facilitated networking during the funding period and other compliance requirements outlined within these guidelines.

The program defines Defence community groups as an incorporated not-for-profit organisation that exists to facilitate building the capacity of Defence families to develop and connect with the community they live in.

About the role

The function of a community support coordinator under the program is described as follows:

- support families in location, communicate, build trust and provide proactive support
 - stay connected and interested in local community happenings and events
 - be a source of local area information for Defence families
 - maintain regular and meaningful engagement with local DCO staff
 - promote and support DCO programs and services
- gather local information and resources, keep families up-to-date and be a consistent point of contact for families
 - research local community information to maintain awareness of local issues
 - regularly engage with families through events and activities and be a familiar face for them
 - undertake regular networking with local Defence stakeholders
 - provide a consistent presence at the community centre and regular contact hours
- Coordinate and tailor community events to increase connections and minimise effects of mobility and absence
 - undertake event planning, promotion and after action review
 - implement the guidance of the committee in relation to the programs and projects to be delivered for the Defence community
 - generate ideas for local activities, catering for different demographics or celebrations
 - share local community connection opportunities.

The community support coordinator is expected to:

- represent the Defence community group
- be the public face of the organisation
- be responsible for the establishment, implementation and development of services and programs to enhance the wellbeing of Defence members and their families within the community they live in.

The role is pivotal in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of a busy vibrant community organisation, providing services for a very diverse community.

The coordinator is expected to be part of the executive team and be responsible for the delivery of effective administrative and financial management within the organisation and be the day-to-day interface with members, service providers and the general public. The coordinator will work in consultation and collaboration with the committee of management and report to their supervisor. The coordinator will work with community members, other services and key stakeholders in the community to determine key projects that encourage and build community participation and wellbeing.

Minimum standard requirements

Defence community groups are responsible and accountable for ensuring:

- the appointment of a paid coordinator is in accordance with their constitution
- a written employment contract is in place
- there is a duty statement
- a supervisor is appointed
- a performance review/policy is in place
- services operate in line with, and comply with, the requirements as set out within all State/Territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations, including child safety laws
- pay slips are provided and accurate payroll records are kept by the treasurer, adhering to transparent and accountable bookkeeping and expenditure procedures
- the organisation is paying employees the correct wages
- the organisation is reimbursing employees for work-related expenses
- a safe working environment
- PAYG tax withheld amounts are forwarded to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- appropriate payment is made under the Superannuation Guarantee legislation
- appropriate insurance is held
- the management of any risks to the reputation of the Defence community group or Defence.

The working conditions of the community support coordinator are the ultimate responsibility of the management committee. Under workplace health and safety laws, employers must provide a safe premises, safe machinery and materials, safe systems of work, information, instruction, training and supervision and a suitable working environment and facilities.

It is advisable that all committees who are employing a coordinator refer to the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010. It is recommended that committees seek external advice through the Fair Work Ombudsman website at <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements> to ensure there is an understanding of what is included in the award rates and that all legislative requirements are met in regard to pay and conditions.

Paid coordinators should refer to their individual offer of employment from their Defence community group regarding their conditions of employment. The award, rate of pay, weekly hours, leave options, type of employment (i.e. part-time), and probation/termination information should all be outlined in the employment contract.

Employers are required to pay superannuation to paid staff (who earn \$450 or more before tax in a calendar month) and this is paid in addition to a wage—an employer cannot deduct this from

wages. The ATO can provide more information about taxation and superannuation at <https://www.ato.gov.au/>.

Employers also have the responsibility of ensuring their staff enjoy the terms and conditions of employment, meeting the minimum requirements of legislation and regulation as well as the needs of the organisation and the individual by conducting a performance appraisal on an agreed regular basis.

Employment of a community support coordinator

The appointment of a community support coordinator should be conducted through an open, competitive and transparent selection process undertaken by the management committee.

Defence community groups in receipt of community support coordinator funding are responsible for their own governance, administration, advertising of the position and appointment of a paid coordinator.

The position should be advertised in accordance with the community support coordinator position description and the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 for a social and community services Level 3 pay point 1 part-time employee.

The successful applicant will be expected to hold or gain first aid certification as well as a working with children check (or equivalent) as part of their employment conditions.

Fair Work Information Statement

An employer must give each employee a Fair Work Information Statement before, or as soon as is reasonably practicable after, the employee starts employment. The statement can be provided in person, by post, fax or email, or by providing a link to the relevant page of the Fair Work website.

The statement includes information on:

- the National Employment Standards
- right to request flexible working arrangements
- modern awards
- making agreements under the Fair Work Act
- individual flexibility arrangements
- freedom of association and workplace rights (general protections)
- termination of employment
- right of entry
- the role of the Fair Work Ombudsman and the Fair Work Commission.

Once the paid coordinator has been appointed, it is important that all new employees feel welcome and are ready to start work safely and competently through the use of a proper formal induction process.

Temporary filling arrangements

Your employee has a range of entitlements available to them, including leave as specified in the employment contract. Should leave extend beyond the employees paid entitlements, you may seek approval from the CSCP team to engage a casual to back fill the coordinator function.

Casual employees are to be paid the rate specified under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 for a casual employee. This will be a higher rate and compensates them for not receiving the entitlements of a part-time or full-time employee.

Performance review process

Community support coordinators are required to participate in a performance review process with their supervisor as part of their employment conditions. Performance management allows organisations to review employees and determine how well each individual is performing. An employee performance agreement paves the way for the organisation and employee to set specific desires prior to the official employee review process.

A performance review/appraisal keeps communication flowing and addresses any concerns, training or accountability issues and provides clarity on priorities. Employees work much better when they are clear on expectations and feel more positive and focused about their contribution to the organisation. Failure to conduct a performance appraisal with the paid coordinator may jeopardize the release of further funding. Coordinators should not be present at committee meetings when the coordinator's performance or remuneration is being discussed.

Formal meetings to set goals and expectations, monitor and conduct an interim assessment and an end of cycle evaluation of the paid coordinator's performance should all be part of the performance review process.

Defence community groups will also be required to conduct a review of the management committee themselves.

A performance agreement template is available from the Defence Community Centre Governance Handbook.

Responsibilities and expectations

DCO understands Defence community groups differ greatly based on size, budget, facilities, hours of operation, staffing arrangements, level and type of activity because the communities they serve have differing interests, needs and resources.

Relationships between DCO and the recipient

The program is administered by DCO. This includes managing the application and eligibility assessments, funding agreements, undertaking monitoring and compliance checks and providing a support network for coordinators and their employers.

Other responsibilities include:

- general program management, which includes closely monitoring the administration and delivery of the program
- promoting the program nationally, including developing and managing communication strategies
- updating these guidelines and supporting documentation as required and effectively communicating these changes/additions to CSCP recipients.

The CSP team provides advice to the Australian Government's Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel on the program and its administration when required. They also complete a program evaluation at the end of each financial year to ensure the funding is contributing to the program objectives and outcomes.

The CSP team will also work with Defence community groups to develop and maintain strong relationships, address needs, issues or problems by providing information, skills and access to resources to assist each group in the process of organising itself and taking action. The CSP team will share best practice, offer ongoing advice and support for groups to continue to thrive, and reasonably assist in disputes raised by Defence community groups.

Relationship between the local DCO office and recipients

The interactive relationship between the local DCO office and CSCP recipients is a requirement to achieve a coordinated response to community need. By maintaining regular stakeholder engagement and inviting and including one another to events and activities where applicable also provides an effective focal point for community development. The local DCO office can assist recipients with local level engagement and staying involved with key stakeholders such as Base Support or Command and more broadly across the civilian community to ensure Defence families become actively engaged in the region where they live and feel a sense of belonging.

Relationship between the Defence community group committee and coordinator

The role of the committee is to appoint and work effectively with the coordinator. In practice, the two are mutually dependent on one another. Committees rely on the coordinator to provide input into strategic development, implement strategy, communicate management's perspective and alert

the committee to issues that are relevant to the organisation. The coordinator relies on the committee for delegation of authority, clear direction, mentoring and support.

The coordinator should be part of the executive team and oversee the day-to-day operations of the organisation, its people and resources. The coordinator should implement the strategy approved by the committee and ensure that the organisation's structure and processes meet the strategic and cultural needs of the organisation. Primary authority for the governance, direction, control and management of an organisation is usually constitutionally and legally vested in the committee. Therefore, it is necessary for the committee to empower the coordinator to take responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the organisation.

The process of formalising the coordinator's powers and responsibilities is in writing, including a position description and employment contract, as these will help the committee to clarify its expectations.

At the same time, the committee's responsibilities should be made clear in its own policies. These documents are intended to give both sides freedom to act within boundaries, rather than to constrain them.

Paid coordinators also have responsibilities to their employer. Coordinators are responsible and accountable for ensuring:

- they are punctual, reliable and professional at all times
- comply with the code of conduct at all times
- they are aware of and adhere to the organisation's mission, vision, values and behaviours
- they know and follow workplace policies and procedures including those that relate to a safe and healthy workplace
- they contribute to a safe and healthy workplace, making sure they don't discriminate, bully or harass anyone they interact with as part of their role
- the work performed will assist their employer run their organisation, making sure it is to the best of their ability
- they are first aid trained and hold the applicable working with children check
- a handover is given to the new coordinator should the occupant leave the role
- they perform all the duties of the role and comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by the supervisor
- confidential information is not revealed about the organisation.

It is expected that all Defence community groups funded through the CSCP actively engage with their local DCO office and key stakeholders, including Defence Families of Australia, base managers (if applicable) and Command as part of networking, and participate in the governance guidance, networking activities and training offered by DCO. Failure to meet these accountability requirements may lead to the withdrawal of program funds.

Funding

Funding caps

DCO will determine funding support to Defence community groups according to hours of operation, responsibilities of the paid coordinator and other expectations of the role up to a capped amount of \$36,000 including superannuation costs, for the financial year period. Superannuation will be calculated at a rate of 9.5% as part of the funding offer.

The provision of funds is subject to annual budgetary appropriation from the Department's budget and funds availability. Where funding levels are affected by appropriation, the amount paid by the Department may be adjusted accordingly. Caps have been applied as part of ongoing financial management of the program.

Actual funding caps for the program have been based on the weekly wages prescribed in the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 for a social and community services Level 3 pay point 1 part-time employee.

Progression from one pay point to the next within Level 3 up to the capped pay point 2 may be considered at the end of a 12 month continuous employment period. In order for committees to be considered for this progression funding, the employee must have demonstrated competency, satisfactory performance and met all Key Expected Results (KERs) for the prior 12 month's employment under the Program's performance review process. Committees also need to demonstrate and provide evidence the employee has developed new or enhanced skills for the role. Requests for progression must be received in writing within 30 days of the new financial year and addressed to the Manager, Defence Community Support Programs.

Any salary payments above the funding caps are at the Defence community group committee's discretion and must be outlined in the employee's employment contract including any increase in classification pay points due to qualifications.

Funding agreement

DCO is responsible for the outcome of the CSCP and payments. Successful groups will receive a CSCP funding agreement from DCO and will be asked to accept the terms and conditions in the agreement. The agreement must be returned by the group as soon as possible, noting funds cannot be released without the signed agreement. Funded groups are responsible for ensuring the terms and conditions of the agreement are met. Any organisation failing to accept or meet the terms of the agreement will forfeit their eligibility to funding.

There is no binding agreement until the agreement is signed by the funded group and the DCO delegate. Funds will be made available once both parties sign the agreement and only be made available to Defence community groups who employ a community support coordinator in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the funding agreement and these guidelines. This may include a job share situation where two people perform the duties of the coordinator role. Other paid staff, such as playgroup coordinators, administrative assistants and bookkeepers, cannot be covered under this funding program.

Payments

The Department is responsible for ensuring that funds are paid accurately and on time, subject to financial and program requirements being met.

The program offers funding support to successful groups, made in two payments covering the periods July to December and January to June. In order to maintain a strong relationship with committees, monitoring occurs between payment schedules. To support the success of the program, during this monitoring the CSP team can provide appropriate guidance and tools to ensure committees adhere to the funding support program conditions. Site visits will also be conducted by the administrators of the program.

Funding will be made available upon receipt of a tax invoice. Payment will be effected by electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the specified bank account via a purchase order number. It is important that the correct bank details are provided by the Defence community group and must pertain to the CSCP recipient, not to personal accounts.

Defence's payment policy is 20 days from receipt of a correctly rendered tax invoice. Payment schedules are from July to December and January to June. Payments may be withheld if there is any uncertainty related to governance, performance or capacity to deliver the services agreed by the Defence community group.

Funding should be accessed within 30 days of signing the funding agreement and within the payment schedule for which the funding has been offered. There is no opportunity to request funds outside the funding payment schedule period.

Funding compliance, monitoring and reporting

Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided. All funding must be expended by 30 June in the year following the approval of coordinator salary funds. Groups will be emailed a mid-year and end of financial year compliance report to acquit the funding from the previous financial year. These reports should be forwarded to the CSP team as soon as the completion of expenditure for that reporting period. Failure to return the completed financial compliance report may impact the release of future funding.

At the end of the financial year, compliance reports provided by groups will be used to determine any unused funds provided by Defence. Unspent funds must be returned to DCO. There is no discretion to carry over funds into the next financial year and there is no capacity to pay a community support coordinator over and above their initial funding allocation. DCO will recover all unspent funds by issuing an invoice to affected groups.

The CSP team will conduct monitoring to assist in measuring progress towards achieving the program objectives and outcomes and in assessing compliance against the funding agreement and the guidelines. Monitoring will be conducted through assessment of reports, phone calls, emails, visits and participation in governance and facilitated networking events. The monitoring is an opportunity to:

- establish a cooperative working relationship and a common understanding between DCO and the CSCP recipient in relation to the program expectations and funding agreement requirements
- discuss current CSCP recipient performance
- discuss local issues that may have implications for the CSCP recipient.

It is the responsibility of the Defence community group to maintain a complete set of policies and procedures as part of good governance as well as records for acquittal purposes, including all receipts and financial statements via an appropriate accounting payroll system.

At any time, the committee may be asked to supply documentation and financial records in support of expenditure. CSCP funding is public money and great care must be taken in the administration of expenditure and committee members are fully accountable for their actions in respect of these funds.

In addition to the financial compliance requirements for coordinator salary funds, Defence community groups will be expected to participate in committee governance compliance to ensure the effectiveness of the management committee is being adhered too in accordance State/Territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations. This may also include information on the networks or partnerships they have established or contributed to, and Working with Children Check compliance.

Defence community groups who do not exist to facilitate building the capacity of Defence families to develop and connect with the community they live in, who do not meet program compliance, or who are in breach of their employment contract conditions will no longer be entitled to program funding. Defence community groups will be advised if they fall into this category and will be transitioned out of the program.

Other important information

Training

DCO will continue to support Defence community groups with training and strategic advice to help them thrive. During the financial year, tools, resources, and governance guidance for committees and coordinators will be offered to maintain a level of support and increase networking opportunities. DCO has responsibility for program development, strategic planning and future program directions.

Child safety

The Australian Government has introduced the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework—a whole-of-government policy that sets minimum standards for creating and embedding a child safe culture and practice.

The framework sets out the minimum standards for Commonwealth entities to protect children. Successful CSCP applicants will be required to meet the child safety requirements consistent with the framework.

More information about the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework is available at <https://pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/national-office-child-safety/commonwealth-child-safe-framework>.

Conflicts of interest

Committee members and coordinators must not put themselves in a position, real or perceived, where there is a conflict between their duties and responsibilities to the organisation and their personal interests. Members of the committee, as well as coordinators, must disclose any material personal interest they may have in any contract, or proposed contract, entered into or being considered by the committee. A committee member has a material personal interest when that member has a personal interest in a matter which could be seen to compromise their ability to act in the interests of the organisation and make an impartial decision. The interest may be financial or non-financial. Disclosures must explain the nature and extent of the interest and be made as soon as the member becomes aware of it.

While there are no laws specifying that the coordinator cannot concurrently hold a position of committee member, it is recommended different individuals hold these positions, removing any real or perceived conflict of interest. As part of a sound and ethical governance framework, a separation of duties between governance and operations provides a higher level of transparency. Additionally, the paid coordinator roles and the committee member role have distinctly different objectives.

The committee member is recruited as a volunteer and is responsible to ensure the organisation meets its legal and stated purpose. Management and staff are employed by the committee to implement programs and operations. If one person is responsible for both roles, there is a real and perceived conflict of interest and this may present issues in relation to the committee's performance management of employees. It is recommended that anyone in a paid position should not be a committee member.

Social media

Social media allows communities to share events and activities, communicate key messages and create awareness of opportunities and services in the community they live in. All Defence community groups should already have guidance in place for use of social media. However, as a general rule, groups should not post material that is offensive towards any group or person based on any personal traits, attributes, beliefs or practices that exploit, objectify or are derogatory of gender, ethnicity or religion. For DCO and other groups to share your events and information on social media, you should consider having an open social media account, even if there's also a closed group attached to the public profile. This also makes it easier for families to find out about your funded initiative.

In addition, groups in receipt of funding must exercise judgment to ensure that no information breaches security or adversely affects the safety and wellbeing of their members and their families or that might damage the group's, or Defence's reputation.

Review of the program

DCO will review the program annually to ensure the aims of the program are being met and remain relevant and, where necessary, adjust the guidelines in line with Departmental and Commonwealth priorities.

Disclaimer

The Australian Government will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to comply with these guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy or error contained in an application.

False or misleading information

Applicants should be aware that the giving of false or misleading information to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). Where false or misleading information is provided, or relevant information withheld, criminal or disciplinary action under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982*, *Public Service Act 1999*, or the *Criminal Code Act 1995* may be taken depending on the circumstances.

If the applicant is a Defence member, or employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*, administrative action may also be taken by Defence and sanctions imposed.

Applications may be disregarded if, in the belief of the Department, false or misleading information has formed a component of an application.

Fraud

For the purpose of this document, fraud means dishonestly obtaining a benefit from the Commonwealth or causing a loss to the Commonwealth by deception or other means.

The Defence community group must take all reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud in relation to the performance of the program. The group will acknowledge that the occurrence of fraud will constitute a breach of the Funding Agreement.

If an investigation finds that the group or its employees have committed fraud, or the group has failed to take reasonable steps to prevent fraud by an employee or subcontractor, the group must reimburse or compensate the Commonwealth in full.

Privacy

The Department of Defence is bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act). Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act contains Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which prescribe the rules for handling personal information. Personal information is defined in part 2 of the Privacy Act as:

“... information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable whether the information or opinion is true or not; and whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.”

More information can be found at <http://www.defence.gov.au/Privacy.asp>.

Reference documentation

To meet the high standards of governance, performance and accountability, and to comply with the program, it is important recipients refer to the reference documents below which underpin this program:

- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- Fair Work Ombudsman
- State/Territory legislation and regulations for the not-for-profit sector.

Contact information

Further information is available at defence.communitygrants@defence.gov.au.