Victorian
Health Building
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**Community Mental Health
Expansion Program**
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Contents

General

What is the Community Mental Health Expansion Program?

The Community Mental Health Expansion Program has been established to fund the accommodation requirements for Area Mental Health Services to unlock the capacity of mental health community services.

In line with the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, the key objectives of the Community Mental Health Expansion Program are to support:

- the increase of community mental health service activity by Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services through expansion of space through minor capital works and/or fitting out owned or leasehold premises.
- enhancement of community mental health service capacity and delivery of contemporary models of care.

Funding will be provided to proposals that refurbish, remodel, or modify/expand space to meet clinical or administrative needs to expand the community mental health service.

What type of projects will be in scope?

Funding will be provided to complete minor construction, remodelling, refurbishment and fit out capital works across the following key areas:

	Expansion: fit-out works and renovation of existing or new spaces to optimise space and increase service hours.
	Service efficiency and demand pressure: increase the efficiency of the service to better address demand pressures, including waiting times
	Healthcare quality and safety improvement: works that best mitigate the risk of serious incidents occurring and balance the need to provide safety with service provision in a therapeutic and least restrictive environment.
	Environmental sustainability: improve the asset's environmental sustainability and indoor environment quality to promote the health and well-being of consumers and healthcare workers/staff. Foster environmentally sustainable uses of resources and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation.

Projects must be completed within 18 months of notification of funding approval.

What is the pool of funds available?

The Victorian Budget is providing funding of $33.4 million in 2023-24.

What is the maximum amount we can apply for?

Health services are not limited in the number of submissions they can make.

Each submission should be for one site only. Please do not include multiple sites in the one submission as this makes project readiness and delivery assessment harder and leads to delays. The submission will be rejected if it includes multiple sites.

Regardless of how many submissions a health service makes, the sum of the submissions should be between a minimum of $100,000 (excluding GST) and a maximum of $6 million (excluding GST).

How do I apply?

Submissions must be completed through the SmartyGrants Portal <https://dhhs.smartygrants.com.au/CMHEP23-24>

The application form must be completed in its entirety. Further supporting information is to be provided as attachments. If the file size of the supporting documentation is over 25MB, please contact the Mental Health team via the mhfrf@health.vic.gov.au to discuss how best to submit this additional information.

Will hard copies be accepted?

No, all submissions must be submitted via the SmartyGrants portal.

What qualifies project basic rules and deliverables?

Construction works
- minor works and/or fit out of premises to increase capacity
- remodelling and refurbishment projects to address aged building fabric, compliance, and demand issues; and meet universal design standards
- need for buildings to be fit for purpose
- need for minor refurbishment / repairs / replacement / reconfiguration and upgrades of ageing facilities that reflect infrastructure risk mitigation strategies
    - kitchen upgrades or equipment
    - assets located underground and reticulation services
    - waiting room configurations (infection control and prevention)
    - tearoom configurations (infection control and prevention)
    - accessible paths and ramps, Changing Places toilets
    - additional consulting/therapy/group rooms.

Ineligible and excluded items

- funding for capital projects at community mental health service sites that have already been completed, for example if a newly leased building has already been fitted out through a capital project paid for by the health service
- operational funding
- fixtures, fittings, and furniture not associated with a refurbishment project. Routine replacement of furniture and fittings that are worn is the responsibility of agencies to manage as part of their existing maintenance and replacement program
- motor vehicles
- planning funding for future redevelopment/growth projects
- projects that are additional stages of previously funded projects will be de-prioritised

What qualifies as a project?

Projects should focus on expanding community mental health service capacity and need to be able to be completed within 18 months.

Can we have multiple sites in one submission?

No – a submission must only be for one site. Submissions with multiple sites will be rejected.

If you are unsure on whether a submission would be suitable, please email mhfrf@health.vic.gov.au for guidance.

Can I apply for projects that may be eligible under other funding sources?

Yes. Health services and agencies can still apply but should identify in their applications that they have submitted proposals to other funding sources. Note that under the conditions of funding, funding is not available for projects previously funded or already approved for funding from another source.

Health services that submitted a proposal to the Mental Health Renewal Grants process for an expansion in community mental health capacity are welcome to re-submit the same proposal, or an amended/new proposal.

We currently have a project, funded through other sources, in progress, can we submit this for funding?

No, there will be no evaluation of projects that have already commenced.

When does my project need to be completed?

All projects must be completed within 18 months for the grant award date.

Can funds be sought for projects to leased properties?

Projects that relate to capital works to property not owned or controlled by the State Government will be considered. However, it is preferred that such property should not be mortgaged nor encumbered. In such circumstances the Department will require a legally binding agreement with the mortgagee or charge of the property. Applications should clearly outline the lease term.

Applications

When do applications close?

5:00 pm on 29 April 2024.

How do I submit an application?

Applications must be submitted through the SmartyGrants Portal <https://dhhs.smartygrants.com.au/CMHEP23-24>

The Application Form must be completed in its entirety. Further supporting information is to be provided as attachments.

Can I apply for projects if I have pending applications under another fund program?

Yes, as far as the project is in alignment with the Community Mental Health Expansion Program eligibility criteria.

Will hard copies be accepted?

No. All submissions must be submitted via the SmartyGrants portal.

What information should the application include?

Applicants should read the Community Mental Health Expansion Fund Guidelines in full prior to submitting.

Please consider your eligibility and alignment of the proposal with the guidelines, before submitting your proposal.

The application form and the CEO declaration must be completed for each proposal.

Relevant supporting documentation can be included as attachments.

Applications should include the following information:

- Evidence to support how the funding would increase community mental health service hours, including:

    - Additional FTE (discipline, grade and fraction)

    - Additional community mental health service hours each FTE will provide yearly, and total hours

    - Additional consumers projected to be seen under the submission yearly

    - Additional consumers spaces, such as additional consulting rooms, group therapy rooms, etc

    - Additional sqm

- Anticipated key milestones in accordance with the payment schedule milestones
- How risks have been identified and mitigation strategies to address these
- Evidence of how the proposed changes will improve the asset's environmental sustainability and indoor environmental quality, including completion of the checklist in *Environmental sustainability requirements and checklist*.
- Describe the benefits your project is expected to achieve supported by metrics/ data to measure current performance and targeted outcomes, with timelines based on the successful delivery of the project.

What file types and naming conventions should be used in applications?

The conventions and file types to be used in the submission are on the Mental Health Capital Expansion Program SmartyGrants Application form.

How will my application be assessed?

Applications will be assessed in a panel arrangement using a defined set of assessment criteria. Submissions should reflect agreed policy objectives and how the proposed works will meet the objectives for contemporary person-centred Mental Health treatment in Victoria.

The following criteria will be used to assess the application and will be considered with the evidence provided.

- Applications that clearly address multiple criteria are at a distinct advantage. It is expected that all design solutions will be consistent with VHBA's design guidelines and Health Technical Advice.

No	Criteria	Descriptor	Weighting
Criterion 1	**Project readiness**	Organisational readiness to implement the project, including key milestones and the expected timeframe for completion. Relevant supporting documentation as	Projects will be assessed

| | | outlined in the submission requirements section of this document must be provided.

All project dependencies must be listed including their potential impact on the project cost, schedule, scope, and benefits. | as ready, partially ready, or not ready |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Criterion 2** | **Governance** | The degree to which health service/agency governance structures and processes are in place to oversee the proposed project development, implementation, monitoring & reporting.

This relates to the governance framework supporting transparency, probity, and accountability relating to the delivery of this proposal. | Project governance will be assessed as strong, good, or inadequate |
| **Criterion 3** | **Strategic alignment** | Alignment with the Community Mental Health Facilities Expansion Program objectives:

• increase community mental health service activity by Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services through expansion of space by fitting out owned or leasehold premises
• prioritise eligible services that have not received additional funding for community mental health capital projects in the past 3 years
• prioritise investments that will deliver the greatest gain in community mental health service hour growth relative to eligible services' current performance
• enhance community mental health service capacity and delivery of contemporary models of care
• alignment with key drivers for community mental health investment. | 40% |
| **Criterion 4** | **Service efficiency and demand pressure** | Addresses one or more of the following:

• service capacity and growth expansion (for example, increased space for additional community mental health workforce (FTE), improved service options, reduced service fragmentation)

• consideration of fit-out costs as a value-for-money measure against increased contact hours

• demand pressure

• models of care (for example, contemporary models of care/improved services closer to home).

Note to facilitate an equitable comparison of submissions, health services will be asked to provide the following information in a standard format via the submission form (with supporting attachments showing detailed workings):

• additional FTE (discipline, grade, and fraction)

• additional community mental health service hours each FTE will provide yearly, and total hours | 40% |

		• additional consumers are projected to be seen under the submission yearly • additional consumer spaces, such as additional consulting rooms, group therapy rooms, etc • additional sqm.	
Criterion 5	**Healthcare quality and safety improvement**	Addresses one or more of the following: • regulatory compliance • standards compliance • patient and staff amenities • safety and quality risk.	10%
Criterion 6	**Environmental sustainability**	Alignment with the applicable environmental sustainability initiatives in environmental sustainability requirements and checklist.	10%

Assessment of Applications will be addressed in three phases:

• Initial review of application for compliance, eligibility and buildability readiness
• Internal departmental program review (Mental Health and Wellbeing Division)
• Prioritisation and recommendations to the Minister for Mental Health for endorsement.

Can I make changes to my application after it has been submitted?

If you need to alter your application after it has been submitted but before the application period closes, please contact us via mhfrf@health.vic.gov.au. Once the Round closes applications are unable to be altered.

When will I know the outcome of my submission?

All applicants will receive written notification of the outcome of their submission following completion of the assessment process.

Further Information

Where can I get further information or assistance?

If you require further information or assistance please contact us via email on mhfrf@health.vic.gov.au

To receive this publication in an accessible format email mhfrf@health.vic.gov.au

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