

JOBS VICTORIA EMPLOYMENT NETWORK PROGRAM GUIDELINES

MAY 2016

1. Introduction

The Jobs Victoria Employment Network (JVEN) is a key initiative of Jobs Victoria.

With \$53 million over four years allocated in the 2016-17 Budget, Jobs Victoria will consolidate all Victorian employment services into one system, making it easier for jobseekers to access the help they need to get work. The aim is that disadvantaged jobseekers will benefit from a more coordinated and streamlined approach that not only increases work readiness but also results in sustainable employment outcomes.

The rationale for Jobs Victoria is underpinned by the government's strong commitments to jobs growth across the state. The government's investment in infrastructure – public transport, roads, hospitals and schools – will generate tens of thousands of jobs. The government is also supporting Victorian businesses with real potential to expand into new markets and develop new products, generating even more jobs into the future.

As investment in jobs growth continues across the state there will be more opportunities for work. The government is determined that disadvantaged Victorians are not left behind and are able to share in the social and economic benefits that come from employment.

2. Background

The **Jobs Victoria Employment Network** will significantly expand employment assistance to disadvantaged jobseekers and enable consolidation of Victorian employment services into one system.

Through JVEN, the Victorian Government will provide additional resources in communities across Victoria to assist unemployed people into work. This program is part of a suite of initiatives to support jobs growth across the State and to assist Victorians to take up these new job opportunities.

Other initiatives include:

- the **Future Industries Fund** – supporting industry sectors that have high-growth potential to create jobs and attract investment in Victoria (see invest.vic.gov.au/opportunities/future-industries-fund)
- the **Premier's Jobs and Investment Fund** – supporting strategic investments that underpin high quality, sustainable jobs throughout Victoria, and including *Start up* to encourage the formation and success of innovative new businesses
- the **Regional Jobs Fund** – funding strategic projects to attract and facilitate investment in regional Victoria, with the primary purpose of facilitating job creation and retaining existing jobs (see rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-jobs-and-infrastructure-fund/regional-jobs-fund)
- the **Back to Work Scheme** – providing financial assistance to employers who hire disadvantaged jobseekers (see vic.gov.au/backtowork)
- additional investment in Victoria's TAFE network.

A review of Victoria's employment programs in 2015 found that there is a valuable role for the Victorian Government to play in the delivery of employment assistance, particularly to disadvantaged jobseekers who are not well-served by Commonwealth programs. JVEN is designed to complement the Commonwealth's *jobactive* program by assisting people who are either ineligible for the full range of *jobactive* services (e.g. jobseekers who are ineligible for income support) or unemployed people who need more intensive and personalised assistance to gain on-going work.

The review identified the need for the government to expand and coordinate employment programs to ensure that those who are disadvantaged in the labour market receive assistance to find a job. This new program has been developed based on the recommendations and best practice principles identified in the review.

The program will be administered by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) and will provide funding for flexible, responsive assistance to unemployed Victorians who struggle to gain a foothold in the labour market. It will extend and complement existing services that assist Victorians to gain skills and employment.

3. Program objectives

The Jobs Victoria Employment Network aims to:

- assist Victorians who are disadvantaged in the labour market to gain and retain employment, contributing to increased social and economic inclusion and assisting Victorian businesses to meet their skills and labour needs
- support the objectives of Jobs Victoria by contributing to a more coordinated and streamlined suite of employment-related services for Victorian jobseekers.

4. Program details

Round 1 JVEN applications will open on Wednesday 4 May 2016 and close on 20 June 2016, with \$25 million in funding available.

Funding will be provided to assist unemployed Victorians to gain on-going employment. The program will support organisations to:

- focus on Victorian jobseekers who are disadvantaged in the labour market and who require assistance to gain employment (see [Section 5](#) for further details)
- actively engage with employers to identify job opportunities and assist in meeting industry workforce needs
- offer flexible services that are tailored to the particular needs of disadvantaged jobseekers and responsive to the particular local/regional needs
- link to community support services to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged jobseekers are met and employment outcomes are maximised
- address gaps in and complement existing services, including Commonwealth employment services.

DEDJTR is seeking applications from suitable organisations to deliver employment assistance in locations of high need across Victoria. Locations of high need are those with high numbers of unemployed people and gaps in services that are designed to assist them to gain work.

Applications may seek multi-year funding, with services to be delivered over the period July 2016 to June 2020, and will be subject to a mid-point review.

JVEN services

JVEN will provide employment assistance that is tailored to the particular needs of eligible jobseekers in a given location. Funded organisations may deliver employment assistance to a range of eligible jobseekers, and/or to specific groups of jobseekers (e.g. mature age, refugees, Aboriginal). JVEN services should include:

- active job search support and job search mentoring
- work preparation, including job-specific skills training
- active engagement with employers, industry and trade unions to identify suitable employment opportunities and match jobseekers to roles
- job matching and placement into employment
- post-employment support to employees (jobseekers) and employers
- personal support to address non-vocational barriers (e.g. health, housing, drug and alcohol dependence, childcare, transport) in collaboration with community support services
- referral to vocational skills training if required
- referral to literacy and numeracy support if required.

All organisations funded through JVEN will be expected to achieve sustainable employment outcomes for an agreed number of jobseekers. A sustainable employment outcome is defined as placement of a jobseeker into on-going employment for at least 30 hours per week. Part-time employment (15-29 hours per week) will be accepted as outcomes where part-time employment meets the needs of particular jobseekers and/or a particular industry. Funding will be linked to the achievement of sustainable employment outcomes for a minimum of 26 weeks (see [Section 7](#)).

Specialist multicultural services

Through the Department of Premier and Cabinet, additional resources have been allocated to assist unemployed people from Victoria's culturally diverse communities.

A high priority for this funding will be assistance to culturally diverse young people aged 15-25 years who are disengaged from education, training and/or employment, and need assistance to become work ready and find work in the following locations:

- south-east Melbourne (especially Dandenong and Casey)
- north-west Melbourne (especially Hume) and
- northern Melbourne (especially Moreland).

A further priority group will be jobseekers from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds.

Applications targeting other groups of culturally diverse jobseekers and other locations will be considered where applicants can demonstrate high jobseeker needs and gaps in services.

In order to achieve sustainable employment outcomes, these specialist **multicultural** services will be expected to:

- engage young people from culturally diverse backgrounds including refugee and asylum seekers who are unemployed or not engaged in the labour market or in education and training
- work with community leaders and peer groups to engage young people and refugee job seekers and develop effective wrap-around support services to enable positive employment outcomes
- bring together key community, government and business groups at the local level to address specific issues/barriers faced by young jobseekers from culturally diverse backgrounds (e.g. disengagement from education, lack of work experience, access to community role models/mentors), as well as to consider the cultural competence of the workplace
- provide work preparation and employment placement linked to participants' aspirations

- actively engage local employers, including from targeted communities, to identify job opportunities and provide flexible support to achieve positive recruitment/job placement outcomes for the target group
- provide additional support to participants to successfully complete training and move into work including pre-employment and post-placement support, mentoring and assistance with barriers to participation in training and employment (e.g. transport issues, work clothing, study resources).

5. Eligibility

The applicant – organisational eligibility

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must be an incorporated entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN), have a significant organisational presence in Victoria, and have sufficient dedicated resources to manage the proposed service.

Applications are encouraged from organisations with appropriate experience in supporting unemployed Victorians into work. However, organisations with contracts to deliver employment assistance under the Commonwealth's *jobactive* program will only be considered for funding in areas **outside** the Employment Region/s for which they have a *jobactive* contract. For example, if an organisation is funded to delivery *jobactive* services in the Barwon region, they may only be considered for delivery of the Jobs Victoria Employment Network outside the Barwon region.

Any organisation with a contract for delivery of employment and/or employment-related services under Commonwealth or Victorian government programs must demonstrate clearly how the funding would result in additional services.

Applications from consortia will be preferred. A lead applicant/organisation will need to be identified as part of the application.

Examples of potential JVEN services

Metropolitan youth employment service, with specialist juvenile justice focus

A provider in inner Melbourne is contracted to deliver a youth-focused service (generally up to the age of 25 but with some flexibility). The provider works closely with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and receives referrals from their youth justice programs, providing skills development and employment placement while DHHS continues to provide personal support as required.

A partnership with a large retail business provides a range of employment opportunities in their distribution centre, supplementing job opportunities identified through a network of smaller employers.

Regional consortia delivery model

A community-based organisation in a regional city is funded to deliver assistance across the region to a range of eligible jobseekers, as well as specialist services to mature age jobseekers and migrants. The organisation determines that a collaborative delivery model with two other organisations to deliver specialist services is the best approach and formalises the relationships with Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). Through this arrangement, services are delivered on an outreach basis to three locations across the region, in addition to the 'core' services in the regional centre. The organisations utilise their networks with employers, and work with the Economic Development and Business section of the local City and Shire Councils to identify job opportunities for unemployed clients.

A separate contract for delivery of specialist assistance to Aboriginal jobseekers is provided to another organisation in the region, and an MOU is formed to facilitate referrals and assist in sharing information.

Jobseeker eligibility

The program will provide assistance to Victorian jobseekers¹ who are either long-term unemployed (six months plus) or at risk of long-term unemployment and lack adequate support through other services. The following jobseekers will be eligible for assistance:

- a) Unemployed people who face labour market disadvantage and need assistance to gain employment but are **ineligible for full Commonwealth employment services** (i.e. people who are only able to access *jobactive* services as a volunteer). This will generally be people who are unemployed but not in receipt of income support payments.
- b) Disadvantaged jobseekers who are eligible for full Commonwealth job services but have **complex barriers to employment and are either referred by other State Government services** (e.g. youth justice clients, young people in out-of-home care) **or are designated as a priority target group** (see below).

The profile of jobseekers assisted will vary from location to location, depending on population and on existing services, but may include:

- long term unemployed people from culturally diverse communities including refugees and asylum seekers²
- Aboriginal jobseekers³
- mature age jobseekers (aged 50+)
- youth justice clients
- young people in out-of-home care
- workers retrenched from the automotive manufacturing and supply chain industry
- other retrenched workers
- disengaged young people (aged 15-24 and not engaged in education, training or employment)

1. Jobseekers must be resident in Victoria, and either Australian citizens, permanent residents or temporary residents under Australia's refugee and humanitarian program who hold visas with work entitlements.

2. Asylum seekers must be resident in Victoria and hold a visa with work entitlements (e.g. temporary protection or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV)).

3. The term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- single parents
- jobseekers with a disability
- jobseekers with a mental illness
- social housing tenants
- ex-offenders
- veterans and their families.

6. Links with other programs

JVEN providers will work collaboratively with existing employment programs funded by the Victorian Government, such as Working and Learning Centres, Youth Foyers and services to retrenched workers. To enable this collaboration, protocols for referrals and complementary service delivery will be implemented.

Underpinning this approach, JVEN providers will be expected to demonstrate and implement practical partnerships between themselves and other services to disadvantaged Victorians – such as support services for refugees, housing services and veterans services. This will enable support for a broad range of different jobseekers, including young people, retrenched workers, refugees and Aboriginal people.

JVEN providers will be required to work collaboratively with other services in order to maximise positive outcomes for clients and avoid duplication. Relevant services include, but are not limited to:

- Commonwealth Government employment services including *jobactive*, Disability Employment Services, National Work Experience Programme and Transition to Work
- social and community support services including housing, health, disability, family support, drug and alcohol and corrections/justice services
- Skills and Jobs Centres in TAFE institutes
- Local Learning and Employment Networks
- other education and training services.

The following programs may assist organisations to deliver services under JVEN.

Program	Description
Back to Work Scheme	<p>The Back to Work Scheme offers financial assistance to employers who employ disadvantaged jobseekers in ongoing roles.</p> <p>Payments up to \$12,000 for employing a long-term unemployed person and up to \$4,000 for providing accredited training to the new employee. It is administered by the State Revenue Office.</p> <p>For further details see: vic.gov.au/backtowork/support</p>
Victorian Training Guarantee	<p>The Victorian Training Guarantee provides government-subsidised training places for people who meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>For more information see: education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/vet</p>
Major Projects Skills Guarantee (MPSG)	<p>From 1 January 2016, all publicly funded works contracts valued at or over \$20 million (inclusive of GST) are required to use local apprentices, trainees or engineering cadets for at least 10 per cent of the total estimated labour hours. In addition, contractors are encouraged to engage trainees, apprentices and cadets who are from groups that are under-represented in the construction industry (such as women) and/or who face barriers to employment more broadly (such as Aboriginal Victorians, older workers and people with a disability). For more information, see: economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-initiatives/major-projects-skills-guarantee.</p> <p>JVEN clients will be a potential source of employees for these major projects.</p>
Workforce Engagement	<p>Jobs Victoria Workforce Engagement specialists will work proactively with industry/employers to assist them with their workforce needs. This will include identifying suitable job opportunities and 'feeding' them back to JVEN providers. This service will utilise 'leads' from the department's Investment and Major Projects, and build partnerships with large and/or strategic employers. Job opportunities identified through these activities will supplement local job opportunities identified by providers.</p>
Digital Engagement	<p>This element will be developed to engage with and provide information to jobseekers and highlight positive stories/case studies utilising social media and other digital channels.</p>

7. Funding

Level of funding

The government has allocated funding over four years to DEDJTR to operate the program to provide additional assistance to disadvantaged jobseekers across the State. Applications will need to demonstrate how the proposed outcomes justify the grant investment.

Payment structure

Funding will be linked to the achievement of milestones and outcomes. The grant agreement will specify the payment arrangements, but an **indicative** payment schedule is as follows:

Milestone	Payment amount
Commencement/signing of contract	Approximately 25% of total funding
Satisfactory progress toward agreed milestones, such as employment placements	Approximately 30% of total funding
Paid pro-rata on achievement of agreed outcomes, including sustainable employment outcomes (measured at 26 weeks)	Approximately 40% of total funding
Compliance with contractual requirements, such as reporting and financial acquittal.	Approximately 5% of total funding

Specific milestones and payments will be negotiated with each funded organisation and will form part of the funding agreement.

Funding duration

Funding will be available to support service delivery for the period July 2016 – June 2020, subject to a mid-point review to evaluate performance-to-date and continued labour market need for the service. This mid-point review may result in a reallocation of funding.

8. The application and assessment process

An online application form is available for prospective applicants on the Business Victoria website at business.vic.gov.au/jobsvictoria.

The closing date for Round 1 applications is 20 June 2016.

The department will conduct information sessions in Melbourne and regional Victoria for prospective applicants. Details will be available on the Business Victoria website. The department will also publish answers to Frequently Asked Questions to assist organisations with their applications.

Assessment process

Applications will be subject to a four-stage assessment process, as follows:

Stage 1: Applications will be assessed against the Selection Criteria (see below) by officers in the DEDJTR. At this point, applications will also be subject to a Financial Risk Assessment.

Stage 2: Local advice will be sought from regional offices regarding duplication, complementarity and viability of employment outcomes. Applications will then be assessed against broad program objectives with consideration given to geographic coverage, delivery to different target groups, linkages to other government policies/initiatives and the sustainability of employment outcomes.

Stage 3: Recommended applications will be reviewed by an interdepartmental committee chaired by DEDJTR (including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Premier and Cabinet) to identify any issues such as duplication of services, performance issues with organisations, and opportunities for linkages to other programs.

Stage 4: The Minister for Employment will receive all recommendations from the assessment panels and will determine the final application approvals and allocation of grant funding.

Selection Criteria

To be successful, **applications must respond to the following selection criteria and:**

- identify the cohort(s) that will be targeted
- provide evidence of employment opportunities in local industry sectors
- demonstrate strong partnerships with businesses in those sectors.
- **Labour market need:** The proposal is strongly evidenced by labour market need including evidence that the target group/s requires additional assistance to achieve employment outcomes and that the location has high unemployment and gaps in service delivery. The proposal reflects an understanding of existing employment programs and related services.
- **Sound approach/methodology to achieve employment outcomes:** The proposal demonstrates a strong understanding of the labour market needs of the proposed client group/s and describes clearly the activities proposed to prepare jobseekers for employment, link them to job opportunities and maximise on-going employment.
- **Demonstrated experience in delivery of effective assistance to disadvantaged jobseekers:** The proposal provides examples of past achievement in delivery of employment services to disadvantaged jobseekers.
- **Demonstrated understanding of and experience in working with employers to achieve sustainable employment placements for unemployed people:** The proposal provides examples of past experience working with employers to achieve employment outcomes in addition to demonstrated evidence of partnerships with employers to deliver employment outcomes.

- **Organisational capacity:** The proposal demonstrates the current capacity of the organisation and its partners, including infrastructure, to successfully deliver the outcomes proposed.
- **Commitment to collaborative service delivery:** Proposal provides evidence of collaboration with other agencies to achieve sustainable employment outcomes for jobseekers and the objectives of Jobs Victoria by implementing referral protocols for clients from other Victorian Government employment initiatives (see **Section 6**)
- **Value for money:** Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed outcomes justify the funding sought.

9. Grant approval and grant agreement

The Minister for Employment is responsible for approval of grant funding. Subject to acceptance of a formal letter of offer sent from the Minister to a successful applicant organisation, a legally binding grant agreement will be prepared describing the services to be delivered, proposed outcomes, milestones, timeframes and conditions of payment. Services can only commence once the agreement is executed by both parties.

The applicant is responsible for entering into the grant agreement with the State of Victoria.

The State of Victoria has full discretion and authority to determine which organisations are eligible to receive funding under the program and the amount of funding offered.

Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the State of Victoria detailing all funding obligations and conditions.

The State of Victoria reserves the right to withdraw the offer of funding if the grant agreement is not finalised or services are not commenced within a specified timeframe.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- deliver against key milestones, such as clients assisted, job placement and jobs sustained for 26 weeks, which will be verified through the provision of appropriate evidence⁴
- cooperate with the department in communicating and promoting the benefits of the program, such as the preparation of media releases and case studies
- consult with the department prior to the publication of any promotional materials relating to the JVEN
- liaise with the department to coordinate any events or announcements related to the activity
- provide annual company and financial reports upon request
- report on service delivery, as specified by the department, including details of clients assisted, activities undertaken, progress against milestones and achievement of agreed outcomes on the Department's Global Engagement Management System (GEMS)
- contribute information on outcomes for use in program evaluation reviews and/or marketing materials
- cooperate fully with evaluations undertaken either during or after the completion of the JVEN
- acknowledge financial and any other support from the Victorian Government according to the *Acknowledgement and Publicity Guidelines* as amended from time to time, which can be found at dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/communication/brand-victoria.

⁴ Acceptable evidence of 26-week employment outcomes will include copies of payslips and letters from employers confirming employment details.

Negotiation on grant funds

The State of Victoria reserves the right to negotiate with recommended applicants on the level of funding and outcomes.

Payment of grant funds is only to be made following documented evidence of milestone conditions being met. The approval and allocation of funding will comply with the Financial Management Act.

Confidentiality

The department will, to the extent permitted by law, treat all information as strictly confidential and commercial-in-confidence where relevant. Any personal information will be managed in accordance with the published Privacy Policy, which can be found at business.vic.gov.au/privacy.

10. Contacts and further information

For more information:

- Jobs Victoria webpage business.vic.gov.au/jobsvictoria.
- email the Employment Programs team at jobsvictoria@ecodev.vic.gov.au
- Phone the Business Victoria Help Line on 13 22 15.

Please note that engagement with the department or any Victorian Government representative does not constitute endorsement of any application for funding.



Economic Development,
Jobs, Transport
and Resources