



Australian Government

Defence



Community Support Coordination Program (CSCP)

Guidelines FY2026–27

Defence Member and Family Support

Please contact dmfs.communityengagement@defence.gov.au to express an interest in future funding opportunities.





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1. About The Program

1.1. Overview

Defence Community Groups provide Defence members and their families with a supportive and safe environment to connect with people in their local community. Defence Community Groups are supported through the Department of Defence to provide a wide range of activities, events and opportunities for families to participate and enjoy.

The success of Defence Community Groups is dependent on the commitment, skills and hard work of their committees, coordinators, staff and volunteers. Defence is a proud supporter of Defence Community Groups and acknowledge the comprehensive costs associated with running a successful, safe and inclusive community group.

When these centres thrive there is an increased connection with communities and Command, and greater capacity to provide mobility and absence from home support. It is also acknowledged that there is benefit to ADF retention rates when there is strong support for families.

The Community Support Coordination Program (CSCP) is designed to provide comprehensive and sustainable support to Defence Community Groups under one Defence funded program. CSCP provides financial assistance to eligible Defence Community Groups to:

1. Enable the employment of a part time Community Support Coordinator within the organisation. These coordinators play an important role in enhancing the capabilities and effectiveness of these groups;
2. Support ongoing business sustainment costs associated with running a successful Defence Community Group such as operational costs, administration costs, utilities, first aid supplies, office supplies, insurance, governance training, software, professional auditing and more; and
3. Support costs associated with the development and delivery of an array of events, activities and programs to their local Defence community.

Defence Member and Family Support (DMFS) is the administering and governing authority of the program. Management of the CSCP and components under the program are the responsibility of the Directorate of Community Engagement (DCE).

1.2. Objectives

The primary objectives of the CSCP are:

1. **Empowerment of Defence Community Groups:** Provide eligible Defence Community Groups with funding to assist in the employment of Coordinators to support the executive committee and to coordinate community events. Coordinators strengthen the support networks available to the Defence community, providing a range of services and resources to increase connections and minimise effects of mobility and absence.
2. **Enhanced Outreach:** Increase the capacity of Defence Community Groups to reach and engage with Defence members and their families within the broader community.
3. **Comprehensive Operational Support:** Provide support to Defence Community Groups within the ongoing and comprehensive costs associated with running a successful centre to enable the groups to strive for excellent customer service.



2. Defence Community Groups

2.1. Eligibility

To be eligible for funding under CSCP, organisations must:

1. Be a legal entity
2. Have been in operation for 12 months or longer
3. Be a recognised Defence Community Group – please see [section 2.2](#)
4. Be a Australian not-for-profit organisation
5. Be operational within Australia
6. Be financially complaint with any funding received under Defence funded programs.

2.2. Recognised Defence Community Groups

A Defence Community Group is defined as an incorporated Not for Profit organisation that exists with the sole purpose of:

- supporting Defence families
- providing a safe and supportive environment where they can come together to share information
- engaging in activities and connect with the community they live in.

Their outcomes must contribute to the wellbeing and cohesion of Defence families and provide a sustainable sense of community, meeting both the social and practical needs of Defence families.

To be recognised as a Defence Community Group, your organisation must meet all the following criteria:

1. **Mission Focused on Community:** The organisation must exist with a primary purpose to sustain and engage the Defence community, offering services and support to local families and those in the wider Defence and Veteran community.
2. **Range of Programs and Events:** The organisation must facilitate a variety of programs and events tailored to children, adults, and families with a purpose of connection, shared experience and wellbeing.
3. **Enduring Support Networks:** The organisation should demonstrate a commitment to building strong, inclusive, and connected support networks for Defence families, fostering a sense of belonging in each posting location.
4. **Community Space or Symbol:** The group must offer a physical space or regular engagement opportunity that serves as a common and consistent environment for Defence families.
5. **Commitment to Partnerships:** The organisation must work closely with Defence Member and Family Support (DMFS) and have a shared commitment to work in partnership to shape the identity of the local Defence community, providing opportunities for Defence families to come together, interact, and establish lasting connections.



3. Funding

The CSCP offers funding support over two consecutive financial years (2025-26 and 2026-27).

The funding amount available is dependent on a range of factors including:

1. Annual budgetary appropriation from the Department of Defence's budget and funds availability;
2. The Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 for a social and community services Level 3 pay point 2 part-time employee rate; and
3. The Defence Community Groups size, budget, facilities, hours of operation, staffing arrangements, level and type of activities, and geographical location.

3.1. Funding Categories

Funding caps are necessary to ensure fair and equitable distribution of budget allocation.

3.1.1. Community Coordinator Employment Costs

Funding under this category is for a single Community Coordinator salary only and is capped at a maximum of 30 hours per week.

The capped amount includes superannuation costs and leave loading for a 12 month employment contract period only. Hourly rate, leave loading and superannuation will be calculated at the rate as announced by Fairwork.

Funding for the employment of a coordinator is calculated of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Industry Award for permanent part-time employee, level 3, pay point 2. Any salary payments above the designated pay level and allocated hours are at the Defence Community Group committee's discretion, this may include but is not limited to pay progression, additional leave and travel allowances. Defence Community Groups will be expected to cover additional costs over and above those detailed in the funding agreement.

3.1.2. Sustainment and Administration Costs

DMFS acknowledge that there can be significant ongoing operational costs associated with running a successful Defence Community Group providing vital services to your local community.

It is important for Defence Community Groups to acknowledge that Defence is not solely responsible for covering all running costs and groups are expected to seek additional income sources through other means such as fundraising and membership income.

Please ensure to read and acknowledge costs that will not be supported under CSCP at [section 3.2.](#)

3.1.3. Events, Activities and Programs

Funding in this category must be accompanied by a detailed timeline and plan of events.

3.1.4. Supplementary Funding

Defence Community Groups can apply for supplementary funding for reasonable and eligible costs associated with insurance, audit requirements and long service leave.

3.1.4.1 Insurance costs

Insurance costs are limited to:

1. worker's compensation specifically for a single Community Coordinator position
2. public liability insurance
3. reasonable insurance costs related to the protection of assets approved and funded through the program for example contents insurance.

Insurance costs that will not be considered under the program include:

1. Business or association insurances for activities not related to CSCP program delivery
2. Additional worker's compensation insurances for positions outside the single Community Coordinator position
3. Any costs deemed unreasonable after delegate consideration.

3.1.4.2 Audit requirements

A requirement of participating in the CSCP program is for participating Defence Community Groups to acquire the services of an independent auditor whom adheres to the Australian Accounting Standards to prepare end of financial year financial acquittal of CSCP funds. Costs associated with this requirement will be covered by DMFS. However auditing of Defence Community Groups expenses and funds not associated with CSCP funding will not be supported.

3.1.4.3 Long service leave (LSL)

Defence Community Groups with longstanding Community Coordinators can apply for additional funding to cover fees associated with a period of long service leave. DMFS will also support costs associated with levies paid into Portable Long Service Leave schemes as required under relevant State and Territory legislation. Requests for additional funds for LSL must be sent with evidence of long service leave acquired and calculations for the LSL period.

Additional funding can be sought to engage a casual coordinator to back fill the coordinator function. It is important that the casual employee 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 employee.

3.1.4.4 Applying for supplementary funding and payment of funds

Defence Community Groups can send valid and reasonable requests for supplementary funding to dmfs.communityengagement@defence.gov.au for consideration.

DMFS will provide advice on approved requests and process for accessing funds. This may include instructions to raise an invoice, direct payment of existing invoices or reimbursement.

3.2. Costs Not Supported

These costs will not be considered under the CSCP:

1. Purchase of alcohol
2. Honorariums
3. Centre supplies not directly associated with ongoing operational costs such as kitchen utensils, cutlery, crockery
4. Petty cash
5. Travel costs

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6. Cover employment costs of other paid staff outside the coordinator, such as playgroup coordinators and administrative assistants.

3.3. Funding Agreement

Defence Community Groups receiving funding under the CSCP must enter into a funding agreement with DMFS prior to receiving funding. The agreement identifies the responsibilities of the Defence Community Group and Defence. The agreement must be returned by the group as soon as possible.

Funds cannot be released without a binding agreement. There is no binding agreement until the agreement is signed by the funded group and the DMFS delegate.

The funding agreement sets out the key obligations, objectives, rights, and responsibilities of the Defence Community Group delivering services and the department providing funding to the organisation. 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 funding.

3.4. Payment of Funding

Funding is provided by the department on a two year financial agreement and will be paid in six monthly pay increments (1 July – 31 December and 1 Jan – 30 June). DMFS will provide six monthly invoice instructions for program participants to receive intermittent periodical payments to ensure organisations remain compliant, engaged with the funding organisation and accountable for program objectives. Defence is responsible for ensuring that funds are paid accurately and on time, subject to financial and program requirements being met.

All payments 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. Bank accounts must be managed and accessible by the current Defence Community Group committee.

Defence's payment policy provides for a payment to be made no more than 20 days from receipt of a correctly rendered tax invoice. 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.

4. Compliance and Monitoring

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. Committees may be asked to supply documentation and financial records in support of expenditure.

Funding provided under CSCP must:

- only be used for the purposes for which it was provided
- be expended by the end of the financial year in which funding was approved for.

It is the responsibility of the Defence Community Group to maintain a complete set of records for acquittal purposes, including all receipts and financial statements via an appropriate accounting payroll system.

At the end of each financial year, each Defence Community Group must complete the CSCP compliance reports. These reports will be used to determine any unused funds provided by Defence. All unspent funds **must** be returned to Defence, DMFS will recover unspent funds by issuing an invoice to the affected group.



In preparation to meet the financial reporting and audit requirements, a copy of the Funding Agreement, Certificate of Compliance, guidelines and receipts should be provided to the organisations auditor. The auditor must be independent to the organisation and adhere to the applicable Australian Accounting Standards.

If Defence Community Groups are failing to meet funding, program or reporting requirements, they will be contacted by Defence to negotiate a plan and process for meeting these requirements. If groups continue to fail to meet the requirements, funding may be suspended or withdrawn as outlined in the funding agreement.

Defence Community Groups who do not meet program compliance requirements will not be eligible for future DMFS funding.

5. Employment of a Coordinator

Defence Community Groups are solely responsible and accountable for:

- the recruitment, employment and management of the coordinator
- defining the Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Committee Roles and Responsibilities

When a committee accepts funding under the CSCP, they are agreeing to meet all requirements and provide full support and management to the coordinator.

Under [funding category 1](#), Defence Community Groups are responsible for:

1. Ensuring the open and competitive recruitment and appointment of a paid coordinator
2. Ensuring a written employment contract is in place
3. Providing a clear duty statement
4. Appointing a supervisor to manage the coordinator and provide a link between the committee and the coordinator
5. Establishing appropriate policies and procedures to manage a paid employee
6. Engaging in a performance management process, and
7. Ensuring all employment conditions comply with all State/ Territory and Commonwealth workplace legislation and regulations, including child safety laws.

5.2. Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

The function of a Community Support Coordinator under the program is described as follows:

1. Support families in location, communicate, build trust and provide proactive support
2. Gather local information and resources, keep families up-to-date and be a consistent point of contact for families
3. Support the executive committee to coordinate and tailor community events to increase connections and minimise effects of mobility and absence.

The coordinator:

1. Works in consultation and collaboration with the committee
2. Must have a designated supervisor as a direct reporting line
3. Work with community members, other services and key stakeholders in the community to deliver the above functions and support the outcomes of the program.



A comprehensive matrix of roles and responsibilities can be found on the [Defence Community Group Hub](#).

5.3. Recruitment Process

Committees are responsible for the recruitment of the coordinator. By accepting funding under the CSCP, committees agree that recruitment will be:

1. Undertaken by the management committee.
2. An open, competitive and transparent selection process.
3. Advertised in accordance with the Community Support Coordinator position description.
4. Advertised using the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 for a social and community services Level 3 pay point 2 part-time employee.

Note: Coordinators should only be employed on a one year basis for the period of which funding has been approved. Ongoing funding is not guaranteed and Defence is not liable for any employment costs beyond the approved funding period. If the committee choose to employ a coordinator for a longer term, they are liable for the employment costs of the employee.

6. Defence Community Group Hub

All successful applicants **must** access the [Defence Community Group Hub](#) (the Hub) to complete the induction module once funding approval has been granted. Failure to complete the induction within the specified timeframe may delay the receipt of program funds

Defence Community Groups who receive CSCP funding must enrol their management Committee in the Defence Community Group Hub. The Hub is designed to provide Defence Community Groups with resources to assist them in the creation and ongoing management of their Committee.

The Hub includes a mandatory induction for the management committee. As a minimum the President, Treasurer and Secretary (Executive officer) must complete this induction within the first month of funding approval. Failure to complete the induction within this timeframe may delay the receipt of program funds.

The Hub includes a comprehensive resource centre that provides a range of information, resources, links and referrals on key topics of Not For Profit governance including financial management, fundraising, HR, WHS, complaints, conflict management and more.

Instructions on how to enrol and access the Hub will be provided to successful applicants.



7. Other Information

7.1. 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.

7.2. 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.

All committee members and 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 material personal interest exists when a 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.

To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest it is recommended that the coordinator not concurrently hold a position of committee member.

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.

7.3. Child Safety

All governments are responsible for implementing the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#). This includes managing how the National Principles are being applied and ensuring that organisations are following the National Principles. The National Principles provide a nationally consistent approach to creating organisational cultures and practices that promote the safety and wellbeing of children in Australia

In employing a Coordinator and overseeing volunteers, the DCG Committee must comply with all state and territory child safety legislation including:

- [Working with Children / Vulnerable People checks](#)
- [Mandatory training and reporting requirements](#)

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:

- Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

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- Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
 - Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
 - People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
 - Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
 - Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
 - Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
 - Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
 - Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Visit [Child safe organisations | Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

7.4. Social Media

Social media allows Defence Community Groups 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 have guidance in place for use of social media.

To be eligible for funding groups must 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.

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.

7.5. False and 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.



7.6. Fraud

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.

7.7. 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 defence.gov.au/privacy.

8. Definitions

Agreement – means the contractual arrangement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Recipient for the government monies.

Appropriate committee structure – is bound by a not for profit organisations constitution or set of rules. Generally organisations will have a president, secretary and treasurer. These board members are not paid, but involved with the planning, management and decision-making of the organisation.

Defence Community Group – see [section 2.2](#)

Defence families – mean a group or number of Defence families (as outlined below).

Family – refers to the family of a Defence member that consists of the spouse or interdependent partner and children or anyone else that the Defence member identifies as their family.

Fraud – Dishonestly obtaining a benefit from the Commonwealth or causing a loss to the Commonwealth by deception or other means.

Good governance – is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It incorporates being accountable, transparent, by including consultation policies and practices, meeting procedures, service quality protocols and officer conduct, role clarification and good working relationships.

Honorarium – a payment given for a professional service that are rendered nominally without charge.

Legal entity - a company or organization that has legal rights and responsibilities.

Not-for-profit – is an organisation that does not operate for the purpose of profit, personal gain or other benefit of particular people, when it is in operation or when it is wound up. Whilst a not-for-profit is allowed to generate profits, the profits must be used to carry out its purpose and cannot be distributed to the committee, its members or individuals.