

# Call for applications for Learning System Grants 2020

## Purpose of the learning system grants

The purpose of the learning system grants is to strengthen the capacity of the Victorian child and family services to generate and apply evidence, including data, analytics, evaluation and research. Learning system grants are available to the sector to undertake projects in these areas, contributing to a stronger evidence base in Victoria, and better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

## The learning system

The Roadmap for Reform is the Victorian Government's blueprint for transforming the child and family system from a crisis response to early intervention and prevention. A key part of the reform is a learning system that applies evidence about practice and models of care to inform service delivery and improve outcomes for children and families.

Becoming a learning system means the sector – including the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) – working together to deliver child and family services that are backed by rigorous evidence and are continually re-evaluated, refined and shared to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families.

## Available funding

The total funding for the 2020 learning system grant round is \$300,000. **Individual grants are capped at \$50,000.**

## Project expectations

Partnerships between service providers, researchers or other relevant experts such as evaluators or implementation experts are encouraged. Projects must be completed by July/August 2021.

Successful grant applicants will be required to submit a final report on their project outcomes, and present findings of their project via the OPEN portal and forums.

## Eligibility

Learning system grants are open to service providers registered as a community service organisation under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, or eligible for registration under the Act. To avoid disappointment, please make sure your organisation is eligible before applying.

## Application process

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare will administer the learning system grants. Applications are open from **12 March** and will close on **21 May**. It is expected that the successful applications will be announced by August 2020.

## Grant themes for 2020

The 2020 learning system grants will focus on the ‘**pathways approach**’ outlined in the Roadmap to Reform:<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Early help

Children and families with emerging needs and vulnerability who require assistance from universal services with extra support from the child and family system and community resources to achieve child and family wellbeing and capability.

### 2. Targeted and specialist support

Children and families experiencing a range of needs with increasing vulnerabilities or risks. Some children in this pathway may have experienced or are likely to experience significant harm and, in some circumstances, may need to reside away from their families for a time. These children, families and carers require sustained support in collaboration with universal services, specialist services and community resources to promote child and family safety, wellbeing and capability.

### 3. Continuing care

Children in enduring care arrangements who have experienced significant harm and will not be returning to their birth family. These children, their carers and birth families have enduring needs across many domains and require continuing support from child and family services in collaboration with universal services, specialist services and community resources to promote children’s opportunity to form secure attachments and reach their developmental potential.

The three pathways have the following **features**:

- Services must be timely and offer culturally sensitive support in order to make every contact with the system count.
- Services must be designed with shared decision making and action, which includes empowering children, young people, families and carers to work alongside professionals to explore solutions that meet their needs.
- Services must be flexible and offer tailored support that is proportionate to the changing needs of children and families.

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<sup>1</sup> DHHS Roadmap for Reform: children and families - Progress and directions 2018  
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/201905/Roadmap-for-Reform-children-and-families-May-2018.pdf>

The grants will be awarded to new or existing projects that are linked to the Roadmap themes. The projects can be about services or practices that reflect one of the three pathways and demonstrate at least one of the features mentioned above. Additionally, the projects must contribute to the learning system by building and strengthening the evidence base about the services (delivered under the chosen pathway approach). Please make sure that the projects align to one or more of the phases outlined in the Outcomes Journey information sheet attached with the pack.

## Selection criteria

Applications must address each of the selection criteria below to be eligible:

**Criterion 1:** Focusses on one or more pathways and features (as outlined in the Roadmap and above in this document) and phase/s in the Outcomes journey

**Criterion 2:** Has a well-articulated and detailed methodology with desired outcomes and timeline

**Criterion 3:** Has experienced personnel (including qualifications, experience and time allocated to project)

**Criterion 4:** Outlines how the project will contribute to improved workforce capability in the organisation

**Criterion 5:** Outlines how the project findings will be incorporated into day-to-day practice

**Criterion 6:** Describes how the project, once completed, will have a broader impact on the sector and improve services for children and families.

## Guidelines

Applicants must consider the following guidelines while developing their applications:

- If an organisation has been successful in the 2019 round, then it is not eligible to apply for this year's grants.
- Key personnel cannot be named across multiple submissions.
- The budgets should be GST inclusive
- If the funding is used to pay for salaries, it must be for new positions and not for adding to existing staff salaries
- The funding is not to be used for administration purposes
- Applications must itemise budgets to reflect staff (internal and external), infrastructure, training and transport costs
- While addressing the selection criteria, there must be an emphasis on:
  - Knowledge translation and not just dissemination – applications must explain how they would use the funding to inform the sector, which goes beyond producing academic papers.

- Strengthening or building capability within the organisation, particularly in relation to research and/or evaluation skills.
- In addition to the final report, the applicants must prepare a short paper for OPEN and present at a workshop/forum organised to inform the sector.

**Applicants must complete the application form to be considered for a Grant.**

For more information about the learning system grants and the application process, please contact either:

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