



Grants Programs

Building Excellence in Support and Training

Overview

This factsheet explains the Department of Veterans' Affairs *Building Excellence in Support and Training* (BEST) grant program. BEST aims to improve the quality of pension and compensation claims and promote access to a range of welfare services by providing funds to ex-service organisations (ESOs). BEST grants are available for salaried positions for advocates, pension and welfare officers and support staff, computers, software, hardware, consumables and ongoing running costs. ESOs eligible for BEST funding must be incorporated under the relevant state legislation or be sponsored by an incorporated ESO. There is one funding round each year.

What is BEST?

BEST aims to promote access to a range of welfare services and to improve the quality of pension and compensation claims.

BEST provides funding to ESOs for pensions, compensation and welfare work to assist veterans, their dependents, past and present members of the Australian Defence Forces and their families.

What is eligible?

Funding is available for:

- employment of advocates, pensions officers, welfare practitioners and ESO support staff;
- computer software and hardware; and
- consumables and ongoing running costs.

What is not eligible?

BEST funds will not be provided for rental, lease or purchase of property, electricity or other utility costs.

Applicants cannot receive funding if they:

- have received a current grant from another source which fully funds the same purpose
- are charging for services undertaken for the veteran and defence community
- using grant funds for other than claims or welfare related work

Who can apply?

ESOs that provide welfare and pension assistance and those national ESOs that provide administrative and representational support to veterans, their dependants, past and present members of the Australian Defence Force and their families can apply for funding under

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BEST. ESOs must be incorporated under the relevant state legislation, or be sponsored by an incorporated ESO, to be eligible for funding.

In regional areas where it is economically viable, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) encourages ESOs to explore the option of involving a cooperative project/centre of two or more ESOs to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

How to apply

The BEST program guidelines, application form (form no. D2727) and a guide to completing the application form are available on the DVA website:
www.dva.gov.au/pensions/BEST&TIP/b&tindex.htm.

When is funding available?

There is one BEST funding round each year and applications must be lodged at the Department's Adelaide location as is listed on the application form. Funding is for the period of the next financial year.

How are applications assessed?

Applications are considered by DVA staff who make recommendations to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs for consideration. Applicants are notified in writing of the Minister's decision.

What happens if a grant is approved?

If the Minister approves a grant, the applicant will be required to sign documentation, defining the terms and conditions of accepting the grant.

The signed documentation must be received by DVA before the grant can be paid.

The preferred method of payment is by direct payment into the applicant's bank account.

Organisations are required to acquit the grant once the project is completed. This is expected within a specified timeframe, usually 12 months. An acquittal form will be provided for this purpose.

How does BEST link in with the Training and Information Program (TIP)?

BEST and TIP are closely linked, enabling greater integration between training and the provision of infrastructure. Organisation practitioners are required to undertake the appropriate levels of TIP training, or an acceptable equivalent, prior to funds being granted. This ensures that ESO practitioners are kept up-to-date with developments in the repatriation system and in the use of electronic tools.

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Other fact sheets

Other fact sheets related to this topic include:

- *Training and Information Program: TIP 01*

All DVA fact sheets are available on request from any DVA office or on the DVA website at www.dva.gov.au/factsheets/default.htm

More information

All DVA Factsheets are available from DVA offices, and on the DVA website at www.dva.gov.au or from www.dva.gov.au/grants/index.htm

You can phone DVA for the cost of a local call on:
133 254, or 1800 555 254, if you are outside a major city.

Use a normal landline phone if you can. Mobile phone calls may cost you more.

You can send an email to DVA at: generalenquiries@dva.gov.au
You can get more help from any DVA office.