



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Settlement Engagement and Transition Support

A Discussion Paper on enhancements to the Settlement Grants program



Purpose

This Discussion Paper has been developed to encourage feedback to inform enhancements to the current Settlement Grants¹ program. The paper provides an opportunity for currently funded Settlement Grant providers and other key stakeholders to provide views and ideas on the proposed changes to program settings prior to the next funding round.

Background

Settlement Grants is a key program in the suite of settlement services to support humanitarian entrants and eligible migrants to achieve full participation in Australian society by focussing on social participation, economic well-being, independence, personal well-being and community connectedness.

The Settlement Grants program has been in place for over ten years, and fills an important gap in the post-arrival period for eligible clients who do not have family and other community supports to rely on. The program is complementary to the new Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) and other Commonwealth support to humanitarian entrants and for other vulnerable migrants.

Settlement Grants supports a large number of clients:

Program Year	Individual Clients	Group Clients
2015-16	39,304	181,587
2016-17	51,399	258,238

The following clients are eligible for Settlement Grant services in their first five years of life in Australia:

- humanitarian entrants;
- family stream migrants with low English language proficiency;
- dependants of skilled migrants in rural and regional areas with low English language proficiency; and
- selected temporary residents (Prospective Marriage and Provisional Partner visa holders and their dependants) in rural and regional areas.

¹ The Settlement Grants program is also referred to by the sector as the Settlement Services Program.

Review of Settlement Grants

A review of the Settlement Grants program was recently undertaken to identify enhancements to future program settings. The review has been part of the Department's business as usual activity for managing and administering grant programs. The review has provided an evidence base to consider changes to the program settings to ensure grant funding continues to:

- appropriately deliver against the Government's policy objectives, in particular English, education and employment (the 3Es),
- improved alignment with the recently reformed HSP and Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) business models; and
- ensure grants are targeted, flexible, and innovative in providing timely and effective early intervention support to the most vulnerable based on specific emerging needs.

The review involved an independent evaluation complemented by an internal policy review. The independent evaluation was conducted by the UNSW Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC). The final evaluation report is available on the Department of Social Services (the Department's) [website](#)

The findings from the evaluation and the internal policy review indicate that the program is broadly working well however there are some aspects that could be improved.

Proposed changes to Settlement Grants

Program Design

A range of issues have been identified which highlight that the current service components or streams are not useful for service providers or administratively for the Department. The current four stream structure will be discontinued and the program restructured to include two components clearly defining the type and nature of services expected from providers and the desired outcomes. The two components are:

- **Client services** that adopt a life course approach to casework based on client needs with providers assessing and prioritising clients for support.
- **Capacity building in communities** including support for ethno-specific organisations.

Your say:

Q.1 What types of activities will best support client outcomes under each of the two component types and what are their desired outcomes?

Q.2 What is the best way to ensure ethno-specific organisations benefit from this approach with a view to sustainable capacity building?

Service provision and innovation

The migration streams currently eligible for the program and five year timeframe will be unchanged however the program will be more clearly positioned as a needs based program.

Service providers will be expected to target the most vulnerable cohorts, namely newly arrived humanitarian entrants and youth. In relation to these cohorts, providers will be expected to undertake a more rigorous assessment of client needs and provide appropriately tailored support. The flexibility of Settlement Grants, including the broad types of activities delivered, will be maintained. This would range from basic information and/or support to somewhat more intensive support to the most vulnerable clients. Providers will be entrusted to balance demand and provide tailored services within funding allocations. Innovation in approach and service design will be an important aspect of the program.

Key priorities

The importance of the 3Es in the program intent and as a clear policy priority will be emphasised. The Department will enhance guidance documentation to articulate the types of services to be delivered and the expected outcomes.

A focus on services for youth (clients aged 15-25) is considered critical and will be retained as a policy priority. Youth services will be recognised as an area where clients would benefit from more individualised and tailored support. This could include adopting innovative strategies working well under the Youth Transition Support (YTS) pilot. Effective YTS strategies will be shared more broadly with the settlement sector. It will be important that there is no duplication between Settlement Grant and existing youth services.

Your say:

Q.3 What are some of the characteristics of a needs based approach, including provision of tailored medium-level intensity support, that the Department should address in guidance documentation?

Q.4 What mechanisms would encourage innovation in the program?

Your say:

Q.5 Without duplicating existing English, employment or education services, what Settlement Grants activities drive 3Es outcomes for clients? In the context of Settlement Grants, how would you define an English, education and/or employment outcome? How can Settlement Grants add value in achieving expected outcomes under the 3Es?

Q.6 How can Settlement Grants service delivery be enhanced to meet the often complex needs of eligible youth?

Community of Practice (COP) and Collaboration

There is currently no formal mechanism specified in the program guidelines to allow Settlement Grants providers to share innovative ideas and best practices.

The introduction of a COP model could be used to engage with providers and to regularly collect, assess and share innovative ideas and best practice as part of their work plan. The forum could cover topics of common national interest and/or aspects where services or client outcomes could be enhanced.

Reforms to the program will see a greater emphasis on service providers actively engaging and partnering with other local services regarding referrals and to promote services to potential clients. In particular, this could include formal arrangements for holistic approaches to referral into and out of the program and shared client management. Strong partnerships with HSP providers to ensure warm referral of humanitarian entrants into Settlement Grants will be emphasised as being very important.

Administrative Improvements

To better equip service providers and the Department to monitor and measure the effectiveness of Settlement Grants and interventions undertaken in the program, there will be an enhanced focus on outcomes.

There will be improvements across the range of administrative and guidance material, including the program logic, program guidelines and reporting. Reporting against the DEX fields which are currently voluntary under the Partnership Approach will become mandatory to improve reporting and data collection. The Department has already started to roll out increased support and training on program reporting requirements using DEX for providers.

Your say:

Q.7 In what ways could the Department address barriers and provide incentives for organisations to participate in the COP? What model could these forums take?

Q.8 What strategies could providers implement to enhance collaboration within and across the sector?

Your say:

Q.9 What type of guidance would organisations like the Department to provide to assist with greater program clarity?

Q.10 What do you consider to be the main barriers to service providers increasing their reporting through the DEX Partnership Approach?

How to have your say

Roundtable discussions in select locations will be guided by the questions presented in this Discussion Paper. You will be notified separately of where and when the Roundtables will be held.

The Department appreciates that some stakeholders will be unable to attend the roundtables. We welcome written responses to the questions in the paper to help inform changes to the program. Stakeholders are encouraged to answer only those questions they feel are most relevant to them.

Please provide written feedback to settlementgrantsreview@dss.gov.au by 11 December 2017.

More Information

Information regarding the next Settlement Grants open selection funding round is expected to become available early in 2018 on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).