



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

**Building Excellence In Support And Training
(BEST)**

Grants Program

Application Guidelines

2012 – 2013

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

The *Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grants* program forms part of the Government's commitment to support the role of ex-service organisation (ESO) pensions and welfare practitioners and advocates. BEST assists by providing monetary support to ESO practitioners. BEST links closely to the Training and Information Program (TIP). TIP provides the essential skills for claims and welfare work in organisations that receive BEST funding.

NOTE: While still part of BEST, national organisations applying for funding are directed to the separate set of Guidelines and the separate Application Form for National Organisations at the same DVA website.

Important Information for Applicants

Applications will be accepted from 29 February 2012 to 4 April 2012.

Applicants may apply for funding for an existing organisation/centre or to assist in the development of a new organisation/centre. Depending on the demand on funding and the prioritisation of all applications, part funding only may be offered.

Please read these Guidelines carefully before completing an application for BEST funding.

The BEST application form is available on the Department of Veterans' Affairs website at: http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service_organisations/best/Pages/BEST.aspx

The application form is an online PDF form. This means you can complete the form on your computer by typing into the relevant sections. If you prefer, you may print the form first and fill it in by hand. Applications will not be considered for BEST funding unless submitted on the application form.

All BEST applications are processed at the Adelaide DVA Office. Applicants are welcome to contact the Adelaide office on the number below to discuss their application before lodgement.



If you need more information about BEST or assistance with your application you can phone the Department of Veterans' Affairs 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.

Overview of the BEST Grants Program 2012-2013

1 Aims

- 1.1 The aim of BEST is to provide support and resources to ESO practitioners for pensions, advocacy and/or welfare work to assist the veteran and defence community.
- 1.2 BEST funding is a contribution to costs, not a full-cost model.
- 1.3 The priority of BEST activities undertaken by ESO practitioners must be given to Compensation claims and associated welfare activities under the:
 - (a) *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*;
 - (b) *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*; and
 - (c) *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

2 Program Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the program are to:
 - (a) improve the quality of claims received at the primary determining level and assist ESOs in achieving this objective;
 - (b) reduce the rate of appeals to the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT); and/or
 - (c) promote the provision of welfare services and assist with access to the veteran and defence community. BEST-funded organisations will provide information on a wide range of available welfare services and benefits.

3 Outcomes

- 3.1 This program seeks the following outcomes:
 - (a) the veteran and defence community will benefit by having better informed ESO practitioners who can ensure claims lodged with the Department are of a high standard;
 - (b) claims submitted to DVA will contain all the information required to make timely and quality decisions;
 - (c) ESOs will assist in improving claims assessment efficiency;
 - (d) ESOs will have enhanced infrastructure to provide better services to the veteran and defence community;
 - (e) the veteran and defence community will have access to pensions, advocacy and welfare-related information; and
 - (f) improved co-operation and communication on repatriation and military compensation matters around Australia.

4 Accountability Requirements

- 4.1 All ESOs that receive BEST funding will be required to record and maintain information supporting the use and expenditure of the funds. Usually this information will not be required at the time of acquittal of the BEST funds. It may be required if the ESO is the subject of a random internal departmental audit or external audit of the use of the BEST funds and must be made available upon request from DVA.

- 4.2 The information required will depend on the nature of the grant but will include:
- (a) an Equipment Register for all capital purchases funded under the BEST grant;
 - (b) a Travel Log for all travel expenses claimed and funded under the BEST grant;
 - (c) invoices, receipts or other information for all capital purchases;
 - (d) invoices, receipts or other information for any office consumables where the single purchase was \$100 or more;
 - (e) if salary assistance is provided, evidence of who has been paid, the number of hours worked and in respect of what activities; and
 - (f) any additional accountability requirement that is outlined in the grant Deed of Agreement (*Clause 18* below).

Eligibility for BEST

5 Eligibility of Organisations

- 5.1 To be eligible for BEST funding, the applicant organisation must be:
- (a) a bona fide ex-service organisation (ESO), which is an organisation:
 - whose membership consists primarily of veterans, dependants and/or past and present members of the Australian Defence Forces (ADF);
 - which is established primarily to provide pensions, advocacy and/or welfare assistance to veterans, dependants and/or past and present members of the ADF; and
 - which does not operate as a business or charge any fee for acting on behalf of the veterans, dependants or past and present members of the ADF in the claims and review system.
 - (b) an incorporated body in accordance with the relevant State or Territory legislation. A bona fide ESO which is not incorporated may apply for BEST funding under the sponsorship of another eligible ESO (*Clause 6* below).
- 5.2 There are two categories of applicants who may apply for BEST Grants:
- (a) **Single applicants** who are incorporated ESOs that satisfy the requirements of *Clause 5.1* (above) and are applying for funding for their own organisation; and
 - (b) **Sponsoring applicants** (*Clause 6* below).

6 Sponsoring Applicants

- 6.1 You are considered to be a sponsoring applicant if your organisation is:
- an incorporated ESO, which satisfies the requirements of *Clause 5.1* (above), and is applying for funding on behalf of one or more organisations that may or may not be incorporated; or
 - an incorporated ESO, which satisfies the requirements of *Clause 5.1* (above), and is applying for funding as the sponsor organisation of a joint venture arrangement. In the case of a joint venture arrangement, one organisation must be nominated as the sponsor organisation and will have obligations and responsibilities as detailed below.
- 6.2 The sponsoring applicant's obligations and responsibilities are:

- (a) to bear executive management responsibility and be accountable to DVA for the appropriate use of grant funds in accordance with the terms of the grant;
 - (b) to take responsibility for the receipt and distribution of grant funds; and
 - (c) to take responsibility for the collection, collation and provision of all reporting documents and acquittal of the grant.
- 6.3 Applicants in a sponsoring or joint venture arrangement must provide evidence of a formal agreement between all organisations. This evidence may consist of articles of association, a memorandum of understanding, contractual agreement or other acceptable documentation that indicates that the sponsoring organisation and the participating organisations have agreed to firm and workable arrangements.
- 6.4 The formal agreement must indicate each organisation's involvement, responsibilities and agreement to the Performance Objectives (*Clause 20* below), and it must be confirmed by signatories from all organisations involved.
- 6.5 A signatory from one organisation cannot also be a signatory on behalf of another organisation.

7 Provision of BEST Funding

- 7.1 BEST funding is available to:
- those applicants who directly provide advocacy and pension officer services (*Clause 8.1* below); and
 - those applicants who provide welfare officer services (*Clause 8.1 and Clause 10.4* below).
- 7.2 For the purposes of the BEST grants program:
- an **administrative assistant** means a person who provides general secretarial and administrative assistance and/or office management services;
 - a **pension officer** means a person who provides veterans and defence community members and their dependants with information relating to repatriation and compensation benefits, as well as details of how claims and applications are determined. A pension officer must obtain and maintain appropriate levels of training under TIP and be accredited by their ESO;
 - an **advocate** means a person who usually prepares cases for review before the VRB and the AAT. An advocate must have completed prerequisite TIP training courses, have suitable experience in case management and be accredited by their ESO; and
 - a **welfare officer** means a person who provides the veteran and defence communities with information on, and assists with, access to health, housing and other community services and benefits. A welfare officer must obtain and maintain appropriate levels of training under TIP and be accredited by their ESO.
- 7.3 During the relevant funding round, the applicant must satisfy the training, education and other eligibility requirements of *Clause 12* (below).
- 7.4 **The applicant must keep and be able to provide workload statistics for both paid and volunteer practitioners.**
- 7.5 Assistance is not available if the applicant:
- (a) has received a grant from another source which fully funds the same purpose;
 - (b) is charging for services provided to the veteran and defence community; or
 - (c) is using grant funds for other than the agreed purpose.

- 7.6 Seed funding is available to an ESO that has not received any BEST grant funding in Rounds 10 to 13 and satisfies *Clause 9* (below).

8 Eligible items – ESOs providing Advocacy, Pensions and Welfare Assistance

- 8.1 The BEST Program may provide grants for:
- salary assistance to full-time or part-time advocates and pensions practitioners. This will enable the employment of personnel to assist in the preparation, lodgement and monitoring of primary level claims applications, applications to the Veterans' Review Board (VRB), reconsiderations under SRCA or MRCA and appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). (See a list of Workload Definitions at [Attachment A](#));
 - salary assistance to full-time or part-time administrative assistants. This provision of funding to ESOs will employ administrative assistants to provide support to advocates, pensions and welfare practitioners and other personnel; and
 - other assistance for paid and volunteer practitioners such as equipment, travel and other eligible items, outlined in *Clause 8.11* (below).

Salary Assistance

- 8.2 Salary assistance is a contribution to the cost of the resources required by ESOs to provide assistance to the veteran and defence communities.
- 8.3 Each ESO is required to determine the level of actual remuneration for its paid practitioners. All employee on-costs such as holiday, sick or long service leave and superannuation are not funded as part of the grant and are expected to be funded by ESOs.
- 8.4 Salary assistance is available for administrative support work where it is difficult to retain the services of a volunteer to undertake the work.
- 8.5 Each ESO requesting salary assistance is required to identify each paid practitioner and provide their caseload statistics for the previous 12 months. Workload information will be required for each practitioner where salary assistance is being requested to substantiate the need for salary assistance (see Question 26 on the Application Form).
- 8.6 The amount of salary contribution payable under BEST will reflect the type of practitioner role performed and workload undertaken (see definitions at [Attachment A](#)).
- 8.7 For the 2012-13 funding round, the three year rolling funding cycle of salary assistance will continue. Where salary assistance is approved, payment will be made in early July along with payment for other approved items. At that time, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs will approve, in principle, an amount equal to 85% of the salary amount to be provided in the first year for each of the following two financial years.
- 8.8 This in-principle approval will apply subject to the ESO continuing to comply with the terms of the guidelines, including providing accurate workload statistics that substantiate the need for salary assistance, and complying with the terms of its grant's Deed of Agreement.

Limitations on Salary Assistance

- 8.9 Total funding to be made available for salary assistance will be capped at no more than 80% of the total available grant funds under *Clause 8* and this limit will be applied within each State and Territory allocation.
- 8.10 Where the overall demand for salary funds is greater than the available funds, the Minister will determine priority funding areas.

Equipment, Travel and Other Eligible Items

- 8.11 This section sets out the range of capital equipment, office consumables and travel that can be funded.
- 8.12 A minimum of 20% of total available grant funds under *Clause 8* will be for equipment, travel and other eligible items. These items must be used only for the pensions, advocacy and welfare work activities funded and agreed under the grants agreement.
- 8.13 As with funding assistance for salary, any funding provided for the items listed below is only a contribution to the total cost to ESOs to provide their services:
- Computer Equipment*
Related to pensions, advocacy and welfare work
Desktop, laptop each with 3 year warranty, DVD burner, printer, Multi-Function Device (MFD), Fax Machine, scanner, surge protector, computer network;
 - Computer Software*
Anti-virus Software annual licence, Microsoft Version Upgrades – only if DVA approved, application tools (e.g. MS Office), fire wall. (Note: ESOs are entitled to purchase education versions of software);
 - Internet Equipment
Based on network setup, number of stand-alone PCs, laptops, wireless for laptops being used remotely. Internet modems for Dial Up, Broadband and wireless;
 - Internet Access
Establishment fees and ongoing internet;
 - Office Equipment*
Answering machine, tape recorder;
 - Office Furniture*
Filing cabinet, desk and chair, meeting table, visitor chairs, bookcase;
 - Office Supplies
General stationery, postage, paper, toner, ink, folders, tapes, cleaning products, read/write DVDs, brochure holder, flash drives;
 - Reference Material*
Related reference books and medical information that is available via print and online.(e.g. MIMS);
 - Telephone Costs
Landline and mobile phone calls related to the provision of pension and welfare services;
 - Travel
Reimbursement for travel, related to pensions, welfare and advocacy work, travel to local VRB and AAT hearings and travel to TIP courses. Travel should be calculated at the rate of 30.1 cents per kilometre when practitioners use

their own motor vehicles (subject to Clause 11.1). A Travel Log detailing the kilometres travelled, purpose of journey, date(s) of travel and attributed costs for each journey will be required.

- 8.14 All categories denoted with an asterisk (*) are considered capital purchases and must be recorded in the Equipment Register (*Clause 4.2* above).
- 8.15 All travel must be documented in accordance with the requirements set out in *Clause 8.11* (above).
- 8.16 All requested items must clearly address the Program Objectives in order to be considered eligible for funding.

9 Seed Funding

- 9.1 New applicants will be considered for seed funding, however the ESO will need to address strict criteria such as:
 - the applicant represents a group of ESOs that have combined together to provide more cost-effective services (e.g. through a Service Delivery Integration Grant);
 - providing clear justification for funding on the basis of a severe reduction in the service provided to the area currently supported and, if funding was not provided, the service needs could not be met by any other means including a nearby ESO or DVA office; and
 - clearly demonstrating it is endeavouring to have a co-operative approach to service delivery.
- 9.2 For the purposes of these Guidelines a 'co-operative approach to service delivery' means ESOs adopting a more integrated and co-ordinated approach when providing assistance and services to the same wider veteran community.

10 Transitional Provisions

- 10.1 Previous grant rounds have provided salary for welfare officers. These transitional provisions set out the requirements for those applicants who have previously had grants for welfare officer salary to be considered for continuation of these items.
- 10.2 Where an applicant has previously received funding for a welfare officer salary during Rounds 10 to 13, and subject to continuing to satisfy the requirements of these Guidelines, the applicant may receive salary assistance for a welfare officer in Round 14 (2012-13 FY).
- 10.3 On-going salary assistance for welfare officers beyond Round 14 is not guaranteed. In the 2012-13 financial year, DVA will seek to review all organisations that have received or are receiving funding for a welfare officer to fully understand the duties undertaken and how better these roles could be fulfilled.
- 10.4 No new applications for welfare officers' salaries will be approved.

11 Funding Exclusions

- 11.1 BEST funds are not available for the following:
 - electricity, natural gas or other utility costs;
 - employee superannuation, leave loadings, workers' compensation and management fees;
 - the cost of leasing premises.

- office expenses and fees including insurance, advertising expenses, audit fees and bank fees;
 - any travel costs beyond the local district where the organisation operates or has its usual place of business;
 - any interstate travel for all pensions, welfare and advocacy work including VRB and AAT hearings;
 - purchase of real property;
 - legal consultation costs, including litigation; and
 - air conditioning units, televisions, VCR/DVD data projectors, refrigerators, digital cameras or laminators.
- 11.2 After the grant period, as defined in the Deed of Agreement, the computer equipment purchased under the funding agreement belongs to the ESO. The ESO is responsible for this equipment, any ancillary operational costs such as computer network expenses, and any ongoing costs or repairs to that equipment.

12 Training, Education and Other Eligibility Requirements

- 12.1 The applicant is required to ensure that TIP trained practitioners in its organisation and organisations it may be sponsoring:
- undertake the appropriate levels of TIP training and/or refresher training prior to funds being granted. This requirement will ensure that volunteers and paid ESO practitioners are kept up to date with developments in the legislation administered by the Department and the use of electronic tools; and
 - abide by the TIP Code of Ethics.
- 12.2 Applicants must comply with the agreed Performance Objectives and reporting requirements of the BEST program.
- 12.3 Organisations must ensure they have professional indemnity insurance available through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc (VITA), or a similar insurance provider, which will provide cover for all pension, welfare and advocacy work undertaken by practitioners when working with veterans and the defence community and their dependants.
- 12.4 To be eligible for funding, applicants must:
- (a) have reasonable computer literacy skills or undertake appropriate training in the use of electronic software and computer equipment including the use of DVA systems such as the FACTS system, CLIK and the CCPS Research Library;
 - (b) use the BEST grant equipment primarily to research, record and document claims and appeals preparation;
 - (c) be able to secure all grant equipment and client information and files in suitable and safe premises;
 - (d) ensure that BEST grant equipment is insured by the grant recipient; and
 - (e) maintain an equipment register which includes details of all equipment purchased with BEST funding and is available to be viewed by DVA on request.

Assessment Process

13 Funding Priorities

- 13.1 The funding priorities used to direct BEST funds to ESOs are that the applicant:

- (a) can demonstrate a reasonably clear link between funding sought and the demographics, geographical location and service needs of the veteran population to be assisted;
- (b) seeks funding in alignment with the workload information provided on the application form; and
- (c) can demonstrate that support from an ESO, an ex-service club or from other sources (either financial or "in-kind") is being provided or is being sought.

14 Assessment Criteria – ESOs providing Advocacy and Pensions and Welfare Assistance

14.1 Applications are assessed on merit and a comparative analysis is made of all applications to establish priority for funding.

14.2 All applications will be assessed against the criteria listed below.

14.3 Applications in excess of available grant funds may result in some applications not being approved or being approved for a reduced amount, even though they may meet the eligibility criteria:

- TIP trained practitioners are up to date with their training;
- claims assistance is provided to the veteran community;
- the organisation provides welfare assistance to the veteran community;
- the organisation provides access to services for the wider veteran community;
- the applicant has acquitted all previous BEST grants (if applicable). A grant may be approved for funding, however, payment will not be made until all acquittals are up-to-date;
- if the applicant is seeking funding for ongoing salaried positions, it has demonstrated the need for ongoing assistance and sufficient expected workload levels to warrant continued funding;
- if a new applicant is seeking funding for salaries (other than welfare), the workload statistics and other information provided on the application form demonstrate the need for a funded salary position;
- the applicant has demonstrated a clear link between the funding sought and the demographics, geographical location and service needs of the veteran population to be assisted; and
- the applicant has either secured or is seeking additional funding from another source.

15 Assessment Process

15.1 All applications received will then be assessed using the criteria outlined above. A submission detailing grant recommendations will be provided for the consideration of the Minister.

15.2 Workload statistics for both paid and voluntary practitioners, as supplied on the application form, will be taken into account.

15.3 It is expected that the Minister will announce successful grantees in May 2012.

16 Application Timetable

16.1 Funding will be for the period of a financial year (1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013). The timetable is advised on the BEST website each year. The application timetable for the 2012-2013 financial year funding round is as follows:

DATE	REQUIREMENT
29 February 2012	Applications open
4 April 2012	Applications close
May 2012	Applications processed and recommendations submitted to the Minister
June 2012	Minister approves grants
June 2012	Applicants notified of decision and grant Deeds of Agreement posted to successful applicants
Early July 2012	Payment of funds

16.2 No late applications will be accepted although lost applications and other specific one-off circumstances may be considered on a case by case basis.

Funding

17 Funding

17.1 Funding will initially be distributed by allocation to States and Territories on a per capita basis according to the total veteran beneficiary population in each state.

17.2 Where there are insufficient eligible applications from one State/Territory to use all its funding allocation, funds will be re-distributed to eligible applications from other States and Territories.

17.3 Funding for salaries will be based on workload statistics and practitioner roles as stated on the application form.

17.4 The following conditions apply to BEST funding:

- (a) grants are not guaranteed in any year. An ESO should not consider that the funding received is ongoing. All applicants must reapply for funding in each BEST funding round notwithstanding the in-principle commitment for the salary assistance outlined in *Clause 8* (above);
- (b) in general, funds cannot be used for other than the specific purpose(s) for which they were approved. That is, excess travel funds cannot be spent on meeting salary assistance funding gaps. Exceptions are explained at *Clause 21* (below);
- (c) subject to *Clause 21* (below), surplus or underspent funds must be returned to DVA within a reasonable time and in line with the set acquittal period for expending grant funds;
- (d) funds are generally allocated to successful applicants at the beginning of the financial year, enabling a planned approach for the allocation of grants;
- (e) where requests for funds exceed the available funds, applicants may receive partial or nil funding.

18 Deed of Agreement

- 18.1 Before receiving the grant, successful applicants must enter into a formal Deed of Agreement with the Australian Government that addresses legal requirements, grant period and record keeping as well as monitoring and evaluation procedures. DVA will prepare this Deed.
- 18.2 All successful applicants must return Deeds of Agreement and agreed Performance Objectives (*Clause 20* below) before payment is made. All relevant documentation should be signed and lodged with DVA by 30 June each year. Failure to meet this deadline may delay payment of the grant amount.
- 18.3 Failure to sign the Deed of Agreement and Performance Objectives may lead to the grant offer being withdrawn.

19 Goods and Services Tax (GST) Requirements

- 19.1 If an applicant organisation does not have an Australian Business Number (ABN) it must provide a Statement by Supplier (reason for not quoting an ABN to an enterprise). This is an Australian Taxation Office (ATO) form, which can be accessed at the ATO website: <http://www.ato.gov.au/> If this Statement is not provided, then withholding provisions will apply.
- 19.2 Applicant organisations that have an ABN and are registered for GST will have GST of 10% added to the GST exclusive approved grant payment. A valid tax invoice must be provided prior to the grant being paid. Grant recipients may either:
- generate and provide a tax invoice to DVA prior to processing the grant payment; or
 - enter into an agreement, which will allow the Department to generate a Recipient Created Tax Invoice on behalf of the grant recipient. The agreement is the Deed of Agreement for the Provision of Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTI).

20 Grant Performance Objectives

- 20.1 A set of Grant Performance Objectives must be agreed upon by the grantee and DVA. These may include:
- (a) completing an agreed number of primary claims;
 - (b) providing regular six-monthly progress reports which will detail:
 - number of claims prepared and comparisons with numbers of claims prepared in the last six-monthly report,
 - number of appeals and comparisons with numbers of appeals undertaken in the last six-monthly report,
 - all TIP training undertaken by Advocates/Pension Officers and comparison with training undertaken in the last six-monthly report, and
 - number of clients assisted with welfare information and comparison with clients assisted with welfare information in the last six-monthly report;
 - (c) an agreed percentage of time spent on welfare assistance, or number of welfare clients assisted;
 - (d) reduction in the time taken to prepare certificates of readiness for VRB cases; and
 - (e) other specific reporting conditions that may be required depending on the nature of the application.

21 Funding Variations

- 21.1 Grantees may apply for a variation to certain aspects of their Deed of Agreement provided:
- (a) All requests for grant purpose variation are to be put in writing by the grantee to DVA before grant funds are re-directed to other purposes. Only the Minister for Veterans' Affairs can approve a variation to a grant.
 - (b) Any grant funds spent on purposes other than those specified in the Deed of Agreement may require the repayment of funds where a variation has not been sought or approved.

22 Disclosure of Information

- 22.1 Information provided by the ESO on the grant application form may be disclosed:
- to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs;
 - to Members of Parliament for use in the presentation of the grant;
 - on the Department of Veterans' Affairs website (for at least two years), in media releases; and
 - to the Australian National Audit Office as required to meet Government accountability requirements.

Acquittal of Grant Funding

23 Acquittal Process

- 23.1 Acquittal processes are the main means by which DVA ensures that the grant funds distributed to approved applicants are utilised effectively and for the purposes for which they were granted.
- 23.2 As required in the Deed of Agreement, the following acquittal documents must be completed:
- for all grants, a six month Progress Report, addressing the Performance Objectives and outlining compliance with the requirements under the Deed of Agreement, must be completed and returned to DVA by mid February;
 - for grants over \$10,000, a 12 month Project Report, Audit Certificate and Statement of Compliance must be completed within 30 days of the end of the Project Period and returned to DVA within a further 14 days; and
 - for grants under \$10,000 the 12 month Project Report and Statement of Compliance must be completed within the timeframe stated above.
- 23.3 Details of what is required in these documents (including templates) will be given with the Deed of Agreement.
- 23.4 Failure to meet these requirements may impact on receiving future assistance under BEST.
- 23.5 Payment of approved funds in a new Round will not be made if ESOs have not met the obligations described at *Clause 23.2* (above).

24 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 24.1 Six-monthly progress reports are to be provided by the grantees against agreed Performance Objectives.

- 24.2 DVA will undertake an evaluation of each grantee against the agreed performance objectives.
- 24.3 DVA will discuss any perceived risk that the agreed Performance Objectives for the remaining 6 months of the grant period may not be achieved.
- 24.4 Any significant remaining risk may affect the outcome of any application in the following grant funding round.
- 24.5 The results achieved through the BEST program will be included in DVA's Annual Report.

SECTION TWO

Guide to Completing the BEST 2012-2013 Application Form

This section contains information on how to complete the *Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST)* 2012-2013 Application Form. The guide includes comments and explanations on some of the more complex questions in the application form. The references, for example, "refer *Section One, 4.1*" are to the relevant Clause in the Guidelines. For further assistance, feel free to contact the DVA Adelaide office to discuss your application.

Part A – Applicant Details

Q 1. *Are you an incorporated organisation?*

Indicate if your organisation is incorporated. You will need to attach a copy of your organisation's Certificate of Incorporation.

To apply for BEST funding an organisation must be incorporated. If your organisation is not incorporated you may ask another eligible organisation to apply for funding on your behalf as a sponsor. Please refer to *Section One, 5.1*.

Q 2. *Is your organisation a 'bona-fide' ex-service organisation?* To be eligible for BEST funding your organisation must be a 'bona-fide' ex-service organisation. Please check *Section One, 5.1* for detailed information about a 'bona-fide' ex-service organisation.

Q 3. *Are you a Single Applicant or a Sponsoring Applicant? (Tick all applicable boxes.)*

Indicate which type of applicant you are. Details of each category are explained in *Section One, 5.2*. Note that if you are the sponsor of an organisation (or organisations) that is not incorporated, it is expected that you agree to take on those responsibilities of a sponsor as detailed in *Section One, 6*.

Q 4. *If you have previously applied for BEST funding, have you changed your organisation's legal name since that application?*

If you applied for BEST funding in previous years, we need to match your application to our records of your organisation. Please supply the legal name you gave in your most recent previous BEST application.

Q 5. *Your organisation's details.*

Please supply the full legal name of your organisation as defined in documents such as the organisation's Certificate of Incorporation or Constitution. Supply your organisation's street and postal address, daytime telephone number and fax. Please also supply an email address and the organisation's website address if you have one.

Q 6. *Are you part of a group that applied for a Service Delivery Integration grant?*

Please tick the Yes box if you were part of a group that completed a Feasibility Study and progressed to submitting an Implementation Plan.

Q 7. *Your nominated contact person details.*

Please supply the details of a nominated contact person. This is the person who will be advised about the outcome of the application. In the event of a grant being approved, this person will be the contact person for all correspondence and any grant presentation arrangements.

The contact person should have a good understanding of the BEST Guidelines and will be closely involved in the grant Deed of Agreement documentation, the grant performance

reporting agreement and its implementation and in any correspondence with DVA during the grant period. Grantees must advise DVA if their contact person changes.

Q 8. *In which Federal Electorate is your organisation located?*

Please indicate the federal electorate in which the street address of this organisation is located. DVA will notify the relevant Federal Member of Parliament (MP) of the outcome of the application. Many MPs may communicate with either DVA or the organisation/centre, particularly when grants are approved. They may also contact successful grantees and offer to facilitate a grant presentation and media coverage.

Q 9. *Do you have a working relationship covered by a memorandum of understanding or similar agreement with other organisations?*

DVA needs to know if your organisation is working collaboratively with other organisations to provide advocacy and welfare services. This question applies particularly to sponsoring organisations who may be sponsoring several smaller ESOs or applying in a joint venture arrangement. However, single applicants may also be working collaboratively with other ESOs and should also provide documentation here.

If you are working collaboratively, you must attach a copy of a document that shows the working relationship between the organisations involved. This may be a formal memorandum of understanding or a less formal agreement signed by all parties involved. An example of a simple memorandum of understanding is at [Attachment B](#) of these Guidelines and is one method of documentation. It may be modified for the purpose of your application.

Q 10. *Has your organisation, or any organisations you are sponsoring, previously received BEST funding?*

Indicate if your organisation, or an organisation you are sponsoring, has or has not previously received BEST funding. Please refer to *Section One, 23* for information about your obligations in acquitting your grant. You will not be granted any BEST funding until **all** previous grants have been acquitted.

Q 11. *Provide your organisation's banking details.*

Be sure to include the name of the financial institution, address of the branch where the account is held, the full account name, account number and BSB number. If you do not know the BSB number, contact your financial institution and they will be able to tell you. DVA pays grant monies by electronic transfer into your nominated bank account.

Q 12. *Has your organisation changed its banking details during the last 12 months?*
Indicate yes or no.

Q 13. *Does your organisation have an Australian Business Number (ABN)?*

Record if your organisation has an Australian Business Number (ABN). Note, that if an ABN is not provided, DVA may be obliged to withhold tax from grant payments at the highest marginal tax rate unless the applicant provides a completed "Statement by a Supplier" form stating the reasons for not supplying an ABN. The form is available at the Australian Tax Office website at <http://www.ato.gov.au/>.

Q 14. *Is your organisation registered for Goods and Service Tax (GST)?*

Please indicate whether your organisation is registered for GST. If registration is pending you will need to notify DVA when registration has been finalised. For more information about GST requirements please refer to *Section One, 19*.

Q 15. *Does your organisation produce a financial or audit report?*

Please attach a copy of your organisation's most recent financial report or audit report.

Q 16. *Have you had contact with a DVA officer regarding this BEST application?*
Providing this contact person information will be helpful to DVA, particularly for those applicants living outside South Australia. It may be useful for the DVA Adelaide grants staff to speak with the DVA contact officer for information when assessing your application.

Part B – Single Applicant and Sponsored Organisation Details

Questions 17 to 19: If you completed these details for your organisation in Part A of the form, you do not need to complete them again and should skip to **Question 20**. If your organisation is sponsoring other organisations you will need to complete **all** the questions in Part B for **each** sponsored organisation.

Q 17. *What are the sponsored organisation's details?*
Please supply the full legal name of the sponsored organisation (this includes organisations that are part of a joint venture arrangement) as defined in documents such as the organisation's Certificate of Incorporation or Constitution. Supply the organisation's street and postal address, daytime telephone number and fax. Please also supply an email address and the organisation's website address if it has one.

Q 18. *Details of sponsored organisation's nominated contact person.*
The details of a nominated contact person. This person will be advised about the outcome of the application.

Q 19. *Is this organisation a 'bona-fide' ex-service organisation?*
To be eligible for BEST funding your organisation must be a 'bona-fide' ex-service organisation. Please check *Section One, 5.1* for detailed information about what a 'bona-fide' ex-service organisation is.

Q 20. *Detail all insurance coverage this organisation has for participants carrying out BEST related activities.*

Organisations must ensure that they have professional indemnity insurance available through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc (VITA), or a similar insurance provider, which will provide cover for all pension and welfare work undertaken by practitioners when working with veterans and the defence community and their dependants.

When there are a number of participant organisations operating as a Veteran Support Centre, it is the responsibility of the Veteran Support Centre to obtain professional indemnity insurance for their Centre through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc (VITA) or a similar insurance provider.

Q 21. *What is the estimated number of financial members in this organisation?*
Provide details on the number (or estimate) of current financial members and associated members in the organisation.

Q 22. *Does this organisation provide a service only to members or will it service the wider veteran community, serving and ex-members of the armed forces or eligible members of the Australian Federal Police?*
Advise if this organisation/centre provides a service only to members or instead does it service the wider veteran community.

Q 23. *List this organisation/centre's operating hours.*

This question relates to the standard operating hours of the organisation.

Q 24. *In which Federal Electorate is this organisation located?*

Please indicate the federal electorate in which the street address of this organisation is located. DVA will notify the relevant Federal Member of Parliament (MP) of the outcome of the application. Many MPs may communicate with either DVA or the organisation/centre, particularly when grants are approved. They may also contact successful grantees and offer to facilitate a grant presentation and media coverage.

Q 25. *Are there any restrictive rules governing membership of this organisation?*

If relevant, provide details of any existing rules which restrict membership to this organisation.

Q 26. *Provide details of practitioners, both funded and voluntary, for whom salary assistance is sought.*

Please give the name of each practitioner in the organisation for whom you are seeking salary assistance and the name of each volunteer practitioner. Indicate the type of practitioner e.g. pensions officer, advocate and, their highest level of TIP training and the date of the last TIP course attended. You must also provide details of the workload for the previous 12 months ending on 30 November of the current grant year for each practitioner. Please provide the amount of salary assistance sought bearing in mind the BEST Grants Salary Assistance Policy as detailed in *Section 1, 8*.

Q 27. *Detail the current number of administrative assistants both paid and voluntary, the hours worked and the amount requested for paid assistants.*

This question seeks a brief table of the paid and volunteer administrative personnel currently involved in the organisation/centre.

Q 28. *Does this organisation, or practitioners associated with the organisation, charge (or intend to charge) a fee or request a donation in return for its pensions, advocacy or welfare services?*

If it is appropriate, provide details of all instances when this organisation, or practitioners associated with the organisation, charges (or intends to charge) a fee, or requests a donation, in return for pensions, advocacy or welfare services.

Q 29. *Provide details of the welfare activities undertaken (include details of home visits, country outreach, etc).*

Please describe the welfare activities that this organisation/centre undertakes and the hours spent on each activity.

Q 30. *Provide details of computer equipment sought.*

List all computer items for which you are requesting funding – see *Section One, 8* for a list of eligible items. Please provide one written quote for each item. Quotes must include GST and be sufficiently formal to clearly identify the proposed supplier and items requested. Quotes must be based on the **reasonable** cost of items suitable to carry out pension and welfare activities.

All equipment must satisfy a number of pre-requisites:

- all equipment purchased must be new;
- all equipment must be purchased from a recognised reputable computer dealer/distributor; and
- all equipment purchased must have an acceptable warranty period. Computers (desktop/laptop) and printers should have a warranty for a three year period.

Note: Once equipment has been purchased, copies of all documentation regarding purchase of equipment and terms and conditions must be presented to DVA's Adelaide office and details must be recorded on the ESO/Centre's Equipment Register.

Q 31. *Provide details of office equipment sought.*

List all office equipment for which you are requesting funding - see *Section One, 8* for a list of eligible items. Once equipment has been purchased, copies of all documentation regarding purchase of equipment and terms and conditions must be presented to DVA's Adelaide office and details must be recorded on the ESO/Centre's Equipment Register.

Q 32. *Provide an estimate of all travel, consumables and internet access costs sought.*

Please see *Section One, 8.12* for a list of eligible reasons for travel. If you are intending to apply for travel costs, the approved ESO payment travel rate used for BEST calculations is 30.1 cents per kilometre. Note, a travel log must be kept (refer to *Section One, 8.12 of Guidelines*).

Q 33. *List in order of priority all requested items in questions 26, 30, 31 and 32.*

Please list all requested items including salary positions as listed in Question 26 and Questions 30 to 32 in order of funding priority to assist in decision making on the allocation of funds where demand exceeds the amount available.

Q 34. *Have you sought any other funds in relation to this organisation's activities?*

Provide details of any funding which has either been sought or offered from any other source in relation to your organisation undertaking the ESO support role. This includes funding from other government departments as well as from other sources.

Part C – Checklist and Declaration

Please ensure you have completed all items on the checklist and attached all necessary documentation before signing the declaration. The declaration must be signed by two members of the Executive of the organisation named at Question 5 of the application form.

Once you have completed the form, you will need to print, sign and post it with all required documentation to:

Manager Grant Administration

Department of Veterans' Affairs

GPO Box 9998

Adelaide SA 5001



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Attachment A – Statement of Definitions

Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grants Program

Statement of Definitions

The Application Form for BEST grant funding requests statistical information on the workload of practitioners, both paid and voluntary.

To achieve consistency across all applications for workload statistics, the following definitions are provided to enable applicants to more clearly identify and categorise the work carried out by practitioners as required on the application form.

Definitions are also provided for those activities conducted by welfare officers that are eligible under BEST funding criteria.

Workload Statistics

Workload statistics are counted for the financial year as stated on the application form and/or on the six and twelve monthly reports.

Note: Claims statistics under the Commonwealth legislation below are for the number of primary claims and do **not** include counts of individual conditions.

Under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*

1. Primary Claims – the number of VEA Disability Pension and War Widow(er)s Pension submitted to DVA during the reporting period.
2. Applications for Increase (AFI) – the number of AFIs submitted to DVA during the reporting period.
3. Veterans' Review Board (VRB) Appeals – the number of appeals to the VRB lodged during the reporting period.
4. Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) – the number of AAT cases lodged during the reporting period.
5. Income Support claims, including Qualifying Service and Income Support Supplement.

Under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*

1. Primary Claims – the number of primary MRCA claims lodged with DVA during the reporting period.
2. Reviews – the number of MRCA reviews lodged during the reporting period.
3. Veterans' Review Board Appeals – the number of MRCA appeals to the VRB lodged during the reporting period.

Under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*

1. Primary Claims – the number of primary SRCA claims open and lodged with DVA during the reporting period.

Welfare Activities

The number of hours to provide welfare support under the following categories:

- Visits - including the number of metropolitan and or country, home, hospital, aged care facility visits for emergencies, support and professional assistance.
 - Bereavement/Funerals – including providing referral assistance, support for bereavement issues and assistance with funeral arrangements.
 - Housing/Accommodation – including providing advice on issues related to rentals, ownership, care facilities, emergencies, income and assets.
 - Problem/Crises – including providing referrals for medical, financial, legal and police matters and providing advice on simple resolutions.
 - Transport – including providing advice on DVA eligibility, resources and benefits and community agencies, resources and benefits.
-

Attachment B - Sample Memorandum of Understanding

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

the

{organisation name 1},

{organisation name 2},

and

{organisation name 3},

For a joint application for funding under
the Department of Veterans' Affairs

Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Program

1. Preamble

This Memorandum of Understanding is made between the {organisation name 1, 2 & 3} and all associated Sub-branches in {State/Territory} unless otherwise mentioned.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish some agreed protocols to assist in the smooth operation of the program and thereby achieving the project outcomes.

3. Definitions

'Agreement' means a Deed of Agreement co-signed by a representative of the Sponsor and the Department of Veterans' Affairs;

Unless otherwise stated, **'Board'** means the management board of the organisations involved in this Memorandum of Understanding;

'Department' means the Department of Veterans' Affairs;

'Sponsor Organisation' means the {sponsor organisation of joint application};

'Participant/s' means the {associated organisations of joint application};

'Practitioner/s' means a Welfare Officer, Pension Officer, Case Officer or Advocate trained to an appropriate level under the Training and Information Program (TIP) and authorised by the Board, in writing, to provide those services to veterans, ex-service personnel, past and present members of the Australian Defence Force and/or their dependants on behalf of the (insert name of organisation/centre).

Unless otherwise stated, **'Program'** means an agreed joint proposal for a grant the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Program;

'Understanding' means this Memorandum of Understanding with Appendices (if required).

4. Aim

The aim of this program is to provide support and resources to Practitioners for Pension and Welfare work to assist members of the veteran and defence communities.

5. Objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- (a) Improve the quality of claims submitted to the 'Department' at the primary level and assist Practitioners in achieving this objective;
- (b) Reduce the rate of appeals to the Veterans' Review Board; and

- (c) Promote the provision of welfare services and assist access to veterans, dependants and past and present members of the Australian Defence Forces (ADF). BEST-funded organisations will provide information on a wide range of available welfare services and benefits.

6. Outcomes

The following are the Program intended outcomes:

- (a) Veterans, dependants and past and present members of the ADF will benefit by having better informed Practitioners who can ensure claims lodged with the Department are of a high standard;
- (b) Claims submitted to the Department will contain all the information required to make timely and quality decisions;
- (c) Practitioners will assist the 'Department' in improving its claims proficiency;
- (d) Practitioners will be assisted in developing the appropriate infrastructure needed to better service veterans, dependants and past and present members of the ADF; and
- (e) Assist veterans and their dependants in a range of welfare related activities.

7. Management

A management board shall be appointed to oversee the operations of the project consisting of two representatives from each participating organisation, one of which (from each organisation) shall be a trained, authorised and a practising 'Practitioner'.

The Board shall ensure that:

- (a) (Insert name of organisation/centre) seeks and maintains membership of the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association in order to provide indemnity insurance cover for practitioners;
- (b) Practitioners are qualified through the Training and Information Program (TIP) for those services which they deliver;
- (c) Practitioners are authorised, in writing, to provide those services for which they are TIP trained on behalf of the (insert name of organisation/centre);
- (d) Practitioners act only in the best interests of the client, observe ethical standards embodied in TIP, create and maintain the required records;
- (e) It withdraws the authorisation to act on behalf of the participants in the event that a practitioner is deemed to have acted other than in the best interests of the client, breaches the TIP code of ethics, is unwilling or unable to undertake TIP training or refresher courses or fails to maintain the required records;
- (f) It maintains a register of practitioners which records the historical detail of those practitioners authorised to provide services on behalf of the (insert name of organisation/centre), including information concerning the withdrawal or lapsing of authorisations; and
- (g) Practitioners create and maintain a paper record of each case and that this record clearly shows that the practitioner was operating on behalf of the (insert name of organisation/centre).

8. Control Measures

All Participants conjointly agree to:

- (a) Meet all the requirements detailed in the Agreement and signed by a representative of the Sponsor organisation;
- (b) Attend progress meetings with a representative from each region on a quarterly basis to receive reports and feedback;
- (c) All Practitioners shall submit three monthly statistical reports to the Board as detailed in the Agreement; and
- (d) Be bound by the decisions of the Board in relation to the management of practitioners operating on behalf of the participants under the name of (insert name of organisation/centre).

9. Responsibilities of the Sponsor Organisation

The Sponsor Organisation accepts responsibility for:

- (a) Administering the Grant monies in line with the signed Agreement; and under the direction of the Board;

- (b) Distributing grant monies as authorised and determined by the Board;
- (c) Paying all accounts and/or reimbursing Practitioners as authorised by the Board on the production of proof of purchase and/or service in the course of providing assistance to the veteran and defence communities; and
- (d) Providing an annual audited report to all Participant/s.

10. Responsibilities of the Participant/s

All Participants agree to:

- (a) Adhere to the Agreement signed by a representative of the Sponsor Organisation and the Department; and
- (b) Provide reports on expenditure and case statistics as detailed in the Agreement.

11. Training and Information Program (TIP)

The Sponsor Organisation and all Participants shall subscribe to the fundamental principles of TIP in that all Practitioners:

- (a) Are trained and given authorisation to act on their behalf;
- (b) Shall comply with the TIP Code of Ethics at the DVA Website; and
- (c) Do not charge a fee for service.

12. Default Procedures

In the case of conflict, a separate sub-committee consisting of one representative from the sponsor organisation and one each from the participants shall be appointed to resolve the issue/s. The representative shall not be a member of the Board.

13. Insurance

All insurance coverage, other than Indemnity Insurance for Practitioners provided to member organisations of VITA, shall be the individual responsibility of the Sponsor Organisation and the Participants. When there are a number of Participant organisations operating as a Veteran Support Centre, it is the responsibility of the Veteran Support Centre to obtain professional indemnity insurance for their Centre through VITA or a similar insurance provider.

14. Duration

This Memorandum of Understanding is in force for a period of twelve months from the date mentioned below.

In placing their signatures the Sponsor and Participants have executed this Memorandum of Understanding on the day mentioned below.

Signed this day theon behalf of

{Organisation name 1}

{Organisation name 2}

{Organisation name 3}

[Witness]