

FACT SHEET – CLIENT SUPPORT FUND

On 20 April 2020, the ACT Government announced \$3 million in funding to support people facing homelessness or domestic and family violence arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding will allow the specialist homelessness sector and domestic and family violence services to expand their operational capacity and relieve the pressure of additional need during COVID-19 and throughout winter.

Client Support Fund

Funding of \$330,000 has been allocated to OneLink to expand existing operations in response to increased demand on the homelessness services sector. All specialist homelessness service providers across the ACT can access this funding to support current and new clients who are at risk of homelessness due to COVID-19.

Questions and Answers about the Client Support Fund

How will OneLink use the fund?

The funds have been allocated to expand OneLink's central intake services for people experiencing or are at risk of experiencing homelessness as a result of COVID-19.

Who can access the Client Support Fund?

While OneLink is the central coordination point for the Client Support Fund, they are intended for providers to cover the additional costs of providing additional tenancy and client support services for up to 12 months, as a result of COVID-19.

Community Housing Providers are not eligible for the Client Support Fund.

How can organisations access the fund?

Housing ACT and OneLink are working to finalise a simple expression of interest (EOI) process and will hold an information session shortly.

Service providers do not have to be immediately ready to access the fund. While it is expected that some services will have sufficient capacity to submit an EOI early in the program, the process will incorporate flexibility for other service providers to participate during the 12 months when they are ready or have sufficient capacity.

What is the timeframe for client supports under this fund?

The aim of the Client Support Fund is to help clients get the support they need while in short to medium-term accommodation to get back on their feet after COVID-19. It is intended that support agencies will work to stabilise their clients within 6 to 12 months to facilitate exits into public, community or private housing.

Will properties be available as part of the Client Support Fund?

As part of client support under this fund, properties will be made available from a variety of sources, including public housing stock. The Housing ACT Specialist Homelessness Services Delivery team will help source urgent properties, noting that some may be older or located in multi-unit complexes.

Properties allocated by Housing ACT will be head-leased under the Housing ACT Asset Assistance Program (HAAP) and must be returned at the end of the short- to medium-term requirement.

Will rent be charged for the properties allocated under the Client Support Fund?

Under the current rent relief waiver for Housing ACT properties, no rent will apply until 30 September 2020. After that time, consistent with existing Housing ACT Asset Assistance Program leases, services will pay 33.3% of the market rate to lease properties.

Service providers can still collect Commonwealth Rental Assistance payments where applicable and tenants can be charged 25% of their income, on top of Commonwealth Rental Assistance.

Will there be additional reporting requirements for recipients of the Client Support Fund?

Details on reporting requirements under this fund are being finalised. At this stage it is expected that OneLink and funded services will need to report on the program.

OneLink will be required to provide Housing ACT with fortnightly progress data updates for the first six months. A governance structure, including a feedback channel, is currently being developed to respond to sector feedback and address any issues that arise.

More information

For more information on COVID-19 support for Canberrans facing homelessness or domestic and family violence, please email quality@act.gov.au.