

FUNDING AND CONTRACTING SERVICES SPECIAL EDITION BULLETIN

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Welcome to this special edition of the FaCS Bulletin.

Funding certainty for community services during COVID-19

The Government recognises that some providers may have difficulties meeting their contractual obligations during this time due to staff shortages.

The Government seeks to assure all community service providers that it will not penalise providers who are unable to deliver services as a result of COVID-19. Government agencies will continue to make payments to service agreements that were established

under the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy, until 30 June 2020, where the organisation remains in operation but may not be able to deliver services due to staff shortages as a direct result of COVID-19.

This approach will provide surety for service providers and their employees in light of the impacts of COVID-19.

Reducing the burden on the not-for-profit sector

Government agencies have been advised to take the following actions to ease the burden of contracting during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Immediately cease service reviews and all non-essential contractual compliance requirements to free up service provider capacity.
- Extend advertising periods for Requests; understand that service providers are stretched and will require more time to develop Offers.
- Continue to comply with the requirement for three months' notice (as a minimum) for the expiry of service agreements. Many service agreements expire 30 June 2020; these service agreements should be extended as soon as possible (and before March 31) to provide certainty and continuity.

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Reducing the burden on the not-for-profit sector *(continued)*

- Partner with the not-for-profit sector to engage in service continuity planning activities.
- Provide honest and respectful advice to internal and external stakeholders regarding the decisions government must make in order to support the not-for-profit sector. Internal requirements and timeframes may have to be set aside to enable service continuity.

If you have concerns about your ability to meet your contractual obligations as a result of the impacts of COVID-19, please work collaboratively with your contract manager to find a flexible interim solution. If you require further assistance, please [contact FaCS](#).

Working in Partnership — COVID-19

Government, service providers and community sector peak bodies are working in partnership to address issues relating to the delivery of community services as a result of COVID-19. The Working in Partnership – COVID-19 working group will meet weekly for as long as the pandemic is active, and will develop strategies in relation to:

- the management of people with symptoms and vulnerable population groups;
- not-for-profit (NFP) community service providers' preparedness, implementation of response measures and recovery;
- maintenance of essential services during the pandemic;
- measures to control infection;
- communication and messaging to the sector; and
- sustainability of NFP community services providers.

If you have issues relating to COVID-19 and service delivery that you would like raised at this meeting, please contact your sector peak body who will be able to speak to it on your behalf.

Personal protective equipment for community services staff

The Government is aware of requests from a number of community service providers for items such as personal protective equipment. These items are in short supply across WA and globally. The Government is working to urgently increase its own stocks and determine whether it can supply these items to the community services sector.

Three month notice period for termination of service agreements

Under the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy, Government is required to provide three months' notice to a service provider on the occasion where a service agreement will cease, not be renewed, or will be substantially reduced.

The three month notice period continues to apply, regardless of current events resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and provides service providers and their staff with a reasonable timeframe in which to make and implement business decisions.



For more information on COVID-19

The Western Australian Government is prepared and has taken precautions and implemented measures to minimise potential impacts to the community. The WA Government Pandemic Plan has been updated and sets out arrangements for protecting the community. The Plan includes practical advice for government agencies, private businesses, the community, households and individuals. The Plan is available at <http://www.wa.gov.au/covid19>.

Members of the public can telephone the COVID-19 Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 for advice and find more information, including specific clinic locations, by visiting <http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au>.

Please contact [Funding and Contracting Services](#) at the Department of Finance if you have any contract-specific enquiries.



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Funding and Contracting Service, Level 4 – Optima Centre, 16 Parkland Road, OSBORNE PARK WA 6017