# Application guide

**Consumer Assistance and Advocacy** **Program** **2017-21**

December 2016

**Note**: To indicate your intention to apply and to receive notices about the Request for Service please email fundedservices@justice.vic.gov.au, using the subject line ‘CAAP <your organisation name> - RFS notices’

CD/16/560821\*

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## 1. Introduction to the guide

### 1.1 Purpose of this application guide

The purpose of this application guide is for Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV), to funder, to explain the application process and provide instructions to organisations who wish to submit applications for the provision of the Consumer Assistance and Advocacy Program (CAAP).

### 1.2 Key documents

Before preparing an application, organisations should carefully read and familiarise themselves with the following documents:

1. [**CAAP Request for Service (Word, 58KB)**](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-request-for-service-2017-21.docx) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-request-for-service-2017-21.docx) – provides an overview of the CAAP service delivery requirements.
2. [**CAAP Casework Service Delivery Model (Word, 172KB)**](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-casework-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-casework-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) – details the CAAP service delivery model and the four service delivery requirements.
3. [**CAAP Application – Response to Request for Service (Word, 174KB)**](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-application-response-to-request-for-service-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-application-response-to-request-for-service-2017-21.doc) – to be completed with details of your organisation’s proposal. All sections of the application form are required to be completed in accordance with the instructions provided in this document.

## 2. Application process

### 2.1 Who can apply for funding?

To be eligible to apply for CAAP funding, organisations must:

* be an incorporated community-based not-for-profit organisation
* have a valid ABN
* demonstrate current experience in delivering consumer services to disadvantaged and marginalised consumers.

Organisations may elect to partner with another organisation, however CAV will only enter one agreement, with the organisation submitting the application. This RFS is for the CAAP only.

### 2.2 Selection criteria

The selection criteria to be applied by CAV when assessing applications, together with their respective weightings, are:

1. The organisation can demonstrate that it has the capacity to manage and deliver the CAAP according to the RFS. (30%)
2. The organisation can demonstrate that it can develop and deliver the CAAP Casework according to the RFS and the CAAP Casework Service Delivery Model. (30%)
3. The organisation can demonstrate that it has the capacity to identify and raise awareness of consumer issues in accordance with the CAAP RFS. (25%)
4. The organisation has the workforce capacity, infrastructure, operational systems and financial management capability to support the delivery of a quality service. (15%)

CAV will assess all applications with reference to the detailed responses provided to the above selection criteria, together with referee reports and any supporting partnership details (if applicable).

### 2.3 Referees

The applicant organisation must provide two referees who are sufficiently familiar with the organisation and its application to comment on the organisation’s ability to meet the selection criteria.

Referees must be selected from the following types of organisations that have worked closely with the organisation:

* a not-for-profit organisation providing community services
* a state government department or organisation, or
* a local government body.

Persons nominated as referees must not:

* have served as a staff or board member for the organisation within the last six months
* be a current or former officer (within two years), of Consumer Affairs Victoria

Please ensure that persons nominated are available for consultation from mid-February 2017.

If submitting more than one application, the same referees can be nominated for each application.

### 2.4 Instructions for completion of application form

1. Carefully read the following documents ***before***you prepare your application:
* this application guide
* [CAAP Application – Response to Request for Service (Word, 174KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-application-response-to-request-for-service-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-application-response-to-request-for-service-2017-21.doc)
* [CAAP Request for Service (Word, 58KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-request-for-service-2017-21.docx) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-request-for-service-2017-21.docx)
* [CAAP Casework Service Delivery Model (Word, 172KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-casework-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/caap-casework-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) and
* the standard terms and conditions of the [Victorian Common Funding Agreement. Victorian Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/not-for-profit-agencies/common-funding-agreement) (http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/not-for-profit-organisations/common-funding-agreement)
1. Complete the application form. Provide clear and concise responses to each of the selection criteria listed in the application form.
* where applicable, provide examples of organisational experience and service delivery. Ensure that claims of expertise are substantiated by reference to past or current achievements. Do not assume that your organisation is known to CAV.
* do not repeat the same information in answers to different criteria.
1. All information that you want to be considered should be included in your application form or any attachment to the form, including any information on partnership arrangements (if applicable). Do not include any hypertext linkages to your organisation’s website. Do not provide DVDs or CDs or additional hard copy documentation.
2. The certification page in the application response should be signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation (or their duly authorised representative) to verify the contents.

### 2.5 Requests for clarification

Any queries regarding the required services or application process should be made in writing and emailed to the following email address: fundedservices@justice.vic.gov.au, using the subject line ‘CAAP query’.

Queries may be made up to close of business on **Wednesday, 1 February 2017.** Any questions submitted after this date may not be answered.

CAV will endeavour to respond to queries within four business days. Except where CAV is of the view that issues raised apply only to an individual applicant, questions submitted and answers provided will be made available, by email, to all intending applicants who register their interest.

## 3. Submitting the application

### 3.1 Application deadline

All applications must be received by Funded Services email by no later than **5:00 pm on Friday, 10 February 2016** (the ‘application deadline’).

Applications received after the application deadline will not be considered.

Any incomplete application will not be considered.

### 3.2 Lodging an application

Lodge your application by emailing one digital copy of the signed application form (in PDF format) to the following email address by the application deadline:

fundedservices@justice.vic.gov.au

The email subject line should contain ‘CAAP application <your organisation name>’.

### 3.3 Acknowledgement of applications

CAV will send an email acknowledging receipt of applications to all applicants within four business days of the closing date.

## 4. Application assessment process

### 4.1 Assessment of applications

All applications will be assessed by Consumer Affairs Victoria against the selection criteria listed in section 2.2. Responses for each of the selection criteria will be scored and weighted as specified.

### 4.2 Seeking clarification

CAV may seek clarification of certain matters to obtain a better understanding of aspects of the application. Generally, applicants will be required to respond to requests for clarification in writing by agreed submission dates.

In submitting an application, the applicant agrees to provide any clarification that may be requested by CAV. Failure to provide additional information may result in the application receiving no further consideration.

### 4.3 Referees

CAV reserves the right to contact nominated referees in the assessment process. However, referees will only be contacted if deemed necessary to support the application.

### 4.4 Recommendation, approval and notification

CAV will recommend successful applicants for the 2017-2021 Consumer Assistance and Advocacy Program funding based on the results of the assessment process.

Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application by 31 March 2017.

### 4.5 Feedback on applications

Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback on their application. Requests for feedback should be submitted in writing to: fundedservices@justice.vic.gov.au The email subject line should contain ‘CAAP> <your organisation name> - <RFS Feedback>’.

### 4.6 Proposed timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Process**  | **Time**  |
| Application process commences | Monday 12 December 2016 |
| End of query period | Wednesday 1 February 2017 (5:00pm) |
| Application closing deadline | Friday 10 February 2017 (5:00 pm) |
| Notification to successful and unsuccessful applicants | By 31 March 2017 |
| Execution of funding agreement  | By 30 June 2017 |
| Commencement of services | 1 July 2017 |

## 5. Terms and conditions of request for service process

The following terms and conditions apply to the application and RFS process for the CAAP.

### 5.1 Status of RFS

The RFS is an invitation to submit a proposal for the provision of services. It is not a legal offer capable of acceptance and no binding agreement will exist between CAV and any applicant unless and until CAV has signed a formal written funding agreement.

### 5.2 Accuracy of the RFS

While due care has been taken in preparing the application and RFS documentation, CAV does not represent or warrant that the content is accurate, current or complete. CAV will not be held liable for any loss arising as a consequence of providing incorrect information either in the RFS or otherwise during the application process.

If the applicant considers that CAV has provided incorrect information it must promptly notify CAV in writing. If CAV considers that corrective action is necessary, it will notify all applicants and make available revised information as required.

### 5.3 Additions and amendments

CAV reserves the right to change information or provide additional information before the application deadline, and if CAV considers necessary, to seek amended applications from any applicant.

### 5.4 Representations

No representation made by or on behalf of CAV will be binding on CAV unless expressly incorporated into the funding agreement signed by CAV and the applicant.

### 5.5 Complaints about the RFS process

Any complaint about the RFS or the application process must be submitted in writing to fundedservices@justice.vic.gov.au immediately upon the cause of the complaint arising or becoming known to the applicant. The written complaint must set out:

* the basis for the complaint (specifying the issues involved)
* how the subject of the complaint (and the specific issues) affects the person or organisation making the complaint
* any relevant background information, and
* the outcome desired by the person or organisation making the complaint.

### 5.6 Conflict of interest

An applicant and its officers, employees, agents and advisers must not place themselves in a position that may or does give rise to an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest between the interests of the State and the applicant’s interests during the application process.

Applicants must disclose to CAV details of any interest, relationship or client which may or does give rise to a conflict of interest. If during the course of the application process, a conflict of interest arises that was not disclosed in the application, the applicant must notify CAV of that conflict immediately in writing. CAV may disqualify an applicant from the application process if the applicant fails to notify CAV of the conflict as required.

### 5.7 Late applications

To be eligible for consideration, any application must be lodged (received by CAV) by the application deadline (5pm on Friday, 10 February 2017). CAV may in its absolute discretion extend the closing time by providing written notice to the applicant.

### 5.8 Obligation to notify errors

If, after an application has been submitted, the applicant becomes aware of any error in its application (other than clerical errors that would have no bearing on the evaluation of the application), the applicant must promptly notify CAV of such error.

### 5.9 Responsibility for application costs

The applicant participates in the application process at the applicant’s own risk, cost and expense. CAV is not responsible for any expense or loss that may be incurred by an applicant in relation to the preparation or lodgement of its application.

### 5.10 Disclosure of application information

CAV will treat applications as confidential and will not disclose any contents and information, except:

* as required by law (including as required under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*);
* for the purpose of responding to any investigation conducted by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission or other government authority having relevant jurisdiction;
* to external consultants and advisers engaged by CAV to assist with the RFS process; or
* if the information is of a general nature and is required to be disclosed by government policy.

### 5.11 Period of validity

All applications remain valid and open for acceptance for a minimum of six months from the application deadline. This period may be extended by mutual agreement between CAV and the applicant.

### 5.12 Status of application

Each application constitutes an irrevocable offer by the applicant to CAV to provide the services described in the RFS on the terms and conditions of the proposed funding agreement (as varied by any details of non-compliance or conditional compliance).

An application must not be conditional on:

* approval of the applicant’s board of directors or other committee of management
* the applicant conducting due diligence or any other form of enquiry or investigation
* the applicant (or any other party) obtaining any regulatory approval or consent
* the applicant obtaining the consent or approval of any third party
* the applicant stating that it wishes to discuss or negotiate any commercial terms of the agreement.

CAV may, in its absolute discretion, disregard any application that is made on a conditional basis.

### 5.13 Compliance with service delivery requirements

Applicants are required to meet the service delivery requirements contained in the RFS and other specification documents.

Indefinite responses such as “noted”, “to be discussed” or “to be negotiated” are not acceptable. Where the applicant is unwilling to accept a specified condition, the non-acceptance must be clearly and expressly stated. Prominence must be given to the statement detailing the non-acceptance. It is not sufficient that the statement appear only as part of an attachment to the application, or be included in a general statement of the applicant’s usual operating conditions.

### 5.14 Discussion with applicants

CAV may elect to engage in detailed discussions with any one or more applicants, with a view to maximising the benefits of the RFS as measured against the selection criteria and fully understanding an applicant’s offer, including risk allocation.

As part of this process, CAV may request an applicant to improve one or more aspects of their application.

In its absolute discretion, CAV may invite some or all applicants to give a presentation to CAV in relation to their submissions. CAV is under no obligation to undertake discussions with, or to invite any presentations from, applicants.

### 5.15 No legally binding agreement

Selection as a successful applicant does not give rise to an agreement (express or implied) between the successful applicant and CAV for the supply of services. No legal relationship will exist between CAV and a successful applicant until CAV has signed a formal written funding agreement.

### 5.16 CAV’s rights

Notwithstanding anything else in this RFS, and without limiting its rights at law or otherwise, CAV reserves the right, in its absolute discretion at any time, to:

* cease to proceed with, or suspend the RFS process prior to the execution of a formal written funding agreement
* alter the details, structure and/or the timing of the RFS or the RFS process
* vary or extend any time or date specified in this RFS for all or any applicants or other persons
* terminate the participation of any applicant or any other person in the RFS process
* require additional information or clarification from any applicant or any other person or provide additional information or clarification
* negotiate with any one or more applicants and allow any applicant to alter its application
* call for new applications
* reject any application received after the application deadline
* reject any application that does not comply with the requirements of this RFS
* consider and accept or reject any alternative application.

### 5.17 Governing law

This RFS and the application process is governed by the laws applying in the State of Victoria.

Each applicant must comply with all relevant laws in preparing and lodging its application and in taking part in the RFS and application process.