# Request for Service

**Tenancy 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 ‘TAAP <your organisation name> <the service area you are making an application for> - RFS notices’

## CD/16/527359\*

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## 1. Introduction

This Request for Service (RFS) is for the provision of place based services to deliver the Tenancy Assistance and Advocacy Program in the 17 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) service areas for four years commencing 1 July 2017.

The RFS is open to not-for-profit community organisations with demonstrated current experience in delivering tenancy services to disadvantaged and marginalised tenants.

## 2. Background

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) currently funds a number of community organisations to provide tenancy and consumer services for vulnerable and disadvantaged private tenants and consumers.

The current service delivery model was reviewed during 2015-16 in consultation with providers and other stakeholders. The review recommended revisions to the service delivery model to ensure these services are delivered in an integrated, efficient and effective manner.

The outcome is the design and development of four programs to support disadvantaged Victorians most at risk of tenancy and consumer issues.

The four programs are the:

* Tenancy Assistance and Advocacy Program (the subject of this RFS)
* Tenancy Central Service
* Retirement Housing Assistance and Advocacy Program, and
* Consumer Assistance and Advocacy Program.

CAV is responsible for the administration of these four programs.

This RFS is for the Tenancy Assistance and Advocacy Program (TAAP) only.

The TAAP is required to be delivered in each of the 17 DHHS service areas. The TAAP service is to be administered across Victoria according to the seventeen geographic service delivery areas determined by the DHHS. View an online [map of the DHHS service areas (PDF, 1MB)](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/749516/department-of-human-services-victoria-map-areas-and-local-government-areas.pdf) (http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0005/749516/department-of-human-services-victoria-map-areas-and-local-government-areas.pdf)

An organisation may apply for more than one of the 17 areas, however a separate application must be submitted for each service area. Each application must address the following topics in the context of the specific service area covered by the application:

* issues and needs
* referral pathways with other local services
* the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) allocation, and
* data and narrative reporting requirements.

## 3. Overview of TAAP services

The TAAP will assist Victorians who are financially disadvantaged (or victims of family violence) who have a private tenancy agreement under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (RTA). The term ‘tenant’ is used to refer to both tenants and residents throughout this RFS (both terms appear in the RTA).

This cohort of private tenants often experience tenancy problems that if not addressed can lead to adverse outcomes, including loss of accommodation or even homelessness.

Tenants in social housing (both public and community) are not eligible for TAAP services. They are eligible for support through the DHHS funded Social Housing and Support Program (SHASP).

The TAAP provides place based tenancy information and casework, via phone or face-to-face, across Victoria. The service areas with the respective resource allocation are shown in the TAAP FTE and [TAAP FTE and Funding Allocation 2017-18 (Word, 106KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-fte-allocation-2017-18.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-fte-allocation-2017-18.doc).

TAAP services will be supported by the Tenancy Central Service (TCS). The TCS provides a tenancy advice service that includes induction training and professional development opportunities for the TAAP workers.

TAAP workers will also be able to refer to the Retirement Housing Assistance and Advocacy Program, which will assist retirement housing residents who are living in dwellings covered by the *Retirement Villages Act 1986* (RVA), or retirement villages, rental villages, caravan parks or residential parks covered by the RTA.

### 3.1 Service objectives

The key service objectives of the TAAP are to:

* provide a quality tenancy assistance and advocacy service to Victorians who are financially disadvantaged or victims of family violence
* provide clients with the least intensive, and therefore least expensive, service that meets the client’s need, and
* provide clients with a similar service, regardless of their service location or the means of delivery. In particular:
* clients should receive a similar level of service no matter which organisation they contact, and
* decisions about the eligibility and priority of service offered are based on common criteria across all organisations.

### 3.2 The role of the TAAP worker

The TAAP will be delivered by TAAP workers employed by the organisations funded by CAV. The TAAP worker is a skilled para-legal position requiring a sound knowledge of tenancy law and practice, including the RTAand Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) processes.

### 3.3 Service types

There are four service types provided by TAAP:

* Information and referral
* Negotiation (on behalf of tenants)
* VCAT assistance (including both VCAT preparation and representation), and
* Outreach (an optional non-client service).

The TAAP provider will be required to adopt the [TAAP Service Delivery Model (Word, 295KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc), (the Model) for the assessment, provision and recording of services. Detailed information on each service type is provided in the Model, to be read in conjunction with this RFS.

For each service type, TAAP workers will be expected to record the duration of the services provided (service hours).

## 4. TAAP Service Delivery Model

The new [TAAP Service Delivery Model (Word, 295KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc), will apply from 1 July 2017. The Model consists of seven major components and associated requirements.

When preparing their application, organisations should carefully consider the requirements of this RFS and the Model, and advise on their ability to deliver on the requirements of the Model.

To assist organisations apply the Model, CAV will develop TAAP Operational Guidelines and hold workshops for organisation managers and TAAP workers before the commencement of the new model.

### 4.1 Service eligibility and prioritisation

Subject to the following exception, to be eligible for TAAP services under the [TAAP Service Delivery Model (Word, 295KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc), tenants must be either financially disadvantaged or victims of family violence. Tenants who are not financially disadvantaged or a victim of family violence may receive a maximum of one hour of information and referral.

* Eligible cases are prioritised according to the tenant’s personal circumstances and the urgency of the tenancy matter. If a matter is deemed urgent, it immediately becomes a ‘Priority’ matter, and the TAAP worker is required to contact the tenant within two business days.

### 4.2 Service coverage

CAV intends to enter into one TAAP service agreement for each of the 17 DHHS service areas. A local geographic presence is considered necessary to align TAAP with other Government funded support services including housing, homelessness, family violence, and the CAV funded Financial Counselling Program.

TAAP organisations will need to have established referral pathways with other local organisations that also provide support to disadvantaged Victorian tenants in the service area, including SHASP organisations, Victorian Legal Aid offices, and community legal centres.

TAAP organisations will be required to respond to tenants and residents in the local government areas within the DHHS Service Area they are applying for.

## 5. Funding

### 5.1 Funding distribution

Funding under the TAAP is provided for the recurrent operational costs of services. Funding is not provided for capital costs. TAAP funds may not be used to provide direct financial assistance to clients.

The funding is to be allocated across the DHHS service areas on the basis of need as determined with reference to:

* Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on the number of private rental dwellings within each service area, and
* ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data, specifically the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (suburbs classified as decile 1 or 2).

The funding for each DHHS service area is provided as a number of FTE positions as shown in the [TAAP FTE and Funding Allocation 2017-18 (Word, 106KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-fte-allocation-2017-18.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-fte-allocation-2017-18.doc).

### 5.2 Funding model

The base rate for a FTE TAAP worker in 2017-18 is $119,306 inclusive of salary, employee costs, management and supervision, and Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) supplementation under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHCADS) Industry Award.

Funding in subsequent years will be indexed at the rate agreed between DHHS and the Victorian Council of Social Services (currently two per cent) and increased by the applicable ERO supplementation component of the SCHCADS Award.

The TAAP funding model is based on 1,301 service hours per FTE per year as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Service hours breakdown

| **Item** | **Days** | **Days/hours** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Days per year** |  | **365 days** |
| Less adjustments: |  |  |
| Weekends | -104 |  |
| Public holidays | -10 |  |
| Recreation leave | -20 |  |
| Sick and carer leave | -10 |  |
| Training and professional development  | -7 |  |
| **Net work days per year** |  | **214 days** |
| Work hours per year at 7.6 hours per day (38 hour week) |  | 1,626 hours |
| Less 20% allowance for time not capable of being attributed to specific cases and related travel. This time allocation includes the data and other reporting requirement.  |  | -325 hours |
| **Total deliverable service hours per year per FTE includes:** * casework
* recording of client data
* preparation of case notes
* maximum outreach hours of 20% (optional)
 |  | **1,301 hours** |

### 5.3 Travel

TAAP organisations will be able to claim reimbursement for travel expenses for the following activities:

* Travel to and from VCAT venues for a tenant’s hearings
* Travel to and from outpost locations for provision of TAAP services
* Travel for outreach services, and
* Travel to and from professional development sessions.

The travel rate for 2017-18 is 76 cents per kilometre, with the amount claimable per year subject to the following caps:

* $2,500 per rural service FTE, and
* $500 per metropolitan service FTE.

Organisations are required to submit the travel amount being claimed each quarter. CAV will pay travel reimbursements in August, following the end of the financial year in which the travel was undertaken.

### 5.4 Interpreting services

TAAP workers will have access to interpreting services to communicate with clients with limited English proficiency. Interpreting costs are funded directly by CAV.

The TAAP provider will be able to use either Victorian Interpreting and Translations Services or Translation and Interpreting Services. The TAAP provider will be provided with an access code for the services.

## 6. Performance monitoring framework

Each funded organisation will be required to deliver the TAAP services in a timely and efficient manner using a standard of care and skill that would reasonably be expected from an expert and experienced provider of the services. The organisation will not be paid for services that do not meet this standard.

TAAP funded organisations must comply with the TAAP performance monitoring framework, which includes:

* reporting against the number of funded service hours
* collecting and submitting service data on a quarterly basis
* providing the organisation’s complaint policy
* providing a six-monthly narrative and training report
* providing an annual acquittal certificate
* providing a copy of the organisation’s annual report with audited financial statement, and
* otherwise complying with the TAAP funding agreement.

All reports must be provided in the prescribed format and within the required timelines. All organisations must report using the data-set advised by CAV. CAV does not require any specific database to be used for data collection, however all organisations must be able to upload the required service hours and data to the CAV Funded Services data portal in a Comma-Separated Values (CSV) format.

At CAV’s discretion, performance monitoring may also include occasional visits to TAAP organisations by CAV or Department of Justice and Regulation staff to discuss service delivery.

If requested by CAV, organisations may be required to conduct or otherwise assist with a client satisfaction survey. In this event, CAV will consult with organisations in the development and design of the survey.

### 6.1 Funding agreement

To receive TAAP funding, organisations must enter a formal funding agreement with CAV in the form of the Victorian Common Funding Agreement.

The standard terms and conditions of this agreement are not negotiable. A copy of these terms is available for download at the [Victorian Common Funding Agreement page on the DHHS website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/not-for-profit-organisations/common-funding-agreement) (http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/not-for-profit-organisations/common-funding-agreement).

The [TAAP Draft Schedule to Funding Agreement (Word, 147KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-draft-schedule-to-funding-agreement-2017-21.docx) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-draft-schedule-to-funding-agreement-2017-21.docx) contains the proposed funding and reporting terms including special conditions. The draft is indicative only, and the final schedule may differ from this draft.

The funding agreement will incorporate the service delivery requirements contained in this RFS, the [TAAP Draft Schedule to Funding Agreement (Word, 147KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-draft-schedule-to-funding-agreement-2017-21.docx) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-draft-schedule-to-funding-agreement-2017-21.docx), and any operational guidelines.

### 6.2 Payments

Funding payments will be made on a quarterly basis upon CAV accepting that the organisation is meeting its obligations under the funding agreement, including:

* delivering the funded service hours
* delivering the required services to a high quality standard
* complying with reporting requirements
* ensuring TAAP workers attend required professional development, and
* meeting the other service delivery requirements contained in this RFS, the [TAAP Service Delivery Model (Word, 295KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-service-delivery-model-2017-21.doc), and any operational guidelines.

Failure to meet the service delivery requirements will constitute a breach of the funding agreement and may result in CAV reducing or withholding payments.

All payments will be made via electronic funds transfer to the organisation’s account nominated in the funding agreement.

## 7. Making an application

Information on how to respond to this RFS is provided in the [TAAP Application Guide (Word, 59KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-application-guide-2017-21.docx) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-application-guide-2017-21.docx).

This includes important information, including the application deadline and other significant dates.

Responses to this RFS must be submitted using the template provided: [TAAP Application – Response to Request for Service (Word, 316KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-application-response-to-request-for-service-2017-21.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-application-response-to-request-for-service-2017-21.doc).

If your organisation intends to submit an application, please register your interest via an email to fundedservices@justice.vic.gov.au, using the subject line ‘TAAP <your organisation name> <the service area you are making an application for> - RFS notices’

## 8. Contact details

For further information or assistance regarding this RFS, contact CAV Funded Services staff by emailing: fundedservices@justice.vic.gov.au, using the subject line ‘TAAP query’.

## 9. Further information

[TAAP FTE and Funding Allocation 2017-18 (Word, 106KB)](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-fte-allocation-2017-18.doc) (https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/grants/taap-fte-allocation-2017-18.doc)

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