

New Community Engagement Grants Program

23 September 2016

Guidelines for new grants to deliver advice and assistance on workplace laws to vulnerable groups in the community have been released today by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

In its 2016-17 Budget, the Federal Government committed \$7.3 million over four years to fund the Community Engagement Grants Program.

Applications from not-for-profit community organisations are now open for the program, which will commence on January 1, 2017.

The Community Engagement Grants Program builds upon the work previously undertaken under the Community Based Employment Advice Services Program.

Through the Community Engagement Grants Program, the Fair Work Ombudsman will provide funding at a rate not exceeding \$1.8 million a year for four years to not-for-profit community organisations to undertake a range of services, projects and programs of work to supplement the Agency's statutory functions.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is responsible for ensuring compliance with Commonwealth workplace relations legislation by employees and employers through advice, education and, where necessary, enforcement.

It is a strategic priority of the Fair Work Ombudsman to assist vulnerable workplace participants and the Agency is increasing its community engagement services, particularly those directed at culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Fair Work Ombudsman's experience illustrates that some members of the community are more likely to be vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace and less likely to understand and assert their workplace rights or obligations due to factors such as age, English language skills and cultural barriers.

It is also recognised that individual workers with problems at work may be reluctant to approach the Fair Work Ombudsman for assistance because of these barriers and that there are also situations where a person's employment problems are manifestations of broader or underlying problems, such as family and domestic violence and mental health.

As such there is, at times, a need for more specialised and intensive assistance than government can provide. The Fair Work Ombudsman recognises the important role community organisations can perform in providing client-centred and holistic services in response to employment issues experienced by vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community.

Information on how relevant organisations can apply for funding under the Community Engagement Grants Program can be found at www.fairwork.gov.au/grants (<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/grants>).

Employers and employees who have any uncertainty or questions about their workplace rights and obligations are encouraged to visit the Fair Work Ombudsman website at www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 for advice.

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

Need language help?

Contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50

Hearing & speech assistance

Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

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