



JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES

FUNDING
GUIDELINES



1. WHAT IS THE JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES PROGRAM?

The Victorian Government allocated \$41.4 million in the 2020-21 Victorian State Budget to establish a network of Jobs Victoria Advocates in local communities. Jobs Victoria Advocates will support jobseekers in their local communities. Advocates will assist Victorians who need help finding work or who are struggling with the impact of unemployment, to find the information, advice and additional support they need.

Advocates will help people to navigate employment and training services via proactive outreach in communities. Advocates will connect with people in libraries, community centres, public housing foyers, shopping centres, other community services and will also go to people's homes in some locations to ensure that everyone is aware of support available. While Advocates will hold specialist knowledge about the employment and training systems, they will also understand that people dealing with unemployment will sometimes need the support of other services. Advocates will also be able to guide people on where they can go to seek this additional help – playing an important system navigation role in local communities.

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the Department) is responsible for implementation of the program, via Jobs Victoria.

2. WHY IS THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PROVIDING FUNDING FOR JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES?

Jobs Victoria Advocates are a component of the Victorian Government's record investment in employment support which is responding to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Jobs Victoria Advocates program aims to:

- assist Victorians to prepare for and secure employment through the provision of information, referral and connection to available resources and supports;
- provide an agile, proactive and mobile workforce to find people most in need of support across the state; and
- contribute to a more coordinated and streamlined experience for jobseekers.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Victorians have lost work and unemployment has increased significantly. For thousands of Victorians, they may be dealing with unemployment for the first time in their lives and will find the experience challenging. Many will not know where to go for the help and advice they need to get back into work or be aware of the supports that are available to them.

While many Victorians will need support to secure employment in the current environment, not everyone will need the same level or type of support. Some will need assistance to acquire the new skills required to transition into secure work. Some will need intensive support to understand their skills gaps, identify career options compatible with their circumstances, and to navigate the training and skills system to fill those skills gaps. Others just need clear information and some basic advice. The Jobs Victoria Advocates will have the ability to direct people to the help they need.

The Advocates will also play an important role in taking advantage of the Victorian Government's record investment of over \$600 million to deliver an integrated, comprehensive package of assistance to support Victorian jobseekers under the banner of Jobs Victoria. Jobs Victoria Advocates are a critical component of that package because they will help Victorians to navigate the services and supports available to them – from both the Commonwealth and Victorian governments – and help them to connect to those that suit them best.

Other elements of the Jobs Victoria response will be:

- **Jobs Victoria Mentors** providing personalised and tailored support to long-term unemployed jobseekers or jobseekers at-risk of being long-term unemployed via the **network of Jobs Victoria services** across the state.
- **Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors** offering career guidance and vocational counselling to Victorians who need support to understand their work/career options and who lack access to professional career counselling.
- **Online platform and hotline** support as a virtual employment connection and navigation hub to provide advice and connect jobseekers to local services that can support them to be work ready and gain employment.

- An active **job creation program** to facilitate job opportunities in partnership with employers to support a more inclusive recovery, with a particular focus on women and mid-career jobseekers.
- **Investing in social procurement** to maximise the jobs flowing from government spending.
- **Local Jobs Networks** across Victoria to ensure the provision of proactive and targeted employment support that meets the needs of local jobseekers and local businesses.

Further information and background on the Victorian Government's initiatives can be found at www.jobs.vic.gov.au

3. HOW WILL THE JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES PROGRAM WORK?

The Department will partner with local councils and other qualified organisations to deliver the Jobs Victoria Advocates program (for further details on eligibility to apply, see [Section 5](#)). These 'host' organisations will be funded to employ one or more Advocates to work in local communities, reaching out to residents who need employment-related guidance and support. The respective roles of host organisations and the Department in delivering the program are summarised below. The Department will provide operational guidelines to organisations funded to employ the Advocates.

The Department will:

- provide funding to host organisations to employ the Advocates
- provide training and professional development of Advocates
- provide an iPad and relevant software to enable Advocates to record interactions with jobseekers/community members
- coordinate activities of Advocates at the regional level
- facilitate 'communities of practice' and collaboration between Advocates
- provide and maintain operational guidelines to ensure consistency of service delivery across the program
- provide signage and other 'branded' collateral to support public engagement activities.

Host organisations will:

- employ the Advocates
- ensure the Advocates have tools they need to perform the role (e.g. access to IT and communications resources, access to transport, suitable accommodation)
- provide day-to-day guidance and support to Advocates
- embed the Advocates within an appropriate part of the organisation's operations to maximise links with other relevant programs and leverage off similar forms of activities
- support Advocates to make connections to organisations and groups in the community that would benefit from the support of Advocates and can support their role.

Over 100 Jobs Victoria Advocates will be funded to work across Victoria, with the allocation of funding based on the concentration and state share of unemployment and targeted by government in a way that will maximise their impact. Not all communities will necessarily be supported by an Advocate.

Regional responsiveness

Program delivery arrangements may vary from region to region, depending on local circumstances and needs. Three examples of different delivery arrangements are provided below as a guide only.

Example 1: Delivery by regional consortium	Example 2: Delivery by regional consortium plus other organisations	Example 3: Mixed delivery model
<p>Funding will be provided to a consortium of organisations (e.g. local councils working together with one or more community organisations).</p> <p>The lead applicant may be a local council or existing regional representative body. The Department contracts with one (lead) organisation for delivery of the program in that region.</p>	<p>Funding is provided to a consortium of organisations (e.g. local councils) working collaboratively and to two other community organisations that can extend the reach of the consortium into the community.</p> <p>The Department contracts with three organisations for delivery in that region. The department will facilitate connections between the three funded organisations to ensure coordinated service delivery.</p>	<p>Funding is provided to five organisations in a region (e.g. a mix of local councils and other community organisations) to deliver the program.</p> <p>The Department will facilitate connections between the funded organisations to ensure coordinated service delivery.</p>

Jobs Victoria Advocates: Roles and responsibilities

Jobs Victoria Advocates will provide information and guidance to all Victorians who require assistance to identify and access services relevant to employment. This includes, but is not limited to people who are:

- unemployed
- underemployed
- out of the labour market but planning to re-enter the workforce
- working but considering a change of career/job in future
- undertaking post-secondary study but are unsure of their work options.

Jobs Victoria Advocates will undertake the following:

- **Utilise** community networks and connections to contact people who need employment-related support.
- **Engage** with jobseekers and others to understand their support needs and options.
- **Connect** people to relevant services that can help them prepare for and secure work (see Section 3.2). While the main focus will be on vocational supports, Advocates will also be able to direct people to where they can get help for non-vocational issues that may be proving a barrier to employment.
- **Follow up** to check on connections made with relevant services, where required.
- **Advocate** on behalf of clients to service providers, if required.
- **Identify gaps** in services, providing feedback to local service providers and the Department.

Advocates will also be required to:

- collect information/data on basic information of the people engaging with the services, referrals and follow-up, if required
- attend training provided by the Department
- follow operational guidelines (including service standards and procedures for safe delivery of services)
- participate in ongoing networking and professional development with other Advocates across the State.

Collaboration with other services

Jobs Victoria Advocates will work closely with employment, education, training and other support services that people often need to secure work. They will be required to have a good understanding of other services available in the region to provide suitable advice to the jobseekers. Relevant services include but are not limited to:

Type of support	Examples of programs & services
Employment	Jobs Victoria Employment Network – Jobs Victoria Mentors
	Jobs Victoria Work & Learning Centres
	Transition to Work
	<i>jobactive</i>
	Disability Employment Services
	Parents Next services
	Apprenticeship centres
Education & Training	Group Training companies
	TAFEs
	Learn Locals (literacy, numeracy, English courses, digital skills, vocational)
	<i>Reconnect</i>
	Libraries (e.g. computer courses)
Vocational information and advice	Local Learning & Employment Networks
	Jobs Victoria Online platform and hotline
	Jobs Victoria Careers Counsellors
	TAFE Skills & Job centres
Income/financial support	TAFE Skills Gateway
	Centrelink
Other support services (non-vocational barriers)	Financial counselling and advice services
	Legal support
	Mental health services such as Lifeline and Beyond Blue
	Counselling and support services
	Youth support services
	Drug and alcohol services
	Emergency relief
	Domestic and family violence support
Migrant support	

4. WHERE WILL JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES BE LOCATED?

The tables below provide indicative figures for the number of Jobs Victoria Advocates in each region.

Metropolitan Victoria	Indicative number of Advocates	Priority areas due to number of unemployed
Southern Metro	20	Hampton Park, Cranbourne, Cranbourne East, Cranbourne North Dandenong, Dandenong North Frankston, Frankston North Pakenham South, Pakenham North
Western Metro	19	St Albans North, St Albans South, Deer Park Derrimut, Sunshine West Werribee East, Wyndham Vale, Tarneit, Hoppers Crossing Melton, Melton South, Melton West Flemington, Ascot Vale, Essendon, Aberfeldie Braybrook, Footscray
Northern Metro	17	Roxburgh Park - Somerton, Meadow Heights, Broadmeadows, Campbellfield Lalor, Thomastown, Mernda Coburg, Brunswick, Glenroy Reservoir East, Preston East, Northcote
Eastern Metro	12	Box Hill, Blackburn, Burwood Doncaster, Doncaster East (South) Ringwood, Ringwood East
Inner Metro	6	North Melbourne, Melbourne, Carlton Richmond, Collingwood St Kilda, St Kilda East
Inner South East Metro	6	Prahran – Windsor, South Yarra – East
Total	80	

Regional Victoria	Indicative number of Advocates	Priority areas
Barwon	5	Corio-Norlane
Gippsland	5	Morwell, Moe – Newborough
Loddon Campaspe	4	Bendigo, Kangaroo Flat -Golden Square, California Gully – Eaglehawk
Central Highlands	3	Ballarat South, Ballarat North, Wendouree – Miners Rest
Goulburn	3	Shepparton North, Shepparton South
Ovens Murray	2	Wodonga, West Wodonga
Mallee	2	Mildura North, Mildura South
Great South Coast	2	Warrnambool North, Warrnambool South
Wimmera Southern Mallee	2	Horsham
Total	28	

5. WHO CAN APPLY FOR FUNDING TO HOST JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES?

To be eligible for funding, organisations must be an incorporated entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN), have a significant organisational presence in Victoria, and have sufficient organisational resources to manage the Jobs Victoria Advocate/s.

Jobs Victoria Advocates will be hosted by organisations across Victoria with the capacity to both support them as employees and deliver a consistent service to the communities including outreach support to Victorians.

Local councils are strongly encouraged to apply, recognising their strong understanding of their communities and existing connections to local services that could support the work of Advocates.

Applications from other organisations with strong knowledge of community needs and existing community networks are also encouraged to apply.

Any organisation with a contract for delivery of employment and/or employment-related services (including vocational training) under Commonwealth or Victorian Government programs must demonstrate clearly how funding for Jobs Victoria Advocates would complement and not duplicate existing services and how they would ensure any Advocates employed by their organisation would work independently of the priorities of their employer – providing connections for jobseekers with other local employment providers.

Organisations applying to be 'host' organisations must demonstrate that Jobs Victoria Advocates will be new roles, and they will not repurpose existing positions as Advocates.

Final provision of funding to applicants will be subject to the completion of Financial Risk Assessments conducted by the Department.

6. WHAT ARE THE FUNDING DETAILS?

Organisations will be eligible to apply for funding up to \$130,000 per Advocate per year including salary/wages, superannuation and other on-costs, transport and supervision costs.

Funding will be available to support Jobs Victoria Advocates for the period January 2021 – June 2023. All grants will be subject to a satisfactory performance.

A grant agreement will specify the payment arrangements, but an indicative payment schedule is as follows:

Payment amount	Milestone
Approximately 30% of total funding	Commencement/signing of contract and proof of employment of Jobs Victoria Advocates (e.g letter of offer/employment contract)
Approximately 65% of total funding	Payments every six months subject to satisfactory performance
Approximately 5% of total funding	Compliance with contractual requirements, such as completion reporting and financial acquittal

7. WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE ASSESSED?

The Department is seeking applications from qualified organisations to employ and support the Jobs Victoria Advocates.

Applications will be received through a single application round, **opening on Wednesday 2 December 2020** and **closing on Thursday 24 December 2020 at 5 pm**. Depending on the volume of applications, assessment will occur from late December 2020 to late January 2021, and grants will be finalised progressively from late January until March 2021.

Applicants will complete a brief online application form at **Jobs Victoria Advocates Program**, providing organisational details, indicating the location in which they propose to deliver the program and their claims against the selection criteria (see below). These will be assessed by the Department, in consultation with regional offices and other Victorian Government departments if required.

Applicants will be required to describe the approach they will take to delivery of the program and will need to provide financial statements that will enable the department to undertake a Financial Risk Assessment.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

1. Strong understanding of the local community

Applicants must be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the cultural and socio-economic make-up of the local community in which they propose to deliver the service, especially community members who may need additional support to connect to employment-related services.

2. Strong networks within the community

Applicants will need to demonstrate networks and positive working relationships within the local community that will support and maximise the impact of the Jobs Victoria Advocates. Strong applications will provide letters of support/endorsement for the application from other community organisations and business leaders.

3. Organisational capacity

Applications must demonstrate that the organisation has current capacity to successfully deliver the program, including, for example, systems for employment, management and support of Jobs Victoria Advocates. Applications should identify any prior experience with similar programs.

4. Sound approach/methodology to provide outreach support and increase engagement with jobseekers and communities

Applications must clearly describe a proposed approach to deliver the Jobs Victoria Advocates service, including details of specific proposed resource allocation and strategies to connect to potential clients of the service, to demonstrate an understanding of the core purpose of these roles.

5. Understanding of the employment and skills 'ecosystem' available in the local community

Applications should indicate knowledge of and any existing connections to the employment and skills ecosystem.

6. Willingness to work as part of a state-wide network

Applicants must demonstrate a willingness to work as part of a wider network of employers supporting the Jobs Victoria Advocates program and ideally provide examples of how they have previously participated within a community of practice to support effectiveness and impact of services they provide.

7. Value for money

Applications should indicate how the funding will be utilised and highlight how the organisation will maximise the value and outcomes from the funding available for Jobs Victoria Advocates.

8. GRANT APPROVAL AND GRANT AGREEMENT

The Minister for Employment is responsible for the approval of grant funding. Subject to acceptance of a formal letter of offer sent to a successful applicant organisation, a legally binding grant agreement will be prepared describing the services to be delivered, milestones, timeframes and conditions of payment. Services can only commence once the agreement is executed by both parties.

Successful applicant will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the State of Victoria detailing all funding obligations and conditions.

The State of Victoria has full discretion and authority to determine which organisations are eligible to receive funding under the program and the amount of funding offered.

The State of Victoria also reserves the right to withdraw the offer of funding if the grant agreement is not finalised or if the project has not commenced within a specified timeframe.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- cooperate with the Department in communicating and promoting the benefits of the program, such as the preparation of media releases and case studies
- consult with the department prior to the publication of any promotional materials relating to Jobs Victoria
- liaise with the Department to coordinate any events or announcements related to the activity
- provide financial reports upon request
- report on service delivery, as specified by the Department, including details of jobseekers assisted, activities undertaken, referrals and follow-up of the participant using the information system required by the Department
- contribute information on outcomes for use in program evaluation reviews and/or marketing materials
- cooperate fully with evaluations undertaken either during or after the completion of the program
- acknowledge financial and any other support from the Victorian Government according to the Acknowledgement and Publicity Guidelines as amended from time to time, which can be found at <https://www.vic.gov.au/brand-victoria-guidelines-logos>

NEGOTIATION ON GRANT FUNDS

The State of Victoria reserves the right to negotiate with recommended applicants on the level of funding and number of Jobs Victoria Advocates.

Payment of grant funds is only to be made following documented evidence of milestone conditions being met. The approval and allocation of funding will comply with the Financial Management Act.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Department will, to the extent permitted by law, treat all information as strictly confidential and commercial-in-confidence where relevant. Any personal information will be managed in accordance with the published Privacy Policy, which can be found at <https://www.business.vic.gov.au/privacy>

9. CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information

- Jobs Victoria website: <https://jobs.vic.gov.au/>
- Email: jobsvictoria@ecodev.vic.gov.au
- Phone: 1300 208 575

Please note that engagement with the Department or any Victorian Government representative does not constitute endorsement of any application for funding.