**JOBS VICTORIA CAREER COUNSELLORS**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

This document will be updated each Friday by COB until applications close 5pm, 13 May 2021. Please read the following questions and the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors Funding Guidelines before submitting a proposal.

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# General questions about the service

## Why is the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service needed?

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service is one of the Victorian government’s initiatives to respond to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19). As a result of the pandemic, underemployment and unemployment have increased and many Victorians are looking to secure their employment pathways. Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors will provide personalised career guidance to Victorians who require support to understand, develop, and self-manage their career options.

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service has been funded to:

* inform and guide jobseekers to make informed decisions about suitable work and education/training opportunities in line with their aspirations and needs and labour market trends
* reduce long-term unemployment by supporting displaced/retrenched workers, as well as young people entering the workforce, towards employment that suits their skills and circumstances
* assist jobseekers to engage in skills development that will lead to employment
* support pathways to economic security for those in precarious work
* strengthen lifelong learning and provide an active approach to labour market engagement and transitions.

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will add consistency, quality, depth and capacity to the current career guidance services in Victoria, complementing other services such as those offered through TAFE Skills and Jobs Centres, the secondary education system and the broader suite of Jobs Victoria services.

## What will the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service do?

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will increase access to professional career counselling by providing the following career supports:

* Career exploration and decision-making (including aspirations and interest exploration)
* Pre-employability / work-readiness skills
* Job search skills
* Work-specific skill enhancement
* Job maintenance skills
* Career-related personal development (i.e. interpersonal skills, self-esteem building, self-management etc.)
* Referrals to relevant employment and non-employment services e.g. TAFE Skills & Jobs Centres, Learn Local Education Network, local Jobs Victoria Advocates, Jobs Victoria Employment Service, specialist services, Commonwealth employment support
* Follow up with referrals or participant progress, if required.

## What will the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service not do?

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will not provide brokerage services to secure job placements or engage with employers directly. They will not act as case managers with a set caseload of jobseekers over a long-term basis.

## Who will the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service be suited for?

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will target assistance to Victorians who need support to understand their career options and opportunities but lack access to professional career guidance services. This includes people who are unemployed, underemployed, out of the labour market or employed but seeking alternative employment.

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will be most suited to individuals who:

* are unsure of their work/career options and pathways
* are seeking employment but lack a clear vocational pathway/plan
* are unemployed and struggling to secure work due to lack of work experience (e.g. recent graduates)
* are underemployed, or precariously employed, and seeking more secure and/or skilled work
* need support to plan a transition to a new occupation/career
* wish to pursue a professional career involving tertiary education pathways.

## Who will the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service not be suited for?

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will not be suitable for individuals who:

* understand their career development needs and pathways but require further information (e.g. specific courses to undertake, basic resume writing and work readiness). Such jobseekers will be able to access further information and advice from Jobs Victoria Advocates or their local Skills and Jobs Centre.
* require intensive long-term case management for more complex vocational and non-vocational needs. Such jobseekers will be able to access the support of employment mentors in their local Jobs Victoria Employment Services or other services more relevant to their specific non-vocational needs.
* are seeking advice on training and careers pathways focused on the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and can readily access Skills and Jobs Centres and Skills Gateway services.
* secondary school students given existing support in the school system, and early school leavers. Early school leavers will only be assisted where supports available through the current Commonwealth government are insufficient.

## What is the projected outcome of this service?

Professional career guidance can support people to understand their work options and give them the tools and confidence they need to pursue them. Therefore, the expected outcomes for participants of the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service is that participants will have:

* a clearer understanding of their career needs and career pathways
* increased confidence to progress their career aspirations
* increased skills to progress their career aspirations; and ultimately
* the capability to progress their career aspirations independently of the service.

## What is the proposed duration for the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service? Will the 2-year funding period commence from the time the contract is negotiated?

Funding is available to support service delivery for the period June 2021 to June 2023. It is expected contracts will be negotiated and executed by end of June 2021.

# Questions about provider eligibility

## What type of organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible, an organisation must have an Australian Business Number (ABN). Applicants also need to have sufficient organisational resources to mobilise a workforce of appropriately qualified career counsellors. Applicants will also need to have organisational capacity to oversee the delivery of high-quality career guidance services, including the maintenance of professional standards of delivery and the provision of professional support to career counsellors.

## Will consortia arrangements be allowed?

Consortia arrangements will be considered.

## Can an organisation apply for the service if they have a head office elsewhere but some offices and programs in Victoria?

Yes. It is not a requirement that applicant organisations have a presence in Victoria.

## Will jobseeker referrals come from Jobs Victoria or will they be sourced by the service providers?

Both. Jobs Victoria services will refer potential participants to the service, alongside other government and community services, but some participants may access the service more directly. The department will work with organisations delivering this service to establish referral pathways.

## Is it assumed demand for these services will be higher in regions with higher population density? How will services be promoted?

Yes. The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service has broad eligibility so it is anticipated there will be greater need for Career Counsellors in regions with higher populations. Final outcomes will also be connected to regional need. As part of the Jobs Victoria investment the department have the Jobs Victoria hotline, online platform and other initiatives to increase awareness of the service, including an advertising campaign.

## Will successful providers be placed in a Jobs Victoria directory?

Approved providers will be listed in the Jobs Victoria website. The department will also provide this information to the Jobs Victoria hotline, Jobs Victoria Advocates, and other services to ensure appropriate referrals and collaboration.

## Would the expectation be that sole proprietors can apply or is the initiative & grant designed for small business?

This application process does not exclude any businesses. Eligibility is broad. However, the Department is anticipating contracting with a relatively small number of service providers and does not propose to fund services engaging one career counsellor. Rather, the Department would like to see providers who can employ and/or engage multiple career counsellors.

# Questions about the application process

## Can organisations apply to deliver the service in multiple regions or state-wide only?

Yes, organisations can apply in multiple regions or for a state-wide service.

## How many providers in total are you looking to contract for the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service?

The department has not identified the desired number of contracts. The department will assess each application individually based on their own merit.

## Will the Department publish the successful organisations on the website, or will they be contacted directly?

The department will be contacting the successful organisations first. Outcomes will then be published on the Jobs Victoria website.

## Is there an expectation that all career counsellors for this service are employed full-time or is there scope for part-time positions?

The department recognises different delivery approaches may be effective in different circumstances for different communities across the state. As such, the department is keen to consider proposals for delivery models that are tailored to specific community needs. This includes details as to the nature of employment for the career counsellors with respect to the proposed delivery model.

## Is there an expected maximum amount of funding for each applicant?

No. The department does not have a number in mind. Funding will be determined by the nature and scale of the service proposal.

## Will you accept an application to service just one LGA within a region?

Yes, though the department’s preference is for a wider service scope unless a small service scope can be sufficiently justified.

## Can we request for funds to cover some of our own marketing or is it assumed the majority of marketing/comms will be managed by Jobs Victoria?

 Jobs Victoria will run a marketing campaign for the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service. If an applicant wishes to allocate a proportion of their grant to marketing this should be clearly outlined in the ‘expenditure’ section of the application form under ‘other expenses’

# Questions about service delivery

## Will priority access to the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service be given to particular demographic groups or cohorts?

No specific demographic groups will be targeted. As specified in the funding guidelines, it is expected that all services will support a diverse range of clients through provision of culturally safe, inclusive and responsive services.

## What data will need to be collected and how often will reporting be required?

The data and reporting requirement are currently in development and will be made available as part of the funding agreement. However, as part of the key selection criteria, applicants are required to illustrate the approach they will use to assess the needs of clients and any particular tools or frameworks that would be utilised. This will inform the data and reporting requirements for the service.

## Will the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service be only face- to- face, or will digital services be considered?

The department recognises digital services (i.e. utilising video conference calls) are necessary for meeting the needs of individuals, such as those in rural areas, and to increase service access. As such, the department will be keen to consider proposals for different delivery models including face-to-face and online modes of service delivery.

## How much funding will be provided to deliver the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service?

There is no fixed funding rate/price for the delivery of the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service. It is expected costs will vary with each proposed service model. Applications for funding must include the proposed number of participants to be supported and justification for how funding sought will provide value for money. See section 7, Selection Criteria, for more information.

Funding will need to cover the salary/wages of all proposed career counsellors including superannuation and other on-costs including on-going professional development, transport, supervision, coordination, accommodation, information technology/digital costs and any other costs deemed necessary to deliver an effective and high-quality service.

## How do you envisage the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will work with the services and supports already in place?

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will add consistency, quality, depth and capacity to the current career guidance services in Victoria by complementing other services such as those offered through TAFE Skills and Jobs Centres, the secondary education system, and the broader suite of Jobs Victoria services. Applicants are required to substantiate how their proposals will complement, and not duplicate, existing like-services by describing the partnerships and collaborations proposed for their delivery of the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service.

The department will coordinate relevant infrastructure and forums to facilitate further coordination and collaboration with existing services and initiates on the ground once the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service is implemented.

## What qualifications do the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellor need to have?

 Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors will have a minimum graduate certificate qualification in career development, or equivalent.

## Would a Certificate IV in Career Development be an acceptable qualification?

No. We are seeking Career Counsellors with postgraduate qualifications.

## Has thought been given to some regional areas where graduate qualified careers counsellors may be hard to come by? Could support be provided to upskill locals?

The department is keen to consider proposals for delivery that meets local needs. If there are no adequately qualified people in a particular region, the department will consider proposals to address this ‘gap’, including use of digital delivery and support to upskill if this can be achieved in a timely manner.

## What metrics and outcomes will the department use to determine adequate service delivery?

As written in the Guidelines, it is expected most applicants will already have systems and tools in place to assess the quality of service provision and monitor the progress of participants through the service. As part of the application process, the department is looking to understand what mechanisms providers currently use to measure performance of their services. Providers will need to report regularly on outcomes and milestones. The department will be interested in understanding metrics such as work readiness, confidence, broader demographic information, regional information, service satisfaction, and other data. More information will be provided to successful applicants at the contract negotiation stage.

## Is there an indictive number of participant interactions expected over the period?

Based on estimates of service capacity, the department estimates that more than 20,000 Victorians will be assisted over the life of the program until June 2023.

## Do you expect multiple sessions from clients, or just a one-off session for initial assistance?

It is assumed, on average, a participant will have up to three sessions. There is no minimum or maximum cap on sessions per participant.

## How will Jobs Victoria determine the overall success of the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service?

A program evaluation will be undertaken to assess quantitative and qualitative data to determine overall program efficacy.

## What is your best estimate of the total number of people who may take up the service across the entire state over the term of the contract? Are you able to break this down further by metro versus regional?

Based on estimates of service capacity, the department estimates more than 20,000 Victorians will be assisted over the life of the program until June 2023. Service capacity and scope will be determined based on population size and community need in each region.

## Will there be a process for categorising people based on their "proximity to the job market"? i.e. some people are likely to need more support than others based on their personal circumstances and employment/education history. Is it your expectation there will be different services provided based on need or that all people seeking career counselling will have access to the same level of support regardless of need?

It is expected career counsellors delivering the Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service will provide support to participants according to need which funded services will assess. Hence, while an average of three sessions will be provided to participants, there is no minimum or maximum cap. The department is keen to hear proposals that articulate different service offers for different participant needs and how these will be determined by providers delivering the service.

##  Would you clarify that the first client appointment would be funded if, after initial career discussions, the client decides they wish to pursue a VET pathway plan?

Funding will not be tied to the vocational or tertiary pathway the participant chooses once a session/s has been completed. If, after an initial counselling session, a participant wishes to pursue a vocational pathway and a referral to a Skills & Jobs Centre is deemed appropriate, the service provided through the Jobs Victoria Career Counselling service will still be funded.

## Can we offer services to residents who live on NSW/Vic border?

The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors service is only available for Victorian residents given it is a state funded service.

## Is it assumed that the career counselling program that we run are fully subsidised for the jobseekers?

Yes. It is expected each participant will be able to access career counselling sessions from the service with no out-of-pocket expenses.

# Questions about the application form

## Is there a size limit for attachments?

The limit is 5MB per attachment.

## The ‘Referees’ section of the application form assumes we currently receive, or previously have received, a grant in the past from a funding provider. Can large scale organisational clients be used as a referee in lieu of not having a current or previous funding provider?

The purpose of this section in the application form is to evidence an applicants’ ability to manage and execute delivery of services and associated budgets relevant to the service proposal under this program. Referees that can speak to this capability, including large scale organisational clients, would be sufficient.