



Housing Establishment Fund Guidelines

Background

The Victorian government acknowledges the critical role that Specialist Homelessness Services play in delivering services to people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

Homes Victoria commenced a review of the Homelessness Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding May 2014 (2014 Guidelines) from January 2024 to August 2024. This review was undertaken in consultation with the homelessness sector and resulted in the development of the [*Homelessness and Housing Support Guidelines 2025*](#) (2025 Guidelines).

Why Homes Victoria have updated the Housing Establishment Fund Guidelines.

The review consultation period identified strong support to create individual operational program guidelines, rather than include program guidance in the 2025 Guidelines.

In addition, the guidance on the Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) program, which was incorporated in the 2014 Guidelines, required revision to align with the current Victorian homelessness landscape, such as the rising cost of accommodation. The new HEF Guidelines provide the necessary requirements for homelessness funded organisations to deliver consistent and high-quality services to people seeking financial assistance to purchase accommodation.

Organisations are required to implement the HEF Guidelines by 8 January 2026 alongside the Service Agreement they have with the department.

What changes have been made

The HEF Guidelines 2025 provide clear guidance to ensure service providers deliver a service that meets best practice and modern standards.

The changes to the HEF Guidelines 2025 include:

- Inclusion of Aboriginal cultural safety guidance
- strengthening guidance on assisting the individual or family at their first point of contact
- update of eligibility and assets requirements to align with the departments RentAssist bond loan requirements
- a rise in the average financial assistance payment, which considers the increase in the cost of emergency accommodation since 2014 and aligns with the organisation's targets and funding
- update of private accommodation providers and safety requirements in purchased accommodation

- removal of voluntary repayment of HEF
- removal of outdated information relating to the homelessness service system
- inclusion of alternative financial assistance programs for people in a housing crisis such as the Private Rental Assistance Program
- inclusion of motel mapping database
- clear and relevant information on data collection and financial acquittal of HEF.

Implementation

Under Clause 3.1 (g) of the Service Agreement, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) are required to provide funded organisations with 40 Business Days' written notice when making amendments to Departmental Policy.

The 40-business day notice to advise organisations that new HEF Guidelines have been published, was delivered to all funded organisations on 10 November 2025. On 8 January 2026, the HEF Guidelines will supersede the 2014 Guidelines and all organisations will be required to comply with the HEF Guidelines alongside their Service Agreement with DFFH and the 2025 Guidelines.

During the 40-Business Day period, organisations should become familiar with the HEF Guidelines. Should organisations or a Local Area Service Network have a query on the HEF Guidelines, they are advised to contact their local area Agency Performance Systems Support representative. If they are unable to assist, the query will be forwarded to Homes Victoria for a response.

Where can I access the HEF Guidelines

The Homelessness Operational Program Guidelines webpage will 'go live' on 10 November 2025, the HEF Guidelines will be published on this date and available for organisations to read online or download. Organisations can also access the HEF Guidelines on the DFFH Funded Agency Chanel.

<p><u>Homelessness Operational Program Guidelines webpage</u></p>
<p><u>Housing Establishment Fund Guidelines</u></p>

Who to contact for more information

Should you require additional information please contact your local area Agency Performance and Service System team or hhs@homes.vic.gov.au