****

**Homeless Children’s Brokerage Support**

**Program Guidelines**

**Introduction**

These guidelines are for use with the Homeless Children’s Brokerage Support Project, funded by DHHS and managed by the Regional Children’s Resource Program in each DHHS region of Victoria.

The Regional Children’s Resource Program aims to improve service delivery for children in the homelessness and family violence sector.

**Program Objectives**

The experience of homelessness can have a significant impact on a child’s education, their physical, emotional and mental health and their sense of connectedness to peers and the broader community.

The Children’s Brokerage Support program aims to enhance opportunities for children experiencing homelessness to:

* Maintain education, including early education services such as childcare and kindergarten
* Reduce social isolation through access to a range of support, social and recreational opportunities
* Engage in social/emotional growth opportunities and increase relational bonds with parents or carers

**The program also aims to encourage homelessness support providers to integrate child focused assessment and case planning into their work practice.**

**Eligibility Criteria**

Funds are for accompanying, dependent children aged 0-18 years of current clients of homelessness and family violence funded support services.

Funds are limited to grants of $400 per financial year and may be taken in a lump sum or a number of applications.

**Outstanding fees or fees incurred prior to support provided by the SHS program will not be paid.**

Brokerage requests will be considered for children who:

* Have been assessed and have a case plan developed by the referring support agency. Children’s needs can be case planned individually or incorporated into the family’s case plan
* Are clients of a Homelessness Support Service or a Family Violence service
* Have an identified need for brokerage as demonstrated by their case plan
* Require support to engage and/or maintain education, or access social, recreational, health or support opportunities in their community

**A short summary of the case plan is required as part of the application process.**

In addition to these eligibility requirements, the length of time an activity can be funded and its sustainability when funding ceases will be considered.

Whilst referring workers are expected to advocate for children’s needs by negotiatng with service providers and accessing other relevant funding programs where appropriate.

Information about other funding options for children are available on the LMH Network website.

**Program Parameters**

The following service types may be covered:

**Education**

Provided on the basis that funding is not available through the school or other financial support such as Schools Youth Focused Services or State School Relief Fund.

* Camps / excursions/incursions, equipment and fees
* Tutoring
* Other educational support
* School expenses

**Childcare**

Brokerage funds can be accessed only to cover the funding gap in Commonwealth Child Care Benefits or where Special Child Care Benefit or other financial support is not available.

* Family Day care
* Centre based care
* Respite
* Vacation care
* Before and after school care

Brokerage for the above is time limited and must be for a specific reason.

**Sport and recreation**

Where no other funding is available through recreation clubs or other financial support.

* Fees for participation in sporting and recreational programs
* Uniforms and equipment

Brokerage should be request per term, so that where children change their preferences or move, allows access to funding for the same or different purpose later in the year.

**Specialist support**

Where free services are unavailable or waiting times do not meet the needs of the child.

* Counselling: group sessions, psychologist etc.
* Specialist assessments e.g. physical, emotional and psychological.
* Specialist medical assessments e.g. Paediatrician, hearing and sight testing, dental etc.

Families should pursue Medicare options. Single sessions may be appropriate when other options have been explored.

**Application Process**

Email your completed application to childrensresourceprogram@cnv.org.au along with an invoice or quote that includes the child’s name, ABN and EFT payment details.

On approval, a confirmation email will be sent in response.

**Requests for reimbursement must be made in advance of submitting funding applications, as it cannot be assumed the application will be successful.**

For further information, you can contact the Children’s Resource Program Coordinator at the Centre for Non-Violence on 5430 3000 or via childrensresourceprogram@cnv.org.au