

1. Program Description

Rural Doctors Workforce Agency (RDWA) provides grants to eligible primary health care professionals practising in rural South Australia (SA) to support the recruitment and retention of a primary health care workforce.

The range of grants offered by RDWA aim to:

- support priority health workforce needs
- improve access to essential primary health care
- build the health workforce capability; and
- increase the sustainability of the health workforce.

Rural Health Workforce Relocation Support Grants assist eligible health professionals to start working in primary health care practice in rural SA by offering a grant to offset some costs associated with relocating to live in rural SA.

2. Program Scope

To be considered for a grant, health professionals must:

- Be registered to practise in one of the eligible health disciplines, or be a Member of the relevant association for self-regulating eligible health disciplines
- relocate from an eligible 'originating location'
- relocate to a Modified Monash Model (MMM) 2019 2-7 location in SA
- commence practising in an eligible 'primary health care practice'
- be employed or have a formal contract for services for a minimum of 12 months; and
- work least 18.75 hours per week (0.5 full time equivalent).

Eligible health professionals can apply for up to \$5,000 for reimbursement of costs they have incurred for eligible items associated with the relocation.

Applicants receiving funding for relocation from other sources may still be considered for support through this program. Where funds are limited, priority will be given to allocating Relocation Support Grants to the Priority Health Professions.

Applicants are required to remain practising in the location for which a grant is approved for a least 12 months as a return of service for receiving the grant.

If the grant terms and conditions are not met, the Applicant will be required to repay the grant.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Primary health care practice

An eligible 'primary health care practice' is a private or not for profit general practice, nursing or allied health practice or primary health care organisation located in an MMM (2019) 2-7 location in SA. The primary health care practice must be providing primary health care services to the local community.

Applicants must provide evidence of an employment agreement or contract for services with the eligible primary health care practice as part of the application process.

State or Commonwealth Departments, Local Health Networks, disability support or aged care services are not eligible primary health care practices. Health professionals employed solely in ineligible practices will not be eligible to apply for the Relocation Grant.

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3.2 Originating Location

Applicants must be living in Australia at the time of their application.

An eligible 'originating location' is a South Australian MMM 1 location or an Australian State or Territory location outside South Australia.

The MMM locator is found at www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator

3.3 Health disciplines

Priority and eligible disciplines have been identified through the RDWA's Health Workforce Needs Assessment process.

The list of eligible health disciplines is:

Aboriginal Health Practitioners	Aboriginal Health Workers
Accredited Mental Health Professionals	Audiologists
Dentists and Dental Hygienists	Diabetes Educators
Dietitians	Exercise Physiologists
General Practitioners (GPs)	Midwives
Nurses (Practitioners, Registered or Enrolled)	Occupational Therapists
Optometrists	Pharmacists
Physiotherapists	Podiatrists
Psychologists	Speech Pathologists

Priority health professions are GPs, Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Accredited Mental Health Professionals.

Final year eligible health discipline students who have an employment contract or contract for services with an eligible primary health care practice under provisional arrangements, pending registration, may be eligible for a relocation grant, conditional upon achievement of registration.

3.4 Items

The Rural Health Workforce Relocation Support Grant can fund reimbursement (to a maximum of \$5,000) for costs incurred by the health professional in the following categories:

- removal of personal effects including furniture where a commercial removal company provides the service; or private travel if the health professional is moving furniture and personal effects privately;
- basic whitegoods or furniture to establish the housing situation, for example bed, lounge, washing machine;
- rental subsidy to offset the costs associated with living in the location in the first year.

The grant cannot provide for:

- Support payments that are part of the employment arrangement;
- Rental bonds;
- Expenses related to relocating from outside Australia.

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4. Process

4.1 Application

Health professionals who have an employment agreement or contract for services in an eligible primary health care practice and who meet the eligibility for originating location and health discipline should contact RDWA by email or phone to discuss their situation. RDWA will provide an application form which the health professional submits along with relevant documents.

Applications will be evaluated based on eligibility and health discipline priority. Where funds are limited, priority will be given to allocating Relocation Support Grants to the Priority Health Professions.

4.2 Return of Service Obligation

Health professionals offered a Relocation Support Grant must consider their obligations before accepting the grant.

Health professionals must continue to provide primary health care services to the local community in the agreed location for the 12-month period at a minimum of 0.5FTE. This condition is the Return of Service Obligation (ROSO).

4.3 Payments

RDWA will pay the grant by electronic funds transfer on receipt of correctly completed claim forms to which evidence of expenses must be attached.

4.4 Recovery of Grant Funds

If the obligations defined in the Grant Agreement, including the ROSO, are not met the health professional will be required to repay the grant.

4.5 Complaints and Review

Unsuccessful applicants may ask for a review of the decision, and should initially discuss their situation with RDWA Director, Primary Health Workforce.

The RDWA's Complaints Policy outlines the Complaint Process and is available at <https://www.ruraldoc.com.au/contact>

4.6 Independent advice

Applicants should consider the impact of entering an agreement for financial support payment and seek their own advice regarding their personal financial circumstance before applying for or accepting an offer of a grant.

5. Guidelines

These Guidelines apply where a re-locating health professional applies to RDWA for consideration for a Relocation Support Grant.

Grants are offered on the basis of eligibility in accordance with these Guidelines and are dependent on the availability of funding.

The terms and conditions of the Grant will be detailed in the Relocation Grant Agreement which is offered to successful Applicants

These Guidelines are current at 20 October 2022.