

## COVID-19 Vaccine for Vulnerable Populations Grants 2024 - Guidelines

To support the Government's COVID-19 health management plan, innovative, local, short-term COVID-19 vaccination activities and strategies are being implemented with an aim to increase access to the COVID-19 vaccination among priority populations who cannot access or have difficulty accessing the vaccine through existing mechanisms.

To continue to support to organisations to deliver COVID-19 vaccination services including boosters, to priority populations, Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network (the PHN) has Vaccine for Vulnerable Populations (VVP) grants available for eligible activities.

Examples of eligible activities include support for transporting clients to vaccination clinics or services, extra staffing required to facilitate vaccinations either outreach or in-reach, or extra hours of operating to facilitate vaccination.

The priority 'vulnerable' populations are defined as:

- people in rural and remote areas, including those with limited healthcare options, and those who cannot travel to a regional centre
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- those who are experiencing homelessness, including those living on the streets, in emergency accommodation, boarding houses or between temporary shelters
- people living in public or social /community housing
- vulnerable women including those experiencing domestic and family violence
- those who do not have a Medicare card or are not eligible for Medicare
- culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse people, especially asylum seekers and refugees and older age groups who may find it difficult to use other vaccination services
- children aged 5-11 who have complex needs, who are not captured by another suitable vaccination channel
- people with a disability, including mental health conditions, or who are frail and cannot leave home (homebound individuals) and their families
- Older persons and those residing in residential aged care facilities
- Disability accommodation residents
- Aged care and disability workers
- People who identify as LGBTIQ+
- People with drug and /or alcohol dependencies
- any other vulnerable or at-risk groups identified as requiring dedicated support to access COVID-19 vaccinations.

The VVP grant round will be accessible via the PHN grants portal SmartyGrants and consist of a payment of **\$7,500 ex GST** to provide a **minimum of 50 COVID-19** vaccination doses to priority populations before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. There are 30 grants to be awarded.

Partnerships are highly encouraged but only 1 lead organisation (the applicant) is permitted. Smaller organisations, pharmacies, general practices and councils are encouraged to apply. It is expected that organisations from outside the health sector engage with a health practitioner experienced in or having the ability to administer vaccinations.

All applicants must outline how they are sourcing the vaccines (no funding is available for procuring vaccination doses) and delivering vaccinations (qualifications and experience of staff). Projects must not already be funded through other sources for vaccination activities with the chosen cohort.

**All successful applications will be required to sign an agreement including the mandatory reporting requirement of doses delivered.**

## What can be funded

Local Health District (LHD)s operating outside of LHD (Local Health District) facilities (nurse led) may apply.

Activities that deliver other health care needs (e.g., other vaccination types) are eligible if the COVID-19 vaccination is also delivered and **is the priority of the activity**.

Activities that encourage or support reaching the target cohorts, including pop-up clinics, mobile vaccination, free transport, incentives to attend clinics (e.g., Meals), staff travel, admin and delivery costs that are related are eligible.

Activities that eliminate barriers for vaccination and/or are related to increasing vaccination uptake can be funded.

PPE and other related resources can be included as can internal costs related to the project.

## What cannot be funded

The COVID-19 vaccination doses are required to be procured via the appropriate channels (refer to information on sourcing vaccine doses below). The purchase costs of COVID vaccines cannot be funded by this grant.

An organisation that does not hold appropriate insurances and an ABN (Australian Business Number).

An organisation that does not demonstrate capability via qualified staff, contractors, or partners, to deliver vaccinations.

Activities not in the HNECC (Hunter New England and Central Coast) PHN geographical region, or activities targeting people not residing in the HNECC PHN geographical area.

Activities that are funded through other sources such as Medicare billing, including flu vaccinations except in circumstances where funding is pooled to increase the reach. Funding sources to be declared and assessed.

Activities that do not target the identified vulnerable population cohorts.

Activities that have occurred retrospective of the grant.

Activities deemed business as usual.

Other activities deemed not eligible by HNECC PHN

## How to apply

Applications open on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024 (closing 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024) via completion of the online form on the PHN grants portal, SmartyGrants. Applications are being assessed on a rolling basis.

HNECC PHN reserves the right to close the grant round if all grants have been awarded prior to the closing date or extend the grant closing date if funds are still available.

Applicants may be contacted to discuss their eligibility and ability to meet the grant criteria. This will constitute part of the grant assessment. Successful applicants will be required to sign a grant agreement outlining payments and milestones, terms and conditions and reporting required. A copy of insurances (Certificate of Currency) may be required if successful: Workers Compensation, Public Liability, Professional Indemnity, plus associated checks e.g., WWCC (Working with Children Checks)

## Selection Criteria

Applicants will be measured against the following criteria:

- Be eligible and able to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant.
- Outline a proposed plan of activities and budget.
- Able to demonstrate value for money in the target cohort and proposed uptake numbers.
- Provide evidence of being able to source and deliver vaccinations.
- Demonstrate experience in delivering programs of a similar nature.

## Eligibility

Organisations will be those who are working within the Hunter, New England and Central Coast geographical area that the PHN covers.

All applicants are required to have a valid ABN.

Previous PHN grant recipients are eligible only if they have fully complied with any previous PHN funding contract commitments including reporting.

All applicants must agree to provide de-identified highline reporting requirements that includes the number of vaccinations per vulnerable group, challenges and opportunities, and a budget breakdown.

Councils are eligible to apply.

Aboriginal Medical Services (Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services) who have received funding under the COVID-19 Vaccination Vulnerable Populations funding are eligible to apply but must demonstrate how the additional funded project differs from activities already funded.

LHDs operating outside of LHD facilities (nurse led) can apply.

Previous recipients may apply with priority given to those who have not previously received funding for the activity.

An organisation may submit more than 1 application if the application is for a separate location or service.

## Terms and conditions

The following terms and conditions will apply to all successful grantees:

- HNECC PHN Terms and Conditions will apply.
- HNECC PHN reserves the right to allocate grants based on priority of vulnerable populations and areas.
- Applications that do not meet the criteria will not be eligible.
- Grant funding will be paid to the applicant as per their grant agreement.
- Activities must be delivered by 31/12/2024 unless notified.

**Reporting of COVID-19 vaccination doses delivered is a mandatory requirement of this grant. Failure to provide this report may require grant funds to be returned.**

## Sourcing COVID-19 Vaccination Doses

Please note that the cost of COVID-19 vaccination doses is **not being funded** by these grants.

To source vaccine doses refer to the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care instructions below:

*In relation to ordering large bulks of COVID vaccines, providers can request an additional order of vaccines where their standard allocation is not sufficient.*

*An additional order can be requested following the below steps:*

- *Additional Orders can be placed online through the CVAS portal.*
- *A link is visible on the Orders tab below the 'New Order' button stating, 'If you are running low on stock and require additional doses, you can **Request an Additional Order.**'*
- *Note: if the site has not yet placed an order for the requested vaccine product in their regular order cycle, they will be redirected to place an order through the **New Order** button in the Orders tab.*

*For any providers that are not currently part of the program, they will need to be onboarded through the relevant channels to be eligible to order, store and administer COVID-19 vaccines.*

- *For GP (General Practice) site types, the GP's will need to reach out to their local PHN and complete the EOI (Expression of Interest) process for the COVID-19 program.*
- *For Community Pharmacy (CP) site types, the CP's will need to reach out to the PPA (Pharmacy Programs Administrator) and complete the EOI process for the COVID-19 program.*

*For queries, please reach out to the VOC team [COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@Health.gov.au](mailto:COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@Health.gov.au) or 1800 318 208*

If you have any questions regarding these grants, please contact the PHN Grants team on [grants@thephn.com.au](mailto:grants@thephn.com.au).