



Victoriaworks



Victoriaworks for parents returning to work

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The global financial crisis has impacted all sectors of the Victorian community. This means that for some people, finding work is now more difficult than ever.

The Victorian Government understands that there are many reasons why some people have extra difficulty or challenges in finding a job. These may include retrenchment, living in a rural or regional area, being young or mature aged, or being a newly arrived immigrant.

To address this, and as part of its commitment to building a fairer and productive Victoria, the Government has created Victoriaworks – a suite of workforce participation programs to help Victorians who face barriers or challenges to employment to access sustainable employment opportunities.

The Victoriaworks programs will provide nearly \$44 million over four years to help match employers to individuals with the skills they require.

By making grants and funding assistance available to employers, industry bodies, and other approved organisations, the programs create more opportunities for employment, skills development, and training.

Since 2006-07, Victoriaworks programs have:

- supported 14,500 people looking for work
- helped more than 5,600 people into jobs
- provided financial support to 6,600 parents being retrained for the workforce.

Victoriaworks programs help many people and include:

- Victoriaworks for **mature age workers**
- Victoriaworks for **graduates with a disability**
- Victoriaworks for **jobseekers with employment challenges**
- Victoriaworks for **parents returning to work**
- Victoriaworks for **carers returning to work**
- Victoriaworks for **young people**
- Victoriaworks for **Indigenous young people**



Message from the Minister

Victoria has a world class workforce and the Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that we have the right people and skills to maintain a thriving economy, both now and in the future.

We know that many parents who have had time out of work to care for their children are keen to re-enter the workforce, but they often need training and support to build their skills and confidence.

For some parents, the costs of courses, materials and childcare are barriers to retraining that are hard to overcome.

The Victorian Government's \$13.2 million *Victoriaworks for parents returning to work* package is designed to give Victorian parents the flexibility to prepare their return to work in a way that suits them and their family best.

Building on the successful *Parents Returning to Work* program – which helped more than 9000 parents return to the workforce – *Victoriaworks for parents returning to work* will help parents cover the costs of the training they need to gain employment in industries experiencing skills and labour shortages.

It is one of the ways the Victorian Government is helping to remove the barriers to training and work and ensure workforce skills match the needs of Victorian business and industry.

Jacinta Allan MP

Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation



01

What is Victoriaworks for parents returning to work?

The *Victoriaworks for parents returning to work* program extends and expands the highly successful Parents Returning to Work and addresses two priorities of the Victorian Government: supporting people back into training and work and broadening and deepening skills.

The program provides support to parents to return to work after an absence caring for children. Funds may be used to cover any costs associated with approved training such as books and materials, course fees, transport and childcare.

The *Victoriaworks for parents returning to work* program consists of two streams: Universal Access and Community Access. The program is funded for a total of \$13.2m over 4 years from 2007-08 to 2010-1011. Up to 1,000 grants per year will be available through the *Victoriaworks for parents returning to work* community access stream.

These community access guidelines are for organisations wishing to apply for grants to support parents to undertake training and employment. Organisations in drought affected area are particularly encouraged to apply.

The grants will support parents to return to work who:

- have been absent from education, training and/or the workforce for over two years caring for children and
- are Indigenous and/or
- are sole parents and/or
- come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds particularly recently arrived migrants and/or
- are young and have left school early to care for their children and/or
- are returning to the workforce after extended absence such as mature aged women and/or
- have a disability and/or
- are homeless and/or
- live in areas of high unemployment or are drought affected.

Up to \$4 million in funding is available to approved organisations for the period 2008-2011.

02

Why is the Victorian Government funding these grants?

The longer the absence from work, the harder it is to re-enter the workforce. Parents who take time out to care for their children may experience a decline in their workplace skills and lose confidence in their ability to work.

The *Victoriaworks for parents returning to work* program recognises that some parents will need extra support to successfully undertake training and find a job.

Skills and labour shortages are emerging across Victoria now, and the number of workers in the future is forecast to decline as a consequence of an ageing population. It is important that Victorians who want to work have the opportunity to do so. Supporting parents who wish to undertake training and return to work will contribute to increasing Victoria's workforce participation.

There is currently a difference in the workforce participation and unemployment rates across groups of people and places despite strong economic and employment growth in Victoria. There is considerable variation depending on who you are and where you live.

Some groups of people experience higher than average unemployment rates including young people (especially early school leavers), Victoria's Indigenous community, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with disabilities. There also continues to be areas of higher unemployment, both in regional Victoria and in parts of Melbourne.

03

Who can apply?

Expressions of Interest are invited from a wide range of organisations including employers, industry bodies/associations, unions, local government, employment service providers, training providers, and community organisations.

Expressions of Interest are particularly sought from organisations in drought affected areas.

It is expected that applicants will have a strong relationship with one or more of the target groups and places listed above and already be providing services such as:

- careers advice and planning
- employment and/or training assistance
- training both non accredited and accredited or
- integrated community services.

Funding is not available to Job Network organisations.

04

How will the Victoriaworks for parents returning to work program work?

Funding of \$1,000 per eligible parent will be provided to spend on training and related expenses as agreed between the organisation and the parent to assist their return to work.

Organisations will be expected to support each parent to identify their training and work aspirations and needs, appropriate training, a training provider, the costs involved (for example course fees, books and materials, transport, childcare) and an appropriate budget.

Organisations are also encouraged to arrange or provide referral to activities for participants such as:

- parent support networks or study groups
- career advice, planning, and mentoring and
- arranging complementary training such as study techniques, writing, exam preparation, time management, and advice on balancing study, work and family.

05

What activities will not be funded?

There are no restrictions on how parents utilise their \$1,000 grant, providing it has been agreed between the organisation and the parent, and providing it is used to directly assist the parent to participate in training and to return to work.

06

How can organisations apply?

Organisations can apply by completing the attached application form.

Grants will be offered to organisations:

1. with demonstrated ability to work with people in a manner that builds their confidence and supports them to take action to realise their training and work aspirations
2. that target eligible parents who face barriers to employment that place them at risk of long term unemployment.

Eligible parents are parents who have been absent from education, training and/or the workforce for over two years caring for children, and;

- are Indigenous and/or
 - are sole parents and/or
 - come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds particularly recently arrived migrants and/or
 - are young and have left school early to care for their children and/or
 - have a disability and/or
 - are returning to the workforce after extended absence such as mature aged women and/or
 - are homeless and/or
 - live in areas of high unemployment or are drought affected.
3. where the grants complement, strengthen or leverage support from other State or Federal Government programs or other services.
 4. with the demonstrated ability to attract and support parents from the target groups.

Note that organisational eligibility does not guarantee success. There may be more applications than available grants.

07

What are the funding conditions?

The following conditions will apply to organisations that are successful in being offered grants:

- The organisation must enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD) that sets out the conditions and reporting requirements.
- Funds must be spent as described in the application.
- Any variation to the approved application must be submitted to DIIRD for approval prior to implementation.
- Unspent funds are to be returned to DIIRD for reallocation.

08

What is the application process?

Organisations can apply for a number of grants at any time to support parents to return to work through training.

A minimum of twenty \$1,000 grants for metropolitan and regional centres is required in the first instance. Once an organisation is an approved administrator, then additional grants can be applied for at any time until the allocation for that funding year is depleted.

There is no minimum for small rural based organisations.

Funding rounds are announced on the www.workforce.vic.gov.au/victoriaworks webpage. Interested parties are advised to link to this page and check it regularly.

Applications may be submitted in a number of ways:

- By email to victoriaworks@diird.vic.gov.au
- By fax to 03 9938 0588
- By mail to: Workforce Victoria, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development GPO Box 4509, Melbourne Vic 3001

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More information



To discuss your application with a Victoriaworks officer, please call **1800 110 109**.

The Victorian Government knows that many parents who have had time out of work to care for their children are keen to re-enter the workforce, but they often need training and support to build their skills and confidence.

For some parents, the costs of courses, materials and childcare are barriers to retraining that are hard to overcome.

Victoriaworks for parents returning to work is a grants program that is designed to give Victorian parents the flexibility to prepare their return to work in a way that suits them and their family best.

It will help parents cover the costs of the training they need to gain employment in industries experiencing skills and labour shortages.

For further information, please visit the Workforce Victoria website at:

www.workforce.vic.gov.au/victoriaworks

Workforce Victoria

Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development

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A Victorian
Government
initiative

