

# Exceptional resource funding procedure

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## 1. Purpose

To ensure the Department for Child Protection (DCP) is committed to minimising risks to children and young people by ensuring appropriate exceptional resource funding (ERF) needs are considered. This procedure supports compliance with the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and specifies the processes for ERF.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to DCP staff who are involved in the process of seeking, endorsing and authorising ERF to support the needs of children, birth families and carers.

## 3. Authority

### 3.1 Legislative context

- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)

### 3.2 Whole of Government requirements

- [Treasurer's Instruction 8 Financial Authorisations](#)

### 3.3 DCP requirements

- [DCP financial authorisations procedure](#)
- [DCP financial authorisations register](#)

## 4. Procedure requirements

ERF is provided to children and young people in care to have a standard of living that ensures they are not disadvantaged and can maximise the child's opportunity to grow up in a safe and stable environment in order to help reach their full potential. ERF is generally for payments of \$20,000 or less per application. However, in pressing circumstances a higher amount may be approved in accordance with the [DCP Financial Authorisations](#).

Where assessed as required and appropriate, DCP may provide these payments to meet individual and/or specific needs of children and/or young person.

ERF forms part of child related incidental costs in each of the regions to cover major or exceptional expenditure related to:

- establishing a child or young person in a placement
- maintaining the child or young person in the placement.



ERF is only available when all other funding sources have been exhausted, and no other source of funding exists.

## 4.1 Funding and monitoring

The Performance and Finance Unit, Finance and Corporate Services establishes an ERF budget for regions annually. Regional Directors and nominated staff are responsible for managing this budget, including the consideration of expenses that are committed which may cross over financial years (ie school fees).

The Regional Director must ensure appropriate business support practices exist to ensure expenditure and commitments are monitored against the budget, and to ensure the ERF Database is updated and regularly monitored.

ERF is generally for payments of \$20,000 or less per application. However, in pressing circumstances a higher amount may be approved in accordance with the [DCP Financial Authorisations](#). The Financial Authorisations also cover additional specific instances where ERF can be approved.

## 4.2 Eligibility

To be eligible for financial support through ERF the carer and child or young person in the placement must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The carer must be fully approved through Carer Assessment and Registration Unit
- The carer must be willing to sign the agreement and declaration in the application form regarding the financial support provided.
- The child or young person must currently be in an out of home care placement.

**Note:** Children or young people under the following types of care are not eligible for eERF, unless otherwise specified in the [DCP Financial Authorisations](#):

- Long Term Guardianship (Specified Person) (LTGSP)
- temporary placement
- financially assisted adoption
- post 18
- adoptions from care unless applications for additional financial support are agreed to at the time the adoption order is made due to DCP having an existing and ongoing arrangement to pay for a child or young person's non-Government school fees and/or specialist therapeutic interventions.

## 4.3 Expenses covered under ERF

ERF can be used to assist with:

- goods or services deemed essential to support the placement beyond subsidies available
- vehicle leasing, purchases or modifications provided they are essential
- home modifications provided they are reasonable and essential
- private schooling where reasonable and provides continuity of support.

These expenses can be apportioned either directly to a specific child or to multiple children, e.g. leasing of a motor vehicle for transporting multiple children. The expenses may also be for the support of the carer so they, in turn, can provide appropriate care for children.

### 4.3.1 Other services essential to support the placement beyond subsidies available

In some unique or very limited situations, it may be permissible to cover costs for goods or services where all other funding sources have been exhausted. There is no general rule as to what level of reimbursement is appropriate, however, funding sources and individual circumstances of the child/young person will influence this decision.

Refer to the Other Financial Support Factsheet for information on financial support that is available from other sources including other state and federal government payments and schemes (ie Medicare, NDIS).



DCP will not provide financial support where other financial support sources are available.

### 4.3.2 Vehicles

ERF may be used to contribute to the cost of:

- leasing a vehicle
- purchasing/ modifying a vehicle.

The carer is required to sign a [Contribution to Purchase/Lease of Vehicle for Carer – Agreement and Acknowledgement Form](#) if such an arrangement is entered into.

#### Leasing a motor vehicle

In some unique situations, it may be permissible to make a payment toward the lease of a vehicle that the carer would not otherwise have required due to the special needs or circumstances of the child/young person(s) in the placement.

The carer must provide two quotes. Lease Plan is not to be used as a provider. The lease agreement will be between the Carer and the lease company (ie not DCP).

The carer will have the responsibility of maintaining the vehicle to an acceptable standard including running costs.

The respective regional office will review DCP's contribution towards the lease every six months.

#### Purchasing/ modifying a motor vehicle

In some unique situations, it may be permissible to make a contribution toward the cost of purchasing or modifying a vehicle for a carer in support of a placement. The contribution will take the form of a one-off payment. There may be specific circumstances where a contribution towards a people mover vehicle (7-or more seater) is required which exceeds \$20,000. These instances are subject to approval under a specific authorisation in the [DCP Financial Authorisations](#).

The vehicle/modification must meet the requirements of an appropriate safety and mechanical assessment and must be comprehensively insured. A copy of the safety and mechanical assessment certificate (ie roadworthy certificate) must be submitted to DCP prior to payment.

The carer(s) will have the responsibility of maintaining the vehicle/modification to an acceptable standard including the running costs, maintenance or replacement of the vehicle.

The application must be accompanied by proof of the value of the current vehicle for modification (e.g. Red book valuation) and at least three quotes for a replacement vehicle.

### 4.3.3 Home

ERF may be used to contribute to the cost of:

- renting a home
- modifying/renovating a home.

Home modifications will only be supported if the application demonstrates the long-term benefit to the child or children in care (e.g. long-term placements greater than 18 months).

The DCP Case Worker should ensure that supports and services are provided, or have been arranged, through other agencies (e.g. Housing SA, NDIS) before proceeding with an application for home modification or rental assistance.

### Renting a home

In some situations, it may be permissible to make a contribution toward the renting of a home which would not otherwise have been required, if it were not for the special needs of a child or young person.

DCP will not enter into a rental agreement to enable a carer to reside in rental accommodation. The rental agreement should be between the carer and the applicable rental agency or private individual.

Rental assistance will generally only be supported if the application demonstrates the need to accommodate a group of four or more children or demonstrates the need to modify the carer's home to meet the special needs of a child.

### Home modifications

The special needs of a child or young person may result in the need for modifications to be made to the carer's home.



These situations require caution as they can impact on the value of the carer's home.

It is essential that carers obtain pre-approval for all proposed modifications, extensions or renovations, so that they can make an informed decision on their options and understand DCP support to be provided and any financial implications for them. Subsequently, it is crucial that all applications are appropriately costed, with up to date paperwork to verify and justify the anticipated expenditure.

The application must be accompanied by at least three quotes. DCP will generally not provide financial support for modifications or extensions to rental properties.

Where payment is approved to modify or extend a home the carers will be required to enter into a formal agreement (ie a [Home Modification Agreement and Acknowledgement Form](#)) with DCP.

DCP will not enter into a contractual relationship with a builder or other tradesperson to undertake a modification or extension to a carer's home. The contractual relationship is between the carer and the builder or tradesperson. The carer must obtain 'Certificate of Compliance' from all tradesperson undertaking modification or extensions to the carer's home that is subject to ERF. Copies of all certificates must be provided to DCP.

Home modifications will generally only be supported if the application demonstrates the need to accommodate a sibling group of four or more children or demonstrates the need to modify the carer's home to meet the special needs of a child with a physical disability.



DCP will generally not provide financial support for modifications or extensions to rental properties.

### 4.3.4 School fees

An ERF may be used to contribute to the cost of paying for a child or young person to enrol in a non-government school.

School fees for a non-government school will be supported when:

- the child or young person is enrolled in the non-government school at the time they are taken into care and it is preferable to maintain continuity of their education
- other siblings (birth or foster) are enrolled in the non-government school and it is demonstrated that it would be detrimental for the child or young person to be enrolled in a different school
- a special program is offered at the school that is not offered elsewhere (within reasonable travelling distance)
- the child or young person is gifted or has a particular talent
- the child or young person has been awarded a scholarship and there is a funding gap
- the child or young person has a special need that can be best met by the non-government school.

The ERF for school fees are approved for the one school for the entire schooling period (ie the whole of primary school, or whole of high school), not per year or term. A separate ERF must be completed if the previously approved school changes. The approving officer must have reasonable assurance that the ERF budget will be available for the entire duration if it crosses over financial years. School fees must not be paid in advance of one year of schooling.

Following approval of the ERF, payments of the school fees may be made per the general financial authorisations where they are in line with what was approved in the ERF.

Other educational expenses (ie uniforms, excursions, etc.) are to be managed by the respective regional office through the incidentals budget.

Adoptions from care applications for additional financial support may be agreed to at the time the adoption order is made due to DCP having an existing and ongoing arrangement to pay for a child or young person's private school fees. Refer to the [DCP Financial Authorisations](#).

#### **4.3.5 Funding criteria – what criterion is used to prioritise funding applications?**

There is no general rule as to what level of reimbursement is appropriate, however, funding sources and individual circumstances of the child/young person will influence this decision.

Applications are assessed on an application-by-application basis, with consideration given to:

- history of child/young person
- care and protection/order arrangements
- Length of time in placement
- financial assessment/co-contribution
- rationale for resource
- safety and placement stability
- sibling/family connections
- history of ERF.

#### **4.4 Processing and approvals**

The Case Manager is the first point of contact who will liaise with the carer in consultation with required stakeholders (ie Senior Practitioners, Principal Aboriginal Consultants and Principal Social Workers) to discuss the child or young person's needs, options and financial assistance requirements. The Case Worker



completes the [Exceptional Resource Funding Request Application form](#) and attaches any relevant supporting documentation.

The appropriate Business Manager reviews the application and seeks approval per the [DCP Financial Authorisations](#) (noting that different specific financial authorisations may exist for different ERF requests). The Regional Director must ensure appropriate budget monitoring exists per section 4.1 Funding and Monitoring.

The authorised officer must ensure documents are appropriately completed and that any supporting documents are completed correctly ensure the receipt of safety and mechanical assessments and/or certificate of compliance).

Following approval, the application can be processed for payment and ERF documents must be uploaded to C3MS. The child/young person's case plan should be updated to reflect what resources have been allocated.

Case Managers must regularly review progress regarding the child or young person and family/ carer during individual supervision and through case consultations within team meetings and will provide the manager with regular updates regarding progress and any reports at review dates.

## 5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

As part of the Policy Governance Framework, this procedure will be reviewed and updated by Service Delivery and Practice in accordance with the review date shown at 'Document Control'.

## 6. Related documents

Related documents, forms and templates
<a href="#">Exceptional resource funding request form</a>
<a href="#">Home modification – agreement and acknowledgement form</a>
<a href="#">Vehicle purchase – agreement and acknowledgement form</a>
<a href="#">Vehicle lease – agreement and acknowledgement form</a>

## Document control

<b>Reference No./ File No.</b>			
<b>Document Owner</b>		<b>Lead Writer (name, position)</b>	
Directorate/Unit: Financial Systems and Compliance		Olivia Dimasi, A/Manager, Financial Systems and Compliance	
Accountable Director: Chief Financial Officer			
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<a href="#">Risk Assessment Matrix</a>	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate

REVISION RECORD		
Approval Date	Version	Revision description
April 2017	0.1	Original Draft
December 2017	0.2	Financial Authorisation Delegations
February 2018	0.3	Private schooling, vehicle purchase, home modifications clarifications and updates
August 2018	0.4	C3MS procedure revision
September 2018	0.5	DCP contribution towards Carer vehicle purchases and home modifications are suspended pending a review.
July 2019	0.6	New directive document developed after review conducted.
September 2019	1.0	Minor amendments requested from the Minister's office
19 November 2021	2.0	Replacing the ERF Directive with a procedure. Inclusion of guidance for school fees.