

Health Services - Winter Retention and Surge Payment program

Guidance - Meal & Refreshment program

OFFICIAL
June 2022

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1. Introduction

The Health Care Worker Winter Retention and Surge Payment program provides support for clinical and non-clinical staff as they prepare for a busy winter. This program provides funding for services to provide access to free refreshments and meals for staff prioritising those working on night shift or doing double shifts. This guidance includes purpose of the funding, requirements and FAQs.

2. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice to health services about the implementation of free meals and refreshments to further support staff:

- This program is an expansion of the 2021-22 Healthcare Worker Wellbeing program.
- Staff working night shifts or double shifts must be prioritised for access to free refreshments and meals.
- Health services have flexibility in how they deliver this initiative to provide access to free snacks and meals for staff prioritising all healthcare workers who are working night shifts and double shifts.
- Access to free night shift snacks and meals should also be prioritised for night shift NEPT drivers and staff at metropolitan and regional health services. Health services need to inform NEPT providers how to access these refreshments and meals.
- Night shift staff may not necessarily have access to meals every night due to local catering arrangements, logistics and funding limits. Not all health services have options for accessing onsite cafes (at all, or for every shift), or local options for provision of pre-packaged meals. Refreshments or meals for night shift staff could be provided in the form of snacks trolleys being available in break rooms that are replenished.
- Health services are responsible for working out the most appropriate way to provide meals or snacks for their night shift staff and team members who are working double shifts.
- Health services are not able to provide meal allowances to workers with this funding.
- Consultation with staff about preferred options for meal or snack availability is strongly encouraged prior to and during implementation.
- Services will be funded for six months from 1 July 2022 – 31 December 2022.

3. How will health services receive this funding?

Each health service will receive a letter from the Department confirming their funding allocation for the meal provision. The amount of funding allocated to each health service is based on staff numbers.

The health service will be required to complete a template (Template A) to accept the funding and indicate their plans for implementing the meals/snacks for staff prioritising night shift staff and those working double shifts. Funding for this program will be paid to health services in two instalments – in July 2022 and October 2022.

There is flexibility in how services will administer this program acknowledging that there are different arrangements for meals at each service.

By accepting this funding, a health service agrees to:

- Adhere to reporting expenditure of funds, including appropriate record keeping and reporting in a timely manner.

- Ensure the funding is used as intended.
- Immediately notify the department if there are any issues that may impact the implementation of strategies under this program.

4. What are the reporting requirements?

Health services will be required to complete and submit an [online form](#) by 15 July 2022 to receive the first instalment of funding.

All health services are also required to report on progress using the same [online form](#) on the following dates:

- Monday 19 September 2022 (triggers the second payment)
- Monday 9 January 2022 (final report and acquittal).

5. Conditions of funding

- The funds provided are one-off based on the acceptance and reporting of these grants.
- The funds must not be used for any purpose other than that for which the grant was made.
- The program will commence from 1 July 2022. Funding will be for six months and must be fully delivered before 31 December 2022. Failure to complete the project within the specified time, may see a recall of allocated funds.
- Funding for this program must not duplicate any other successful request for funds from any source. If other contributing organisations fail to provide funding or there is an increase in program costs, the Victorian Government is not obliged to provide this funding.
- The program will be directly managed by the health service in a manner that reflects government procurement and probity guidelines.
- Health services will be required to ensure that any service providers who are procured to provide meals as part of this program are reputable and able to meet the service demands required. This also includes meeting any accreditation, governance, quality and safety standards, management of funding, human resources processes and any other necessary recruitment or education requirements.
- Program reports will be made to the department as required.

6. Further information

For further information, please contact the Workforce Strategy & Wellbeing branch at the Department of Health on whwb@health.vic.gov.au

Appendix A – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Purpose of the program

- This funding has been provided to health services to provide access to free snacks and meals for staff prioritising those who are working night shifts and double shifts. Access to free night shift snacks and meals should also be prioritised for Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) drivers and staff at metropolitan and regional health services.

2. What can be funded with this allocation?

- Health services have flexibility in how they deliver this initiative to provide access to free snacks and meals for staff prioritising healthcare workers who are working night shifts and double shifts.
- Funding may be used to provide vouchers, or direct access to free meals or snacks, depending on the needs of the staff, and access to resources.
- Access to free night shift snacks and meals should also be prioritised for Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) drivers and staff at metropolitan and regional health services.
- Night shift staff may not necessarily have access to meals every night due to local catering arrangements, logistics and funding limits. Not all health services have options for accessing onsite cafes (at all, or for every shift), or local options for provision of pre-packaged meals. Health services are responsible for working out the most appropriate way to provide free meals or snacks for their night shift staff and team members who are working double shifts. For example: refreshments or meals for night shift staff could be provided in the form of snacks trolleys being available in break rooms that are replenished.
- Health services are not able to provide meal allowances to workers with this funding.
- Consultation with staff about preferred options for meal or snack availability is strongly encouraged prior to and during implementation.

3. What is not able to be funded?

- The funding from this program cannot be used for the purchase or supply of alcohol.

4. How was funding calculated?

- The amount of funding allocated to each health service is based on estimated staff numbers.

4. What are some key considerations?

- This funding provides health service with a flexible approach to implementation and acknowledges that there is not one single solution for different health services and the provision of free meals and snacks. Health services are not able to provide meal allowances to workers with this funding.

5. Measuring reach and impact

Getting feedback on whether initiatives have worked is vital to identify the reach and impact of this approach.

Services will be required to provide data about the provision of free meals/snacks and report on progress. The following information will be required:

- Reporting the number and type of staff who receive these benefits.
- Feedback on access to the meal program
- Any impact on staff retention and absenteeism

Template A – Acceptance and planning template

Please note the Template A and B will be provided to health services via an [online form](#).

This program has been provided to health services to provide free snacks and meals for staff prioritising those working on night shift and doing double shifts from 1 June to 31 December 2022. To accept this funding, please complete this template to and return before 15 July 2022. Funding will be provided in two instalments: July 2022 and October 2022.

Please note: All health services will be required to report on the progress using Template B.

Organisational information	
Name of lead organisation	
Partner organisation/s (if relevant)	

Organisational contact			
Accountable Executive Officer:		Phone:	
Position:		Email:	
Program Contact name:		Phone:	
Position:		Email:	

Plan for implementation	Consultation with shift staff	Predicted reach	Estimated cost	Measure of success - evaluation
<i>Provide a short overview of the planned activity.</i>	<i>Provide an overview about how you consulted or plan to consult with staff about the meal/snack options</i>	<i>Provide an estimate of the number of health workers who will benefit from snacks/meals at your health service.</i>	<i>Provide the estimated cost and a summary of the meal/snack options provided</i>	<i>How will you know this has made a difference? How do you plan to measure this? E.g. surveys for staff, feedback via Managers.</i>
<i>Please provide information about how your health service will be administering meals or snacks for staff prioritising those working night shift, double shifts and NEPT drivers/staff</i>	<i>E.g. Survey with food options Discussion with night shift staff/Managers Suggestion box</i>	<i>X staff working each night will have access to snacks/meals. X staff working double shifts will have access to snacks/meals</i>	<i>E.g. Fruit baskets Ready meals Food vouchers for staff</i>	<i>Feedback from staff/NEPT drivers on the program etc Was there any impact observed on retention of staff working these shifts? Did the provision of meals/snacks impact absenteeism?</i>
Total costs				
Total funding allocated to service				

Template B – Progress and reporting template

This program has been provided to health services to provide free snacks and meals for staff prioritising those working on night shift and doing double shifts from 1 June to 31 December 2022. Funding will be provided in two instalments: July 2022 and October 2022. This form will be made available as an [online form](#).

All health services will be required to submit this template to whwb@health.vic.gov.au on the following dates:

- Monday 19 September 2022 (triggers the second payment)
- Monday 9 January 2022 (final report and acquittal).

Organisational information	
Name of lead organisation	
Partner organisation/s (if relevant)	

Organisational contact			
Accountable Executive Officer:		Phone:	
Position:		Email:	
Program Contact name:		Phone:	
Position:		Email:	

Summary of progress				
Activity	Progress update	Approximate reach to date	Expenditure	Measure of success
<i>Please report back against your planned activities from your Template A submission and identify any new / additional activities you have undertaken.</i>		<i>Provide the number of workers who have benefited from the snack/meal provision; please provide headcount for program recipients where you have this information</i>	<i>Provide the actual costs and a summary of the meal/snack options provided</i>	<i>What did your planned evaluation measures tell you about the access to meals/snacks for night shift workers and those working double shift? E.g. What was the feedback from surveys from staff or from Managers.</i>
Total costs				
Total funding allocated to service				

Please provide a copy of a financial statement acquitting the funds for the purpose for which they were provided.

Consultation with staff	<i>How did you consult with staff (especially those working double shifts/doing night shifts/NEPT drivers/staff) about the provision of meals/snack options?</i>
Budget Analysis	<i>To what extent has the program been delivered within its scope, budget, expected timeframe, and in line with appropriate governance and risk-management practices?</i>

Barriers	<i>Provide an outline of any challenges/issues/concerns that have been raised during implementation.</i>
Feedback on access to meals/snacks	<i>What was the feedback from your night shift staff, team members working double shifts and NEPT drivers/staff about access to meals/snacks?</i>
Changes to planned activity	<i>Provide an outline of any changes you have made to your planned activities and if you have implemented any new / additional activities.</i>
Feedback on the impact of the meals/snacks on staffing (e.g. wellbeing / retention).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. Provide an overview of the impacts of the provision of meals/snacks for staff over the funding period.</i> <i>b. Was there impact on retention of staff members or willingness of staff members to work on night shift or do double shifts?</i> <i>c. Did the provision of meals/snacks impact wellbeing?</i> <i>d. Your feedback on whether this initiative had an impact on retention, absenteeism or other staffing issues?</i>

Signature of Accountable Executive Officer	
Name	
Position	
Signature	