



Fact Sheet: Strengthening Medicare – General Practice (GP) Grants Program

May 2023

This fact sheet provides information on the Strengthening Medicare – General Practice (GP) Grants Program.

Background

The Australian Government is investing \$220 million in grants, over two years from 2022-23 to 2023-24, through the Strengthening Medicare – GP Grants Program (the Program), to support general practices and eligible Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).

What is the purpose of the Program?

To provide funding to general practices and eligible ACCHOs to make improvements to their practices to expand patient access and support safe, and accessible, quality primary care.

Who is eligible to apply for grants under the Program?

- General practices (see definition below); and
- ACCHOs that deliver general practice services and are not owned or operated by a state, territory or local government agency or body.

Definition of 'general practice':

An open and operating **general practice** as per the RACGP definition for the purposes of practice accreditation against the Standards for General Practices (5th edition), that meets all the following criteria:

- a) the practice operates within the model of general practice described in the [RACGP's definition of general practice](#).
- b) general practitioner (GP) services are predominantly* of a general practice nature
- c) the practice is capable of meeting all mandatory indicators in the RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th edition).

*'Predominantly' is defined by the Health Insurance Regulations 2018 (made under the *Health Insurance Act 1973*) as 'more than 50% of the practitioner's clinical time, and more than 50% of the services for which Medicare benefits are claimed, are in general practice.'

Please refer to the RACGP [fact sheet](#) to assist in determining whether a health service meets the definition of a general practice.

When does the General Practice Grants Program open and how can general practices and eligible ACCHOs participate?

The Program was announced by the Minister for Health and Aged Care on [20 April 2023](#) and opened from 21 April 2023. The Program is being implemented in partnership with Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), who will administer and manage the Program in relation to general practices and ACCHOs, respectively.

PHNs and NACCHO are sending correspondence (including a grant agreement form) directly to general practices and eligible ACCHOs, inviting their participation in the Program.

The correspondence from PHNs and NACCHO advises each practice and ACCHO of the grant amount (between \$25,000 and \$50,000) applicable to them.

Organisations wishing to participate will need to complete the grant agreement form and send back to their PHN (for general practices) or NACCHO (for ACCHOs), by 15 June 2023.

What can the grants be used for?

A single one-off grant will be available to each participating general practice and eligible ACCHOs to invest in innovation, training, equipment, and minor capital works in **any one or more** of the three investment streams below:

1. **enhancing digital health capability** – to fast-track the benefits of a more connected healthcare system in readiness to meet future standards;
2. **upgrading infection prevention and control arrangements** – to support the safe, face to face assessment of patients with symptoms of potentially infectious respiratory diseases (e.g. COVID, influenza);
3. **maintaining or achieving accreditation** against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) [Standards for General Practice \(5th Edition\)](#), under the General Practice Accreditation Scheme – to promote quality and safety in general practice.

The Program provides the flexibility for general practices and eligible ACCHOs to fund activities within the three investment streams to best address their needs.

How much funding is available under the Program?

The Program has a budget of \$220 million available to be distributed to general practices and eligible ACCHOs across Australia. A one-off grant between \$25,000 and \$50,000 will be available to each participating general practice and eligible ACCHO.

How will the grant amount for each general practice and eligible ACCHO be determined?

A general practice and ACCHO's grant allocation is based on their:

- accreditation status, against the RACGP Standards for General Practices; and
- practice size, as determined by the Department of Health and Aged Care's (the Department) Medicare GPFTE 2021-22 financial year (FY) data.

Medicare GPFTE is a statistical methodology used by the Department that aims to estimate the entire time that General Practitioners (GPs) spend delivering primary care services. It is not simply the standard hours worked by employed GPs in the general practice, nor a headcount of GPs.

The method calculates a GP's primary care workload based on Medicare Benefits Schedule items claimed within a GP's scope of practice. For each GP, the measure provides an estimate of the billable time, non-billable time, and non-clinical time.

For more information on how GPFTE is derived, see [Method Paper: General Practice Full Time Equivalent \(GPFTE\) – Workforce](#).