

- **Expression of Interest**

for a

Demonstration Project Grant

to address the issue of

Food Insecurity

**Jointly funded by Victorian Health Promotion
Foundation and Department of Human Services**



VicHealth

1. INTRODUCTION

Summary

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) invites expressions of interest from local government or agencies working in partnership with local government to apply for a demonstration project grant to address the issue of food insecurity that has been identified as a priority in their community.

This grant program comprises of the following elements:

- Two projects each valued at \$95,000 each. These projects will develop, implement and evaluate strategies to reduce the prevalence and impact of food insecurity in their local community.
- An external evaluator will be funded to resource and advise the demonstration projects on the tools and design methodologies that can be used to evaluate the process, implementation and outcomes of the projects.

Food Insecurity

The term food security can be defined as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. At a minimum, this would include having acceptable, nutritionally adequate and safe foods available and the ability to acquire food in socially acceptable ways without resorting to emergency food supplies or other coping strategies¹

Food insecurity has a high cost to individuals, families and to society as a whole which is reflected in reduced physical, mental, spiritual and social health and well being. It is a significant factor in reducing health status and quality of life amongst many disadvantaged groups in Australia. Existing evidence suggests that those most at risk of food insecurity are people who are homeless, disabled, drug users, live in remote areas, have low incomes, are older and from indigenous communities.

A single item question in 1995 Australian National Nutrition Survey (NNS) provides the only Australian population prevalence estimate of food insecurity indicating a level of 5% of the respondents to the survey. This figure is considered to be an underestimate as homeless people were not included in the sample and single, unemployed people were under-represented. A study undertaken by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (1995)² identified one in ten Victorian adults reported running out of food at some time during 1995 and did not have enough money to buy more.

There are a range of strategies that can be used to respond to food insecurity. These include emergency food relief programs, strategies that aim to improve the skills and

¹ Kendall, A & Kennedy, E. (1998) Position of the American Dietetic Association: Domestic Food and Nutrition Security J.Am Diet Assoc 1998; 98:337

² Australian Institute Of Health and Welfare. A look at Population Survey Monitor. Food and Nutrition Monitoring News Number 5 December 1995.

confidence of people to use a wider variety of foodstuffs and to improve food purchasing or eating patterns through access to cheaper food.

The demonstration project grants will encourage partnerships between local governments, community agencies and the commercial sector to develop local level solutions to food insecurity. The contributing factors to food insecurity are numerous and interact in a complex way. As such local governments are often well placed to develop such solutions and strategies that are likely to yield the best results for the food insecure within their communities.

Rationale

Food insecurity has become an important issue at national, state and local levels. At a national level, the issue of food insecurity has been identified as a priority in the *Eat Well Australia-Action for Public Health Nutrition* draft document. At a state level, the Department of Human Services' Nutrition Advisory Committee (NAC) have decided to focus attention on food insecurity and vulnerable groups and subsequently established a Vulnerable Groups and Food Insecurity Sub Committee. This Committee has undertaken significant work to produce a report that provides an initial framework for action. The report recognises the need to not only respond to the immediate needs of those experiencing food insecurity but to also respond to the social and economic issues which actually lead to food insecurity.

VicHealth's *1999-2002 Strategic Directions* document recognises healthy eating as one of its five priority action areas with a particular emphasis on addressing social inequalities in health outcomes. Over recent years, VicHealth has invested in the area of food insecurity. This demonstration project grants program provides an opportunity for VicHealth and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to jointly fund community based, health promotion activities that will build and add value to the research and work that has already begun in the area of food insecurity.

2. STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENT

The purpose of the projects is to develop innovative approaches or enhance existing strategies to more effectively respond to food insecurity. The projects should also contribute to an increased understanding and awareness of the key factors that influence food insecurity in the local community that goes beyond short term food relief.

Projects should be flexible in exploring different short and long term local system approaches to food insecurity and should recognise the potential for collaboration with a broad range of organisations from various sectors.

Project Description

Goal

To develop and implement innovative and sustainable strategies to address food insecurity in the community.

Objectives

The objectives of the projects will be to:

1. Contribute to the understanding of the physical, social, cultural and economic factors that influence food insecurity in the community.
2. Pilot the implementation of strategies at a local level that:
 - Build the capacity of community workers and agencies to create environments to sustain interventions designed to increase food security and adapt them to changing needs
 - Increase government and non-government organisational capacity to work collaboratively and promote good practice models.
3. Evaluate the impact of the interventions.

Project Outcomes

At the end of the funding period the two projects are expected to have:

- Identified strategies to address the key factors that influence food insecurity in their local community
- Implemented and evaluated a response to addressing food insecurity based on identified strategies
- Identified sustainable strategies to reduce food insecurity that are evident through the planning and strategy development at a local government and community level.
- Improved networks of local agencies and the commercial sector in addressing food insecurity that will lead to a more coordinated approach to the issue.

Projects will be required to contribute to VicHealth's Learning Strategy to disseminate the lessons learned as appropriate.

Deliverables

The projects will deliver the following:

Documentation:

- Work Plan: the grant recipient will be required to provide a detailed workplan incorporating timelines, with a breakdown of activities
- Progress Reports: the grant recipient will provide written reports on a bi-annual basis. These will include progress achieved against objectives, key issues arising from the project's activities, changes to methodology and/or approach and an update on the budget.
- Documentation of lessons learnt during the project.
- Final Project Report: this will include an internal evaluation, an assessment of achievement against objectives, discussion of key issues arising during the implementation of the project; recommendations for replication of practice/service models and recommendations on any further work that maybe required.
- Financial Statement upon completion of the project.

Management

This project will be managed by a joint VicHealth and Department of Human Services management team.

Timeframe

Projects will be completed within eighteen months of commencement.

- Expressions of Interest should be lodged by:
5.00pm Friday 20 April 2001
- Short-listed Expression of Interests will be notified by:
Friday 4 May 2001
- Short listed Expression of Interests will be contacted for further information and/or interview by:
Wednesday 23 May 2001
- It is anticipated that the successful projects will commence on:
2 July 2001

Budget

A total budget of \$95,000 (excluding GST) is being offered for each project. A proposed budget should cover all areas of expenditure associated with the implementation of the project as described in this brief.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST APPLICATION

Expressions of Interest of no more than four pages should include the following information:

- **Executive Summary** of the Project Proposal in one page;
- **Organisational details:** including proposed lead agency if the project is to be implemented by a network of organisations and liaison arrangements between network members;
- **Relevant experience:** recent experience relating to the objectives and activities
- **Achievements and outcomes:** identify major projects undertaken which demonstrate the successful achievement of outcomes in similar or related areas.
- **Proposed methodology:** identify the proposed approach and the range of strategies to be considered including how the project will contribute to a sustainable process of improving food security at a local level.
- **Quality Assurance:** identify mechanisms that will be implemented to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the project's implementation processes;
- **Timelines:** state the applicant's ability to commit to the time-frame outlined in this brief;
- **Budget:** provide a budget covering potential areas of expenditure associated with the development, implementation and evaluation of the whole project as described in this brief.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST LODGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Information

Interested parties wishing to obtain further information about VicHealth and the Project Grant are invited to access our website at: <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au>.

A briefing session will be held on Monday 2 April 2001 from 3.30-4.30pm at VicHealth, Level 1, 333 Drummond St Carlton. Potential applicants intending to attend the briefing session should RSVP to Maggie McNamee by 29 March 2001 by phone on 9345 3241 or email mmcnamee@vichealth.vic.gov.au .

Submission Details

Five copies of the Expressions of Interest must reach VicHealth by **5.00pm 20 April 2001**. The Expression of Interest must be addressed to:

**Ms Kellie-Ann Jolly
Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
PO Box 154
Carlton South 3053**

Faxed or emailed applications will not be accepted.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST ASSESSMENT

The assessment process will include the following:

- Short listing of applicants on the basis of their stated ability to meet the key requirements of the project.

In assessing expressions of interest, VicHealth and the DHS will consider applicants who have:

- Demonstrated an existing commitment to addressing food insecurity locally
- An understanding of the complex issues impacting on food insecurity
- Demonstrated experience in undertaking projects in similar contexts to those required by this brief including an understanding of the broader policy and service delivery context;
- Existing relationships with local networks
- Experience in delivering high quality outcomes within a proposed time-frame
- Demonstrated ability to work across sectors
- Experience in planning and implementing dissemination
- Sound budgetary and financial arrangements

Short listed applicants will be required to develop their proposals for lodgement by Wednesday 23 May 2001.

Enquires and Confidentiality

VicHealth undertakes to act in accordance with the principles laid down in the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 in respect of all applications in response to this Expression of Interest document. Only VicHealth officers or agents of VicHealth actually carrying out tasks associated with assessment and administration will have access to applications. All supporting information provided by applicants will be considered as having been submitted in confidence.

Ms Kellie-Ann Jolly will be the contact person for any further enquiries. She can be reached on telephone 9345 3208 or email kjolly@vichealth.vic.gov.au