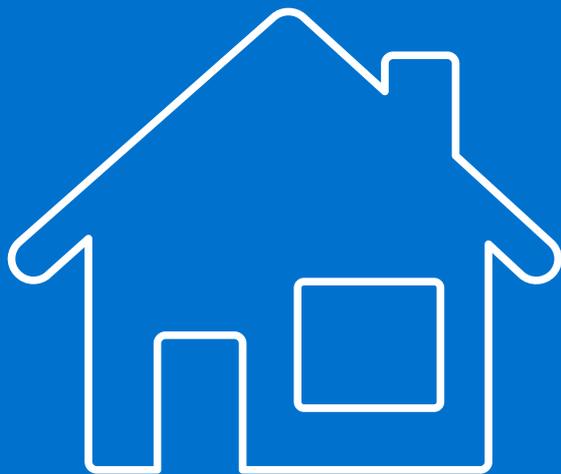


# Renting Central Service **Program Guidelines**



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# 1. About the RCS Guidelines

The Renter Central Service Program Guidelines (RCS Guidelines) define and describe the role and responsibilities of the Provider funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) to provide rental support to renters and community workers.

The RCS Guidelines are the contractual service and reporting requirements of the RCS and form part of the terms and conditions of the funding agreement for delivery of the RCS to be entered by CAV and the agency (Funding Agreement).

**Note:** All guidelines documents are available to download at [consumer.vic.gov.au/renter-rights](https://consumer.vic.gov.au/renter-rights).

The RCS Guidelines describe:

- the purpose and operation of the RCS
- RCS service components
- Referrals
- CAV's program management
- reporting requirements.

The RCS Guidelines may be updated by CAV from time to time to reflect current service requirements and practices. CAV will notify the provider whenever the RCS Guidelines are revised and make the latest version available.

The RCS Guidelines should be read in association with:

- the RCS Request for Service guidelines
- the service delivery requirements listed in Table 1 on the following page

**Table 1: RCS – Service delivery requirements**

No.	Service delivery requirement
1	The Provider must operate in accordance with the program objectives set out in section 2 of the RCS Guidelines.
2	The Provider must provide and report on the Renter Support Service set out in Section 3 of the RCS Guidelines.
3	The Provider must provide and report on professional development for VRRP workers set out in Section 4 of the RCS Guidelines.
4	The Provider must provide and report on program governance of renter services programs set out in Section 5 of the RCS Guidelines.
5	The Provider must provide and report on the renting media, campaigns, advocacy and policy requirements set out in Section 6 of the RCS Guidelines.
6	The Provider must comply with the program management requirements set out in Section 7 of the RCS Guidelines.
7	The Provider must comply with the reporting requirements set out in Section 8 of the RCS Service Requirements.

## 2. Introduction to the RCS

### Overview

The Victorian Renter Rights Program (VRRP) supports Victorian renters and older people most at risk of renting and housing issues. There are four components:

- Renter Rights Service (RRS)
- Renter Central Service (RCS)
- Older Persons Housing Rights Service (OPHRS)
- Victorian Renters Helpline (VRH)

The RCS is a state-wide service that supports vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorian renters by providing specialist rental advice, advocacy and training to community workers.

### The VRRP's objective

The objective of the VRRP is to keep Victorians in safe and secure housing.

### RCS service model

The RCS service model is designed to complement and strengthen the existing rental support sector. The RCS service model details the service components provided by the RCS. The components of the RCS are:

- The Renter Support Service (worker advice, specialist legal advice for renters, referral coordination, support for multicultural renters and communities of practice)
- Professional development provision
- Community sector workforce education and advice
- Renter campaigns, media, policy and advocacy
- Support for the implementation and governance of the VRRP.

## 3. Renter Support Service

The Renter Support Service is comprised of the following main components:

- the workers' advice line, including disaster worker advice
- referrals between RRS agencies
- culturally and linguistically diverse renter engagement support
- specialist legal support for renters
- community worker outreach, education and capacity training, and
- RRS community of practice.

### Workers' advice line

The RCS provider will operate a workers' advice line to provide renter legal information, advice and legal support for community workers. The workers' advice line must be staffed by lawyers with extensive knowledge and expertise in renting law and practice.

The Provider is required to operate the workers' help line for a minimum of 5 hours each business day (excluding public holidays and days between Christmas and New Year).

### Referrals

The Provider will be responsible for facilitating the conflict of interest and inter-agency referral process for the 17 RRS agencies. To manage this process, the Provider must maintain an up-to-date list of the RRS agency referral contact details, including a referral email and contact person.

### Culturally and linguistically diverse engagement support

The provider will deliver targeted education to multicultural renters through a combination of online and in-person community forums and small group discussions guided by bicultural workers. To support multicultural renters, the provider will create and maintain a library of appropriate resources.

### Specialist legal support for renters

The Provider will provide select specialist legal support (discrete legal tasks and representation services) to renters who are eligible for the RRS in circumstances when the client's matter is assessed by the RCS as complex and requiring the input of legal expertise. The RCS may also elect to provide legal support services to demonstrate priority campaign and policy issues.

### Community worker outreach and capacity training

The Provider will deliver a community worker outreach and capacity training program aimed at educating a broad range of non-lawyer renting workers about rental law and services. The program will be flexible in content and structure and have state-wide reach.

The program will promote the workers' advice line and the local RRS agency. The RRS agency and local CAV officers should be invited to participate in local workshops.

## **RRS community of practice**

The Provider will deliver a RRS community of practice in consultation with DGS and RRS agencies. The community of practice will provide RRS workers with a regular opportunity to gather in a supportive learning environment to discuss current issues, share knowledge and foster a culture of learning, collaboration, and best practice. The forum will also provide an opportunity for workers to get to know each other better, discuss and reflect on the common challenges of the role, and build supportive working relationships across RRS agencies.

## **4. Professional development for VRRP and community workers**

The Provider will support and uplift VRRP program workers to deliver quality casework. This includes through the development and provision of:

- VRRP worker induction training
- VRRP worker legislation training and skills development, including family violence provisions and supports
- Other training to increase worker capacity, including disaster recovery training.
- VRRP tools and resources
- Community worker outreach and capacity training.

### **VRRP worker induction training**

The Provider will design and deliver induction training for new VRRP workers including RRS, VRH and OPHRS workers. The training will be equivalent to a two-day intensive workshop, with a follow-up third day to address practical learnings.

The induction training will comprise a structured combination of face-to-face training supplemented by e-learning modules that allow self-paced learning, with progress monitored and supported by the Provider. The content will focus on residential tenancies law, Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria (RDRV) and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

processes, with a focus on common renting problems.

## **VRRP legislation training and skills development**

The Provider will deliver legislation training and skills development workshops for VRRP workers. The Provider will produce a calendar every six months, offering training across different levels and mediums. Training will be conducted in Melbourne and the regions, and in some circumstances via e-learning modules.

Each RRS worker is expected to attend a minimum of two professional development sessions per year. As a component of the broader renter suite of services, OPHRS workers will also access the legislation and skills development program as appropriate to their needs.

Legislation training will focus on key aspects of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic) (RTA) to help VRRP workers understand the complexities of the RTA and highlight any changes and updates, including family violence provisions and available supports. The training will include practical sessions on representing clients at VCAT.

The skills development sessions will focus on ensuring that VRRP and community workers understand the rental needs of marginalised groups, and how to best support these groups, including:

- First Nations people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Older people
- Residents of rooming houses
- People affected by family violence
- People living with a disability
- Neurodivergent people.

## **VRRP tools and resources**

The Provider will develop and maintain an online repository of rental law and practice resources (including templates and sample documents) for use by VRRP workers, including RRS, VRH & OPHRS workers.

The information resource should detail common renting problems. It should also cover how to respond to clients experiencing family violence. The resources should cater for a diversity of experience, knowledge, and skill levels within the renter workforce. The online repository may also house e-learning modules as a component of the RRS worker's professional development program.

The Provider will ensure that the on-line repository remains available, and that content is updated as new legislation is introduced.

## 5. Program governance of the VRRP

The Provider will assist CAV with overall program governance of renter service programs. CAV will work with the Provider to develop a program governance framework to outline the key roles and responsibilities between the Provider and CAV.

The Provider will also manage and promote the consistent delivery of rental support services across Victoria through the management of referrals, development and provision of professional development, and the community of practice (see above).

## 6. Renter media, campaigns, policy advocacy

### Renter campaigns and media

The Provider is required to deliver rental campaigns and media activities that address emerging and systemic renting issues identified through the renter support service and other sources.

The Provider must give prior notice to CAV of any campaigns or media activities expected to result in significant public exposure of issues to which the Government will likely be required to respond by sending an email to [CommunityPrograms@dgs.vic.gov.au](mailto:CommunityPrograms@dgs.vic.gov.au).

### Renter policy and advocacy

The Provider is required to participate in renting and broader housing policy and advocacy work that is likely to impact Victorian renters, especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. The Provider must participate in policy-making processes, networks, forums, and reviews to improve government and industry policies that affect renters.

## 7. Program management

- acknowledges the requirements of a prescribed Information Sharing Entity under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*.

### Insurance

The Provider must have professional indemnity and public risk insurance, as detailed in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement.

The Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) provides insurance to most community service organisations funded by DGS.

### Client satisfaction survey

CAV may from time to time evaluate the quality of services. The design and development of the evaluation process and techniques will be done in consultation with agencies.

### Complaints handling

The Provider must have in place a client complaints policy. Renters who use the service (and others acting on their behalf) can make a complaint to either the agency or to CAV.

### Privacy policy

The Provider must have a privacy policy that explains how client information will be managed, and that the policy:

- aligns with current privacy legislation, including the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- includes information on how conflicts of interests can occur and what the agency will do if a conflict is identified

## 8. Reporting requirements

Under the funding agreement, your agency must provide a number of reports to assist CAV to assess service delivery performance and to contribute to overall VRRP management. Agencies are required to provide the following reports:

- quarterly data reports
- six-monthly narrative reports including a case study
- annual funding acquittal certificate
- annual audited financial statement regarding the agency's finances (a program audit is not required).

The timeframes and reporting requirements you will need to adhere to are outlined in the funding agreement and RCS Request for Service Guidelines.

