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Community Recovery Officer

The Community Recovery Officer (CRO) is defined in Section 1.1.1 of the DRFAWA as:

“One twelve month full-time equivalent officer per eligible disaster employed by the State to work with affected communities to:

- *Identify recovery needs*
- *Assist in accessing relevant information and resources to develop community recovery programs, and*
- *Provide community capacity building as required”*

Refer to Section 4.2 and Schedule A, section 9, of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia (DRFAWA) for further detail.

Description

Where certain emergency assistance for individuals is being provided under the DRFAWA, the arrangements may provide for a temporary Community Recovery Officer (CRO), or a full-time equivalent period of up to 12 months, to work with disaster-affected communities.

The provision of a CRO is reserved for eligible disasters where the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia (DRFAWA) administrators are satisfied that the relevant criteria have been met, that there is a need to employ such an officer, and their functions cannot be completed by existing local government or community services sector personnel in the disaster-affected communities.

Role Summary

The role of a CRO is to support community recovery from eligible disasters by working with communities to identify recovery needs, assist in accessing information and resources to develop local recovery programs and provide community capacity building as required.

Potential activities which may be undertaken by a CRO are:

- Liaison between state and local recovery coordination
- Assessment, in consultation with affected LGs, of the need for DRFAWA Category C/D funding
- Support the DRFAWA Category C/D application process, if required
- Support the recovery needs analysis process
- Understand information and resource needs in local recovery
- Assess and develop recovery capacity in affected communities

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- Support the development of community recovery programs and ensure they align with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery
- Support short, medium and long term recovery planning
- Foster collaborative partnerships to deliver recovery activities
- Guide monitoring and evaluation of community recovery programs and activities

Eligibility Criteria

A CRO is only able to be employed when the state is providing emergency assistance for individuals under all of the following DRFAWA measures:

- a) emergency food, clothing or temporary accommodation
- b) repair or replacement of essential items of furniture and personal effects
- c) essential repairs to housing, including temporary repairs and repairs necessary to restore housing to a *habitable* condition.

Exclusions

Funding is provided to establish new temporary CRO roles to respond to a specific eligible disaster.

Assistance will not be provided to fund or augment existing community development, emergency management or similar roles within a local government or community services workforce.

Costs associated with a CRO using existing assets are not eligible for reimbursement. Examples of these costs include existing office accommodation, vehicles, facilities, computers, telecommunications infrastructure and any other resources that would have been available for use, even if the CRO had not been employed.

Amounts Available & Mode of Delivery

A CRO's role may vary depending on the capacity of the local community service network and the blend of government and community-based organisations operating in the disaster-affected area.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services Recovery Directorate (DFES Recovery) will consult with affected local government/s to ensure a role description that is appropriate for the community, and to identify a suitable organisation or partnership of organisations to undertake the employment, management and supervision of the CRO.

A CRO may be employed and managed by local government, an existing non-government organisation or WA Government agency.

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The scope of work for each CRO will be determined on a case-by-case basis by DFES Recovery, in consultation with affected local government(s), for each eligible disaster, in accordance with the DRFAWA.

The employment of the temporary CRO may be for a maximum full-time equivalent period of up to 12 months.

As a general rule, only one (1) CRO may be employed for each eligible disaster, irrespective of the number of Local Government Areas that have been affected by the disaster.

In the event that the nature, scale and circumstances of the eligible disaster warrants the employment of one or more additional CROs, DFES Recovery may submit an application to the Australian Government to seek additional funding for this purpose. To demonstrate the need for additional CROs, local governments and community organisations may be required to provide information about the impacts of the disaster.

Conditions of Assistance

Where funding is provided to employ a CRO, an Engagement Agreement will be executed between the appropriate organisation(s) and DFES. This agreement will outline the conditions of funding and the service specification.

Any variation to the agreement will require approval of both parties. The funding arrangement between the State and Commonwealth governments (e.g. under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements) must be acknowledged on all written materials.

The service provider must retain records of all grant monies expended on the employment of the CRO. A copy of the records must be provided in full to DFES Recovery.

Funding for the support service will depend on the service model, however costs may include provision for the following items, subject to the exclusions discussed above:

- Salaries and on costs for staff as per award
- Travel and other relevant allowances as per award
- Operating costs (including program and service development costs)
- Communications costs
- Temporary office accommodation costs where required
- Temporary motor vehicle hire where required
- Essential establishment costs as negotiated with DFES Recovery

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Coordinating Agency

DFES Recovery will be the coordinating agency for this assistance measure in the first instance.

The CRO role will be established in consultation with local recovery governance mechanisms (e.g. the Recovery Committee) and key human services representatives from government and non-government agencies in the disaster affected community.

Claims Process, including timings

The Engagement Agreement will specify the process by which DFES will provide funds to the organisation that employs and manages the CRO.

In general, the employing organisation will be required to pay the agreed employee related expenses and overheads for the CRO and seek reimbursement from DFES on a monthly basis.

Invoices from the employing organisation must be submitted monthly and in accordance with the Engagement Agreement.

Please contact the DFES Disaster Recovery Funding Officers to discuss the claims process at drfawa@dfes.wa.gov.au.