

Customer Fee Waiver



Purpose

A Customer Fee Waiver may be put in place to ensure that MoWSA meals and services are affordable for customers.

This policy relates to:

Service standards	ACQS 1 (3)(a), 2(3)(b)
Legislation and other requirements	
Contractual requirements	

Scope

This policy applies to all staff undertaking assessments and service reviews.

Policy Statements

- Provision of meals and services is a priority for MoWSA and as such customers will not be refused a meal or service due to inability to pay.
- MoWSA is committed to the principle of providing services that are accessible, by making meals and services affordable for current and new customers.
- MoWSA will act in accordance with the requirement of government funding programs to ensure that no eligible person is refused services due to inability to pay.
- Every attempt will be made to work with customers and their family to agree payment arrangements to suit the customer's financial situation.
- MoWSA will maintain budget provision to provide interim support to customers experiencing financial disadvantage, in the form of discounted meal and service prices.
- Fee Waiver to be applied in situations of financial crisis and/or significant financial disadvantage. Where appropriate, extension to the fee waiver period can be made.
- Will not apply when unwillingness to pay for meals or services is the grounds for Fee Waiver claim.
- Is not a replacement for other more appropriate income support measures (e.g. pensions), nor a means of recovering bad debts for MoWSA.

Procedures

Application of Fee Waiver assistance:

- applies in cases of financial crisis and/or significant financial disadvantage
- 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% waiver depending on the customer's ability to contribute
- will include some customer contribution where possible
- will be time limited and matched to expected time period of financial disadvantage
- with customer permission, support to resolve the financial situation will be given by providing information about relevant agencies

When financial disadvantage/financial crisis is identified

If a customer indicates that they need to cease or reduce meals or services due to financial difficulty the Branch Support Officer (BSO), Customer Service Coordinator (CSC) or WISE (My W.I.S.E. Choice) team member is responsible to discuss the fee waiver options.

- Fee waiver
 - Conditions of the agreement will reflect how long the customer will require fee waiver assistance and how much they think they are able to pay towards the cost of the meals or services
 - a copy of the fee waiver Information package is provided to the customer
- BSO or CSC or WISE team member can assist the customer to complete the fee waiver documentation
- service delivery is not delayed whilst paperwork is being completed.
- a Branch Support Officer will provide support and advice to customer service coordinators during this process.
- the customer will be encouraged to access financial assistance from an appropriate agency e.g. Social Security/Centrelink, Financial Counselling Service, Department of Community Services, Community Social Worker, (or other appropriate local networks) and the BSO can assist the CSC to arrange this if required
- the completed fee waiver form is forwarded to the Program Support Manager ASAP after assessment. Information on the form should include
 - details of the financial disadvantage experienced
 - time frame of the waiver
 - the number of meals or services being delivered per week under the agreed fee waiver conditions
- BSO/WISE team member forwards the fee waiver application form to finance department

Review of Fee Waiver at end of waiver time period

- at follow-up review, the customer's ongoing ability to pay is identified by discussion with customer (and delegate if appropriate)
- outcome of review is provided to Program Support Manager

Further extension of the fee waiver:

- is unlikely but can be arranged in exceptional circumstances
- dependant on needs of the customer will be considered
- with customer's permission may require further advice to be sought from the customer's family, other support persons or professionals to inform decision making
- where no extension to fee waiver is appropriate the service can be terminated (see Policy: Termination or Change of Customer Service)

Policy Responsibilities

Responsible for monitoring	GMSO
Responsible for implementation	Senior Program Manager

Policy Delegations

Review of policy and policy compliance	GMSO
Approving policy and policy changes	CEO