

|  |
| --- |
| Sexual Assault Support Brokerage  Program guidelines |
|  |

# Purpose of the funding

Sexual assault support brokerage (SASB) funding aims to respond to the individual support needs of victim survivors who have experienced sexual assault by providing immediate, flexible, person-centred support.

SASB delivers a holistic response to assist the recovery and wellbeing of victim survivors who have experienced sexual assault.

Brokerage for Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) is a new service component that has received funding for four years (2021-2025). All funded providers of sexual assault support services who deliver direct support services will receive brokerage funding.

# Program requirements

SASB is provided to agencies through the activity *38026 Flexible funding family violence and sexual assault – Family Violence Service Delivery.*

SASB is available to adults, young people and children who have experienced sexual assault and are receiving support from a SASS. SASB providers are required to undertake an assessment of needs and risk in line with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and any other risk assessment tool used. The assessment of needs should include consideration of financial circumstances and the anticipated outcomes or positive impact that brokerage will have on the individual’s wellbeing. Brokerage can be provided throughout an individual’s case with a SASS, provided they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

SASB can also provide direct support to an individual’s non-offending family members and support people. As such, non-offending family members and support people can access brokerage where it is determined by a risk and needs assessment that the victim survivor would benefit from this person receiving brokerage.

Children and young people should be considered as people in their own right (and are therefore unique individuals) for the purpose of assessing risk, needs and impact of brokerage.

There is no minimum amount for use of the brokerage. However, providers are expected to ensure equitable access to available brokerage funds across the financial year by balancing the amounts provided to each individual and targets will be set at an average of $500 per person. The maximum amount of brokerage an individual may receive in one case episode is expected to be no more than $1,000. In circumstances where an individual re-presents after a case has been closed this will be considered a new case for the purposes of brokerage.

In cases where more than $1,000 is required within one case, providers must use their professional judgement and have an internal delegation and approval process to ensure equitable access to available brokerage funds and that agencies can achieve their targets.

Access to SASB does not preclude individuals who are experiencing the co-occurrence of sexual assault in a family violence context from accessing a Family Violence Flexible Support Package (FSP) or Family Violence Crisis Brokerage (FVCB). An assessment of needs and risk in line with MARAM may warrant immediate referral and application for these other financial supports.

FSPs deliver a personalised and holistic response to victims/survivors experiencing family violence who have a case management or support plan in place by assisting them to access support, move out of crisis, stabilise and improve their safety, well-being and independence into recovery. For further information including eligibility and suitability requirements, please see the FSP program requirements at <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/program-requirements-delivery-family-violence-flexible-support-packages>.

Family Violence Crisis Brokerage (FVCB) can be used to address costs associated with crisis responses such as accommodation, transport and material aid as well as smaller incidental costs associated with specialist family violence support. For further information including eligibility and suitability requirements, please see the FVCB program requirements at [Funds to support victims of family violence | Victorian Government (www.vic.gov.au)](https://www.vic.gov.au/funds-to-support-victims-of-family-violence)

# Principles

The following principles should guide the use of sexual assault support brokerage:

* the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors is paramount
* support provided is strengths-based, where possible
* expenditure is directed by the individual receiving the brokerage, within the parameters established in these guidelines
* the social and gendered context of family violence and sexual assault and the impact of violence on victim-survivors (including children) development is understood
* consideration is given to culturally appropriate service responses, and brokerage expenditure, for individuals from a range of backgrounds
* the significant and disproportionate impact of family violence and sexual assault on people from marginalised communities and the effect of this on their level of risk and need is recognised.

# Eligibility

Eligibility criteria for sexual assault support brokerage is as follows:

* adults, young people and children who have experienced and/or been affected by sexual assault; or
* adults, young people and children who are the non-offending family member or other support person, where access to brokerage would otherwise support the victim-survivor; and
* the victim survivor is receiving support from a specialist sexual assault support service.

# What brokerage can buy

Brokerage may be used to purchase goods and services including, but not limited to:

* **transportation** – such as public transport cards (‘mykis’), fuel vouchers or taxi vouchers for attendance at appointments
* **freedom from abuse and harm** - such as such as crisis accommodation, relocation costs, mobile phone
* **good physical and mental health**  – including medical or pharmaceutical costs not covered by Medicare or Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, physical aides, counselling or other specialist services.
* **basic material needs** – such as clothing, food, basic toiletries, infant supplies such as nappies or formula
* **wellbeing and independence** – legal fees, financial counselling, wellbeing courses, complementary therapies
* **child development and safety items** – such as educational resources, school uniforms or books, therapeutic supports or toys
* **identification and connection with culture and identity** – including access to travel, culturally specific service supports, or other cultural activities
* **opportunities for participation in learning and education** – schooling, educational costs, workforce readiness (for example adult education/TAFE course)

# Exclusions

SASB must not be used for the following purposes:

* illegal activity
* gambling or alcohol
* other free or low-cost services readily available within the community
* to replace or duplicate supports available through other funding sources, including other Local, State and Commonwealth Government programs where these can be accessed in a timely manner
* cash payments.

# Accountability and monitoring

SASB providers are required to acquit against brokerage expenditure by reporting on the number of new individuals who have been provided with SASB and the total amount expended during the reporting period, via Service Delivery Tracking on a monthly basis. This measure is based on an average price of $500 per individual assisted. The amount of brokerage administered per individual will vary depending on their individual needs.

SASB providers are also required to acquit against the brokerage funding to their DFFH Service Agreement Manager on a quarterly basis using an acquittal template provided by Family Safety Victoria. The acquittal template is due on the 15th day of the month following the end of the quarterly reporting period (January, April, July, October) of each year. All brokerage provided to an individual should also be recorded in the provider’s client record system to track all funding provided to each individual.  
  
The acquittal template includes (by each financial year):

* total amount of funds allocated to the service provider for that financial year
* number of individuals assisted with brokerage by client category (i.e. adult or child) and by demographic categories
* the final value of funds expended/committed by type of support
* the balance of unspent/uncommitted funds.

SASB providers are expected to fully allocate brokerage over the financial year. This will require consideration of demand and prioritisation measures to ensure equity of access and retainment of sufficient reserves to last the duration of the funding period. The treatment of any unspent funds will be negotiated with the department, depending on the amount and reasons. The department reserves the right to require providers to repay unspent funds to the department.