**Policy document**

**Jobs for Canberrans**

An ACT Government initiative in response to COVID-19

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Executive Summary

On Friday, 3 April 2020 the ACT Government announced it would establish the ‘Jobs for Canberrans Fund’ (the Fund) as part of the Economic Survival Package in response to COVID-19.

$20 million has been allocated to the Fund to provide short term employment opportunities within the ACT Public Service to Canberrans who have lost their jobs or whose income has been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

The ACT Government has worked closely with various business, employee representatives and community services organisations and will continue to engage with stakeholders to make sure that jobs are being targeted towards those who need it the most.

As the Fund is intended to target those most in need, the ACT Government will be prioritising the employment of people who might not benefit from other programs announced, such as the Commonwealth's JobKeeper wage subsidies.

This document outlines the ACT Government’s intentions to implement a program that is efficient to administer, will provide support for groups that are particularly vulnerable and that is tailored specifically to keeping Canberrans employed during these uncertain times.

Should you require any assistance or further information in relation to this policy, please email Jobsforcanberrans@act.gov.au

# 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the management and implementation of the Jobs for Canberrans Fund (the Fund).

# Scope

The Fund will provide casual or temporary employment opportunities within the ACT Public Service for those who have lost their job or whose job has been significantly impacted due to COVID-19.

As the Fund is intended to target those most in need, recruitment into these jobs will need to be prioritised. The eligibility criteria can be viewed at section 4.

It is anticipated that people eligible for the Fund may be semi-skilled, unskilled, or potentially looking for work outside of their usual job category. Therefore, most job opportunities will likely have minimal pre-requisites and must be able to be undertaken in a manner that is compliant with current public health directions.

Employment opportunities will be available from Monday, 20 April 2020 until June 2021.

# Governance

* 1. **Jobs Fund Oversight Group**

The Jobs Fund Oversight Group (JFOG) has been established as the internal Government body responsible for implementing and managing the Fund, reporting to the Coordinator-General for the Whole of Government (Non-Health) Response to COVID-19.

Members are at the Senior Executive level within ACT Government, and include:

1. Chair of the Jobs Fund Oversight Group, as appointed by the Coordinator-General WhoG Response (Non-Health) to COVID-19
2. CMTEDD, Treasury, Deputy Under Treasurer, Economic, Budget and Industrial Relations
3. CMTEDD, Treasury, Deputy Under Treasurer, Commercial Services and Infrastructure (CSI)
4. CMTEDD, Workforce Capability and Governance (WCAG), EGM Public Sector Management
5. CMTEDD, Workforce Safety and Industrial Relations, EGM
6. Education Directorate, EGM Business Services, and
7. Environment Planning and Sustainable Development (EPSDD), Chief Operating Officer.

### Roles and responsibilities

The Jobs Fund Oversight Group (the JFOG) is responsible and accountable for the management of the Fund. The JFOG’s responsibilities include:

1. promoting and responding to questions about the Fund
2. ensuring that jobs opportunities are informed by the Jobs Fund Advisory Group
3. approving jobs that are proposed to be filled by applying the criteria
4. ensuring eligible people are being employed in line with the proposed prioritisation
5. approving up to 20% of administrative on-costs where appropriate
6. monitoring and reporting to Cabinet on the number of jobs filled and associated expenditure
7. overseeing the casual jobs register
8. engaging with external agencies to inform their decision making; and
9. ensuring the accuracy of minutes taken.

The JFOG’s consultation will not be limited to the formal engagement with the Jobs Fund Advisory Group. It will also engage with employment agencies, industry peaks, UnionsACT, the ACT’s Apprentice Network Provider and the peak body for Group Training Organisations, to identify appropriate opportunities for out-of-trade ACT Australian Apprentices.

Should additional staff be required to assist the JFOG with their responsibilities, individuals would be engaged through the Casual Jobs Register and the Fund.

* 1. **Jobs Fund Advisory Group**

The Jobs Fund Advisory Group (JFAG) has been established as an engagement mechanism for external stakeholders. The JFOG, through the Chair, is responsible for engaging with the JFAG through regular meetings, which will be weekly for five weeks and then transitioning to monthly for the duration of the program. Engagement is to ensure JFAG members have the opportunity to input into the program and to ensure jobs are targeted to those most in need.

The JFAG will have representation from:

1. Chair of the Jobs Fund Oversight Group
2. one representative ACT business community i.e. Canberra Business Chamber
3. one representative of the Tertiary education sector i.e. CIT
4. one representative from the Community service sector i.e. ACTCOSS
5. standing representatives from UnionsACT and CPSU; and
6. in addition, a representative from the relevant union for consideration of job types to be advertised that are covered by that union.

### Roles and responsibilities

The Jobs Fund Advisory Group (the JFAG) responsibilities include:

1. providing input, comments and concerns related to the operational aspects of the Fund
2. reviewing job opportunities and advising as to targeted to the most in need
3. acting as the conduit between their sector/industry and the JFOG to provide an effective two-way communication channel that is focussed on ensuring the success of the Fund.

# Eligibility Requirements

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is being developed to support this policy to provide guidance for all parties as to the process associated with this Fund. The SOP will include further information about obtaining approval to access the fund, advertising jobs, assessing applicant eligibility, the recruitment process and reporting.

To be eligible for the Fund, individuals must have lost their job or be significantly impacted as a result of COVID-19. Priority tiers have been established to ensure those most in need are prioritised, see section **4.1**.

The Fund has been established to provide jobs for Canberrans. This means people who have lived and worked in Canberra, including the broader Canberra Region (e.g Queanbeyan, Yass, Braidwood and Comma).

Eligibility criteria will be reassessed on a regular basis to ensure the Fund is agile, meeting demand and the overall intent.

* 1. **Priority tiers**

Tier 1 - First priority will be given to people ineligible for any Commonwealth funding. Applicants falling into tier 1 should be offered positions over and above applicants from tier 2 and tier 3. Tier 1 includes the following groups:

* Most temporary and provisional work visa holders;
* People on SHEV/TPG/Bridging Visa and not receiving Special Benefits;
* Most Bridging visa holders, including ACT Services Card Holders;
* Non-protected 444 Special Category Visa holders;
* Protected 444 Special Category Visa holders who do not meet the eligibility requirements for all welfare payments, including the Job Seeker and Job Keeper payments
* International students who hold a current Australian student visa with work rights; and
* People who arrived in Australia on Skilled and family visa (permanent and temporary) after 1 January 2019 who are required to meet the newly arrived resident’s waiting period.

Tier 2 - Second priority will be given to people eligible for JobSeeker allowance and Youth Allowance (JobSeeker).

Tier 3 – Third priority will be given to people whose income has been significantly impacted by COIVD‑19, including:

* People eligible for JobKeeper (who have been stood down by their employer but are receiving $1500 per fortnight)
* Sole traders would not be prioritised unless their income has fallen to a level where they become eligible for JobSeeker payment or Youth Allowance.
	1. **ACT Public Servant**

The head of service must ensure that a person to be engaged or employed as a public servant meets the ‘eligible person’ requirements under the PSM Act.

An eligible person means a person who:

1. satisfies any of the following:
2. is an Australian citizen;
3. is a permanent resident of Australia;
4. holds a visa that permits the person to work in the service; and
5. is capable of:
6. upholding the public sector values; and
7. exercising each function that the person is, or will be, employed to exercise, in accordance with the best practice principle; and
8. acting consistently with section 9 (public sector conduct); and
9. holds all qualifications required to lawfully exercise every function that the person is employed to exercise. Qualifications includes the following:
10. an academic qualification;
11. an apprenticeship;
12. a licence;
13. membership of a professional body;
14. a registration;
15. a security clearance.

Each job advertisement will outline whether there are applicable qualifications for the job.

* 1. **Ineligible**

The following people/groups are currently not eligible for the Fund:

* People that do not fall within the priority tiers outlined in section **4.1**
* Existing ACT Public Service casuals; and
* People that are unable to meet the criteria outlined in section **4.3**.
1. Criteria for jobs to be filled by the Fund

The following criteria will be used by JFOG to determine which jobs should and should not be supported through the fund:

* 1. work can be undertaken in compliance with public health directions (e.g. social distancing and without exposing the person to COVID-19 related risks) and other Work Health and Safety requirements
	2. the job is temporary, can commence within 2-3 weeks and conclude by 30 June 2021
	3. the engagement is practical, e.g. necessary equipment such as ICT is available
	4. directorate is aware of engagement channel options and has selected either ACTPS payroll or Contractor Central; and
	5. ensure that the job fit is suitable for the expected cohort that is being targeted.

Decisions made by JFOG will be captured in the JFOG meeting minutes.

1. Costs covered by the Fund

The Fund will cover salaries and the following direct salary on-costs of staff engaged (such as superannuation, workers compensation. Up to 20% of salaries is able to be approved by the JFOG to meet administrative on-costs (such as training or equipment).

1. Casual Jobs Register

The Casual Jobs Register (the Register) will be used by Directorates to advertise temporary positions to be filled through the Fund.

This register will allow Canberrans to register their interest and apply for casual job vacancies within the ACTPS online. The register will be available for job seekers to register their interest from Monday, 20 April 2020.

Directorate staff with responsibility for recruitment processes will be able to access the Register to upload job opportunities and access job applications. They will be able to look through, categorise and arrange applicants for particular job opportunities.

The Register will be able to report on registrations and applications received, including by job type.  For casual job seekers the process is designed to be easy. Registration should take approximately two minutes and applying for a job should take less than 20 minutes. Please see below the job seekers journey.

The Office of the Chief Digital Officer will provide the initial training to assist directorates in navigating the new Register.

The Standing Operating Procedure (under development) will provide a step by step guide on the recruitment process, including instructions on how to use the Register.



1. Recruitment and Engagement

The recruitment will be slightly different to a standard recruitment process. The application process will be managed within the newly created Casual Jobs Register. The engagement process, including letters of offer, relevant employment declarations and payroll details, will be managed through existing processes (e.g. Issued by Shared Services Recruitment) and systems including Chris21.

Prioritisation of candidates based on the eligibility requirement and tiers outlined in section 4 which will also be unique to recruitment under the Fund.

Current COVID 19 public health directions need to be considered, along with other WHS requirements to ensure the jobs offered are compliant.

The application of the merit and equity principle is required as part of the recruitment process. The Head of Service exercises a function under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (PSM Act) in accordance with the merit and equity principle if the head of service is an equitable employer and employs a person in a job who is best able to do the job in all the circumstances.

Workforce Capability and Governance, CMTEDD, will issue further advice to directorates to assist them in meeting the merit and equity principles and requirements under the PSM Act and Public Sector Management Standards (PSM Standards).

It is useful to note that some positions will need to be advertised in the gazette under section 11 of the PSM Standards.

The aim is to complete the full process within a three-week period, from the closing of the job advertisement to the successful applicant’s starting date.

* 1. **Basic procedure**

The Jobs for Canberrans SOP contains the detailed guidance for the process. Below is a high level outline only.

1. Directorate identify job opportunity (considering Fund intent) and completes the Job Opportunity template
2. Directorate submit the job opportunity to JobsForCanberrans@act.gov.au
3. JFOG review and make a decision e.g. approve, not approve, seek additional information
4. Directorate advised of JFOG decision
5. JFAG reviews proposed jobs list approved by JFOG at their next meeting
6. Directorate upload approved job opportunities to the Casual Jobs Register
7. Applicant registers within the online Register to receive notification of new jobs
8. Applicant applies within the Register
9. Directorate access/download applications from the Register
10. Directorate conducts their selection process and identify successful candidates (considering eligibility as well as other job criteria)
11. Directorate uses online templates to complete temporary contracts and email contract and supporting forms to successful applicant(s) through Shared Services
12. Applicant returns paperwork to Shared Services Recruitment for processing, citizenship/visa requirements, WWVP, Police checks etc. and organises upload of details to payroll.
13. Directorate manages onboarding, induction, job specific induction and training, upskilling if necessary, ensuring any necessary pre-requisites are met (e.g. WWVP, trade licence etc.), ongoing human resource management, updating the directorate’s Jobs for Canberrans commitment register and submission of the register to the JFOG on a fortnightly basis, to enable accurate financial forecasting and reporting.
	1. **Types of engagement**

Directorates may use the following channels to employ casual workers through the Fund:

1. ACTPS payroll, temporary ACT Government contract (preferred method); or
2. Contractor Central, temporary contract through a recruitment company.
	1. **Upskilling**

A key focus of this Fund is to provide a proportion of jobs that have little or no pre-requisites, enabling applicants with skills outside of that particular job category to still apply and be successful. It is therefore likely that applicants may need skill development if successful in their application, to fulfil the role effectively and safety. Any upskilling of this nature will need to be undertaken during their induction into the role.

Directorates will be able to upskill workers using their internal programs, or partner with the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) or other Registered Training Organisations with agreements with the ACT Government to provide training as part of the directorate’s induction process. This could be accredited or non-accredited training (including micro credentials, skill sets and units of competency).

If Directorates have bulk positions to fill, CIT could assist by partnering with a recruitment company to match candidates to jobs.

Applications can be made to the JFOG for an additional funding of up to 20% of the salary to meet administrative on-costs (such as upskilling, tools of trade including equipment, Working With Vulnerable People Card, White Card and Green Card).

* 1. **Applications not meeting eligibility requirements**

In the event that a job closes and no eligible applicants have applied:

* but an individual not falling within the eligibility criteria has applied and has been found suitable. The directorate can decide to engage the suitable candidate but costs will not be covered by the Fund, costs will be covered by the directorate.

but an individual who already has a job has been found suitable. The directorate can decide to engage the suitable candidate but costs will not be covered by the Fund, costs will be covered by the directorate.

* 1. **Timing**

It is important to ensure timely turnaround and completion of recruitment processes. Our aim is to fill jobs within three weeks of when the job advertisement has closed. This will require impeccable timing from all directorates to identify the job; identify the engagement method; identify the selection process, panel, dates for shortlisting/interview and schedule/undertake interviews, and arrange approval from the relevant delegate.

Directorates should consider innovative and flexible recruitment methods, still utilising merit but fit for purpose and preparing in advance to achieve tight turnaround timeframes, e.g. selection panel is identified (if internally managing) and dates are booked into diaries for shortlisting/selection, reassignment of existing ACTPS resources to form recruitment panels.

1. Monitoring and Reporting

Data associated with the management of the Fund will reside in multiple systems including Oracle Financial, CHRIS21, Contractor Central, ACT Digital Account and the directorate-level commitments register. Reporting will be through a daily dashboard to ensure timely, streamlined reporting, whilst minimising the administrative workload for agencies and remote access.

A reporting working group has been established to produce a daily dashboard report. The working group will be chaired by the Executive Branch Manager, Data and Analytics, OCDO. Input from the JFOG, JFAG and directorate Executives. Work undertaken will include identifying key indicators, tools and processes required to measure if the initiative is being implemented according to plan and the Fund’s effectiveness. For instance, in addition to financial reporting the system will include reports and dashboards on the number of Canberrans who register, apply for and are placed in jobs over the course of the program, as well as the number and types of jobs made available as part of the initiative.

It is envisaged that to support monitoring and reporting, directorates will be required to maintain a Commitments Register, completed at the time of engagement and submitted to Treasury via the JFOG fortnightly. This will be confirmed once the reporting requirements are fully scoped and communicated via the Jobs for Canberrans Standard Operating Procedure.

Monitoring and reporting requirements are currently being drafted and will be included in the policy once it has been finalised.

1. Compliments and Complaints

Compliments and complaints can be forwarded to JobsForCanberrans@act.gov.au. A staff member from the Jobs for Canberrans team will be in touch within 48 hours.

Should you wish to speak to someone outside of the Jobs for Canberran’s Team, you can forward your complaint to JACSComplaints@act.gov.au.