Who is eligible to apply?
Any existing not-for-profit community service organisation or local council can take on the role as a kindergarten cluster manager.

Any community-based kindergarten service delivering a funded four-year-old program is an eligible kindergarten cluster location.

When can your organisation apply?
Kindergarten cluster management funding applications may be submitted at any time of the year.

How much funding is available?
Kindergarten cluster management organisations receive an annual grant for each approved location. Effective 1 July 2010 the annual kindergarten cluster management grant is $7,662.

When adding new kindergarten locations, cluster managers also receive a one-off additional payment of 15% of the annual grant, which is $1,149 effective 1 July 2010.

Following approval, all kindergarten cluster management organisations receive a one-off $5,000 grant to support the development of good governance practices.

What should organisations consider prior to making an application for funding?
Organisations interested in becoming a kindergarten cluster manager should contact the Regional Office of DEECD prior to preparing an application. Regional staff will also be able to provide information local kindergartens who have expressed an interest in joining a cluster arrangement.

When preparing an application you should consider:
- the Kindergarten Cluster Management Policy Framework
- the cluster management service delivery model
- input required from the kindergarten cluster locations
- input required from Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- input and support from external stakeholders or partnering relationships and how these may be established and/or managed
- how the kindergarten program will integrate with other services provided by your organisation
- how the kindergarten program is integrated with the broader early years service system across the municipality.
- how your organisation will manage the transmission of business causing minimal disruption to children and families.

Do all of the specifications need to be addressed?
Yes, all of the specifications must be addressed in order for your application to be considered.
Do organisations need to have the full complement of kindergartens signed up before applying?

Kindergarten cluster managers are required to manage a minimum of three locations in rural regions, and five locations in metropolitan regions. Each of these locations must deliver a funded kindergarten program. Organisations may be approved to become a cluster manager with fewer than the minimum locations. In this case they will be required to have recruited the minimum number of locations within 12 months of approval, at which time cluster management funding will commence.

Where can applicants access the application form?


Organisations interested in becoming a kindergarten cluster manager should contact the Regional Office of DEECD to discuss the application process. Regional staff will also be able to provide information about local kindergartens who have expressed an interest in joining a cluster arrangement.

How to submit an application for funding?

The application must be enclosed in a sealed envelope and clearly addressed to the Kindergarten Cluster Management Project Officer in your local DEECD regional office. Addresses can be found on the Department’s website at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/regions.htm

Facsimiled, e-mailed or electronic applications may be accepted at the discretion of the Department. Contact the Kindergarten Cluster Management Project Officer in the local DEECD region if your organisation plans to submit an application via these channels.

Regional contact details are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Contact Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Metropolitan Region</td>
<td>Glen Waverley</td>
<td>9265 2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Metropolitan Region</td>
<td>Glenroy</td>
<td>9304 0799</td>
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<td>Southern Metropolitan Region</td>
<td>Dandenong</td>
<td>9096 9595</td>
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<td>Barwon South Western</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>5225 1000</td>
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<td>Grampians Region</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>5337 8444</td>
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<td>Gippsland Region</td>
<td>Traralgon</td>
<td>5177 2500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hume Region</td>
<td>Shepparton</td>
<td>5832 1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Metropolitan Region</td>
<td>Footscray</td>
<td>9275 7036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loddon Mallee Region</td>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>5434 5555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further Information about the application process is contained in the document Kindergarten Cluster Management: Application to become a kindergarten cluster management organisation which is available on the Department’s website at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/clusters.htm

How are the applications assessed?

All applications will be evaluated against the extent to which they:

- demonstrate that the organisation meets the general conditions applying to the application process
- describe how the potential cluster manager will meet the specification requirements outlined in the document Kindergarten Cluster Management: Application to become a kindergarten cluster management organisation.

An assessment process will be undertaken by a panel of DEECD regional and central office staff to evaluate applications.

The Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development is the delegated authority to approved kindergarten cluster management funding.