

Overview

Muscular Dystrophy WA is committed to empowering the lives of our community by providing you with the practical help you need now. One of the ways in which we aim to facilitate this is through the Empower Fund. Through an application process, funds can be applied for by community members in support of being able to live our brand beliefs of:

- Empowering full lives
- We believe in practical help, not just hope
- Everyone deserves the chance to reach their full potential

Objectives

The purpose of the Empower Fund is to provide funding to our community, whereby you apply for a grant for money towards an item that cannot ordinarily be fully funded or supplied via other agencies (including the NDIS). It would also allow members of our community to enjoy life experiences that you wouldn't have otherwise been able to.

Given some of the significant challenges faced by many of our community, we believe it is important for you to reach your full potential and lead a life as fulfilling as those without the condition.

It is the aim that Empower Fund will have a long-term impact beyond immediate key outcomes. To apply for assistance, you must be able to demonstrate a genuine need and explain how the assistance requested will meet this need.

Once you have sent through your application, a Community Services team member will ensure that other sources of funding have already been approached by you.

Parameters

There are two types of funding that can be applied for:

1. An Empower Grant, where the outcomes are of an empowering nature.
2. An Empower Hardship Grant, where the applicant requires assistance in funding for an "essential" item that they, due to financial hardship, cannot pay for themselves.

The Empower Fund Grants Committee meets once per quarter (except in circumstances where an application requires immediate consideration eg. Hardship Grant) and applications are considered against set eligibility guidelines. This includes a personal assessment, the eligibility matrix and is subject but not limited to the following conditions:

- Grants are capped at \$5,000 and precedent is not set by amounts granted in previous applications
- Quotes should be obtained by the applicant and a minimum of two quotes are required where items are greater than \$500 in value (except in circumstances where only one quote is possible and this will be approved at the discretion of the Grants Committee)
- Grants must be used/redeemed within 12 months of the initial approval
- Where applications are medical in nature, medical supporting documentation is required from two separate professional sources to show that the equipment or service is recommended and appropriate for use.
- Applications may be made by those residing in WA, who are Australian Residents, Citizens or granted Refugee status or hold an appropriate visa.

- Applications can be submitted by informal primary carers or directly by individuals with MD, however the grant must directly benefit or impact on the person living with MD.
- The Empower Fund does not grant money towards research;
- Each applicant must complete the Empower Fund Grant Application form;
- As a general rule, there is a limit of one grant per recipient per year, except in special circumstances at the discretion of the Grants Committee
- The Grants Committee will assess each grant thoroughly; if more information is required, a committee member may follow up via telephone or email
- The deliberation process may take up to two weeks post committee meeting for an outcome to be advised (every effort will be made to expedite Empower Hardship applications due to their timely nature)
- Please ensure that all questions are answered thoroughly on the application forms
- Please ensure that additional paperwork requested (eg. quotes etc) have been included when submitting the application so as not to delay the process of consideration
- If you are applying for a grant and are under the age of 16 then you need to have a guardian sign the application form

Exclusions:

MDWA aims to 'fill the gaps' and prioritise requests for which there are no alternate sources of support. If the Grants Committee believes that funding is already available through another agency, the applicant may be referred elsewhere, unless they can explain why they cannot access their support. Sometimes, MDWA will provide 'top up' funding where another agency cannot fund the entire cost of equipment or a project. An example would be part contribution towards a mobility aid or car modifications.

The following exclusions apply:

- Retrospective funding – items which have already been purchased or which will be purchased prior to the date of the associated EFGC Meeting are not eligible for consideration;
- Funding for research for undergraduate, masters or doctoral students;
- Applications will not be accepted from organisations;
- Cash donations;
- Items where alternative funding sources are available. This includes CAEP eligible items. Proof of any unsuccessful alternate funding should be included in your application;
- We do not fund vehicles for individuals/families but may fund maintenance/upkeep or modification items.

The Application Process

Fill in the application form and return to Muscular Dystrophy WA prior to the cut-off date or for Empower Hardship applications, send through as soon as you have completed the application. Please read and answer all questions carefully – attach separate sheets if you require more space. Please feel free to request assistance from our team in filling out your application, we are more than happy to help!

Applications for assistance can be made at any time of year but will be presented and assessed at one of four annual Grants Committee meetings. The Grants Committee oversees all applications for assistance

Guidelines to Applying for a Grant

to ensure that requests are considered in a fair and equitable way and given priority in relation to urgency of need. If a request is deemed an emergency, the Committee will be contacted to consider the request outside of its four annual meetings.

Participants will be notified in writing once a decision is made. We respect the personal nature of the details you submit and will provide complete confidentiality. Please note, as part of our accountability procedures, Muscular Dystrophy WA provides the MDWA board with a list of successful grants each financial year, including the suburb/disadvantage of individual recipients. If you have any concerns regarding this procedure, please contact the Muscular Dystrophy WA office.