



7 February 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 18 December 2023, requesting information about the Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) grant funding.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

1. Details of currently available OSCAR funding:

a. Amounts allocated for OSCAR funding.

Details on the total number of OSCAR programmes receiving grant funding can be found in **Appendix One** which provides OSCAR Funding and Provider details as at 10 Jan 2024.¹

b. Specific criteria and eligibility requirements for accessing this funding.

There are three ways to access this funding:

- Existing grant recipients are invited to reapply when their grant is due to expire.
- Ownership of an OSCAR programme in receipt of grant funding changes hands and the new owner applies to transfer the grant to them.
- The Ministry opens applications for unfunded programmes.

The eligibility criteria for OSCAR remains the same for all applications and can be found on our website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/childcare-assistance/oscar-grants.html.

When applications are opened to programmes that do not currently receive a grant there may be additional criteria such as geographic location used to prioritise funding and support filling gaps in service availability.

¹ Note this data excludes records that have a status of Under Offer and Withdrawn and counts before school, after school and holiday programmes separately.

c. Any restrictions or limitations on the use of the funding.

OSCAR grants are a contribution to operating costs of an OSCAR accredited programme.

2. Historical data on OSCAR funding over the last decade:

a. Annual funding allocations for OSCAR programmes.

Please refer to **Appendix One**.

b. How many applications have been made? How many applications have been successful?

Information about the number of applications received is not centrally recorded. In order to provide the number of applications made, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, requires substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The number of successful contracts issued each year can be found in **Appendix One**.

c. The number of OSCAR programmes supported each year.

Please refer to **Appendix One**.

d. Any notable changes or trends in funding distribution.

OSCAR operational settings have been impacted in recent years because of the COVID-19 pandemic and because of adverse weather events. This included the provision of some additional support to the sector which has now ended.

3. Criteria and process for accessing OSCAR funding for new programme:

a. The application process for new OSCAR funding.

Applications for OSCAR funding grants are currently closed. We will update the 'How to apply' section of this publicly available page on the Ministry's website when applications open: www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/childcare-assistance/oscar-grants.html.

b. Information on how MSD is supporting the OSCAR industry and its strategy for the future?

The OSCAR Expert Advisory Group (OEAG) was established in late 2021 with its inaugural meeting in December 2021. The group provides the Ministry with advice on how to improve the overall effectiveness of OSCAR services. The Ministry also funds the Out of School Care Network (OSCN) to support and strengthen OSCAR provision and sector connectivity and respond to current advice and support needs. Further information about OSCN can be found on their website: www.oscn.nz/

c. Key factors considered in the evaluation of new funding applications.

The eligibility criteria for OSCAR are the same for all applications and can be found on www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/childcare-assistance/oscar-grants.html. When applications are opened to programmes that do not currently receive a grant there may be additional criteria such as geographic location used to prioritise funding and support filling gaps in service availability.

d. How much funding will be available for new OSCAR funding Applications in the next 1, 3, and 5 year periods?

There is \$24.189 million dollars appropriated to support OSCAR within Social Development. This funding is allocated every year however the exact amount spent depends on attendance at OSCAR programmes and changes to programmes. When applications open, information will be found on the Ministry's publicly available website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/childcare-assistance/oscar-grants.html. When applications are open this page will provide information on the application and approval processes. We will also share information about opening OSCAR application with the OSCAR sector and OSCN.

e. Timelines for the application review and approval process.

When applications are open, the above page will provide information on the application process and timelines.

4. Statistics and information on OSCAR programmes:

a. The total number of OSCAR programmes currently supported by MSD.

Please see **Appendix One**.

b. Geographical distribution of funded programmes.

Information about locations of all accredited OSCAR providers is publicly available and can be found on the Ministry's website provided here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/children/childcare-providers.html.

c. Demographic information related current organisations receiving OSCAR Funding.

All demographic information held by the Ministry about OSCAR providers can be found in **Appendix One**.

d. Statistics on how many OSCAR providers have ceased operation, or relinquished their MSD OSCAR funding over the past 5 year period?

I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

5. Any upcoming changes or announcements regarding OSCAR funding:

a. Information on the "industry Advisory Group" or equivalent group that MSD seeks guidance and input from regarding decisions that affect the industry? Is there a

representative industry group that MSD interacts with and that MSD consults with when consulting for change?

The OEAG was established in late 2021 with its inaugural meeting on 14 December 2021. The group provides the Ministry with advice on how to improve the overall effectiveness of OSCAR services, including how outcomes can be improved across numerous domains, and where improvements can be made to realise better return on investment for government funding. The last meeting was on 24 November 2022. The Ministry also funds the OSCN to support and strengthen OSCAR provision and sector connectivity and respond to current advice and support needs.

b. Planned changes to the OSCAR funding model.

At the current time there are no planned changes to the current model.

c. Anticipated timelines for the release of new funding opportunities.

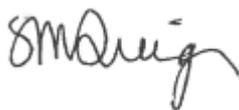
This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
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Ministerial and Executive Services