



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, Wellington 6011, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140
• Telephone: 0-4-916 3300 • Facsimile: 0-4-918 0099

25 SEP 2014

Ms Keri Eagan

fyi-request-1968-4ad06480@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Eagan

Thank you for your email of 28 August 2014 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Please provide the names of agencies in the Wellington Region who have successfully applied for the Citizen's Support Fund across the year 2014-2015, and the amounts each were awarded.*

The Citizens Support Fund (CSF) is administered by the Ministry and provides funding to support advocacy groups to help New Zealanders access social assistance entitlements. It is designed to support those beneficiary advocacy groups that are able to assist people through the benefit review process and the appeal process to the Social Security Appeal Authority. This requires advocacy groups to have expertise in the social security legislation.

CSF is available on the basis that:

- that the service is a bona fide advocacy service
- the advocacy service needs to be "not for profit"
- the advocacy service needs to have a proven track record of providing good service to its clients up to the level of review or appeals where required.

The number of groups that have this expertise is limited in New Zealand. Many other organisations can provide advocacy support but do not have the expertise to take matters through benefit review and appeal processes. Clients seeking assistance from other support groups and community law centres are frequently referred to the beneficiary advocacy groups, again because of a lack of specialised knowledge of welfare law.

There are two Wellington based organisations that have been awarded conditional grants for 2014/15. The Benefits Education Services Trust has been allocated \$14,400 and the Downtown Community Ministry has been allocated \$22,500, these figures are inclusive of GST.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely

Wendy Venter
Deputy Chief Executive, Risk and Assurance