Open Office Hours FAQ

Reminder

It is crucial not to copy and paste, as this will remove the underlying formulas, including drop-down menus.

General

Q: Why are some submission fields marked as 'if applicable'?
A: Applicants are reminded that not all documents relate to Part B eligibility criteria are mandatory. Please refer to the pre-populated Funding Application Part B for what is required. Applicants must ensure that MFS has the most up-to-date version of all documents listed in Part B.

Q: Could you please confirm the signatures that are required for the submission.
A: As per previous years, 2 documents require a signature:

- The Board Composition that has to be signed off by the Board Chair.
- The Application Declaration that needs signatures by the Executive Director, a Board Representative and the Base/Wing Commanding Officer.

Tab A - Organization Info

Tab B - Mandatory Criteria

Q: Does our Chain of Command have to sign off on the Funding Application?
A: Yes; as seen on the Funding Declaration form, the Chain of Command will need to sign off on the Funding Application to be deemed complete

Q: You have required documents from last year's funding application that are not highlighted in green, such as the Contracting Policy and Board of Directors. Do you require me to send them again?
A:

1. The Board of Directors form is specific to the funding year and will be requested every year.
2. If a Part B Mandatory document from last year is dated up until 2024, it would have been deemed "No" for FY25-26 as it would be deemed out of date following 2024. This may be the case with some documents from the previous fiscal year application.

Q: Risk Register-As risk is managed on an ongoing basis, should the status not remain as ongoing vs completed or approved?
A: The ED and the board chair will determine the status of the actions taken to mitigate / eliminate the risk. It is dependent on their management action plan (column H).
EX: What action is being taken to mitigate the risk, is that action New, in progress, closed…etc. (to be indicated in column I – status). If there is a long term plan to mitigate the risks, what is the anticipated completion date (column k)
Note: If adding a risk that is not on the list: The risk register template contains a comprehensive list of 22 risks identified by MFRCs as part of the risk profile project. There is also a tab with the list of the pre-populated risks and their definition. We ask that you select from the list of the pre-populated risks. For example, reputational risk does not appear on the list but is inherently tied to one or more of the pre-populated risks. Loss of funding or privacy breach may cause damage to your reputation. We suggest considering the primary source of the risk and then selecting from the pre-populated list of risks.

Q: Reporting date being to whom- the ED, BOD, responsible Committees, MFS?
A: If the residual risk rating (column e) is in the red, it is to be reported to MFS – reported date (column k).

Q: For the Board of Directors Composition Form, what information is required for the Position Term and Year of Term? For example, if the Secretary is in Year 2 of a 2-year executive term but has been on the board for 3 years, how should this be recorded?
A: The Position Term refers to the duration of the term for that position, while the Year of Term indicates the current year within that term. If a member has been on the board for 10 years due to multiple re-elections, this is not recorded. Only the current position, its term, and the current year within that term need to be documented, regardless of whether it is the first or a subsequent term.

Q: Why are ranks of BOD members requested other than the Base Commanders rep who we understand has to be a senior officer major or above?
A: As indicated on the Board Composition form, the rank is only to be added if applicable. Currently, MFS uses it to confirm compliance with the MOU to ensure 51% military family representation of voting members and to ensure that the Base Commander's representative rank is accurately reflected. Some locations have multiple formation representatives on their Board, hence the reason to have rank as an option throughout the document.
For any board members who have concerns about the confidentiality of the information provided on the form, please reassure them that this information is not shared publicly by MFS. Additionally, all CFMWS team members have Enhanced Reliability Security Clearances and are always committed to upholding the confidential nature of the sensitive information we handle.

Q: I see the Board Composition Form is different than the one at start of funding. Are any of the other forms different/updated?
A: All Forms requested are available on the Application page.

Q: What is the submission matrix letter (#9) and does everyone need it?
A: Each location receives a letter from the Governance team indicating the submission matrix status and if any documents are outstanding.

Tab C - Community Profile

Q: I'm wondering if Part C should include:

- Partner organizations that are not directly involved in service delivery, such as the organizations on the *tables de concertation*
- Partner organizations to which we refer (without a specific agreement)
- Partner organizations to which we make referrals that prioritize our clientele
- Organizations to which we raise awareness and educate so that they can better meet the needs of their clientele (e.g., schools)
- Funding partner organizations (foundations or other funders)
- Organizations with which we collaborate to hold an activity or workshop, but which we pay for their services

A: Yes, within the MVFSP

Q: What I understand is that unlike last year when we had to list all of our partners and they had to be in Penelope's Blue Book, this year you want to have only the organizations with whom we have a service delivery partnership. Is this correct?
A: Included in Part C should be both established and prospective partnerships. As long as these partnerships are within the scope of the MVFSP, they should be included.

Q: Do we have to register only the collaborations we have with the MFSP and VFP? In other words, do we have to register the partner if the collaboration identifies local programming that is not in line with the Logic Model or operations manual and is carried out with other funding?
A: These should be limited to the MVFSP - child care being the only exception

Q: If I've understood correctly, this column is used to indicate the service gap, and the next, which service we'd like to put in place to fill it. I have to confess that I'm having a bit of trouble figuring out how I'm going to identify the service gap. Is there a preferable vocabulary to use (in relation to the logic model or the determinant of well-being, for example)? In addition to my lack of knowledge of the impacts of the military lifestyle and the lack of resources in English, I'd like to know how I can make a service hole understood in an Excel form and not in a Word-style development....
A: The service gap may not be applicable to all partnerships, but aims to identify which gaps are being addressed mostly with prospective partnerships

Q: Can you give an example of what could be a risk of a partnership?
A: For Example, if a second language partnership is established but can only provide services in English, this would present a risk relating to the Official Languages Act .

Q: The gap analysis columns appear to be password protected. Please advise.
A: Part C is formulated whereby content is required in the previous 9 Columns (B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J) prior to entering information into the remaining columns. This is a mechanism in place to ensure the minimum required information is obtained for each partnership.

Q: Cost: when it is asking free or fee-based, is the reference point to the potential cost for the MFRC organization or to the mil client that may be using it?
A: If there is any cost (to either the MFRC or the participant) it would need to be indicated as fee-based.

Q: Are we only required to complete the 2 columns (K and L) under gap analysis if the partnership was created because of a gap in service?
A: Yes.

Q: Are we to complete the 4 risk analysis columns as identified in our risk registry for all the agencies listed?
A: If there is a known risk in this partnership.

Q: Issues encountered with the cells in Part C. Unable to input information and prompted for a password when attempting to unprotect it.
A: Part C requires content to be entered in the previous nine columns (B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J) before information can be entered into the remaining columns. This mechanism ensures that the minimum required information is obtained for each partnership.

Q: In Part C, how is the ownership of risk determined, especially in referral relationships? For instance, if a referral is made to Avail Veteran Services, which only provides services in English, the risk would be in not providing equal language service. Who owns this risk—the provider or the referral agency?
A: The risk would be not meeting the official Languages Act's (OLA) requirements, which is: MFRC provides services in both official languages in accordance with Department of National Defence (DND) standards and the principles of family support. Therefore they are taking the risk of receiving complaints.

Q: In Part C, should gaps be shown only for innovation/new programming, or are there other gaps that should be highlighted?
A: The FAQ addresses many questions similar to this one.

Tab D.1 - MFSP & FLO Annual Services

Q: Issues with select all that apply (we will be adding this question and answer to the FAQ)
A: As a trouble shooting method, do ensure the workbook has been marco-enabled. You can check to ensure that macro's have been enabled by following these steps:

1. File --> Options --> Trust Centre --> Trust Centre Settings --> Macro Settings --> Enable --> OK
2. Drop-Down options need to be clicked individually, and should be automatically added to your cell

Q: Do you want a breakdown of all the services we provide, or can I just write "Child and Youth Services sessions" and then the title of the session we are providing, such as sensory or growth activities?
A: As long as the Name of the Service matches what would be inputted into Penelope, it can be included as the overarching service with the individual activities listed within the description.

Q: Where should the cost of software platform for Service Delivery Staff be captured? Does this belong in M&A or within the cost of the service?
A: If a particular platform is in support of service delivery, the full cost should be listed as a Level 1 – Business Functions and Administrative Support in your funding application. Do bear in mind that if the platform is utilized for services coming from multiple funding sources (GBV+, VFP, MFSP), the cost should be proportionately split amongst them. This does not change how you would capture the cost in Penelope normally.

Q: In the descriptions section, you also have to explain the type of expenditure that will be covered by the requested funds?
A: Correct.

Q: What qualifies and should be included in expenses linked to the different workshops and activities, aside from hospitality? And do we put them altogether in other expenses?
A: Any requirements in support of delivering the service that have an associated cost.

Q: When applying for funding, is it recommended to group activities together or to enter them individually?
A: Groups and workshops can be included in a single line; grouped line items will need to include each individual group/workshop service name in the description space.

Q: We have applied for in year (and ongoing funding) for a .5FTE VFPC due to increased local demand. We have not had a response yet regarding funding approval. If we have not received confirmation/refusal by the funding application due date do we include the .5FTE in our funding application?
A: Yes, include this request in your Funding Application for consideration.

Q: Anticipated #: is that referring to total number of program uses in a year or number of families, or??
A: This is intended to capture the total number of unique participants. For example, if the same 75 participants are accessing the service and the service is offered 4X/year, the number of unique individuals would be 75 and the 'schedule' would reflect when to anticipate the 4 instances.

Q: For Name of Service, I'm assuming what you're looking for is the information we enter under "Description" in Penelope. Is that correct?
A: Yes. This information can also be included in the Description of Service if lines are grouped together.

Q: Hospitality Costs for MVFSP Events
In the Operations Manual (Ops Manual), page 44 states hospitality costs for MVFSP events are limited to $4.50 per eligible attendee. Should the funding application reflect this amount multiplied by the number of workshops and attendees?
A: Each workshop or support group must be inputted as a separate line in the application, including all relevant details in Columns A-L (D.1) or A-J (D.2, D.3).
The maximum allowable hospitality cost is $4.50 per eligible attendee per event, regardless of the event's length or number of days.
Event planning must comply with Ops Manual guidelines: responsible public fund use, align with MVFSP priorities, cost effective, and withstand public scrutiny.

Q: For programming, can a Level 1 staff member run a Level 2 program?

A: No, a Level 1 staff member can only deliver services at their level or below. A Level 3 staff member can deliver Level 1, 2, and 3 services. Similarly, a Level 2 staff member can deliver Level 1 and 2 services.

Q: In the email sent on November 12th regarding important updates for completing the funding application, "Social Meetup" was mentioned. However, "Social Meetup" cannot be found in the Penelope definitions. Is there another list of Penelope name descriptions?
A: Penelope provides definitions for the platform tools, and it is recommended to use it regularly as a reference. However, in the Funding Application, the method of data capture is not being requested (this is reflected in Column A, under the levels). In Column B, the manual entry for naming the event is required—the name decided by the centre.
In the example provided in the email, "Indirect Event" refers to the method of inputting it in Penelope. "Social Meetup September" is a fictional event name; it could be "September Get-together," "Quarterly Social Event," or any other name chosen by the centre. Each event needs to be clearly identified to accurately compare what was offered/entered versus what was approved/planned during monthly data reviews.

Tab D.2 – GBV Annual Services

Q: Why is there no drop-down menu for Level One: Business and Admin Support and Registrations and Enquiries? When planning a large-scale GBV event, there is a substantial amount of admin, research, Stakeholder engagement, program development, and, in some cases, professional development for staff need to be captured under GBV to show how much time organizing and conducting staff training events requires.

A: According to the Ops Manual business functions are not eligible under GBV funding because there are no GBV staff. However, staff that are funded under the MFSP can include time spent on organizing GBV related services in Penelope to identify staff effort on GBV initiatives and services. Professional development for service delivery staff supporting GBV can be applied for directly in the funding application at Part E

Tab D.3 – VFP Annual Services

Q: Is part of the ED's salary eligible under the VFP funding for 2025-26 application?

A: Unfortunately, the only salary eligible under the VFP is the VFPC themselves. If an MFRC does not have a VFPC but another position is covering the VFP service delivery responsibilities, then a portion of their salary could be attributed to the VFP funding. But maximum salary approved for 1 FTE - VFPC is identified in the Staffing and Salary Guide for Military Family Resource Centres (Revisions June 2023) under the position of Level 2 staff.

Tab D.4 – Service Delivery Staff Costs

Q: Should I list each staff member on a row separately? One line per staff person?

A: Yes, each staff member should maintain their own line, unless multiple staff members share the same staff level. For example, if an MFRC employs 2 Level 2 staff with the same description, they can be included on the same line and the FTE would reflect a total of 2.

Q: Is it possible to contract an interpreter and acknowledge the expense to do so in Part D.4.?

A: Yes, D.4 is where the cost will be captured, and identified in part C - Community Profile.

D.4 capture the salaries of employees, including contractors instead of regular staff.

D.5 captures administration, management, and director/executive.

D.6 captures professional services, such as accounting.

Q: Do you want us to submit "real" costs as we have before, ie. include targeted salary increases which would be a higher baseline amount than previous years. Or, must this application remain within the same baseline amount as FY 24-25?

A: The real reasonable and necessary cost have to be captured to represent accurately the cost of the operations of the Centre.

Tab D.5 – M&A Staff Costs

Q: Is a portion of the Executive Director's salary eligible for VFP funding for the 2025-26 application?

A: Unfortunately, the only salary eligible under VFP funding is the VFP Coordinator. If an MFRC does not have a VFP Coordinator but another position assumes the responsibilities of VFP service delivery, a portion of their salary could be attributed to VFP funding. However, the maximum approved salary for 1 FTE – VFP Coordinator is indicated in the Staffing and Salary Guide for Military Family Resource Centres (June 2023 revisions) under the Level 2 staff position.

Tab D.6 – M&A Administrative Costs

Q: I believe insurance and banking fees would in M&A costs, but the drop down in column B does not have a fit for them.

A: These would best fit within Professional Services --> Accounting Services

Q: Instead of a staff person doing marketing and communications, we have an external contractor who provides these services. There is a place on the program delivery tab to add this cost, however there is also Marketing Support under Board Professional Services. Which is the best place to add this expense?

A: This would likely come down to the quantity of work the contractor is doing, the overall cost, and how that cost effects the overall M&A costs and percentage.

Tab E – Funding Request RECAP

Q: Area A. Additional Requested Funding for Site Specific Activities. What funding sources are required. All other funding sources or only Site Specific, like Base Funding, Fundraising for Site Specific items.

A: The Additional Request Funding would be to list anticipated additional funders, which are site specific.

Q: If staff wages and M&A costs cannot be covered by the 20% allowed, is it okay to keep wages in M&A and use other non-MFS funds for M&A costs, such as Audits and insurance, to allow me to stay under the 20% threshold?

A: Yes. The MFS allowable M&A percentage is 20%, therefore any required administrative costs above that percentage should be supplemented with other sources of funds.