

Factsheet 1.2

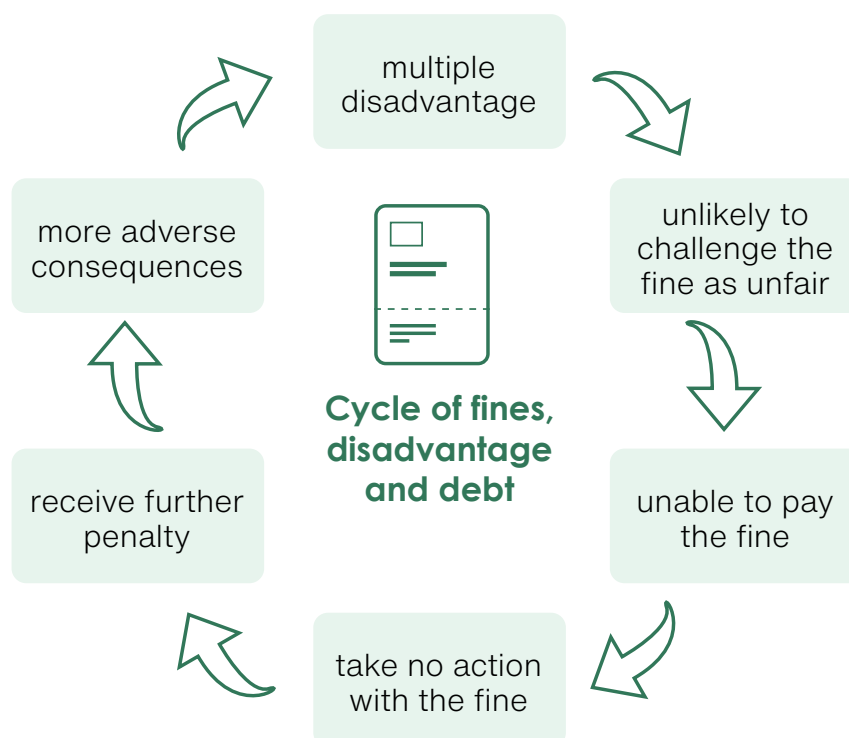
Why be a WDO Sponsor?



The impact of fines

Unpaid fines can result in increasing debt, loss of driver licence or car registration, wages or savings being taken by Revenue NSW or property being seized by the NSW Sheriff's office. Fines debt can have a significant impact on a person's mental health and well-being. It can also lead to loss of employment, offending and social exclusion. Fines can be managed by:

- Entering into a payment plan with Revenue NSW;
- Seeking an extension of time from RNSW to develop a management plan
- Applying for a write off or partial write off (in certain circumstances) to RNSW
- **Participating in a Work and Development Order (WDO) activity with a WDO sponsor**



WDO activities

An organisation or individual can apply to be approved, as a sponsor, to support people to clear fines debt through participation in activities that the sponsor provides themselves (direct) or through another organisation (by referral). Each activity has a set value and fines can be cleared by up to \$1000 per month.

WDO Activity	Rate	Total	Direct	Refer
Voluntary unpaid work	\$30 per hour	You may enter multiple WDO activities up to a total of \$1000 per month.		
Financial, other counselling or case management	\$50 per hour			
Educational/vocational or life skills course	\$50 per hour			
Medical or mental health treatment	\$1000 per month for full compliance			
Drug or alcohol treatment				
Mentoring Program – all ages				

More information about WDO activities can be found in the Resource Kit.

WDO sponsors

An organisation or person can apply to be approved as WDO sponsor to support people to clear fines on a WDO through participation in a range of activities. Types of WDO sponsors include:

- Government organisations e.g. corrective services, health services, youth case management services, drug and alcohol or mental health services
- not-for-profit charitable organisations such as a neighbourhood centres, an op-shops, an Aboriginal community controlled organisations, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services
- for-profit (sole trader or partnership) – whose objectives align with those of the WDO scheme – such as a vocational education provider or a sole trader counselling service
- individual health practitioners e.g. a registered doctor, nurse or psychologist
- social workers who are eligible to be a member of AASW or an accredited mental health social worker.

More information about requirements for each sponsor type can be found in the Resource Kit.

Key reasons to become a WDO sponsor

Research by the Law and Justice Foundation shows that the more disadvantaged a person is, the more likely they are to experience adverse consequences from fines, including stress and ill health.

There are many reasons that an organisation or individual practitioner may decide to become a WDO sponsor, including:

- Increased engagement in positive programs, continuity of service and wraparound supports
- Providing alternate avenues for clients to access your service
- Providing an opportunity to work more deeply with a client and build trust while working in parallel on other issues your service is aiming to address
- Increasing your understanding of the impact of fines on the people you work with and opening practical conversations to assist them with these debts

How to become a sponsor

- Apply to become a sponsor on the [Revenue NSW website](#)
- Before you apply make sure you know your ABN, have the approval of your senior management and a copy of your insurance.
- Complete the online application and provide information about your clients, the services and programs you offer, the WDO activities you choose to support (directly and on referral), your staff qualifications and a copy of your insurance policy.
- Once you are approved you may access training through Legal Aid NSW.

Why we became a WDO sponsor

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

The WDO Scheme is such a game changer for our clients. I'd encourage any agency to sign up as the benefits are enormous. Our WDO sponsorship has credited over \$250,000 towards fines for our service users since we signed up. Often people come to our service buried in debt with no way of getting out of it and are totally demoralised. It's often for minor things like not having a train ticket (because they can't afford one) and having this compounded with fees for non-payment. Our service users have entered into activities such as psychology, financial and drug counselling, case management and volunteering as ways of paying down debt with the bonus that these activities create positive change in their lives. It's a brilliant scheme.

Ulladulla and Districts Resource Centre

We originally sought out to become a sponsor because of the clients we were seeing. People were in crisis, in financial difficulty, and this was a way to help them clear one of their debts.

Macleay Vocational College, Kempsey

We work with kids who, due to anger issues and past trauma, can't talk to police who pull them up when they aren't wearing a helmet. We teach them skills to communicate, with the police, with authorities and to remain calm and respectful. It's a safe place. The WDO takes away some of the worry about how they are going to deal with these fines. These young kids are trying as hard as they can to be better. And the WDO opportunity is showing them that they are in a better place than they were last week, last month or a year ago.

Break the Cycle, St Luke's Anglican Church, Liverpool

The WDO program provides a wonderful opportunity to attract new clients and offers a practical way to empower sustainable life choices.

HIV and Related Programs (HARP) team, NSW North Coast Local Health District

Many of our participants have experienced stigma and discrimination in health care settings which have created barriers for them when they need help and support. Becoming a WDO sponsor has provided our service with a resourceful way to reach out and engage vulnerable community members in a safe and non-judgemental space to discuss health care and treatment.

Anglicare, Nowra

Work and Development Orders to me are a win-win situation. People can pay off fines by attending some of our activities and hopefully they will address some of the issues that might be getting in the way of, you know, living a productive life.

Support for sponsors

WDO sponsors are actively supported by Legal Aid NSW, Revenue NSW and DCJ as follows:

Legal Aid NSW WDO Service – wdo@legalaid.nsw.gov.au

- is a state-wide service comprising of six teams of solicitors and community engagement officers across NSW who provide targeted, ongoing and individualised training and support about fines and the WDO scheme.
- run regular monthly training to new WDO sponsors with opportunities for questions and personalised support.
- provide WDO education resources on their website including webinars on specific WDO related topics and step-by-step guides for sponsors.
- provide sponsors with free access to WDO publications which can be ordered via the Legal Aid NSW website and used to promote the WDO scheme in a sponsor's office or with their clients.
- are able to attend community events to support clients with fines, or provide legal education about fines and the WDO scheme.
- are able to organise online or face to face WDO regional sponsor forums in your area
- can discuss how your service could best utilise the WDO scheme to suit your needs
- can discuss with your service how to support clients with complex needs or high fines debt, who may benefit from additional advocacy with Revenue NSW.

Revenue NSW – wdo@revenue.nsw.gov.au

- manages the online portal and processes all WDO applications
- manages the WDO Hotline on 1300 478 879 (available 5 days a week from 9–5) or
- has a team of regionally based Aboriginal Outreach officers able to discuss how your community can manage fines debts and be involved with the WDO scheme.

Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) – wdo@dcj.nsw.gov.au

- updates the WDO Guidelines and supporting resources.
- run the Operations Advisory Group to provide a feedback mechanism to improve the WDO scheme
- currently manage WDO audits and investigations

For more information, please call the WDO hotline 1300 478 879 or email WDO@legalaid.nsw.gov.au.