



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Guidelines for Applicants

Housing Support Program – Stream 1

February 2024

Introduction

The Australian Government's Housing Support Program is one of a range of programs designed to help contribute to the National Housing Accord's target of building 1.2 million new, well-located homes over 5 years from 1 July 2024. The Housing Support Program will support the delivery of increased housing supply by funding projects that deliver enabling infrastructure, provide amenities to support new housing development or improve building planning capability.

This first funding stream (HSP 1) will provide funding to state, territory and local governments for projects that will **improve planning capability**.

A second funding stream (yet to be released) will provide funding for enabling infrastructure and amenity projects.

These Guidelines outline the application process for the program and contain the mandatory requirements for an application.

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1 About the Guidelines

These Guidelines outline the application process and contain the mandatory requirements for applicants for Stream 1 of the Housing Support Program (HSP).

These Guidelines must be read in conjunction with the [Default Funding Offer for successful funding recipients](#), which contains rules about how funded projects must be administered and delivered.

Approved applications will be administered under the Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other sectoral Federation Funding Agreement. Payments will be made through state and territory governments.

You can find a glossary of common terms at the end of the Guidelines.

1.1 About the Program

The HSP is a \$500 million Australian Government initiative which is a competitive funding program open to all local, state and territory governments across the nation, and forms part of the Commonwealth's commitment to support jurisdictions achieve the National Housing Accord targets. The program supports the delivery of increased housing supply by funding projects that seek to deliver enabling infrastructure, provide amenities that support new housing development or improve building planning capability. HSP will have two streams.

- Stream 1 (this stream – HSP 1) with up to \$50 million provided for projects that increase planning capability. This stream is designed to provide resources to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of planning process, so that housing construction can commence sooner, support increasing housing in well-located areas, or encourage development in line with the national blueprint.
- Stream 2 will focus on infrastructure projects that support new housing. Stream 2 will open in the coming months. This stream is designed to remove barriers to housing construction by ensuring enabling infrastructure and community amenities are in place.

1.2 Questions about the Program

If you have questions in relation to the program, please contact us by email:

- PPDHousingSupportBranch@Infrastructure.gov.au

2 Application eligibility

The following section outlines the rules for eligibility of applications for HSP 1. Applications which do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be further assessed and are ineligible for funding.

2.1 Who can apply?

Applications can only be made by a state government, territory government or local government authority (LGA).

Applications in partnership with other government and non-government entities are eligible to apply, but the lead applicant must be a state, territory or local government authority.

2.2 What projects are eligible?

The Department's decision on the eligibility of a project is final. To be eligible, the project must improve planning capability.

Examples of eligible projects could include, but are not limited to:

- New pathways for planners and related professions to enter the industry
- Tools to streamline planning systems and improve efficient decision making
- Sharing of resources between local governments
- Resources to support master planning and planning reform.

Planning capability projects can support the delivery of housing outcomes either directly (for example by increasing the efficiency of the development approval process) or indirectly (for example by increasing the workforce trained to do planning and related work).

Planning outcomes

One of the primary aims of the project must be to achieve the commitments of the National Housing Accord 2022.

We can only accept proposals that demonstrate how the project will work cohesively with planning, zoning and regulatory reforms through the National Cabinet commitment for the National Planning Reform Blueprint and Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilience.

The primary aim of the project should be to achieve efficiencies in the planning approvals process, enabling increased housing supply.

Whole and complete

Projects should deliver benefits on their own and not be wholly dependent on other projects or activities to achieve outcomes.

For example, an application for stage 1 of a project, when the benefits will not be realised until stage 3 will be ineligible.

Pilot projects, to test the success of a concept, are eligible.

Master planning projects to support increasing housing supply are eligible.

Related projects can be grouped for consideration as a single application where the projects have a clear and close relationship.

For example, a project to analyse where delays occur in the planning process could be combined with a project to implement software upgrades to reduce those delays.

Joint applications are permitted. Joint applications between two or more local governments must identify a lead applicant. Joint applications between a state or territory government and one or more local government(s) are also permitted. In that case:

- The state or territory government will be the lead applicant.
- The application must comply with the co-funding requirements for a state government (i.e. an Australian Government contribution of no more than 50 per cent of the total project cost).

Able to be completed in time

The project within the application must be scheduled to be completed on or before 30 May 2025.

The Department cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances.

2.3 Funding

The Australian Government will contribute up to 100 per cent for successful local government projects and 50 per cent for successful state and territory applications.

The maximum funding from the Housing Support Program to any single project is \$5 million.

Payments under the program will be made through a schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement - Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other. Payments will be made by the Australian Government to the relevant state or territory. State or territory governments will pass on payment to local governments where the local government is delivering the project.

Information about what costs are eligible for funding are contained in the [Default Funding Offer for successful funding recipients](#).

The Australian Government will only fund activities in the project once. Applicants must not make a profit from the project.

Applicants will be required to list all funding sources being used to meet their project cost contribution. Co-contributions may be sourced from local, state, territory, Australian Government or private funding sources. Co-contributions from other Australian Government programs must comply with the rules and/or guidelines for that program.

The program may not be used to cost shift business as usual expenditure to the Australian Government.

3 Application process

3.1 What you will need

All applications must be submitted on the [HSP 1 application form](#) with all mandatory items complete.

In completing the application, you will need to provide the following:

- Basic information about the project
- A project budget
- Whether the project aligns with a state, territory and/or national housing strategy or plan
- Evidence of co-contributions from other contributors (such as private organisations or other LGAs for joint applications)
- Proposed milestone schedule
- Project timeline
- Risk assessment (optional)
- Project plan or design (optional)

The level of information supplied should be consistent with the size and complexity of the project.

3.2 Submitting an application

The Department will accept applications from 8am Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) 27 March 2024 until 12 noon Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) 29 April 2024 for Stream 1 applications.

All applications must be submitted by email to:

PPDHousingSupportBranch@Infrastructure.gov.au

The Department may refuse to consider any application not received in this way.

All applications will be acknowledged once received. If you do not receive this acknowledgement please advise at PPDHousingSupportBranch@infrastructure.gov.au within 24 hours of lodgement.

Late application may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

3.3 Timing of processes

If you are successful the Department expects your project to commence no later than 31 July 2024, once you have received the offer of funding.

Table 1: Expected stream timing

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	4-6 weeks from Stream 1 closing date
Approval and announcement of successful applicants	3-6 weeks from assessment of applications
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks from the announcement of outcomes
Start date of project	No later than 31 July 2024
Project completion date	No later than 30 May 2025

3.4 Assessment of applications

The Department will assess all applications received. The Department may contact you to clarify information provided in your application, but will not consider new or additional information.

Applications go through three stages:

1. Eligibility assessment.
2. Merit assessment.
3. Ministerial consideration.

3.5 Eligibility

All projects will be assessed for eligibility. Eligible projects must:

- meet all of the requirements of Section 2 of these Guidelines, including applicant and funding requirements; and
- contain in the application all mandatory information.

Ineligible applications will not proceed to the next stage of assessment.

The Department's decision on the eligibility of a project is final.

3.6 Merits Assessment

The overarching consideration for the Merit Assessment is whether the project represents value for money in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. In assessing whether the applications represent value for money, assessors will consider the extent to which the application meets the program objectives and how it performs against assessment criteria relative to cost.

Eligible applications will be assessed by the Department against three criteria, weighted equally:

- 1. Alignment with the program objectives of increasing the supply of well-located housing**
(see definition in Glossary)

You must demonstrate this by identifying how your project will:

- a. Do one or more of the following:
 - i. Increase the efficiency of planning decisions for well-located housing developments.
 - ii. Increase capacity to make planning decisions for well-located housing developments.
 - iii. Improve housing affordability and supply.
 - iv. Enable more social and affordable housing.
- b. Work cohesively with planning, zoning and regulatory reforms through the National Cabinet commitment for the National Planning Reform Blueprint and Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilience, National Construction Code if relevant, and relevant state and territory law.
- c. Align with state or territory development plans and other planning policy.

2. Project Impact

You must demonstrate project impact by outlining:

- a. The anticipated impact the project will make on housing supply and over what time period. When assessing this criterion, well-located dwellings in regional areas will be evaluated as being equivalent to 3 well-located dwellings in an urban area.

For example, a project enabling 200 well-located dwellings in a regional area would have equal merit as one enabling 600 well-located dwellings in an urban area for this element of this criterion. This is to ensure regional areas are not disadvantaged in the application process.
- b. How the project will support planning activities for well-located housing with details on per capita impact, housing shortages and geographical impact. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate the impact of the proposed project relative to the size and population density of the location and demonstrated housing demand.
- c. Evidence as to why investment in the project is needed, including any barriers preventing investment to date.
- d. What matched funding or in-kind contributions are being made to the proposal with details on funding amounts, and parameters for co-investment.
- e. Whether and how the project will enhance the resilience (or mitigate the effects) of climate change and natural disaster risk for housing and enabling infrastructure.
- f. Where relevant, how the project contributes to Outcome 9 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need).

3. Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project

You must demonstrate capacity, capability and resources for the planning related project by providing evidence of:

- a. The ability to quickly commence and deliver proposed projects by 30 May 2025, including demonstrated readiness to commence the project with appropriate business case approvals, community support and completed engagement/consultation and all relevant legislative requirements in place.
- b. Track record of success in delivering similar initiatives and/or sound project planning experience to manage and monitor the project. This should address scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, consultation, budget and risk management.
- c. The business or governance structure and how you will incorporate Commonwealth procurement principles and priorities including the use of First Nations employment and suppliers where possible.
- d. Achievable timeline and well managed risks.

3.7 Ministerial decision making

Upon completion of application assessments, the Department will make recommendations to the Minister on applications for funding.

The Minister or delegate will make the final decision on which projects are funded.

3.8 Notification of outcomes

Following the Minister's decision, the Department will contact all applicants to inform them of the outcome of their application.

Applicants will be offered feedback on applications, where resources allow.

Further information about the rules that apply to successful funded projects can be found in the [Default Funding Offer for successful funding recipients](#).

4 Administration

4.1 Amendment of the Guidelines

The Australian Government may amend these Guidelines from time to time. When this happens, applicants are expected to comply with the Guidelines in place at the time they apply. All Program Guidelines and changes will be communicated and published in timely fashion via the [Department's website](#).

4.2 Confidentiality

Information submitted by the applicant may be provided to other organisations for the purposes of assessment. In addition, the details of successful projects will be made publicly available.

Information from applications may also be used for research and analysis purposes.

Applicants should identify any information submitted which they wish to be considered as confidential, supported by reasons for the request. The Australian Government reserves the right to accept or refuse a request to treat information as confidential. The *Privacy Act 1988* applies to the handling of personal information about individuals obtained in the course of the delivery of the programs.

4.3 Probity

It is important to the Australian Government that it avoids bias and the perception of bias and other probity issues in the operation of this program.

Any information which would have a material impact on the decision to approve an application must be disclosed in your application. This includes any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Failing to declare relevant information or making a false declaration on the application will make it ineligible.

4.4 Non-compliance

Non-compliance with the *Guidelines for Applicants* will make that project ineligible for funding.

Applications for projects which have already been funded may have their funding withdrawn, and/or be required to repay funding already paid.

5 Glossary

Term	Definition
Accountable Authority	See subsection 12(2) of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act)
Affordable Housing	Affordable housing is generally taken to refer to rental housing that is provided at below market rent to qualifying tenants (usually between 70 and 80 per cent of market rent).
Applicant	The State, Territory or Local Government Authority that submits the application. Joint applications must have a single applicant that submits the application.
Application	A completed application form, and associated documents, requesting funding under the programs. When approved, applications become projects.
Commonwealth	A Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a corporate body established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act).
Completion Date	The expected end date for the project activity.
The Department	The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts or its successors responsible for urban and regional development.
Local Government	<p>Local government has the same definition as a local governing body at section 4 of the <i>Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 (Cth)</i>.</p> <p>As at January 2024 this meant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a local governing body established by or under a law of a State, other than a body whose sole or principal function is to provide a particular service, such as the supply of electricity or water; or b. a body declared by the Minister, on the advice of the relevant State Minister, by notice published in the <i>Gazette</i>, to be a local governing body for the purposes of this Act. <p>For the purposes of the Housing Support Program, a non-self-governing territories will be considered a local government.</p>
The Minister	The Minister is the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, another portfolio Minister or a delegate of the Minister for Infrastructure.
The Program	The Housing Support Program.
Regional	A location is regional if it is outside of a Significant Urban Area with a population of greater than 100,000 people at the 2021 census. The boundaries of Significant Urban are determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See the definition of urban for a list of Current Significant Urban Areas.

Term	Definition
Social Housing	Social housing is affordable housing provided by state and territory governments and not-for-profit organisations for people on lower incomes who are unable to afford or access suitable accommodation in the private rental market. It includes public housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing and community housing.
State and Territory Governments	<p>State and Territory Governments are the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Capital Territory Government • New South Wales Government • Northern Territory Government • Queensland Government • South Australia Government • Tasmanian Government • Victorian Government • Western Australia Government
Urban	<p>A location is urban if it is within a Significant Urban Area with a population of greater than 100,000 people at the 2021 census. The boundaries of significant urban are determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Current Significant Urban Areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney • Melbourne • Brisbane • Perth • Adelaide • Canberra • Hobart • Darwin • Gold Coast-Tweed Heads • Newcastle-Maitland • Wollongong • Sunshine Coast • Geelong • Townsville • Cairns • Toowoomba • Ballarat • Bendigo • Albury-Wodonga • Launceston • Mackay • Rockhampton
Well-located	Well-located housing is a home is close to work, schools, transport and other amenities as relevant to the community, supports improved productivity and liveability, and located in an appropriate and safe area.