

Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund

The NSW Government has launched a new, \$12-million grant program to support regional councils in planning for housing supply, including diverse, affordable housing and resilient to natural hazards. We encourage councils and groups of councils to apply by 30 September 2022 for these competitive grants, which will help deliver the strategies, plans and studies needed to support the delivery of housing that meets community needs.

The NSW Government is working to improve housing supply, affordability, diversity and resilience across the state. To address supply and affordability pressures, it has recently announced the \$2.8-billion 2022-23 Housing Package. The Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund is one initiative of the package that responds to the findings of the Regional Housing Taskforce.

The Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund acts on the taskforce's recommendation to invest in up-front strategic planning. This will help councils plan for and deliver new housing that meets community needs and give greater certainty about where, when, and what types of homes will be built.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment is administering the fund for these competitive grants.

Funding available to regional councils

- Up to \$12 million in funding will be available over 4 financial years from July 2022
- Up to \$3 million in funding will be available in round 1.
- Funding of up to \$250,000 is available for each application.
- The minimum grant amount is \$20,000.

Objective of the program

The objective of the grant program is to support eligible strategic planning projects that:

- enable and accelerate new housing capacity and the delivery of zoned and 'development-ready' residential land in regional NSW
- support new housing capacity in regional NSW and enable future development by resolving issues and constraints
- better align and coordinate housing and infrastructure delivery
- support more housing choice and the availability of affordable and diverse housing in regional NSW
- make housing in regional NSW more resilient to natural hazards and other potential shocks and stresses
- empower and support local councils to plan strategically for future housing supply.

How to apply

All regional NSW councils are eligible to apply for funding. A single council or groups of 2 or more councils, such as joint organisations of councils with a project that address shared strategic planning needs or regional or subregional planning issues, may apply.

Councils wishing to apply for funding under the program should:

1. visit [program website](#) for resources to support the application
2. complete and submit their application through the [SmartyGrants portal](#) by Friday 30 September 2022.

The department will not accept late applications unless we consider the circumstances to be exceptional.

Projects must be scoped appropriately and supported by enough detail. This includes:

- giving all information requested
- addressing all eligibility and assessment criteria
- giving all necessary attachments and evidence to support the application, such as quotes for any consultant work.

The department will announce successful applications in December 2022.

Assessment process

An independent panel will assess all applications against the program objectives and assessment criteria. The independent assessment panel will make recommendations to an interagency committee made up of NSW Government representatives for endorsement. The Minister for Planning and Homes will make the final decision to award the grant funding.

An independent probity advisor will oversee the program.

Project eligibility

Program funding will support strategic planning projects, investigations and technical studies that are consistent with the aim and objectives of the fund

Eligible projects include:

- **subregional and local planning strategies** such as local housing strategies or growth management strategies
- **affordable housing strategies** and affordable housing **contributions schemes**
- **technical studies** that help identify residential lands
- **structure plans or precinct master plans** for lands with a significant residential component
- **preparation of local environmental plan amendments** that facilitate a significant housing or affordable housing opportunity
- **infrastructure needs analysis, servicing strategies or infrastructure contributions plans** that will better align infrastructure and housing delivery
- **detailed planning and design guidelines** such as amendments to development control plans
- **projects that identify solutions to broader issues** that have implications for the location and delivery of future housing supply.

We will consider projects not listed above if they align with the program aims and objectives.

Limits on projects

For each round of funding, there is a limit of one application and one project for each council, or one joint application and one joint project for group projects. A council may apply for and receive funding for both an individual project and a joint project within a single funding round if the projects are clearly distinct and there is no duplication.

A project can only receive funding once under this program.

Project start date for round one

To be eligible for funding in round one, projects must begin by 31 January 2023. Projects must be completed within 12 months from the project start date.

Eligible project costs

Funding may be used towards the direct project costs such as:

- engagement of third-party professional services for the approved project
- procurements for the approved project, such as relevant data and evidence
- staff salaries directly for the approved project
- community consultation costs for the approved project
- reasonable project management costs for the approved project (no greater than 10% of total project value)
- any other costs the department determines to be eligible.

Funding may not be used for:

- costs incurred before the approved project start date
- staff training or education
- statutory fees and charges
- legal advice
- financial advice
- administrative or operational advice
- ongoing council costs such as administration, operation and maintenance
- remuneration of employees for work not directly on the approved project
- overhead charges for internal council costs
- infrastructure or other capital works
- any other costs the department determines to be ineligible.

The above lists identify examples of eligible and ineligible project costs and are not meant to be complete. If you have any questions about eligible project costs, please contact the department at regional.housing@dpe.nsw.gov.au.

We encourage council co-funding of projects. During assessment, we will consider the extent to which projects demonstrate good value for money in the context of the available funding.

Round one timeframes

Table 1. Timetable for the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund (round one)

Activity	Date
Applications open	25 August 2022
Applications close	30 September 2022, 5pm
Independent panel assesses grant applications	by November 2022
Department announces successful councils	by December 2022
Department issues funding agreements to successful councils	by December 2022
Councils return signed funding agreements to department	20 January 2023
Department pays grant funding	When the department executes the funding agreement
Project must start	by 31 January 2023
Project must be completed	by 31 January 2024

More information

For more information, visit [program website](#) to view the program guidelines and frequently asked questions.

If you have any questions, please contact the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund team at regional.housing@dpe.nsw.gov.au.