

Guide to applications for round 4 of the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund

Follow this guide to develop your application for round 4 of the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund

Steps

Step 1: Prepare

- Carefully read the round 4 program guidelines, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and other material on the [Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund webpage](#). Check your eligibility and understand the grant program's aims, objectives and assessment criteria.
- Register on [SmartyGrants](#) and familiarise yourself with the application form, including the evidence and supporting documents you will need to attach.
- Schedule time to:
 - plan and design your project
 - get input from the project team, other council staff, project partners, or any third-party service providers
 - write, review and submit the grant application ahead of the closing date.
- Review your past grant applications and feedback received in rounds 1, 2 and 3, if relevant.
- Contact the program team at rhspf@dpie.nsw.gov.au with any questions.

Step 2: Write

- Follow the instructions in the form and fully complete the application.
- Use concise, direct and factual language to give unique answers to all questions. Support your answers with relevant statistics, evidence and examples.

Step 3: Check

- Check the [Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund webpage](#) regularly for new information, including FAQ updates.
- Review your application or get someone else to check it. Ensure your responses directly address the questions, are easy to understand, and error-free.

- Review all attachments and complete all declarations carefully. If your application is incomplete, your project may be deemed ineligible or given a lower score.

Step 4: Submit

- Submit before the deadline or on time. Late applications will not be accepted unless we consider the circumstances to be exceptional.
- Check your inbox to make sure you've received confirmation of submission. You may wish to download a copy of your application to keep as a record.

Preparing your application

Table 1 provides high-level guidance to consider as you develop your application for round 4 of the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund. It does not give instructions on how to address the program criteria or how to select a project.

Table 1. Guidance for each section of your application

Section	Key considerations
Project title	• Choose a clear and concise name of no more than 10 words that conveys the location of the project and what it will deliver. • Include your council's name in the project title. • Avoid generic names such as '[Council name] housing project' or names that do not convey what the project will deliver.
Project description	• Provide a succinct overview of the project of less than 100 words, the area or site, why it is needed and what its impact will be.
Project aims and objectives	• Include a brief statement that describes the overall aim of the project. This should be concise and achievable. • Include a list of specific project objectives. Objectives are more detailed statements about what the project should achieve. They should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).
Project scope	• Define the scope of your project through a brief list of the key parameters, such as: ○ activities that will take place ○ items the project will deliver ○ locations that will be affected.

Section	Key considerations
	• If relevant, consider listing any areas that are outside the scope of the project, such as locations or activities that you have excluded. For example, your project may include preparing a local housing strategy and supporting technical studies, but exclude preparing amendments to a local environmental plan to carry out the strategy. It may include preparing an infrastructure servicing strategy, but exclude concept or detailed infrastructure design.
Project outputs and deliverables	• Describe each project output or deliverable in detail. • If the project includes multiple deliverables, you must show that these are linked and directly support the project's aims and objectives. • Consider if your project's outputs and deliverables are realistic and feasible given the project scope, timeline, budget, available resources, and any other relevant constraints.
Project plan and timing	• Include a realistic and achievable timeline that specifies the start and end dates for each milestone and supporting activities and tasks. • Include council meetings to seek approval for exhibition and/or adopt project deliverables. • Consider factors that may influence the project duration or cause delays, such as regulatory requirements, procurement processes, available resourcing, or community consultation. Adjust your timeline accordingly or include contingency measures in your project plan. • Consider including between 5 and 20 milestones, depending on the scope and complexity of the project. These may include: ○ initiation and detailed project planning ○ procurement ○ background studies or issues paper ○ internal consultation ○ agency consultation ○ public consultation and/or public exhibition ○ consultation report ○ draft report ○ review of draft ○ final report.

Section	Key considerations
Project budget	• Include an itemised project cost summary that shows the project is feasible, cost-effective and meets the program eligibility criteria. • Categorise each item as one of the following eligible cost types: ○ community consultation ○ procurements ○ professional services ○ project management costs ○ staff salaries ○ other. • Include a budget that is well-structured, transparent and accurately reflects the resources required for all aspects of your project. This includes costs that will be covered by the fund and costs that other sources, such as council contributions, will fund. • State all costs exclusive of GST, unless we ask for the GST inclusive. • Support your project budget with appropriate documentation to show the project costs are realistic and will achieve value for money. This includes: ○ detailed cash-flow budget, including all project costs and contingencies ○ quotes for third-party professional services and other procurements ○ a breakdown of expected staff costs, activities, and hours towards the project if your budget includes staff and/or project management costs.
Project funding	• Provide details of your Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund request and any other sources of funding for your project. This may include: ○ council co-contributions ○ project partner contributions ○ other grant funding ○ any other funding sources. • If relevant, disclose if the project is under consideration for funding as part of another grant application or if it is being considered for funding by a federal or state government agency through any other means.

Section	Key considerations
Project governance	• Include an outline of a governance framework that defines roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders, including project managers, team members, external consultants and other key individuals involved. • This may be an existing governance framework or a framework that will be put in place to deliver the project. • If the project is a joint one, consider how you will jointly govern and make decisions about the project with any project partners.
Capacity to deliver	• Briefly outline the relevant qualifications and expertise of key team members who will oversee and deliver the project to show your capacity to deliver it within the proposed scope, budget and schedule. • Consider the relevant experience or expertise that you or your team have in delivering or managing similar projects, and how to resource the project both internally and through any consultants or external service providers.
Risk management	• Include an overview of key project risks, including what actions you will take to lessen potential risks and uncertainties. Show that you have or will have appropriate strategies in place to manage these risks, including a description of any contingency measures you have built into your project plan. At a minimum, you should include: ○ schedule risks, including any factors that may prevent you from achieving project milestones ○ budget risks, including unforeseen costs ○ resourcing risks, including staff availability and workload, and procurement processes. • Consider including any other relevant project risks such as: ○ stakeholder responses and consultation ○ council elections ○ approval processes ○ dependencies on other projects ○ reputational risk ○ scope changes and creep ○ factors affecting project quality and consultant performance.

Section	Key considerations
Attachments	• Upload or submit attachments to support your application at several points in the application form. Include only the requested documents. We will not assess documents that we have not requested. • Files can be up to 25MB, and we recommend a maximum of 5MB. • Please ensure that all attachments you submit follow this file-naming standard: 'RHSPF - APPLICANT NAME - DOCUMENT NAME'. • In your answers to the assessment criteria, please provide page references for the relevant text in attachments if the documents are large. Alternatively, consider attaching only extracts of relevant pages.

Further information and advice

Visit the [Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund webpage](#) for more information. It includes the program guidelines and answers to FAQs. If you are having difficulty with your application on the [SmartyGrants portal](#), check out the [SmartyGrants help guide for applicants](#).

To contact SmartyGrants:

- email service@smartygrants.com.au
- telephone 03 9320 6888 (support desk hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm AEDT, Mon to Fri)
- visit the [SmartyGrants applicant help website](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the program team at rhspf@dpie.nsw.gov.au