

## Fact Sheet

January 2012

# Applying for social housing

## What is social housing?

Social housing is secure, affordable housing for people on low to moderate incomes who have a housing need. It includes public housing properties owned or managed by Housing NSW and the Aboriginal Housing Office, and community housing properties managed by not-for-profit, non-government registered community housing organisations.


## How do I apply for social housing?

You can apply for all types of social housing using an *Application for Housing Assistance*. You can also use this form to apply for housing assistance if you are already a tenant of a social housing provider (such as Housing NSW or a participating community housing provider).

You can lodge your application with any social housing provider in NSW, either in person or by mail. This includes all Housing NSW local offices and participating community housing providers. You can find details of where you can lodge your application on the Housing Pathways website (see address below).

An initial assessment of your application will be made by the social housing provider you lodge your form with. If you appear to be eligible for social housing, you will be asked to fill in a *Social Housing Supplement*. If we need more information, you may also be asked to come to an interview.

## What evidence do I need to attach?

You will need to provide documents that support your application. The questions that we need evidence for are marked on the form with .



Information about the type of evidence we need is in the *Evidence Requirements Information Sheet*.

This is available from your local housing office or from the Housing Pathways website at [www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au](http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au)

## Can I choose what type of social housing I want?

Yes. Whenever you apply for social housing, you can choose to receive offers of social housing properties from any social housing provider or from Housing NSW only or from community housing providers only. You will be asked to make this choice when you fill in the *Social Housing Supplement*. Some locations, however, may only have one social housing provider that is able to assist you in the time frame you need. If you want to live in these locations, you may not be able to choose the type of social housing you want.

If you are Aboriginal, or someone in your household is Aboriginal, you can also choose to be listed for Aboriginal housing as well as for other forms of social housing. To be listed, however, your Aboriginality will need to be confirmed.

You can change your choice of provider at any time before you receive an offer of housing.

## Can I choose where I want to live?

When you apply for social housing you can choose an area or town where you would prefer to live. Areas where social housing is available are grouped into allocation zones. We will check which allocation zone your selection is in, and if you are eligible for housing, list you for offers of housing in this allocation zone.

We try to house people where they would prefer to live but we can't guarantee specific locations. The location of the property we offer you when it's your turn to be housed will depend on where the next vacancy that matches the type of housing you need occurs within the allocation zone you are listed in. This means that we might offer you housing in ANY of the suburbs that are grouped into the allocation zone you are approved for.

You also need to be aware that the waiting times are much longer in some areas than in others. Some allocation zones are called 'high-demand' zones because the demand for housing in these zones is greater than the number of properties that become available. If you select a high-demand zone, you may be asked to select another zone or else be prepared to wait a very long time for an offer of housing.

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### Are the eligibility criteria the same for all types of social housing?

Yes, the general eligibility criteria are the same for all types of social housing. However, different social housing providers may have different policies about some things, for example, payment of bond, length of lease available and whether you can keep pets. Also, some community housing providers may provide specialist help to their tenants and/or to their local community. For more information about this, talk to your local social housing provider.

### How do I know if I am eligible for social housing?

To be eligible for social housing, you must:

- be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident
- live in New South Wales (NSW)
- have a household income within the income-eligibility limits
- not own any assets or property that you could live in
- be able to sustain a successful tenancy, with or without support
- in general, be at least 18 years of age.

You will also need to be able to prove your identity and, if you have any debts with a social housing provider from a previous tenancy, you must be making regular repayments.

### What are the income limits for social housing?

To be eligible for social housing, your household income must be within the social housing income-eligibility limits that are outlined in the table below. This table shows the maximum gross weekly income each household member can earn and gives some examples of maximum income limits for different household types (based on the number of adults and children). Households that exceed these income limits are not eligible for social housing.

#### Social housing income eligibility limits from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012

Household members (regardless of relationship)	Maximum gross weekly income (before tax)
First adult (single)	\$525
Each additional adult (18 years or over)	Add \$200
First child (under 18 years)	Add \$260
Each additional child (under 18 years)	Add \$85
<b>For example, if your household includes:</b>	<b>Each week, your household can earn (before tax):</b>
1 adult	\$525
1 adult + 1 child	\$785
1 adult + 2 children	\$870
1 adult + 3 children	\$955
1 adult + 4 children	\$1,040
2 adults	\$725
2 adults + 1 child	\$985
2 adults + 2 children	\$1,070
2 adults + 3 children	\$1,155
2 adults + 4 children	\$1,240
<b>If someone in your household receives a:</b>	
Disability allowance (per person)	Add \$85
Exceptional disability allowance (per person)	Add \$200

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### What happens if I am eligible for social housing?

If you are assessed as eligible for social housing, the provider will place you on the NSW Housing Register. The social housing providers you have chosen (i.e. Housing NSW and/or community housing organisations) will then use this register to offer you housing when a suitable property is available.

### Can I get priority housing assistance?

You cannot apply for priority housing assistance directly. If, however, when you apply for housing assistance your application shows that you have an urgent and ongoing housing need that you are unable to resolve for yourself in the private rental market, you may be assessed for priority assistance.

If we are assessing you for priority assistance and you have asked to live in an area that is a 'high-demand' zone, you will also need to be assessed for locational need. This means you will have to show that it is essential to the needs of your household for you to live in the zone you have chosen. If you cannot show that living in this zone is essential for your household, we will ask you to choose another area before we continue our assessment.

If you are assessed as eligible for priority assistance, you will be listed on the NSW Housing Register on a priority basis.

### Once I am listed on the NSW Housing Register, when will I get housed?

The waiting times for both priority assistance and wait-turn housing will vary depending on the number of other people waiting, the amount of social housing in the area you have chosen, and your specific housing needs.

Clients approved for priority assistance will be housed ahead of most other applicants on the social housing register. Clients approved for wait-turn housing will be offered housing in their chosen location when:

- a suitable property becomes available
- other applicants who applied before them have been offered housing.

### What if I have an urgent housing need but I am not eligible for social housing?

If you have an urgent housing need but you are not eligible for social housing, you may be eligible for Emergency Temporary Accommodation. This is short-term temporary housing for up to three months that is available to people who are Australian citizens or permanent residents with an urgent housing need because of:

- a natural disaster such as fire, flood, earthquake or storm

- domestic violence that places a family member at risk of harm; or
- homelessness with custody of children

To apply for Emergency Temporary Accommodation, talk to your local housing provider.

### For more information or to find a social housing provider in your area

For more information about applying for social housing and to find out whether you are eligible, or to find a social housing provider in your area, see the Housing Pathways website at [www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au](http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au) or phone 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It is illegal for an officer of Housing NSW or a community housing provider to ask for money or favours or other benefits of any kind in exchange for helping you with your housing needs.

It is also illegal for you or anyone else to offer money or favours or other benefits of any kind to anyone who works for Housing NSW or a community housing provider in exchange for helping you. If you have any information regarding this, please contact Business Assurance on 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746).

### Translation service

Arabic	خدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية المجانية اتصل على الرقم 131 450
Chinese	免費的翻譯傳譯服務 致電 131 450
Russian	Служба бесплатного письменного и устного перевода Позвоните по номеру 131 450
Spanish	Servicio Gratuito de Traducción e Interpretación Llame al 131 450
Vietnamese	Dịch vụ Phiên dịch và Thông dịch Miễn phí Điện thoại 131 450