

# Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund – Fact sheet

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The NSW Government has opened round 3 of the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund (RHSPF), a \$12 million grant program to help regional councils plan for new housing supply.

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The fund will support councils to plan future housing in regional areas, including diverse and affordable housing that is resilient to natural hazards. We encourage councils and groups of councils to apply by 22 November 2024 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 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure is administering the fund.

## Funding available to regional councils

- Up to \$3 million in funding will be available in round 3.
- Funding of up to \$250,000, excluding GST, is available for each application.
- The minimum grant amount is \$20,000.

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## 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.

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## How to apply

Councils wishing to apply for funding under the program should:

1. visit the program website for resources to support the application
2. complete and submit their application through the [SmartyGrants portal](#) by the deadline of **12pm, Friday 22 November 2024**.

We 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:

- providing all information requested
- addressing all eligibility and assessment criteria
- providing all necessary attachments and evidence to support the application, such as quotes for any consultant work, detail and costings of expected staff activities and hours towards the project, and relevant strategies or frameworks that the project aligns with.

We will announce successful applications by April 2025.

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## Assessment process

An expert panel made up of independent third-party panellists and a departmental subject matter expert will assess all eligible applications against the program objectives and assessment criteria. To ensure an equitable and geographic spread of program funding, councils that have not already received funding under the program may be prioritised by the assessment panel. The panel will make recommendations to an interagency committee made up of NSW Government representatives.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will make the final decision on the recommendation from the expert panel and interagency committee to award the grant funding. A probity adviser will oversee the program.

## Round 3 timeframes

Table 1. Timetable for round 3 of the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund

Activity	Date
Applications open	3 October 2024
Applications close	12pm, 22 November 2024
Independent panel assesses grant applications	by March 2025
Department announces successful applicants	April 2025
Department issues funding agreements	April 2025
Councils return signed funding agreements to department	28 April 2025
Department pays grant funding	by 6 June 2025
Projects must start	10 June 2025
Projects must be completed	10 June 2026

## Project eligibility

Program funding will support strategic planning projects, investigations and technical studies that are consistent with the aims 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
- **other projects** that show alignment with the program aims and objectives.

Projects that are not eligible for funding include:

- projects outside of NSW (except for cross-border planning projects)
- capital works projects
- projects related to the preparation and assessment of development applications
- projects that have already received development consent
- otherwise eligible projects that have received funding under another program, unless the application can demonstrate how additional funding will complement and/or expand the scope or outcome of the project to increase its impact.

### Limits on projects

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 if the projects are clearly distinct and there is no duplication.

A project can receive funding only once under this program.

### Project start date for round 3

To be eligible for round 3 funding, projects must begin on 10 June 2025 upon receipt of the funding. The funding agreement will identify the project starting activities. Projects must be completed within 12 months from the project start date.

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## 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 comprehensive. If you have any questions about eligible project costs, please contact us at [regional.housing@dpe.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regional.housing@dpe.nsw.gov.au).

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

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## Outcomes from rounds 1 and 2

Round 1 of the RHSPF closed in September 2022 and provided \$3.9 million to fund 20 projects across 19 regional councils.

The projects covered a broad range of planning strategies, planning proposals, technical studies, design guidance and infrastructure contributions plans to help support and accelerate new housing supply. Round 1 projects will support the delivery of approximately 40,000 homes. This includes new housing capacity that the projects will create and existing capacity that the projects will help unlock by addressing barriers to development.

Round 2 of the RHSPF closed in September 2023 and provided \$2.93 million to fund 16 projects that will support the delivery of approximately 24,000 homes. Round 2 projects are due to be completed by April 2025.

Visit the [program website](#) to view a full list of these projects.

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## More information

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

If you have any questions, please contact the program team at [regional.housing@dpe.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regional.housing@dpe.nsw.gov.au).