

Eligibility and Applications Policy

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1 Purpose and Applicability

This policy references the eligibility criteria for Social Housing in New South Wales (NSW) and describes how the Women's Housing Company (WHC) accepts applications and assesses eligibility, in accordance with [Housing Pathways policies](#).

The policy applies to all Social Housing properties managed by the WHC. The policy applies to all WHC staff, Social Housing applicants and WHC Social Housing tenants wanting to transfer to a different property.

For applications and eligibility information relevant to Transitional Housing, Transitional Housing Plus – DV, and Affordable Housing, refer to the [Transitional Housing Policy](#), the [Transitional Housing Plus – DV Policy](#) and the [Affordable Housing Policy](#).

The [Customer Service Charter](#) and [Customer Rights and Responsibilities](#) guide the interactions between the WHC, applicants and tenants.

2 References

2.1 External or Statutory Requirements

This policy complies with the following external legislation or requirements:

- Housing Act 2001
- Community Housing Providers (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012
- FACS Eligibility for Social Housing Policy
- Housing Pathways Policies
- NSW Community Housing Access Policy
- NSW Community Housing Eligibility Policy

2.2 Definitions

Housing Pathways is the way applications for housing assistance are managed in NSW. It is a partnership between the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), including the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) and the Housing Contact Centre (HCC), and participating Community Housing Providers (CHPs). Housing Pathways provides a single application process with common eligibility and prioritisation guidelines and a standardised assessment process, regardless of which housing provider is approached by an applicant, using a 'no wrong door' protocol.

NSW Housing Register is the single waiting list for housing assistance across NSW, where eligible applications are registered and from which FACS Housing, the AHO and participating CHPs make offers of housing.

Social Housing is subsidised rental accommodation provided by not-for-profit, non-government or government organisations to assist people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private housing market. Social housing includes public housing and community housing as well as other housing assistance services and products.

The following terms are used in this document, with specific meaning:

- "may" is an acceptable action or requirement but not mandatory
- "must" or "shall" or "will" designates a mandatory requirement or action

3 Eligibility Requirements

To ensure that social housing assists people who are most in need, the eligibility criteria for social housing in NSW concentrates on assisting:

- People on low income that need support to help them live independently, and
- People on low income that have problems finding affordable housing in the private market that is suited to their needs.

To be eligible for social housing, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be an Australian citizen or have permanent residency in Australia; and
- Be a resident in New South Wales (NSW), and
- Be able to establish their identity; and
- Have a household income within the income eligibility limits; and
- Not own any assets or property which could reasonably be expected to resolve housing need; and
- Be able to sustain a successful tenancy, without support or with appropriate support in place; and
- If applicable, make repayments of any former debts to a social housing provider; and
- In general, be at least 18 years of age.

The Income Eligibility Limits are reviewed and updated annually by FACS Housing and published on their website. Refer to the [Social Housing Eligibility and Allocations Policy Supplement](#).

4 Applications

Applications for housing assistance can be made through a number of channels:

- Call the FACS Housing Contact Centre (HCC) on 1800 422 322
- Complete the online application form on the [FACS Housing Assistance website](#)
- Call or drop into any office of FACS Housing or any participating CHP to collect and complete a paper version of the Application for Housing Assistance form

WHC staff are available to assist applicants by explaining the application process, forms and evidence requirements.

Applications lodged directly with the WHC will be registered, processed and assessed in accordance with Housing Pathways Policies. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application assessment.

5 Waiting Times for General Social Housing

The time that an applicant will wait before being offered housing depends on a number of factors, including the supply of social housing in the nominated allocation zone, the number of vacancies, the number of people waiting for the same type of housing in the same area who have been waiting longer, the number of people who have demonstrated a higher need to be housed, and the number of applicants leaving the NSW Housing Register. Expected waiting times are published on the [FACS website](#).

6 Change in Circumstances

If an applicant experiences any changes in their household circumstances, including contact details, a change of name, the number of people included in the application, any changes to household income or asset ownership, or any factors that might affect the type of property or location required, they must notify FACS Housing or a participating CHP.

A change in circumstances may require a reassessment of an application for housing assistance, including an interview.

WHC staff are available to assist applicants by explaining the change of circumstance process, forms and evidence requirements, and to conduct interviews and reassessments.

Changes of circumstance lodged directly with the WHC will be processed, assessed and updated on the NSW Housing Register, in accordance with ***Housing Pathways Policies***. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of any re-assessment conducted due to the change of circumstances.

7 Complaints and Appeals

Any person who has a complaint about how the Eligibility and Applications Policy has been administered, or applicants and tenants who wish to appeal a decision, should refer to the ***Complaints and Appeals Policy***.