2019 Affordable Housing Innovation Fund Guidelines

To support new approaches to affordable housing

Applications open: 9:00am, Wednesday 17 April 2019
Applications close: 5:00pm, Monday 27 May 2019

Please read these guidelines carefully before completing your application online through the SmartyGrants portal.

Introduction

The ACT Government has established the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund (the Innovation Fund) to encourage and support new approaches to increasing the supply of affordable housing in the ACT.

Affordable housing is dedicated housing made available for purchase or rent to households on low to moderate incomes.

The focus of the Innovation Fund is to increase the supply of affordable housing options for households who are in housing stress in the private rental market, are homeless or are looking to move on from public housing.

The Innovation Fund will support projects within five specific funding categories, each reflecting a different delivery model:

1. **Disability Accommodation Project**
   
   In this model we are seeking expressions of interest from the private or community sector to come forward with projects that boost the supply of accessible low-cost accommodation for either rent or purchase targeted at persons living with a disability. The project may be on existing privately leased land or may be on a site released under the Government’s new affordable or community housing targets from within the annual land release program.

   We are looking for innovative solutions that will not only incorporate a high level of universal design but will enable better social inclusion particularly for persons who may be currently housed in inappropriate or institutional type accommodation.

2. **Supportive Housing Project on Underutilised Community Facility Land**
   
   In this model we are seeking interest from lessees of underutilised community facility land to access funding to facilitate projects that boost the supply of affordable supported accommodation. This could be further targeted (but not limited) to cohorts in the greatest need including elderly women, families escaping domestic violence, or persons transitioning out of the justice system.

3. **Accommodation for Low Income Families Escaping Domestic Violence**
   
   In this model we are seeking interest from the private or community sector to come forward with projects that boost the supply of specialist housing for this cohort. The project may be on existing privately leased land or may be on a site released under the Government’s new affordable or community housing targets from within the indicative land release program.
4. **Other Innovative Approaches to Boosting Affordable Housing Supply**
   In this model we are looking for any new projects or ideas that could potentially boost the supply of affordable housing.

5. **Home Sharing**
   In this model homeowners with a spare room in their own property are matched with low income tenants seeking affordable rental accommodation, in exchange for providing assistance around the home.

Funding for projects under these models may be allocated to:

- provide start-up seed funding to grow an enterprise into a self-sustaining operation
- bridge financial gaps that may assist in making a project financially viable and/or
- assist with specialist advice.

We are now inviting organisations to submit funding applications for projects which will deliver affordable housing outcomes through these models. The types of projects we anticipate, the criteria which applications must meet, and the assessment and funding allocation process are set out below.

**Background**

The Innovation Fund responds to a 2017 commitment under the 9th Parliamentary Agreement for the ACT Legislative Assembly and is an important component of the new ACT Housing Strategy. It is one of a suite of initiatives which builds on the earlier Affordable Housing Action Plan.

Facilitating the provision of affordable housing is a Government priority. Recent research has shown that a significant number of households within the Territory are experiencing housing stress or homelessness.

The development of the new ACT Housing Strategy has a deliberate focus on strengthening existing supports for low income households in income quintile one (Q1), earning up to $55,000 per annum, and providing greater opportunities for households in income quintile two (Q2), earning up to $100,000. As a cohort, Q2 households are at greatest risk of experiencing housing stress, especially if they are reliant on the private rental market.

The feedback received in 2017 during the Housing and Homelessness Summit, and from engagement with the community on the discussion paper “Towards a new Housing Strategy”, has informed the development of the Innovation Fund. We recognise that success in tackling the issue of housing affordability is dependent on coordinated whole-of-government and whole-of-community action across the entire housing continuum from homelessness, public and community housing, disability housing, private rental and home ownership. The ACT Government will continue to engage at the Commonwealth level to seek complementary and supportive action.
Funding Priorities 2018-19

The Innovation Fund has been established to respond to the following four priority Affordable Housing goals, with 2018-19 funding particularly focused on Goals 3 and 4:

Goal 1 – An equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for the ACT community

- Provide land and housing development opportunities to meet demand
- Set a 15% target for social and affordable housing
- Maintain a healthy land and housing development pipeline
- Provide a diverse mix of housing types and choices
- Facilitate innovative design and delivery mechanisms and
- Encourage well designed, environmentally sustainable and accessible housing.

Goal 2 – Reducing homelessness

- Build strong ACT government and community sector partnerships to effectively address homelessness in the ACT
- Intervene early and reduce the intergenerational impacts of homelessness
- Address gaps in our services system and respond to new and emerging groups vulnerable to homelessness
- Develop a strong and sustainable homelessness services sector supported to enhance workforce and organisational capability and
- Establish an integrated and coordinated human services system across the ACT government.

Goal 3 – Strengthening social housing assistance

For those households, especially those earning the lowest incomes - below $53,000 per annum (Q1) – for whom home ownership or private rental may not be a viable option:

- Grow and renew social housing to better meet demand
- Build a range of housing options that is designed to better meet the diverse and contemporary tenant needs
- Develop a tenancy service that focuses on client outcomes and responds to individual needs and
- Provide a better customer experience through a modern and digital service platform for current and future tenants.

Goal 4 – Increasing affordable rental housing

- Grow and diversify the community housing sector
- Grow the supply of affordable private rental properties
- Strengthen rights and protections for tenants
- Target advice and support to tenants and landlords and
- Target programs to increase supply of affordable housing for vulnerable and disadvantaged households.

Goal 5 - Increasing affordable home ownership

- Provide more affordable homes for purchase and
- Increase home ownership through alternative finance and occupancy models.
Priority Groups

The Innovation Fund will prioritise programs which provide specific benefit for the following identified “at need” groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- People with a disability
- People escaping family violence
- Refugees
- Older women
- Youth.

The feedback received in 2017 during the Housing and Homelessness Summit, and from engagement with the community on the discussion paper “Towards a new Housing Strategy”, identified these groups as being at particular risk of homelessness and housing stress.

Funding Categories

Eligible entities may submit applications in any or each one of the following five (5) categories.

**Specialised Disability Accommodation Project**

Projects under this category will aim to increase the supply of accessible low-cost accommodation for either rent or purchase, targeted at persons living with a disability. The project may be on existing privately leased land or may be on a site released under the Government’s new affordable or community housing targets from within the annual land release program.

We are looking for innovative solutions that will not only incorporate high level of universal design but will enable better social inclusion particularly for persons whom may be currently housed in inappropriate or institutional type accommodation.

The Innovation Fund could provide, for example, funding to assist with:

- program establishment costs
- tenancy managers and/or
- an initial promotional campaign.

**Supportive Housing Project on Underutilised Community Facility Land**

Projects under this category will aim to facilitate projects that boost the supply of affordable supported accommodation. This could be further targeted (but not limited) to cohorts in the greatest need including elderly women, families escaping domestic violence, or persons transitioning out of the justice system.

The Innovation Fund could, for example, provide funding to assist with:

- assist with set-up costs
- bridge any financial gaps that may assist in making a project financially viable and
- assist with due diligence, planning, design, legal and or engineering advice.
Accommodation for Low Income Families Escaping Domestic Violence

In this model we are seeking interest from the private or community sector to come forward with projects that boost the supply of specialist housing for the growing cohort. The project may be on existing privately leased land or may be on a site released under the Government’s new affordable or community housing targets from within the annual land release program.

The Innovation Fund could, for example, provide funding to:

- assist with set-up costs
- bridge any financial gaps that may assist in making a project financially viable
- assist with due diligence, planning, design, legal or engineering advice.

Other Innovative Approaches to Boosting Affordable Housing Supply

In this model we are looking for any new projects or ideas that could potentially boost the supply of affordable housing.

The Innovation Fund could, for example, provide funding to assist with:

- assist with set-up costs
- bridge any financial gaps that may assist in making a project financially viable
- assist with due diligence, planning, design, legal or engineering advice.

Home Share

Projects under this category will aim to increase the supply of affordable private rental accommodation. This will be through the matching of homeowners who have spare rooms in their own property, with low income tenants seeking affordable rental accommodation. In exchange for affordable rent, the tenants will enter into an agreement with the homeowner to provide a level of in-home help.

The Home Sharing model brings together older householders or householders with a disability who could benefit from help in the home and companionship, with people prepared to lend a hand in return for affordable accommodation. The Householder provides a bedroom and shared facilities. In exchange, the Home Sharer provides approximately 10 hours per week of practical assistance such as cooking, cleaning, shopping and gardening, as well as providing company and the added security of having someone else sleeping in the home.

Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance (HANZA) has developed a manual which covers aspects of planning a Homeshare program. It provides some guidance which may useful to prospective operators in areas such as organisational and community assessment, program design, hiring of staff, record keeping, successful matching, marketing and funding. The manual can be accessed from HANZA for a fee.

Further resources are also available on the Homeshare International website.

The Innovation Fund could, for example, provide funding to assist with:

- program establishment costs
- program co-ordinators and relationship managers and/or
- an initial promotional campaign.
Available Funding
Specialist Disability Accommodation category has $125,000 available, the Supportive Housing Project on Underutilised Community Facility Land category has $125,000 available, the Accommodation for Low Income Families Escaping Domestic Violence category has $125,000, there is $125,000 available for other innovative approaches to boosting affordable housing supply and the HomeShare category has $220,000 available.

Grants will range from $5,000 to $125,000 for the Specialist Disability Accommodation category, $5,000 to $125,000 for the Supportive Housing Project on Underutilised Community Facility Land category, $5,000 to $125,000 for Accommodation for Low Income Families Escaping Domestic Violence category, $5,000 to $125,000 for other innovative approaches to boosting the affordable housing supply and from $5,000 to $220,000 for the Home Sharing category (GST exclusive).

Successful applicants may be awarded an amount other than the amount requested in their application. Funded projects would generally be expected to have some financial or in-kind contribution by applicants as a demonstration of their commitment to the project.

Under the Program, no more than $125,000 and $220,000 will be approved for funding to an applicant in each category over a twelve-month period (however consideration will be given to applicants that can demonstrate a need to have the funding over a longer period). Concurrent grants will not be provided to any applicant in the same category. An entity (individual, company or organisation) will not be funded more than once for the same or very similar innovation.

Grants are one-off for the activities specified and are not intended as a recurring funding source.

Indicative Program Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>STAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 17 April 2019</td>
<td>Announcement of the 2019, Stage 2, Innovation Fund program and call for call for Expressions of Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 17 April 2019</td>
<td>Applications open 9am ESDT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 27 May 2019</td>
<td>Applications close 5pm EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 25 June 2019</td>
<td>Successful grant projects announced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June/July 2019</td>
<td>Deeds of Agreement are signed, and projects commence</td>
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Eligibility Requirements

Individual Eligibility Requirements

Only entities (individuals, companies and incorporated non-profit or private organisations) which meet the following eligibility requirements may apply:

1. All previous ACT Government grants must be fully acquitted and all reporting obligations fully met.
2. A current Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN) must be provided.
3. Only one (1) application per eligible entity is allowed in each funding category.
4. Current ACT Government staff are not eligible.

If you do not comply with the above eligibility requirements, your application will not be assessed for funding.
Applicants do not need to be residents of, or have their organisation registered in the ACT, but the project must be of benefit to the ACT community.

Current operators in the affordable housing area may apply.

Exclusions on the use of Grants Funding

Funding will not be approved for expenditure related to any of the following:

1. Activities that do not contribute to the aims of the Innovation Fund Program
2. Activities where alternative sources of funding are more appropriate
3. Activities that do not occur primarily within the Australian Capital Territory
4. Retrospective costs — activities or purchases which have already taken place or been completed prior to signing the Deed of Agreement
5. Commitments such as contracts, hire purchases or rental agreements for any goods beyond the period funded
6. Purchase or lease of real estate or vehicles
7. Travelling allowances
8. Excessive salaries and/or administrative costs. The Program will only fund salary and administrative expenses that can be demonstrated to relate to the grant project i.e. not to the normal operations of an organisation. These should be based on the relevant industrial award
9. Public liability or other insurances for an organisation.

Assessment of Applications

Applications will be assessed through a competitive Expression of Interest (EOI) process. Applications must be submitted through the online application form.

An Evaluation Panel (the Panel) will review all applications and recommend eligibility and priority within the available funds. The Panel will include representatives from some or all of the following:

- Environment, Planning & Sustainable Development Directorate
- Community Services Directorate
- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

The Panel will make their recommendation based on the information provided in the application.

All eligible funding applications will be assessed in terms of the proposed project’s demonstrated potential to deliver against the following selection criteria:

1. Funding Priorities
   How the proposed program is consistent with one or more of the Affordable Housing funding priorities and will benefit the community.
2. Priority Groups
   Whether the proposed program will provide specific benefit for one or more of the identified Priority Groups.
3. Value for Money
   The degree of budget rigour in identifying the anticipated costs associated with the proposed program, and the comparative value-for-money of the proposition.
4. Program Design
5. Comprehensiveness of project design, feasibility, the appropriateness of identified timing for required funding within the first 12 months.
6. Staffing and Expertise
Degree to which the applicant has and/or can access the necessary skills, experience and expertise to deliver the project.

The Panel is not limited in the number of applicants it can recommend as successful in each category, and may decide to make no recommendation in one or more categories if no proposal is considered to demonstrate sufficient merit against the criteria.

The Panel will make their recommendations to the Director-General of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, who will determine the successful applicants. It is anticipated that applicants will be advised of the outcome of the assessment process within thirty (30) days of the closing date for applications.

Making an Application

Your application needs to be detailed enough to explain your request and how you worked out the requested funding amount. In general, your budget should be appropriate and realistic. You should also show other contributions you have received or sought for this project/program and separate these from the grant amount requested from the ACT Government.

Please complete all the required information on the application form and provide relevant attachments in order to successfully submit the online application. You will be asked to provide the following details:

- Applicant details
- Project details
- Funding priority area
- Statement of Benefit
- Project Staffing and Expertise
- Amount Requested and Program Budget
- Timetable
- Declaration

Accepting a Grant

1. Successful applicants will be required to enter into an Agreement with the ACT Government setting out the terms and conditions for which funding will be provided, including milestone reporting and acquittal requirements within the agreed timeframe; this Agreement will be in the form of a Deed of Agreement.

2. The ACT Government does not carry any responsibility for the activity undertaken funded by the Innovation Fund.

3. Funds may be spent only on items and activities specified in the agreed Deed of Agreement. Any unspent funds must be returned to the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

4. If you wish to change the terms of your funding in any way, you must first obtain written permission from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

5. The names, project descriptions and funding amount of all successful applications will be posted on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate’s website following the assessment process; by accepting a grant you agree to this requirement.

6. Any promotional material for the funded program must acknowledge the ACT Government’s Innovation Fund support.
Reporting
All successful applicants must expend the funds within the timeframes nominated in the Deed of Agreement; this is normally twelve (12) months from receipt of funds or at the completion of the activity, whichever is sooner.

Progress reports will be required to be prepared by successful applicants at milestones set out in the Deed of Agreement. A final report will also be required which includes a description of project outcomes, and an acquittal of how the grant was used. This may include an independent audit of the grant expenditure. We will provide an acquittal template that will make clear the information required. We require you to keep ALL receipts and submit them with your acquittal form.

You will be required to give back any grant money not expended, as part of the acquittal process.

Important Information for Applicants

Accessibility
The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format please telephone 02 6207 1831.

If English is not your first language and you require the translating and interpreting services – please telephone 131 450.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the National Relay Service phone 133 677 then ask for 133 427

Or - TTY (hearing impaired only): 02 6207 2622

When to submit your application
Applications open 9:00am, Wednesday 17 April 2019
Applications close 5:00pm, Monday 27 May 2019
Applications received after 5:00pm, Monday 27 May 2019, will not be accepted.

How to submit your application
Submit your application online via the online Innovation Fund: to support new approaches to affordable housing application form. You will need to create a log-in to begin your application and you may begin anywhere in the Application Form. Please ensure you save as you go.

Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted.

If you are having any difficulty in accessing the application form, or if an error occurs, please contact the Program Manager during business hours.

Please quote your application number if you have one.

Phone: 02 6207 5494
Email: affordablehousing@act.gov.au
Addendum

Any additional information provided by ACT Government as part of this grants program will be
posted online at the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate website.

In addition, all applicants that have started or submitted an online application form will be notified
by email to the address that was registered with SmartyGrants.

Complaints

What you can expect

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the application process
and/or an unsuccessful application for a grant.

You or your representatives have the right to raise your concerns. This information supports us to
improve services and supports your right to ask questions about the grant application process as
well as decisions made in relation to an unsuccessful application.

You can expect to:

1. be treated respectfully, fairly and in confidence;
2. have your concerns dealt with as soon as possible;
3. be informed of progress; and
4. be told of the outcome.

Further Information

For more information about the Innovation Fund and the application process, please contact the
Innovation Fund Program Manager:

Phone: 02 6207 5494
Email: affordablehousing@act.gov.au