

Fact Sheet



It is illegal for an officer of Housing NSW 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 an officer of Housing NSW in exchange for helping you. If you have any information regarding this, please contact Housing NSW's Business Assurance Unit on 1800 806 206. Housing NSW may refuse the provision of further housing services to anyone who has engaged or sought to engage in corrupt or illegal conduct.

What is priority housing?

If you have been approved for the housing register and you are in urgent need of housing, you may be eligible for priority housing.

To be considered for priority housing you must be:

- currently eligible for public housing and
- in urgent need of housing and
- unable to resolve your housing need in the private rental market.

People approved for priority housing are housed ahead of most other people on the Housing NSW register. Housing NSW must be satisfied that your housing need is more urgent than the housing needs of other people who are waiting their turn to be housed.

How do I apply?

If you haven't applied for public housing before, you will need to complete a Housing Register application form. The form is available from your local office or the Housing NSW website. You must be eligible for public housing before you can be considered for priority housing.

If you have already been approved for public housing, you will need to complete an application for priority housing also available from your local office or the Housing NSW website.

You can ask someone else to pick up the forms for you or help you fill them in. But you will have to provide documents that confirm your eligibility for priority housing and support your request for urgent housing. Examples of supporting documentation you may have to show Housing NSW include:

- passport, birth certificate or driver's licence
- bank books or statements
- completed Medical Assessment form

- letters or reports from health professionals, other agencies or support providers
- current Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs statement, details received electronically through the Income Confirmation Scheme or payslips with year to date total.

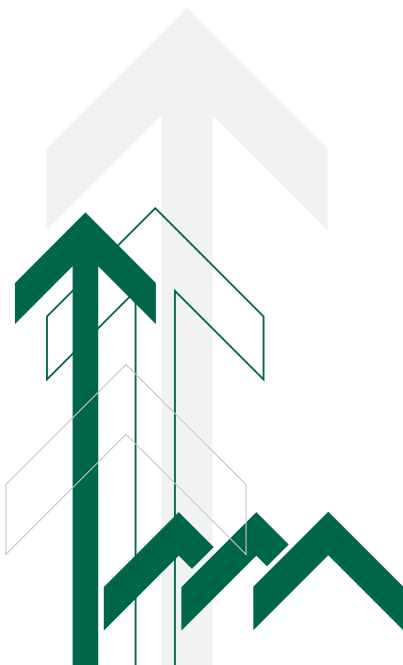
You will need to prove that your household income does not exceed the income eligibility criteria for public housing. For information on current income limits refer to the *Income Eligibility Limits* fact sheet which is available from a Client Service Officer at your local Housing NSW office or the Housing NSW website.

Housing NSW will verify your income in one of the following ways:

- for each person who participates in the Income Confirmation Scheme, we will accept Centrelink's advice about their Centrelink payments. However, we will not accept Centrelink's advice about income such as wages, savings or shares. Each person must show proof of this income.
- for each person who does not participate in the Income Confirmation Scheme, there must be proof of all income received.

Proof of income can include:

- current Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs statement
- completed Form B for each person who receives any income through casual, part-time or full-time employment
- current profit and loss statement or the latest taxation return for each person who is self-employed
- letter or statement from a superannuation fund confirming the amount received for each person
- letter or statement from the respective government of each person who receives an overseas pension, confirming the amount received.



You will be advised in writing of the outcome of your application.

How is my application for priority housing assessed?

Housing NSW will assess your application and any supporting documentation that you provide.

Factors Housing NSW considers in assessing the urgency of your housing need include:

- unstable housing circumstances
- at risk factors, such as domestic violence
- inappropriateness of your existing accommodation for your basic housing requirements.

You may be experiencing unstable housing circumstances if you are:

- homeless or about to become homeless
- living in crisis or emergency accommodation
- living with family or friends who cannot provide longer term accommodation
- living apart from your partner or children because you cannot find, or afford housing suitable for your whole family.

You may have an urgent housing need because you, or a member of your household, are at risk of harm due to any of the following:

- domestic violence
- sexual assault
- child abuse
- threatening behaviour by someone you are living with
- torture and trauma.

You may also have an urgent housing need because the place in which you are currently living is very unsatisfactory because:

- it is severely overcrowded
- it is substandard (eg extreme damp, dangerous or unhealthy conditions)

- it is lacking essential facilities such as water, electricity, a bathroom or kitchen
- you need secure accommodation before you can take your child out of care
- you have a severe and ongoing medical condition or disability.

If you have demonstrated an urgent need for housing, Housing NSW then assesses whether you are able to resolve your own housing need by looking at:

- any assets or savings you can use
- your housing requirements, such as the number of bedrooms your household size requires
- whether you need disability modifications
- the suitability of other housing options such as Rentstart, crisis, emergency or supported accommodation
- the availability and cost of private rental accommodation that matches your basic housing requirements in your preferred area as well as other suitable areas
- any personal circumstances, such as a large family, that may reduce your access to private rental accommodation
- whether you have a disability, or medical condition, that may reduce your access to the private rental market, or make it difficult for you to rent privately.

Your ability to afford private rental accommodation is based on your household's combined income. Housing NSW considers private rent reasonable if it doesn't exceed 50% of your household's gross weekly income.

Can I apply for priority housing if my carer's income or assets are over the Housing NSW's income limit?

You are still eligible for priority housing if your live-in carer's income and assets place your household over Housing NSW's income or asset limit, provided:

- you meet all the other criteria for priority housing and



- your carer is receiving a Carer Pension or Carer Allowance and
- your carer understands that they won't have any tenancy rights and they will have to leave the property if you move out for any reason.

If approved for priority housing, you are entitled to an extra bedroom for your carer. When you move into public housing your carer's income is assessed as part of your gross household income and this will affect the amount of rent your household has to pay.

What happens if I'm approved for priority housing?

Your name will be listed on the housing register for priority housing and you will receive a letter advising you that your application is approved.

When it is your turn for priority housing, you will be made an offer of accommodation. If you reject two reasonable offers your name will be removed from the housing register and you will not receive any further offers of housing.

Housing NSW considers a reasonable offer to be one which matches:

- the number of bedrooms your household size requires
- your chosen area (not suburb)
- any special location or dwelling requirements demonstrated in your application such as needing to live near public transport, or disability modifications.

What type and length of lease will I receive?

Tenants entering public housing will be offered a fixed term lease of 2, 5 or 10 years, depending on the Housing NSW assessment of the household's need.

What happens when my fixed term lease ends?

Fixed term leases are reviewed before they end to confirm that the household is still

eligible for public housing and to decide if the lease will be extended.

If the household is still eligible for public housing, the lease will be extended for 2, 5 or 10 years depending on the needs of the household. In some cases, the lease may be renewed in another suitable property.

If the household is no longer eligible for public housing, the lease will not be extended and the household will be required to move out when the current lease ends.

If you are not eligible for a further lease, Housing NSW may offer you help to move into private housing. Further information on the types of help Housing NSW may be able to offer will be provided after the lease review.

For more information about lease arrangements, refer to the fact sheets *Changes to Public Housing Leases* and *Lease Review*, available from your local Housing NSW office or the Housing NSW website.

Do I need to do anything if I want to live in a high-demand zone?

If you want to live in a high-demand zone you will need to complete a Locational Needs Assessment form, available from your local Housing NSW office or the Housing NSW website and satisfy this assessment. Housing NSW will consider your need to live in a high demand zone based on the information contained on the form and any supporting documentation you give us.

To be eligible for housing in a high demand zone, you or a member of your household must have:

- an ongoing medical condition or a disability, and
- a need to access services in the requested area at least once a week on an ongoing basis.



Interpreter Services

If you have difficulty understanding English, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

The Translating and Interpreting Service will telephone Housing NSW for you at no cost.

If you are hearing impaired, please contact the TTY Service on 1800 628 310.

Arabic

خدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفوية 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

What happens if my request for a high demand zone isn't approved?

If your request for a high demand zone isn't approved, you will need to choose a different zone. If you don't tell Housing NSW what other zones you prefer, Housing NSW will select a different zone for you that matches your urgent housing needs.

If you haven't demonstrated a locational need and refuse to accept a different zone, Housing NSW will withdraw your approval for priority housing. This means that you won't receive an offer of urgent housing. However, you will still be listed on the housing register in your chosen area.

What can I do if I don't agree with the Housing NSW decision?

If you disagree with Housing NSW's decision, you should first discuss your concerns with a Client Service Officer. The next step if you still believe we made the wrong decision is to ask for a formal review of the decision. For information on how reviews work, ask the Client Service Officer for a copy of the fact sheet *Reviewing Decisions*, or go to the Housing NSW web site to read the *Appeals and Review of Decisions* policy.

There are two levels of review or appeal.

You can lodge the first appeal by filling in a Reviewing Decisions form, available from your local Housing NSW office. The staff member who does the first internal review will be more senior than the one who made the original decision.

If your first appeal is declined, you can apply for another review which is looked at by the Housing Appeals Committee. This is called a Second Level Appeal request. This form is available from your local Housing NSW office.

What other kinds of housing assistance can I apply for?

If you need help renting privately, you may be eligible for Rentstart Assistance. There are three types of Rentstart Assistance:

- Rentstart Standard provides basic financial assistance with up to 75% of a rental bond
- Rentstart-Plus provides additional assistance for people facing severe financial barriers to private rental or who are homeless
- Rentstart-Tenancy Assistance provides assistance to maintain a tenancy through help with rental arrears.

You'll need to fill out a Rentstart application form if you want to apply for Rentstart Assistance. For more information about this type of financial assistance, refer to the fact sheet *Rentstart*, available from your local office or the Housing NSW website.

More information

For more information you can:

- visit your local Housing NSW office, Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm (closed public holidays and 8.30am - 1pm on Wednesdays). Office hours may vary in some locations.
- phone Housing NSW on **Freecall 1800 629 212**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- phone the Aboriginal Enquiry Line on Freecall 1800 355 740, Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm (excluding public holidays)
- go to Housing NSW website **www.housing.nsw.gov.au**

