

# North-West Aboriginal Housing Fund

Enabling pathways to independence and wellbeing

## ACCO Aboriginal Employee Housing Grants Program

### Frequently asked questions

The Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Aboriginal Employee Housing Grants Program will support the valuable work of ACCOs across the North-West by providing secure and stable housing for Aboriginal employees and their families.

\$15 million is available to enable ACCOs to construct new homes, refurbish existing homes, or buy homes to be occupied by their Aboriginal employees and their families. The homes must be in the Pilbara or Kimberley regions of WA.

Access the guidelines for the grant submission process via [SmartyGrants](#).

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#### 1) Who can apply for this grant funding?

Only ACCOs who operate in the Pilbara or Kimberley regions of WA are eligible to apply.

An ACCO is defined in accordance with the Priority Reform 2 of Closing the Gap<sup>1</sup>:

‘Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations deliver services that strengthen and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities and people and are:

- incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit;
- controlled and operated by ATSI people;
- connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services; and
- governed by a majority ATSI governing body.’

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<sup>1</sup> [Closing the Gap 2020: Priority Reform 2 - Building the Community-Controlled Sector](#)

## **2) If our organisation does not already own land, can we still apply?**

Homes must be on land owned or controlled by the ACCO applying for the grant (also known as 'the Respondent'). The Respondent must demonstrate ownership or that they will secure ownership or control within 90 days of grant execution, in the case of proposed new builds, or existing homes to be refurbished.

The option to buy homes for sale on the open market is available for Respondents that are unable to meet the above.

## **3) Will the ACCO be expected to co-contribute?**

To ensure that funding is distributed across the Pilbara and Kimberley, and to a range of organisations grant funding for new builds will be capped at \$650,000 per dwelling.

ACCOs seeking grant funding for new builds will be required to co-contribute funding if the cost of construction exceeds the capped amount.

Grant funding to enable homes to be purchased by an ACCO will be capped at the median price (for the 12-month period) for a three (3) bedroom, one (1) bathroom dwelling in the proposed location (Local Government Area) of purchase. Co-contribution is encouraged.

With consideration to these capped amounts, the Department of Communities reserves the right to consider Submissions for larger amounts by exception, and on a case-by-case basis. Respondents are encouraged to co-contribute to the overall cost required to complete their project works if required.

## **4) What type of dwelling is permitted?**

The Department of Communities will consider all dwelling types including houses, units, apartments and villas, semi-detached dwellings and innovative forms and construction such as tiny homes and modular or prefabricated dwellings. The Respondent should ensure that the dwelling type proposed meets the needs of their employees.

## **5) Who can live in the homes created using the grant funding?**

Homes must be used for the purposes of housing Aboriginal employees of the Respondent, and their families.

## **6) How long will organisations be required to use the homes to provide Aboriginal employees with housing?**

Successful Respondents will need to use the homes for the purposes of housing their Aboriginal employees for at least ten years.

## **7) What will be required of ACCOs if they are successful in securing the grant?**

Successful Respondents will be required to demonstrate how training and career development will be provided to Aboriginal employees living in homes funded under the ACCO Employee Housing Grants Program and to report on housing provision and employee support for a minimum of five years.

## **8) Can ACCOs collect rent from the employees living in the homes provided through the grant?**

Yes, but it will need to be set at an affordable rate relative to the employee's household income.

### **9) Who will assess the Submissions?**

We heard in our regional engagement sessions that Aboriginal representation on the evaluation panel was crucial. We also heard regional representation was important. The membership of the grant Submission evaluation panel will represent this feedback.

### **10) Where can I lodge our Submission?**

The Submission will need to be lodged via SmartyGrants. The guidelines on this site will assist your organisation to make a submission.

### **11) How long is the Submission period?**

The Submission lodgement period opens on 1 July 2024 and closes on 30 August 2024.

### **12) How will we know if our organisation has been successful?**

Respondents will be advised in writing whether their Submission will be awarded grant funding after all Submissions received during the lodgement period have been reviewed by the Evaluation Panel.

Successful Respondents will be advised on the path forward to formalise the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and for funds to be released.

### **13) Will there be further funding available after this grant round is complete?**

Future grant rounds may be established at a later date subject to available funding. If so, Communities may contact any Respondents unsuccessful in this first funding round and ask them to confirm whether their Submission still remains valid for consideration.

Respondents are encouraged to demonstrate their full demand for Aboriginal employee housing.

### **14) What support will be available to Respondents to assist with the Submission process?**

Respondents can contact the North-West Aboriginal Housing Fund via email at [NWAHFACCOGrants@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:NWAHFACCOGrants@communities.wa.gov.au) for support and any queries.

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## Responses to Questions Asked at Online Briefing Session – 8 July 2024

### **15) Are consultant fees such as architect fees included within the 5% project management costs?**

No. Consultant fees such as architect fees may be included as part of the Submission as a capital cost.

Project management costs can be included for New Builds and Refurbishments in addition to capital costs, and should be commensurate to the proposed project works, up to a maximum of 5% of the total Submission amount.

### **16) Are there any restrictions on the number of Submissions an organisation can submit?**

No. There is no limit on the number of Submissions a Respondent can submit.

For New Builds and Spot Purchases, Respondents must lodge one (1) Submission per lot.

For Refurbishment, Respondents can lodge one (1) Submission for multiple dwellings that are located in the same region.

### **17) Is there a baselined cost per sqm that Submissions for New Builds will be assessed against?**

All dwelling types including houses, individual units, apartments and villas, semi-detached dwellings and innovative housing types will be considered. The variation in dwelling types prohibits an accurate response to this question.

Respondents should be aware that the evaluation criteria aims to assess the degree to which the cost of the project offers value for money based on the location, applicable housing type (including construction methodology) and design standards.

### **18) Do Spot Purchase homes have to meet the minimum 7-star Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) rating?**

No. The Grant Guidelines do not require dwellings under the Spot Purchase workstream to be a minimum 7-star Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) rating.

### **19) Are we able to apply for grant funding to purchase land?**

New Builds must be constructed on land owned or controlled by the Respondent at the time of Submission, or within 90 days of grant execution. Grant funding cannot be used for the purchase of land.

### **20) For the Spot Purchase workstream, how does the median price assessment work and at what point is this assessed, noting this will continually change?**

For Spot Purchase, the grant funding amount sought by Respondents will be considered relative to the current median dwelling price of a 3-bedroom dwelling for the specific town/s and/or community at the time of Submission. Evidence of the research undertaken to inform the grant funding amount based on this median price is required as part of a Respondent's Submission and assessed within Project Evaluation Criteria 4.

### **21) Will new dwellings built in Aboriginal Communities fall under a Housing Management Agreement?**

Dwellings funded through this Program will not fall under a Housing Management Agreement.

**22) Where New Builds are constructed, will connection fees be waived or will they have to be included in the cap amount?**

The management of all essential services (power, water and wastewater) has now been transferred to the relevant licensed specialists (Horizon Power and Water Corporation) and Respondents are advised to approach these authorities to discuss the requirements for essential services for their project works.

The cost of connection for these services (if required) are permitted to be included as part of a Respondent's Submission.

**23) How will construction costs across regional locations be assessed in a fair and equitable way?**

The evaluation of Submissions will assess the degree to which the cost of the project offers value for money based on the location, dwelling type and design. Submissions for larger amounts will be assessed by exception and Respondents should provide rationale for any cost departures. The Grant Guidelines state, "With consideration to these amounts, Communities reserves the right to consider Submissions for larger amounts by exception, and on a case-by-case basis, providing adequate is provided and evidenced in the Submission." (Grant Guidelines, Section 4.1.2)

**24) Can Submissions be proof-read or reviewed by Communities prior to Submission?**

The Respondent is strongly recommended to submit as much supporting evidence as possible. Proof reading is unable to be provided, however should a Submission be missing supporting evidence, Respondents will be notified prior to evaluation and provided an opportunity to submit further supporting evidence within a specified timeframe.

**25) For Spot Purchases, are we required to identify the specific dwelling we would like to purchase?**

No. Identification of the specific dwelling is not required for to Submission for a Spot Purchase, but is permissible.

**26) Can grant funding be used towards the cost for demolition?**

Yes. The cost of demolition is an allowable inclusion for New Builds and Refurbishments Submissions.

**27) For New Builds, do partnerships and consortiums relating to dwelling use and allocation need to be identified as part of the Submission or can this be done afterwards?**

Partnership and consortium applications are permitted and Primary Respondents will need to identify and demonstrate the parties to the partnership arrangement as part of their Submission, including providing details on the nature of the agreement and intended dwelling allocation and management.

**28) Are lease agreements for land with private parties permitted?**

Yes. The Respondent must demonstrate current ownership or control, or how they will secure ownership or control of the land within 90 days of execution of the grant agreement. Lease agreements between the Respondent and a private party are permitted and details should be provided as part of the Submission.

**29) We are interested in acquiring existing department owned dwellings as part of this grant program. Who do we speak to?**

Respondents are encouraged to contact the owner of the dwelling prior to Submission. The closest local Department of Communities Housing Office can be found [here](#).

**30) Will there be a requirement for employees to live in the homes on a permanent basis, or are we able to offer homes in a more flexible manner?**

The Grant Guidelines do not prohibit the flexible use of homes; however Respondents should note that the Program aims to support the work of ACCOs across the North-West by providing secure and stable housing for Aboriginal employees and their families and enable those employees to improve their income and financial wellbeing as they are supported by their employer to achieve their career goals.

Respondents should demonstrate how building, buying or refurbishing housing will address this goal. The Grant Guidelines ask Respondents to demonstrate how the dwelling would deliver a positive social impact and benefits to:

- the community;
- the Respondent's Aboriginal Employee/s; as well as
- the Respondent's organisation and service delivery outcomes.

The Grant Guidelines require that Tenancy and Property Management (TPM) costs be calculated and that these costs cannot be covered by grant funding.

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## Responses to questions asked 15 – 30 July 2024

**31) Can we apply for the grant as the Trustee for a Charitable Foundation on behalf of an ACCO?**

A trustee can apply for grant funding on behalf of an ACCO as long as the Submission meets the following:

- A Memorandum of Understanding between the entities is provided as part of the Submission
- Evidence of the ownership or control of the dwelling(s) or land including any limitation on the land title is provided in the Submission
- The submission demonstrates how the ACCO has access or control to the dwellings(s) or land for a minimum of 10 years
- The Submission demonstrates how the project(s) meet the Eligibility Criteria and the Assessment Criteria
- The Submission outlines the responsibilities and approaches to project management and property and tenancy management.

**32) Can we lease some of the houses to Aboriginal staff from other ACCO's or are the houses restricted to our own employees?**

Organisations wanting to support other ACCOs can make a joint submission with other key parties, i.e. partnership or consortium. Full details of other key participating organisations will need to be included in the Submission.

The Respondent must clearly demonstrate the proposed partnership and consider how the arrangement would work. The submission will need to include clarification on, and evidence of, ownership of the land/ assets(s) and how the proposal would work. The other participating ACCO's will also need to demonstrate the proposed modelling.

**33) Can the eligible respondent be a for-profit entity which can demonstrate how it will make dwellings available to a number of related not-for-profit ACCOs for the 10 year period?**

The requirement is for the Respondent ACCO to be not-for-profit. However, an application from a consortium would be considered. Details of any other party i.e, joint applicant or other key party will need to be provided in the submission.

**34) We own a single lot with 2 dwellings. How many submissions are required if we refurbish both dwellings, and how many are required if we demolish one to undertake a rebuild, and refurbish the other?**

For Refurbishment of multiple dwellings on a single lot, one (1) submission per lot.

A separate submission is required for a new build, even when it is located on the same lot as a dwelling undergoing refurbishment.

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## Responses to questions asked 31 July – 08 August 2024

**35) If a property identified for purchase is sold by the time the grant is decided, will Respondent's be able to purchase another property of equal/less value?**

If the grant application is successful and the property you identified is no longer available at the time of the grant award, you are eligible to apply the awarded grant funding towards the purchase of another property, providing that the property is located in either the same town, community or region and is of equal or less value.

**36) Would extensions to properties being refurbished be considered part of a refurbishment?**

Yes, proposed extensions can be covered under refurbishment works.

**37) How can an organisation demonstrate value for money without a finalised design and accurate constructions costs before the submission closing date?**

The Respondent must be able to provide determination on the size of land as to how many dwellings can be developed or situated, in order to obtain costs as well as dwelling type/numbers. The Respondent may wish to seek advice from an Architect or Design Consultant familiar with development within the region to undertake a Preliminary Feasibility Study, at the cost of the Respondent.

**38) Can an estimate of cost per sqm be applied to proposed constructions?**

Yes, an estimated cost per sqm can be applied. However, as this is only an indicative methodology, it is recommended to negotiate services with an Architect or Design Consultant in the first instance.

**39) Can an organisation use the maximum amount allowable (\$650,000) for a new build for construction costs within the application?**

The Respondent may submit an application for \$650,000 per new build and provide sufficient evidence to support the proposed construction costs (\$650,000) in the application. The Respondent must note that no variation will be allowed once the grant application is assessed and outcome determined. In the case of a cost escalation or variation, the Respondent must be able to demonstrate their ability to cover the shortfall.

**40) The Smarty Grants application form asks for the legal entity name of the proposed partnership, and we are not a legal partnership, can we still apply?**

Yes, although you should detail a summary of the role and the relationship between the parties in the text box below this question. You should also provide details of any proposed arrangements to manage the consortium including a summary of the role and the relationship between the parties, for example through a Memorandum of Understanding. Please note, you will be required to provide an ABN.

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## More information

To find out more about the ACCO Aboriginal Employee Housing Grants Program, please [visit our website](#) or contact [NWAHFACCOGrants@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:NWAHFACCOGrants@communities.wa.gov.au).