Local Government Partnership Fund for Homelessness

Webinar questions and answers

On Tuesday, 7 September 2021 the Department of Communities and the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) delivered an online information session regarding the Fund for local governments.

As part of the webinar, local governments had the opportunity to submit questions. Below are the questions asked and the responses provided.

Please note, questions that were discussed during the webinar that were beyond the scope of the program have been omitted from this document but are accessible through the webinar recording.

# Clarification is needed regarding matched funding requirements. Specifically, around in-kind contributions, if there is a minimum percentage of matched funding that has to come from the local government, and how local governments need to demonstrate matched funding.

It is recognised that local governments have just finalised their budgets, meaning they may not have their own cash budget to contribute to projects.

As such, in-kind contributions can count towards the matched funding amount. As mentioned earlier, this can include for example:

* Voluntary labour (time or services ‘donated’ should be additional and not part of the persons' normal job).
* Donated equipment.
* Services donated from other companies or organisations.
* Use of premises or office space for the project.

There is currently no requirement for how the matched funding has to be split – this will fall under the discretion of the panel. That means there no minimum contribution required from local governments and matched funding can come from other funding sources, such as philanthropic funding or resources from the community sector. However, there is an expectation that local governments do contribute – whether that be financial or in-kind.

The matched contribution must be clearly detailed in the budget section of the application form. Funds don’t need to be ‘ready to go’ as such, but the matched contribution must be spent or consumed within the specified project period.

# Are any of the strategy outcomes higher priority at this stage or is there any weightings applied to the selection criteria

For the purposes of this Fund and the types of projects we want to see, the Strategy outcomes are equally prioritised. We want the fund to encourage individual areas to determine local priorities, community need and the best ways to respond.

The assessment criteria are not weighted; however, priority may be given to applications that demonstrate service development and implementation led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

# Can the funding be used to address continuous emerging needs around funding for crisis accommodation and safe night spaces?

If you are proposing a project such as a safe night space and you are able to meet all the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria, i.e. it does not duplicate an existing service, includes a matched contribution, there is demonstrated community need etc. then you can submit an application for funding.

It should be noted however, that the Strategy’s focus is on moving away from temporary solutions and providing people with more long-term solutions and supports. So, this may be something that impacts the competitiveness of your application – but this will be at the panel’s discretion.

# What level of evaluation is required to support the project at the application stage?

Applications are required to submit a program logic and evaluation plan when submitting their application. These documents don’t need to be finalised or complete at this point, but what we are looking for is that there has been some thinking and consideration for how individual projects will be evaluated and how they will contribute to the outcomes of the State Strategy.

# Is it possible for the funding to go towards engaging a consultant to undertake a review of existing Homelessness Plans that are in place? This would include undertaking community and stakeholder engagement on a regional level.

Yes, capacity building activities can be included under the grant and fees for a consultant are an eligible expenditure item.

# Will there be an opportunity for community service providers to attend an information session on the funding program?

At this stage, we will not be providing an information session for community service providers, as local governments are the primary applicant for the Fund.

A recording of this webinar and presentation slides will be available on the Department’s website.

If you or your community sector partners do require additional information or assistance with developing your projects, the Department and WALGA are happy to offer support.

# When will the next grant round open?

If the timelines for the first grant round are achievable, it is anticipated that grant rounds will open in August each year during Homelessness Week.

# What evidence is required to demonstrate a matched funding commitment? Council approvals may be impacted by upcoming elections and associated caretaker periods.

A letter of support will be sufficient. The budget and project plan will also need to clearly indicate when the contribution will be made available.

# Can an organisation show they are working towards being an ACCO? Is this admissible?

Yes, but it is important to demonstrate the level of partnership and how the local government and Aboriginal organisations will work together. Priority weighting will be given to projects that are Aboriginal-led.

# May funding be used towards initiatives bringing more affordable housing options to the community? Many residents are facing homelessness due to housing shortages creating a lack of affordable living. Low-income earners are at risk without more affordable options being available.

Yes. A key focus area of the State Strategy is preventing homelessness, and this includes initiatives that support vulnerable or at-risk cohorts to maintain their tenancies.

Capital works are not an eligible expenditure item under this grant program, however projects requiring funding for capital may be eligible under the Social Housing and Economic Recovery Package Grants Program. Further information can be found on the Department of Communities [website](https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/social-housing-economic-recovery-package-grants-program).

# Is there capacity for a regional approach? That is, a group of LGAs applying together?

Yes. While it is not mandatory, local governments are encouraged to partner with each other when appropriate to do so. Joint applications must have a lead organisation who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply.

Please note that joint applications will not be eligible for funding greater than the $200,000 limit specified.

# Will the Department be able to support local governments that do not have the resources to make an application? Without assistance, vulnerable members in our community may be impacted.

Local governments can engage with the Department to get advice on proposals and on filling out the grant application to help make the best use of limited resources.

# Can a local government develop a suite of actions rather than one single item?

No. Local governments are only permitted to submit one application for one project per round.

If you are proposing multiple projects to feed into a broader approach to homelessness in your community, please contact the Department to seek advice on whether this may be eligible.

# How can local governments include family and domestic violence issues into the project?

Family and domestic violence is a key driver of homelessness and is considered a priority cohort for the Strategy. Local governments can connect with local family and domestic violence services and facilities, and partner to build on these approaches.

# If an application is unsuccessful in the first round, with some tweaks can it be resubmitted for the next round?

Yes. The Department can provide feedback on unsuccessful applications to assist with this.