

Scope

This policy applies to applicants for social housing managed by Pacific Link Housing Limited (PLH) including, transitional housing and supported housing programs.

For affordable housing eligibility, please refer to the Affordable Housing policy.

Purpose

The policy is intended to explain who is eligible to apply for social housing managed by PLH and provides an effective, accountable, and transparent framework for assessing eligibility of applicants in accordance with our contractual and legal obligations. PLH participates in Housing Pathways, a partnership between NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), the Aboriginal Housing Office and participating community housing providers to manage housing assistance applications in NSW.

Housing Pathways provides:

- a consistent, streamlined way to apply for housing assistance.
- a common assessment process.
- a single waiting list known as the NSW Housing Register.

More information on Housing Pathways is available at the link below:

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/housing-pathways>

General Housing Eligibility

To be eligible for social housing an applicant must meet all the following criteria:

- be a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia.
- be a resident in New South Wales (NSW).
- establish their identity with two forms of acceptable documentation – refer DCJ Evidence Requirements <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=329224>
- have a household income within the income eligibility limits.
- not own any assets or property which could reasonably be expected to resolve their housing need.
- be able to sustain a successful tenancy, with or without, support.
- if a former tenant of public or community housing, make repayments of any former debts.
- in general, be 18 years of age or older.

Details of how each of these eligibility criteria are administered, evidence requirements and eligibility for priority housing are in the DCJ Social Housing Eligibility Allocations Policy Supplement at the link below:

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/social-housing-eligibility-allocations-policy-supplement#iel>

Tenants requesting a transfer will be assessed according to PLH's Transfer Policy.

PLH does not offer Emergency Temporary Accommodation, however, we can facilitate a person's needs by referring them to DCJ Link2home service or local crisis accommodation agencies where they are in an extreme situation.

Supported Applicants

PLH partners with many support agencies who may nominate potential tenants who are linked with their support services. Generally, nominated applicants must be eligible for Housing Pathways and have an active application listed on the NSW Housing Register and meet the requirements of the relevant Support Service Partnership Agreement.

Additional eligibility criteria may also apply for specific housing programs. Tenants must be supported by, and remain engaged with, the Support Partner through the period of the tenancy, generally 12 months. Applicant allocations are documented and approved consistent with PLH policy and applicants must sign a Residential Tenancy Agreement with PLH and a Supported Tenancy Agreement. Where appropriate, special conditions relating to shared living arrangements are included as an addendum to the individual tenancy agreement.

Additional Entitlements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island People

Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are entitled to the range of services available to all eligible applicants. In addition, they may choose to:

- be identified on the NSW Housing Register as being eligible for Aboriginal Housing Office properties, as well as public or community housing.
- seek accelerated progression on the NSW Housing Register if they, or members of their household are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and over 55 years of age.
- nominate their interest in living in a Senior Communities property if they are 45 years of age or over.

For more information, see item 3 on the Housing Pathways Evidence Requirements Information Sheet: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=329224>

Eligibility of Former Tenants

A former tenant is someone who previously lived in a property that was owned or managed by PLH, other community housing providers (CHPs) or DCJ Housing and has since vacated the property.

A former PLH tenant who left their property without debt and in a satisfactory condition is eligible to reapply for social housing. If you are not eligible for Tenancy Reinstatement as outlined below, we will assess you for a new social housing application.

A former tenant who owes a debt to PLH of \$500 or more is eligible to go onto the NSW Housing Register but we will not make an offer of housing until the debt is repaid, or you have made regular repayments for six months in a row.

If a former tenant who was evicted by PLH or left with a poor tenancy history (i.e. property damage or antisocial behaviour), applies for social housing, we will ask you to show that you are now able to maintain a satisfactory tenancy and have adequate support in place. Applications of this nature will be considered on a case by case basis.

Tenancy Reinstatement

Former tenants that are approved for tenancy reinstatement will have their application prioritised when they re-apply for housing. To be eligible for tenancy reinstatement the former tenant must be able to prove the following:

- they meet the eligibility criteria.
- they vacated their property due to any of the following reasons:
 - they were under duress,
 - they had to move into a residential care facility,
 - they were placed in a custodial facility (e.g. prison) or
 - themselves, a household member or a family member required care.

- they made an application to their former housing provider for tenancy reinstatement within six months of vacating their property (except for custodial sentences of three years or less where the former tenant can apply within six months of their release from custody).

Making a Housing Application

The DCJ Housing Pathways application form and applicant information package is available from the PLH office or by e-mail, or downloading it from the Pathways website or <https://www.pacificlink.org.au/apply-for-housing/> Interviews can be arranged for applicants who would like to explain their needs and discuss their options further or where PLH believes that this will assist the application process.

While PLH will provide information and support to assist in making housing applications, it should be understood that a lengthy waiting list for housing exists and that no firm time frame can be given for housing allocation. Information on waiting times is available from DCJ on the link below:

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>

Housing assistance from DCJ Housing, with a PLH support partner or a refuge may be an appropriate referral for those who are homeless. All applicants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing domestic violence or have children at risk are given information and telephone contacts of other agencies and accommodation options that may be able to assist. Applicants will be offered the opportunity to use PLH interview rooms to access phones and computers. Assistance with interpreting will be provided through the Telephone Interpreter Service. If the situation is very urgent, PLH may act as advocate by making the appropriate telephone contacts for the client to find immediate shelter if possible.

Conflict of Interest

PLH employees, directors, or their friends or relatives who apply for housing will not be disadvantaged or privileged by their position. They must declare any conflict of interest (refer PLH Code of Conduct – Conflict of Interest) and will be treated as the other applicants in accordance with PLH and DCJ policy. The employees or directors concerned will under no circumstances take part in the application or any allocation process and mitigation plans will be put in place to manage conflicts of interest.

Appeals

If a client believes PLH has made the wrong decision they should ask for a formal review of the decision. To do this a client needs to complete an appeals form stating why they disagree with the decision – refer PLH Appeals and Complaints Policy.

Related Documents

Housing Pathways, Eligibility for Social Housing Policy
 Housing Pathways, Matching and Offering a Property to a Client Policy
 Housing Pathways, Managing the NSW Housing Register Policy
 Housing Pathways, Social Housing Eligibility and Allocations Policy Supplement
 NSW Community Housing Eligibility policy
 NSW Community Housing Access policy
 PLH Transfer Policy

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