



Family &
Community
Services

Opportunity Pathways Policy

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Summary: This policy is designed to support social housing provider staff to refer clients to the Opportunity Pathways program and to support participants in the program.



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1 Purpose of policy

1.1 Purpose

Apply this policy if:

- You work for a Social Housing Provider participating in the Opportunity Pathways program, and
- You would like to refer a client to the Opportunity Pathways program, or
- A client you manage has been referred to the Opportunity Pathways program, or
- A client you manage is participating in the Opportunity Pathways program.

1.2 Background and policy links

Opportunity Pathways is a program initiative under [Future Directions for Social Housing](#). It provides social housing clients with support to increase their economic participation and facilitate positive exits from social housing to housing independence, where appropriate. Participation in the program is voluntary.

The following documents are linked to this policy:

- [Eligibility for Social Housing Policy](#)
- [During a Tenancy Policy](#)
- [Rent Choice Policy](#)
- [Opportunity Pathways Fact Sheet](#)
- [Opportunity Pathways Program Guidelines](#)

2 Scope and application

2.1 Eligibility

Opportunity Pathways is designed for social housing clients who aspire and have the capacity (with the appropriate support) to gain, increase and retain employment. Participants may include clients who are not working, are seeking a job or want to work more hours or improve their employment situation.

Those eligible for Opportunity Pathways includes people who are:

- 17 years and over and meet the school leaving requirements. and
- A public, community or Aboriginal housing tenant or household member, or
- Receiving a Rent Choice Subsidy, or
- An approved applicant on the NSW Housing Register.

2.2 Opportunity Pathways Providers

See the list of [Opportunity Pathways Providers](#) by FACS District.

3 Legislation

Social Housing Providers and Opportunity Pathways Providers must always act in a lawful way, including when making decisions on client entitlements and will act within the following frameworks:

- The rules of procedural fairness in accordance with administrative law
- The [Housing Act 2001](#)
- The [Residential Tenancies Act 2010](#)
- The [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#)
- The [Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002](#)

4 Policy statement

4.1 Recruitment

The Opportunity Pathways Provider is responsible for ensuring a sufficient number of clients are recruited to the program. They will work in partnership with Social Housing Providers and other client support providers to encourage client referrals.

4.2 Referral

Referrals can be made to an Opportunity Pathways Provider who will then assess if a client is eligible and suitable to participate in the program.

A client can be referred to the Opportunity Pathways program by:

- A client phoning the Opportunity Pathways Provider directly, or
- Any Social Housing Provider or any other support provider approaching a client that may be suitable and determining their interest in the Opportunity Pathways program.

Clients will be required to provide written consent for the Opportunity Pathways Provider to exchange information with the Social Housing Provider (and other relevant support providers) in order for the referral to be assessed.

4.3 Assessment

The Opportunity Pathways Provider will phone a client to complete a referral form and advise the client of the assessment timeframe. The Provider will check eligibility with relevant social housing staff, and will follow up with the client for further information as required.

4.4 Review

If a client believes that they were deemed ineligible or unsuitable for the Opportunity Pathways program due to an error or missing information, they should refer to the Opportunity Pathways Provider to review the decision. The Opportunity Pathways Provider can also refer decisions to the Local Design and Implementation Committee

4.5 Case Planning

The Opportunity Pathways Provider will develop a case plan, a Training, Employment and Housing Plan (TEHP) with the program participant. The TEHP will outline their training, career and housing independence goals and the tasks, resources and support required to achieve them. The TEHP will be reviewed regularly to track the participant's progress against their identified goals. For some program participants, exiting social housing or coming off the NSW Housing Register may not be a suitable goal. Social Housing Providers may be requested to provide support with achieving housing independence goals as part of the TEHP.

Brokerage funds can be used to support the TEHP within the agreed limits.

4.6 Case Management

The Opportunity Pathways Provider will provide active case management and advocacy to the program participant.

The Opportunity Pathways Provider will maintain regular contact with the program participant and this will include regular reviews of their TEHP to ensure that they are appropriately supported to meet their training, career and housing independence goals. Progress and outcomes will be reported back to the Local Design and Implementation Committee as well as any issues, risks or suggestions for improving the program's operation.

Clients will be exited from the program in accordance with their TEHP.

5 Support and advice

Opportunity Pathways is not a housing assistance program and as such clients cannot lodge an appeal under the Social Housing Provider's appeals policy. E.g. if deemed to be unsuitable for the program or not selected to participate. For more information see section 4.4 of this document.

If a client or advocate has a complaint or feedback about an Opportunity Pathways Provider, they should first provide their feedback under the Opportunity Pathways Provider's complaints policy. If they remain unsatisfied, they can complain to FACS at feedback@facs.nsw.gov.au. For more information see:

- [Client Service Delivery and Appeals Policy](#) (FACS)
- [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) (FACS)

- [Community Housing Complaints, Issues and Appeals Management Framework](#).

If you are reviewing a printed version of this document, please refer to the Intranet to confirm that you are reviewing the most recent version of the policy. Following any subsequent reviews and approval this policy will be uploaded to the internet/and/or intranet and all previous versions removed.