

# Small Sparks Fund Policy (HCWA)

Operations Western  
Australia

Document Owner

1  
Version

26/08/2027  
Next Review Date

26/08/2022  
Published Date

5 years  
Review Period

## 1 Purpose

The Housing Choices WA Small Sparks Fund provides financial help to people living in our houses who want to lead local activities which aim to build more connected communities in their area.

This policy outlines the purpose, principles, criteria and administration of the Fund.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies to the activities of any staff interacting with people who apply for and/or receive Housing Choices WA Small Sparks Funds. This includes staff working for Housing Choices WA Operational Services - Community Housing and Property Assets along with staff in the broader Housing Choices Australia group.

## 3 Policy Statement

Housing Choices WA is committed to investing in programs and engagement work that helps people connect to their community and/or improve the wellbeing of local tenants who participate in such activities.

We believe that our tenants, their household members and carers may have the capacity and/or interest in organising local activities but may be limited by the cost of establishing such activities. By supporting them to take initiatives in their local area we hope to both build their personal capacity and confidence alongside contributing to more connected neighbourhoods.

### 3.1 Principles

We will:

- Be flexible in how we administer the Fund and assess eligible funding applications in response to the varied needs, interests and circumstances of each community and the person applying to the Fund.
- Set and interpret eligibility criteria to maximise our ability to build capacity, confidence and create opportunities for both applicants and their communities. This includes identifying extenuating circumstances and, where appropriate, using our Discretionary Decision-Making Policy.
- Be consistent, transparent and accountable about decision making and treat applicants in a fair, person-centred and non-judgemental basis.

## 3.2 Funding

It is expected that funding will be for between \$100-\$500 but will vary according to the needs of the proposed project. The Tenant Engagement team will use discretion to support requests for both smaller or larger amounts if needed.

Funding is intended to be used to provide start-up costs for community activities or to underpin small running costs, as opposed to ongoing program or activity costs. While not an exhaustive list, funding can be used to cover things like:

- Cost of food and consumables.
- Costs of venue hire or equipment.
- Costs of promotional materials.

Examples of activities people may wish to organise include community morning teas, book clubs, craft groups, community gardens and walking groups. People are encouraged to be creative and use the funding as an opportunity to take ownership of their ideas and projects.

## 3.3 Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, the person applying must be:

- A current Housing Choices WA tenant, resident, household member or carer for at least three months.
- Willing to engage with the [Tenant Support and Capacity Building Officer](#) to explore their activity idea and what they need to be able to successfully run it.

Fund applications can be made by a group of tenants who wish to work together to deliver an activity or project and have a shared commitment and understanding of their project.

Tenants who have rent arrears or tenant liability debts are not excluded from applying to the Fund but must show they are committed to repaying the debts such as entering into and keeping to a repayment plan. Tenants who have breached their tenancy agreement and have received a breach notice must have rectified that breach prior to application.

Successful applicants can re-apply for further funding 12 months after receiving the earlier funding but must complete the application process again.

## 3.4 Application Process

The process for apply for and receiving funding is:

1. In the first instance, people interested in applying for a grant should have a conversation with the Tenant Engagement and Capacity Building Officer to discuss their idea and explore how it maps against the below assessment criteria and get advice on completing the application form.
2. Complete an application form and submit to the Tenant Engagement team.
3. If necessary, the Tenant Engagement and Capacity Building Officer may follow up the application with additional questions and suggestions.
4. The Tenant Engagement staff will meet as a team to discuss applications and agree if they should be approved.
5. Once finalised, successful applications will be signed off by the Tenant Engagement and Capacity Building Manager.

Fund applications will be assessed against the following (keeping in mind the principles listed above):

- **Sustainability:** The likelihood of activities would be successful, and either be sustainable after the funding has been used or have an ongoing impact on the community.
- **Capacity:** The existing capacity of the tenant, resident, household member or carer applying for the Grant to lead the project. It is intended that proposed activities should be led by tenants (resident, household member or carer). While the Tenant Engagement team can provide some guidance and assist with initial planning, the applicant is expected to take responsibility for the establishment and/or ongoing running of the activity.
- **Community benefit:** The extent to which the activity is likely to benefit the local community, and in particular other Housing Choices WA tenants. While activities should involve other Housing Choices WA tenants, they can also be open to other local community members.
- **Inclusivity:** Activities should be inclusive and should be aligned to Housing Choices' Diversity Policy. Activities should not actively exclude a particular individual. To support this, people will be encouraged to use community spaces and rooms.
- **Leadership development:** The extent to which running the activity will help develop the leadership capacity of the tenant, household member or carer applying to the Fund.
- **Need:** Whether the specific need or type of activity is already available, accessible and welcoming to local Housing Choices WA tenants, residents, household members and carers. If there are similar activities already available in the community, the extent to which the proposal is different or meets the specific needs of Housing Choices WA tenants.

Page | 3

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application within 4 weeks of Housing Choices WA receiving the application.

Unsuccessful applicants can appeal against the outcome of their application.

### 3.5 Support for Applicants and Activities

As part of the purpose of the Fund is to build the capacity and leadership skills of tenants, the Tenant Engagement team may provide basic level support at the beginning of the project. Activities should quickly transition from inception to be self-sufficient and run by tenants, residents, household member or carers.

It is expected that not all applicants will need the following, but if needed the team can:

- Assist with initial planning and working through ideas.
- Assist with completing an application form.
- Direct people to resources and information that may help them plan and run their activity.
- If invited, attend an initial activity session or drop into a session.

People in receipt of funding will be informed and need to agree that Housing Choices WA is only responsible for providing funding for activities and that all responsibility for running activities sits with the recipient of the Fund.

### 3.6 Funding Payments

Funding will not be provided in cash or directly to the person. Payments will be arranged through:

- Housing Choices WA directly paying the supplier of the goods or services either through an invoice or credit card payment.
- Provision of gift voucher.

We will only approve payments to or purchase gift vouchers from reputable and trusted businesses and institutions.

Housing Choices WA will not take responsibility for materials or goods bought via the Fund, and will not replace items that are lost, damaged or stolen.

### 3.7 Reporting

Because funds provided are small and given through vouchers or payments directly to the supplier of the goods or services, people in receipt of funding will not be asked to acquit or provide receipts.

Recipients will be asked for verbal feedback about the activities they organise and will be invited to provide photographs and updates for Housing Choices WA's Facebook page and/or newsletter. Housing Choices WA consent forms will be needed be completed by all individuals photographed.

The Tenant Support and Capacity Building Officer is responsible for keeping a record of all activities carried out through the Fund and compiling an end of year summary that will be provided to the Advisory Committee of Tenants (ACT) and the Housing Choices WA General Manager.

## 4 References:

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS	RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS
[List legislation, standards and guidelines relating to this process]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tenant and Carer Engagement Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Feedback and Complaints Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Discretionary Decision-Making Policy</a></li> </ul>

## 4.1 Glossary

Carer	People who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged.
Household member	Someone who lives in a Housing Choices WA property on an ongoing basis but is not the leaseholder. A household member can be distinguished from a visitor because their income has been included in a rent review for the property.
Tenant Support and Capacity Building Officer	A Housing Choices WA dedicated staff member who supports applicants for Grants to apply and develop their project idea.



#### English:

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call **Housing Choices Australia** on **1300 312 447**. Our business hours are **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

You can also visit the TIS National website for translated information about the service TIS National provides. Visit: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

#### Arabic:

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم، يرجى الاتصال بـ TIS الوطنية على الرقم 131 450 وأطلب منهم الاتصال بنا على هاتف رقم **1300 312 447** Housing Choices Australia. ساعات العمل الخاصة بنا **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

يمكنك أيضا زيارة موقع TIS الوطنية للحصول على معلومات حول الخدمات التي تقدمها TIS الوطنية. قم بزيارة: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

#### Farsi (alt Persian):

اگر به مترجم نیاز دارید، لطفاً با شماره تلفن تیس نشنال 131 450 تماس بگیرید و از آنها بخواهید با **Housing Choices Australia** به شماره **1300 312 447** تماس بگیرید. ساعت کاری ما **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday** است.

[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au) شما همچنین می توانید به وب سایت تیس نشنال برای اطلاعات در مورد خدماتی که تیس نشنال فراهم می کند مراجعه کنید. به

#### Vietnamese:

Nếu quý vị cần thông dịch viên, xin hãy gọi cho Dịch vụ Thông Phiên dịch Quốc gia (TIS Quốc gia) theo số 131 450 và yêu cầu họ gọi cho **Housing Choices Australia** theo số **1300 312 447**. Giờ làm việc của chúng tôi là **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**. Quý vị cũng có thể vào thăm trang mạng của TIS Quốc gia để có thông tin về các dịch vụ mà TIS Quốc gia cung cấp. Hãy vào thăm [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

#### Somali:

Haddii aad u baahan tahay turjumaan, fadlan ka wac TIS National taleefanka 131 450 waxaad ka codsataa inay kuu wacaan **Housing Choices Australia** iyo **1300 312 447**. Saacadaha Shaqadu waa **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

Waxaad kaloo booqan kartaa website-ka TIS National ee macluumaadka turjuman oo ku saabsan adeegga TIS National ay bixiso. Ka eeg: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

#### Simplified Chinese:

如果您需要口译员，请拨打TIS National 的电话131 450，请他们打电话给**Housing Choices Australia**，电话号码：**1300 312 447**。我们的营业时间是**9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**。

你也可以访问TIS National 的网站，了解TIS National提供的服务。网址：[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

#### Traditional Chinese:

若你需要口譯員，請撥打TIS National電話131 450並請他們轉接 **Housing Choices Australia** 的電話 **1300 312 447**。我們的工作時間是 **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**。

你也可以瀏覽TIS National 網站瞭解TIS National 的服務資訊，網址：[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

#### Spanish:

Si necesita un intérprete, por favor llame a TIS National en el 131 450 y pida que lo comuniquen con **Housing Choices Australia** en el **1300 312 447**. Nuestro horario de oficina es **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

También puede visitar el sitio web de TIS National para obtener información acerca de los servicios que provee TIS National. Visite [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

#### Italian:

Se hai bisogno di un interprete, telefona a TIS National al numero 131 450 e chiedi di chiamare **Housing Choices Australia** al **1300 312 447**. I nostri orari d'ufficio sono **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

Puoi visitare anche il sito web TIS National per informazioni tradotte sul servizio che TIS National fornisce. Visita il sito: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**For other languages, access to an interpreter is available by contacting Housing Choices Australia on 1300 312 447.**