

The PHN Blue Sky Fund Guidelines

(Innovative Unsolicited Grants)

The Hunter New England and Central Coast (HNECC) Primary Health Network (PHN) through the [2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#) has a focus on increasing equity of access to primary care services for those in the Hunter, New England and Central Coast geographical area.

Being a leader through innovation, the PHN acknowledges that many ideas that are novel and innovative fall outside the scope or timing of the PHN grant program. The PHN Blue Sky Fund is designed to provide flexibility in capturing these opportunities to trial projects that can deliver tangible positive health outcomes for the community.

The PHN's most recent [Health Needs Assessment](#) identified a range of key disparities in health outcomes for people and communities in the region. These disparities have highlighted that poorer health outcomes are linked with socioeconomic disadvantage and increasing rurality, as well as older people, those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, infants and young people, those with a disability, and First Nations people.

The highest priority service issue identified in the needs assessment that contributes to these health disparities is access to primary care services. Key factors that contribute to poorer access to services include the lack of supply of the primary care clinician workforce, the resulting lack of local services, the lack of visibility and poor timeliness to book into affordable primary care services, and the distance and lack of integration between services. Other key issues include the ability for people to find and navigate their health care, and a range of issues relating to the prevention and management of key diseases and conditions.

The PHN encourages submissions for consideration for funding, that have a strong emphasis on addressing the strategic priorities of the PHN particularly in the areas increasing access to primary care and/or for priority groups and/or digitally enabled services.

Please read our Strategic Plan for more information.

[2023-to-2028-Strategic-Plan.pdf \(imgix.net\)](#)

Applications submitted via the PHN Blue Sky Fund will be assessed and sent to the appropriate internal stakeholder areas for consideration.

Submission of an application is no guarantee of funding.

If funding is offered, it will be time limited and not ongoing. Therefore, projects and ideas that are innovative and require seed funding or are a pilot (with evaluation) are encouraged, as are collaborations.

Selection Criteria

Grant applications will be assessed by a panel, with a ranking system used based on set criteria, funding availability and value for money determination, as well as spread of projects throughout the PHN region. Selection criteria includes:

- Description of your activity or project and the intended benefit or aims showing innovation or a different approach to addressing identified needs.
- How the activity or project addresses the strategic priorities of the PHN.
- Evidence of the need or research as to the benefits of the project.
- What and how other organisations or communities are involved in the activity. (Partnerships and collaborations are to be accompanied by signed letters of support).
- Outline of a high-level plan, with objectives, timeline and budget that shows efficient and effective use of funds.
- Demonstrated capacity to carry out the proposed activities.

Funding is for time limited grants as there is no ongoing funding available.

What cannot be funded

Projects already receiving funding from other sources.

Activities and projects not carried out in the grant period (grant period being from when an agreement is signed), or retrospective costs.

Capital items and costs not directly associated with the grant activity.

An organisation that does not hold appropriate insurances, qualifications and an ABN.

An organisation that does not demonstrate capability via qualified staff, contractors or partners.

Activities not in the HNECC PHN geographical region, or activities targeting people not residing in the HNECC PHN geographical area.

Activities deemed business as usual.

Political activities, personal expenses or activities deemed harmful to the community or environment.

Activities deemed not eligible by the PHN or judged to not meet the criteria of the grant.

How to apply

Applications are open via completion of the online form on the PHN grants portal, SmartyGrants. Assessment of submitted applications will take place quarterly and applicants notified of the outcome.

The PHN reserves the right to close the grant round if all funding has been awarded prior to the closing date or extend the grant closing date if funds are still available.

Applicants may be contacted to discuss their eligibility and ability to meet the grant criteria. This will constitute part of the grant assessment.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a grant agreement outlining any staged payments and milestones, terms and conditions and evidence or reporting required at each stage. A copy of insurances and qualifications may be required if successful, dependent on the nature of the activity.

Eligibility

Organisations will be those who are working within the Hunter, New England and Central Coast geographical area that the PHN covers.

Previous grant recipients are eligible only if they have fully complied with any previous PHN funding contract commitments including reporting and acquittal requirements.

All applicants MUST agree to meet reporting requirements.

Councils are eligible to apply.

Terms and conditions

The following terms and conditions will apply to all successful grantees:

- HNECC PHN Terms and Conditions will apply.
- Applicants must have a valid ABN.
- Only one grant per organisation will be allocated.
- Partnerships are highly encouraged but only one lead organisation (the applicant) is permitted.
- Applications that do not meet the selection criteria will not be eligible.
- Grant funding will be paid to the applicant as per their grant agreement and will include reporting requirements that may be linked to split payments.
- Successful applicants will be required to sign a grant agreement with payment made as a Recipient Created Tax Invoice.
- All conflicts of interest are to be declared.

If you have any questions regarding these grants, please contact the PHN Grants team on grants@thephn.com.au.