

Frequently Asked Questions Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program

General:

- **What is the purpose of this grant program? What project elements will be prioritized for selection?** The purpose of the program is to provide one-time grants for the construction of student housing, or for the acquisition and renovation of commercial properties into student housing, to provide affordable, low-cost housing options for students enrolled in public postsecondary education in California. Projects that convert commercial space into student housing, projects serving the greatest percentage of a campus's low-income student population, and projects serving low-income students across more than one segment may be prioritized for selection. Selection criteria may also include the unmet demand for student housing for the campus or service area, construction timeline, geographic representation, and positive impact on a four-year institution's capacity for undergraduate enrollment growth.
- **When will these funds be available for selected projects?** The date on which funds will be available to selected projects is unknown at this time, but the governing statute provides flexibility for projects to be funded either in the annual budget act or other legislation. Funds for proposals submitted in the initial filing round are estimated to be available sometime between March and July of 2022, but this estimate is subject to change.
- **How many project proposals or what dollar value of project proposals should applicants or segments submit in the initial filing round?** We encourage applicants and segments to submit any proposals for Student Housing Grants and Planning Grants that meet program eligibility criteria and can be submitted by the initial filing round deadline of October 31, 2021. The Department of Finance will establish additional proposal deadlines and any proposals submitted by the initial deadline, but not funded in the initial round, will be considered in subsequent proposal filing rounds without the need to resubmit the proposal.
- **Are local contributions allowed?** The intent of the program is to provide up-front state funding, generally for the entirety of selected Student Housing Grant projects. Project proposals that include funding contributions from other sources will be considered, but these components must be described in the project proposal and clearly differentiated from the grant-funded portion of the proposal, per the application instructions.

Rental Rate Calculation:

- **How is the rental rate of “30 percent of 50 percent of the area median income for a single-room occupancy unit type” calculated?** Area median income amounts for each California county are updated annually by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The most recent data on area median income for 2021 can be found [here](#). For purposes of this program, please see below for an example of the rental rate calculation.

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Example project located in Riverside County:

Find the county-specific, annual area median income for a single-room occupancy unit type in HCD's State Income Limits for 2021 as follows:

Number of Persons in Household:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Riverside County Area Median Income: \$77,500	Extremely Low	16600	19000	21960	26500	31040	35580	40120	44660
	Very Low Income	27650	31600	35550	39500	42700	45850	49000	52150
	Low Income	44250	50600	56900	63200	68300	73350	78400	83450
	Median Income	54250	62000	69750	77500	83700	89900	96100	102300
	Moderate Income	65100	74400	83700	93000	100450	107900	115300	122750

Calculate 30% of 50% of this amount:

$$0.30 \times 0.50 \times \$54,250 = \$8,137.50 \text{ in annual rent}$$

Divide by 12 to determine the monthly rental cost:

$$\$8,137.50 / 12 = \$678 \text{ in monthly rent (rounded to the nearest whole dollar)}$$

Project Eligibility:

- **Can applicants partner with other campuses or segments to submit a joint project proposal?** Yes—joint proposals and intersegmental partnerships are encouraged. In fact, program selection criteria may include an emphasis on projects with intersegmental housing arrangements, particularly those that support transfer pathways between community colleges and four-year public postsecondary institutions.
- **Can these grant funds be used to construct shared occupancy units, such as doubles, triples, quads, or apartment-style units?** Yes—the program provides flexibility for various formats of student housing, such as apartment style, dorms with singles or doubles, married or family student housing, etc. Project proposals must specify the planned format(s) of student housing units and the number of students to be housed.
- **Can a proposal include co-location of ancillary services?** Yes—projects funded by this program can include space for ancillary, co-located services such as dining, academic and student support service spaces, basic needs centers, student healthcare services, and other necessary and usual attendant and related facilities and equipment. However, the applicant must have a plan to address operational costs associated with these ancillary services, which cannot be paid for with these grants.
- **Can these grant funds be used for deferred maintenance or renovation of existing student housing facilities?** No—the program will provide funds for projects that increase the stock of affordable student housing, either through construction of student housing or acquisition and renovation of existing commercial properties into student housing.

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- **Can these grant funds be used to acquire a residential building, such as an apartment building or motel?** No—in keeping with one of the program's key policy objectives to increase the state's housing stock and increase the availability of affordable student housing, eligible project types are construction of new student housing, or acquisition and renovation of commercial properties—such as vacant retail or office space—into student housing.
- **Can funding be provided on a reimbursement basis for projects that have already completed construction?** No—a reimbursement model does not align with one of the key policy objectives for the program, which is that this funding helps to add to the state's housing stock and increase the availability of affordable student housing.

California Community Colleges (CCC) Specific:

- **What activities are eligible expenditures for CCC Planning Grants?** Planning grants can be requested and used for one or more of the following purposes in connection with an affordable student housing project:
 - (1) Feasibility studies
 - (2) Engineering studies
 - (3) Financing studies
 - (4) Environmental impact studies
 - (5) Architectural plans
 - (6) Application fees
 - (7) Legal services
 - (8) Permitting costs
 - (9) Bonding
 - (10) Site preparation
- **Will projects funded under this program receive priority for required state agency approvals, such as Division of the State Architect (DSA) review and approval?** At this time, we do not anticipate that expedited DSA review will be available for projects funded by this program. However, the statutory construction timing of “December 31, 2022, or the earliest possible date thereafter” (emphasis added) will consider any timelines associated with DSA approval and other required approvals.

Miscellaneous:

- **I have a question that is not addressed here. How can I learn more?** Prospective applicants seeking clarification on program requirements may reach out to their respective system offices—the UC Office of the President, the CSU Chancellor's Office, and the CCC Chancellor's Office—for assistance. To read the program statute, which includes more information on legislative intent, project proposal requirements, and potential project selection criteria, see Section 2 of [SB 169](#).