

Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative – Phase I

Introduction:

The Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative (AHPI) resulted from the Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Program Agreement being signed between Alberta Seniors and Community Supports and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on June 24, 2002.

The Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative provides capital grants to assist in the construction of new affordable housing projects, major renovations to convert existing non-housing projects into housing, or undertake major restoration of existing housing stock to accommodate low and moderate-income working households.

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports encourages municipalities (or organizations representing or authorized by the municipality) to support proposals for funding under this initiative. Parties interested in preparing affordable housing proposal applications are requested to work with their local municipality to ensure their project addresses local needs.

Principles:

The following principles guide the implementation and operation of the Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative:

- The initiative is targeted to high-growth, high-need communities to increase the supply of and access to affordable rental housing for low-income families and individuals, persons with special needs, and seniors.
- Proposals should demonstrate their ability to improve and coordinate existing housing and services, and should generate capital for new housing and services.
- Projects developed under the initiative are expected to remain as affordable housing for a period of not less than 20 years.

Note: For the purposes of this initiative, affordable housing is defined as housing that is modest in terms of floor area and amenities, based on household needs and community norms, and priced at least ten percent below average market rents or prices in the community or area (modesty assurance guidelines).

- Proposals will be selected based on the greatest demonstrated need, financial viability and sustainability, project design, and location.

Purpose of the Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative:

- To provide stable, secure, and affordable housing for lower-income residents, which may consist of low-income working families and individuals, persons or households with special needs, and seniors in high-growth, high-need communities.

- To provide one-time grants for eligible capital costs to assist municipalities, local community housing authorities, non-profit organizations, and private sector groups to fund new affordable housing projects or converting non-residential properties and new residential units.

Program Delivery:

- On an annual basis, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports will identify high-growth, high-need communities to be given priority for Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative funding.
- The municipality, not-for-profit groups, local community housing authorities and private sector may submit applications to Alberta Seniors and Community Supports.
- The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports will approve Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative proposals.

Partnerships:

- The establishment of effective partnerships to plan, construct, own and administer affordable housing is essential to the Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative. The following are some possible partners that may be considered in developing affordable housing proposals:
 - non-profit organizations;
 - local community housing authorities;
 - municipalities; and
 - private sector companies.

Target Population:

- Primarily focused to low-income working families and individuals, persons with special needs, and seniors that:
 - cannot afford to pay average market rent;
 - cannot find affordable accommodation;
 - live in overcrowded, shared or unsuitable accommodation;
 - live in housing detrimental to health;
 - have special circumstances (e.g., accessibility needs); or
 - want to retain their independence as they age with access to required support services.

Eligible Proposals:

- Projects can be buildings or units created through new development, conversions from non-housing uses, or units that are retained in the housing system through major renovations and meet the definition of affordable housing.

- The Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative supports housing in the form of a complete modest and functional structure. The housing form can therefore vary from fully self-contained units to single room occupancy such as may be available in a rooming house setting. The provision of support services for projects is not included under Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative. Funding for support services must be provided through other sources.
- Proposals can include a mixture of units at market rent and below market rent.
- Proposals will be selected based on evaluation criteria developed by Alberta Seniors and Community Supports and will include factors such as greatest demonstrated need, financial viability and sustainability, project design, location and facilitation of existing housing stock. The units will be rental units priced ten percent or more below average market rents in the community or area as determined by Alberta Seniors and Community Supports.

Funding:

- Alberta Seniors and Community Supports will provide funding in the form of a capital grant.
- Eligible projects may receive combined federal and provincial funding up to \$50,000 per unit.
- A grant funding agreement is required for each approved project that will specify the terms and conditions for the payment of federal and provincial funding and any contributions by others for the project.
- A contribution by others means cash or eligible in-kind contributions from municipalities, the private and voluntary sector, charities and individual donors. These may include the transfer of land and/or buildings at below market prices, waiving of municipal fees, reduced property taxes, donations, a land lease and other similar forms of contributions. It does not include contributions from any other Government of Canada source.
- All funding sources must be disclosed.
- Alberta Seniors and Community Supports will monitor grant recipients and ensure compliance over the term of the grant funding agreement, including verification that each approved project has been completed and remains as affordable housing for a period of not less than 20 years.
- Rents must remain at least ten percent or more below average market rents.
- Tenants shall be drawn from the social housing waiting list for the community in which the approved project is to be located.
- In the absence of a waiting list or in the event the recipient, in his sole discretion, is unable to access suitable tenants from the waiting list, tenants shall be drawn from low-income individuals and families whose incomes fall within the core need income thresholds.
- The recipient must have land secured by holding ownership, or have a bonafide offer to purchase or lease agreement in place.