

Proposal Guidelines for Developers

Affordable Housing Development Program

The Affordable Housing Development Program supports the creation of new affordable housing in partnership with private and community housing developers. Through financial contributions that help fund the construction of new housing projects or renovations of existing vacant buildings, the aim is to increase the supply of affordable, accessible and energy efficient homes for low-to moderate-income Nova Scotians.

These guidelines outline the minimum requirements for a proposal to be considered complete. While following these guidelines does not guarantee a project will be supported, the guidelines are intended to provide applicants with the best opportunity to compete for project funding.

If an applicant is struggling with too many of these sections, or missing much of the required information, it is likely they are not yet ready to submit a proposal.

Affordable Housing Specialists are available anytime to answer questions on preparing a high-quality proposal and are happy to discuss your project and provide helpful advice.

These proposal guidelines include everything an applicant needs to build a complete proposal. The form and format of the proposal is up to the individual applicant. However, when deciding on a proposal format, choose a structure that ensures all important content is included and easy to find for the evaluation team.

There are a couple of format requirements all proposals should meet:

- No more than 15 written pages, excluding cover page, executive summary and appendices
- Appendices should not exceed 20 pages
- No more than a two-page executive summary that provides a full, high-level summary of the project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	A place to provide a snapshot of the submission including an overview of the project and what makes it notable, key attributes of the project, estimate of when the project will be complete and operational, how many affordable units you are proposing, and how much funding is being requested.
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APPLICANT INFORMATION	<p>A summary of your organization, outlining elements such as history, and overall approach to property development, including previous development experience and any other relevant details the evaluation panel should know. Please include contact person(s) and contact details, as well as detail on the organization, including legal name, province of incorporation, name of parent company if applicable, corporate/ charitable status, Board of Directors.</p> <p><i>Tip: We're looking for partners who can help increase the supply of affordable housing for Nova Scotians. In this section, help us understand why you would make a great partner in this important work.</i></p>
Property development & management experience	<p>Background on previous development experience on projects of similar scale (size and complexity), property management experience, and any other information that may affirm your ability to ensure the successful delivery and ongoing management of the proposed project.</p> <p><i>Tip: If you have experience successfully developing and managing affordable housing, highlight it here. If you are working with another organization, include relevant details to outline their experience and expertise and what they bring to the project.</i></p>
Project team	<p>Brief profiles and further information on project team, their current involvement in the project to date and their intended involvement going forward. Provide details on each member's capacity to begin work on this project immediately should funding be granted.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Discuss the nature of any formal partnerships that are in place or planned for this project. Be sure to outline roles and responsibilities of each partner, as well as how the partnership will function relative to this project.</p> <p><i>Tip: Partnerships between for-profit developers and community housing organizations are considered an asset.</i></p>
Resources for project delivery	<p>Discuss the team's capacity to deliver within the proposed timeline. What other projects will you have underway that will compete for your time and resources? How will you ensure required access to trades and materials?</p>
PROPERTY DETAILS	<p>It is helpful to provide as much information as possible about your specific property or site. At a minimum you should provide: The full address including postal code; Property Identification (PID) numbers; and a site plan clearly detailing the site boundaries. Depending on the type of property and stage of acquisition, other useful information could include: Details of Municipal Services; a Building Condition Report; an</p>

	Environmental Site Assessment; Topographical Survey; and Property Appraisal. You should also seek to confirm that no Restrictive Covenants, Easements or Rights of Way or any other legal restrictions exist on the property or any adjacent property, that may impede development.
PROJECT DETAILS	A detailed description of the project, including characteristics of the building(s) being proposed, a general outline for access and utility provision, a block plan with building setbacks and footprints, parking, and outdoor amenity provision, the overall configuration of units, details of the location/community it will serve, and any other unique characteristics. Include whether the project is new construction or renovation of an existing building. Speak to the benefits of the project and state whether the project is mixed-use, mixed-income and/or mixed-tenure.
Construction management	How will construction be managed, by whom (fixed-price contract, general construction management contract or applicant as contractor) and any other relevant details. Discuss how you will ensure access the necessary trades and materials to meet the proposed timeline.
Current project status	What has been achieved to date, what activities are currently underway, and next steps. <i>Tip: Priority will be given to projects that are already deep in the planning phase and where the details have mostly been worked out. Our interest is getting new affordable units built and occupied as quickly as possible so the farther you are down the planning road, the better. Projects already under construction are considered eligible.</i>
Scale, timeline & suitability	Describe the scale of project including the number and breakdown of units (market rent units and affordable units), number of bedrooms in each unit, building height etc. Share a proposed project timeline that includes development approval, construction, and occupancy timelines; and discuss the suitability of the project for the geographic area and local community.
FINANCIAL VIABILITY	A clear indication of the funding you are requesting from us, a detailed, realistic projection of financial viability of the project, together with details of risk mitigation strategy and contingency planning. We have included a sample Capital Costs and Pro Forma Operating Budget as a helpful tool. You can find it here on the Provincial website. <i>Tip: We want to know we're investing in projects that are financially viable and realistic, with partners who want that same thing.</i>
Estimated capital costs	Include land costs, other acquisition costs, professional fees, finance costs, construction costs and contingency planning.

Funding sources	Details on financing, a summary of all intended funding/financing sources, equity components, and any other sources of capital that will fund project costs.
Planning approval status	Summary of current zoning and land use bylaws, together with details on further steps required, and expected timeframe for having a Development Agreement in place.
Risk analysis	Identify and analyze any potential site issues that could negatively impact the project, such as contamination, servicing constraints, or environmental concerns and explain what plans are in place for risk mitigation.
OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	<p>A detailed summary of operational plans, approach, and proforma operating budget.</p> <p><i>Tip: We want to know the new affordable units will remain in the market for many years, so illustrating a thoughtful, strong plan for operating the development is critical.</i></p>
Operating model	Summarize the planned operational model for the new building including any detail that make operations unique or noteworthy. A detailed operating pro-forma must also be provided (a sample template is included here).
Projected income	Total expected income from the new property, including both market and affordable units, any income from commercial units and any other additional income that contributes to the financial sustainability of the project.
Operational costs	A breakdown of all operating costs including property management fees, legal fees, utility costs, maintenance costs, insurance and any other outgoings related to the operation of the completed project.
Management strategy	Detail on the management strategy for the new property and how it may relate to other existing properties in the organization's portfolio.
MARKET NEED/DEMAND	A discussion of current and anticipated market supply and demand, and a substantiation of average market rents relevant to the project being proposed.
Market supply and demand	Analysis of market data and insights to illustrate existing supply and demand for both market and affordable housing in the area. Helpful sources of information include: the Canadian Rental Housing Index , local advertisements, insights from local appraisers, and conducting an independent housing needs assessment.

	<p><i>Tip: There are many communities that need additional affordable housing so deciding among projects can be challenging. Make sure this section is supported as much as possible with solid, credible data and research. General statements about supply and demand are not what evaluators want to see.</i></p>
Average market rents	<p>Analysis of average market rents (AMR) or median market rent (MMR) in the area, ensuring as much as possible that the AMR/MMR identified reflects rental units of similar age, finish quality, size and location to the project being proposed. Please identify sources for figures and any notes of interest on calculations.</p> <p><i>Tip: This section should be supported as much as possible with credible data and solid insight.</i></p>
AFFORDABILITY	<p>A detailed summary of the intended target market, proposed rent structure and term of affordability.</p>
Target market	<p>Discussion of the profile of tenants being targeted for the new units, both the affordable and market rent units.</p> <p><i>Tip: Projects that specifically target underrepresented communities will be prioritized.</i></p>
Depth of affordability	<p>Depth of affordability is the percentage of Average Market Rent the developer intends to charge on affordable units.</p> <p><i>Tip: The minimum depth of affordability is 80 percent of average market rent for this program, but applicants are strongly encouraged to offer deeper discounts where possible. Deeper discounts mean your units can help a wider range of Nova Scotians in need of affordable housing.</i></p>
Proposed rents and utility costs	<p>Proposed rents of both market and affordable units, including a comparison to local AMRs and how the cost of utilities may provide for additional depth of affordability.</p>
Number and mix of units	<p>Detailed breakdown of market units and affordable units, including different depths of affordability if applicable.</p> <p><i>Tip: To achieve both economic and social outcomes, proponents should strongly consider a mix of market and affordability. If possible, consider offering at least 10% of the units at deeply affordable rents for households most in need.</i></p>
Non-residential space	<p>Discussion of any non-residential space included in the plan, and if/how it will impact affordability of units.</p>

<p>Term of affordability proposed</p>	<p>Discussion on proposed length of time the units will remain affordable at the depth of affordability identified above, including an indication of how those units will be migrated back to market rent units.</p> <p><i>Tip: The minimum term of affordability is 15 years but projects that exceed the minimum will receive a scoring premium and potentially additional funding where available.</i></p>
<p>ACCESSIBILITY</p>	<p>A summary of how the property and units will meet and/or exceed accessibility standards.</p>
<p>Overall accessibility standards</p>	<p>Please explain the Accessibility characteristics of the project. Please note the number of Accessible (barrier free) units and discuss plans for meeting and/or exceeding the most current Building Code Regulations. For a project where Code requirements will be exceeded, please reference the most current B651-18 Accessible Design for the Built Environment or Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Standards.</p> <p><i>Tip: Projects that exceed code and/or adapt the above noted standards will be prioritized.</i></p>
<p>ENERGY EFFICIENCY</p>	<p>A discussion of intentions and plans around energy efficiency.</p>
<p>Energy efficiency intentions</p>	<p>Please explain the Energy Efficiency characteristics of the project. Please discuss plans for meeting or exceeding the most recent National Energy Code. Have drawings been assessed by the NS Department of Environment and Climate Change or Efficiency Nova Scotia? For projects where Code requirements will be exceeded, please reference Efficiency Nova Scotia, Canada Green Building Council, or Passive House standards.</p> <p><i>Tip: This program requires units meet Building Code minimum standards. However, projects that exceed those standards, pursue net zero or passive house standards will be given extra consideration.</i></p>
<p>Impact on construction costs and affordability</p>	<p>Details on how the planned energy efficiency components will impact construction costs and the impact it is expected to have on affordability for tenants.</p>
<p>COMMUNITY</p>	<p>A discussion of the proposed location for the new building that addresses relevant community matters including walkability, placemaking (the connection between public space and the people it serves), access to recreation areas, proximity to public transportation and other local services and facilities.</p> <p><i>Tip: A sense of community and the ability to access key services and assets nearby is one of the critical factors in successful affordable</i></p>

	<i>housing. Help us understand why the community in question is an ideal place for this project and those who will be living there.</i>
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & CONSIDERATIONS	<p>An opportunity to share details on project characteristics not addressed in other sections of the proposal.</p> <p><i>Tip: Successful affordable housing is never just about the units themselves. Other amenities and social benefits can boost a project from good to great.</i></p>
Site-specific amenities	Details on other building or property amenities that will be of interest to decision-makers.
Additional social outcomes	Summary of any project attributes that will create additional social benefits for tenants.
Value-add benefits	Details on other project elements that will create a value-added impact for tenants, the community etc.
Financial viability	Consideration for any factors that will improve the financial viability and sustainability of the project that may not have been captured in the other sections of the proposal.
APPENDICES	Include your master plan and any drawings you have prepared, cost estimates, operating pro-forma, any reports, letters of support from the Municipality and others, plus anything else evaluators should consider so they understand the full view of the project.