



Community Housing Capacity Building Program Guidelines, 2019-2020

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to inform applicants of the priorities and goals of the Community Housing Capacity Building Program (CHCBP) in 2019-2020 and outline the terms and conditions of associated funding applications and contribution agreements between community housing sector organizations and the province.

The Nova Scotia community housing sector plays an essential role in meeting the needs of low- and moderate-income households, the hard-to-house, and those requiring supportive housing. It aims to address housing needs the private sector either cannot or will not meet. Moreover, the sector contributes to social inclusion, safety, and quality of life for tenants. Given the critical importance of non-market housing to low-income households, preserving existing social and community housing is a key priority for Nova Scotia.¹

The community housing sector in Nova Scotia includes housing owned and operated by non-profit and co-operative housing organizations, and properties owned by the province. As part of the new 10-year Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)-Nova Scotia Bilateral Agreement, CMHC and the Province have together committed to protect, renew, and expand social housing units. Currently, 1,319 units are owned and operated by co-op or non-profit housing providers included in the social housing baseline.

Through the implementation of the first Nova Scotia three-year Action Plan under the bilateral agreement, which is jointly funded by CMHC and the Province, nearly 3,000 households will be assisted through two Initiatives: the NS Priorities Initiative and the Canada Community Housing Initiative (CCHI). Of those, over 1,200 will be assisted over the next three years through the CCHI in three key areas: preserving existing social housing and expanding access to social housing; improving accessibility to public housing units; and setting the conditions for long-term transformation, expansion, and growth in the community housing sector.

Many non-profit and co-op housing providers are facing financial and operational challenges, which in some cases are directly related to the expiration of subsidies formerly provided through operating agreements under the Social Housing Agreement (SHA). For operators with a high percentage of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) tenants, building a viable rent structure can be challenging, especially when federal subsidies expire. To help these organizations keep rents at affordable levels and improve capacity and long-term sustainability, nearly \$15 million through the Action Plan will be invested in the community housing sector over the next three years, made up of matching contributions from the provincial and federal governments.

Fostering a vibrant and resilient community housing sector is key to achieving our goals and objectives. To that end, the CHCBP will provide up to \$3.75 million in total funding from fiscal year 2019/20 to 2022/23. The program will help not-for-profit and co-operative housing organizations create business plans, assess building conditions, develop governance structure and conduct operational reviews that build long-term capacity and growth in the sector.

¹ **Community Housing** is a term in the bilateral Agreement that means community-based housing owned and operated by non-profit housing corporations and housing co-operatives or is owned directly by the Province; it also includes Social Housing. **Social Housing** is a term in the Agreement that means public housing and community housing units funded through the Social Housing Agreement as of March 31, 2019.

2. Program Priorities

Nova Scotia's first three-year Action Plan demonstrates the province's long-term commitment to serve the most vulnerable Nova Scotians and build safe, connected communities. CHCBP funding will be awarded first to community housing sector organizations with units coming off of SHA in 2019-2020, then to other community housing sector with units coming off SHA over the course of the agreement, and finally to applicants based on evaluation of their application, organizational capacity, and potential to help grow affordable housing stock in Nova Scotia. All proposals must align with the following priorities:

- Stabilize and preserve community housing assets to ensure co-ops and non-profits continue to offer access to safe, suitable, and affordable units to low-income households.²
- Strengthen organizational and governance capacity and strategic planning to ensure growth and long-term operating sustainability of the community housing sector.
- Identify strategic partnership opportunities and leverage federal (external) funding to ensure the community housing sector has the resources it needs to better meet emerging challenges.

3. Proposal Development

The CHCBP Application Form is available in Appendix A of this document.

I. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include Canadian co-operative and non-profit housing providers registered and/or operating in Nova Scotia. Per the agreement, priority will be given to community housing organizations that own and operate units coming off the SHA in 2019-2020. Organizations with units coming off the SHA over the course of the 10-year NHS agreement will also be prioritized. Finally, organizations with units that have already expired under the SHA and/or those with the potential to partner with the province to help grow the community housing portfolio in the province will also be considered.

Applications are eligible if submitted by an organization that:

- Is a non-profit and co-operative housing provider that owns and operate housing units, that is registered with Nova Scotia joint stock companies and is currently in good standing;
- Has the appropriate governance structure in place to administer, manage, and report on project outcomes in accordance with requirements set out in the contribution agreement and/or at the request of Housing Nova Scotia.

² Under the new 10-year bilateral agreement, Housing Nova Scotia has committed to maintain 11,615 social housing units that are set to expire under the SHA. Of these, 432 units are owned and operated by co-operative and non-profit housing organizations that will come off the SHA over the next 3 years. A total of 1,319 community housing sector-owned units will come off the SHA over the course of the 10-year bilateral agreement.

- To receive funding, selected applicants must enter into a contribution agreement with Housing Nova Scotia that reflects the requirements of the bilateral agreement for contributions for the project. The contribution agreement will set conditions that recipients must meet to obtain funding, enable Housing Nova Scotia to monitor to ensure compliance with those conditions and requirements under the agreement, and include remedies for addressing non-compliance.

II. Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include:

- Individuals
- For-profit entities
- Non-legal entities
- Non-profit organizations that do not own or operate affordable housing
- Entities with an expired or revoked registration for non-payment-with the Registry of Joint Stocks

III. Eligible Projects

Projects must align with program priorities and applications must fully and clearly describe how organizations will undertake eligible activities and achieve expected outcomes. Each theme can encompass one or more eligible activity to achieve a range of expected outcomes. Applications must describe how project activities will achieve/support provincial outcomes as set out in the first three-year Action Plan.

a. Eligible Activities

Eligible activities include:

- Creation of business plans, including capital replacement planning, portfolio management, redevelopment, and amalgamation planning
- Governance/operational reviews
- Building condition assessments and energy audits

b. Expected Program Outcomes

All projects that receive CHCBP funding will set the stage for long-term growth and transformation of the community housing portfolio by achieving one or more of the following outcomes:

- Improving operating sustainability
- Improving asset management planning
- Improved decision-making and governance capacity
- Meeting the provincial commitment to maintain 1,319 SHA units, owned and operated by the community housing, as part of the social housing baseline
- Promoting sector growth and construction of new social housing units

- Identifying partnership opportunities for new community housing and leveraging additional (external) federal funding to support stabilization, perseverance, and expansion

4. Project Costs

I. Itemized Budget

Applicants are required to list all project/initiative costs in the budget section of the application form. The budget must provide a clear itemized breakdown of expenditures to help Housing Nova Scotia assess the funding request. Applicants must use the Itemized Budget in the Application (Appendix A, Part E) to describe both the proposed budget to support their CHCBP application, as well as provide a separate, actual budget for reporting. For both the proposed budget and actual budget, organizations must include information on both eligible and ineligible costs. Information on ineligible costs is being collected by Housing Nova Scotia to assess what partnerships and other funding sources support project implementation and obtain a complete picture of the project being undertaken.

a. Eligible Costs

Applicants are encouraged to combine funding sources in support of their project. Budgets should fully disclose all other funding sources that are being leveraged as part of the project proposal.

Costs incurred prior to the signing of a commitment agreement will be ineligible.

Eligible costs include those associated with carrying out eligible program activities as outlined above.

a. Ineligible Costs

The following types of expenditures and activities are not eligible for funding under the CHCBP:

- Budget deficits
- Capital loans and capital expenditures
- Costs covered by other government funding
- Interest expenses incurred on operating loans
- Legal challenges, costs, and settlements
- Mortgage financing/loan guarantees
- Operational funding to enhance existing government-funded programs or provide bridge funding that does not contribute to the objectives of the CHCBP Program
- Professional organization fees paid on behalf of staff for membership in professional organizations
- Property tax expenses
- Public relations and fund-raising expenses
- Travel, accommodation, and meals expenditures

5. Accountability and Financial Reporting

To receive funding through the CHCBP, recipients must commit, via their contribution agreement with Housing Nova Scotia, to submitting Accountability and Financial Reports (see Appendix B). Accountability and Financial Reporting deadlines will be determined by Housing Nova Scotia and detailed in the contribution agreement.

The objective of Accountability and Financial Reporting is to provide Housing Nova Scotia, CMHC, and your organization with an understanding of whether project goals align with outcomes achieved and a description of projected short- and long-term impacts. The information your organization gathers through accountability reporting can also help support the development of applications for additional provincial and/or federal funding.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Organizations submitting proposals and in receipt of funding are expected to:

- Actively work with Housing Nova Scotia and leverage partnerships and collaborations with other groups to strengthen proposals and accountability reporting materials
- Complete all required reporting templates and meet all deadlines

7. Submitting Your Proposal

To receive a copy of the application form, please email communityhousinggrants@novascotia.ca

Applicants must submit completed application forms in fillable PDF format via email to communityhousinggrants@novascotia.ca by February 21, 2020, at 4:30 pm.

Applicants will receive acknowledgement of proposal submission via email.

Final decision based on the evaluation of proposal will be communicated to applicants via email.

Questions about the application process or the program may be sent via email to communityhousinggrants@novascotia.ca

8. Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions form part of the CHCBP agreement in addition to those which are outlined in the contribution agreement.

I. Communications Protocol

The Communications Protocol applies to all communications activities related to projects funded under the CHCBP. Communications activities undertaken by community housing organizations related to the activities funded under the CHCBP must be pre-approved by Housing Nova Scotia to ensure that Nova Scotians are informed of investments made in Housing and that they receive consistent information about funded projects and their benefits. The requestor will provide at least 15 business days' notice to Housing Nova Scotia. If the communications activity is an event, it will take place at a mutually agreed date and location.

Communications activities can be generally defined as, but not limited to, the following:

- Public or media events and/or ceremonies
- News releases

- Reports
- Web and social media products or postings
- Blogs
- News conferences
- Media interviews
- Public notices
- Physical and digital signs
- Publications
- Success stories and vignettes
- Photos, videos, multi-media content
- Advertising

Joint communications or communications activities that relate to the project and are collaboratively developed and approved by CMHC, Housing Nova Scotia and, where applicable, the community housing sector organization, should not occur without prior knowledge and agreement of all parties. Each of the parties may request joint communications with at least 15 business days' notice.

II. Media Relations

Funding recipient will share information within one (1) business day with Housing Nova Scotia should significant media inquiries be received or emerging media or stakeholder issues arise to a project funded under CHCBP

III. Affordability Criteria

As a condition of receiving CHCBP funding, organizations must demonstrate how units under expiring SHA will continue to meet affordability criteria set out in these agreements.