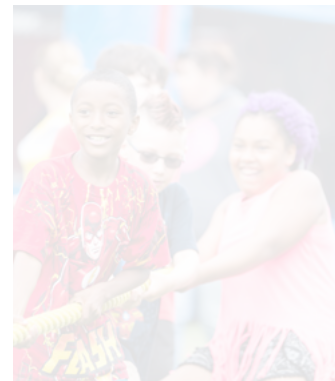




# Community Housing Capacity Building Program

Proponent Guide  
2021-2022



## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Program Summary .....	3
Eligible Applicants .....	3
Eligible Projects .....	4
Before You Apply .....	6
Application Process .....	6

## Introduction

Non-profit housing providers and co-operatives operate in a very challenging social and economic environment which directly affects our province's ability to achieve a suitable, diverse, and affordable housing supply that meets the needs of vulnerable and low-income Nova Scotians. More than ever, Nova Scotia needs a strong network of social landlords and developers in urban and rural communities with the capacity and experience to successfully operate, finance, plan and develop affordable mixed-market housing.

The Community Housing Capacity Building Program (CHCBP) is one of several provincial initiatives aimed at creating a modern, resilient, sustainable, and vibrant community housing sector in which more providers operate as social enterprises and seek to achieve social, economic, and environmental outcomes. The CHCBP provides financial support to organizations ready to begin or continue their renewal and transformation journey and with potential for capacity development and growth. It also encourages sector consolidation and scale.

## Program Summary

This program provides funding to eligible housing providers to undertake projects aimed primarily at supporting modernization and restructuring of non-profit housing providers and co-operatives enabling long-term sustainability and achieve management and resident services excellence. It encourages organizations to assess or reassess their operating practice and governance toward developing a plan that will achieve greater financial viability and optimize social outcomes. Organizations that demonstrate potential for growth can receive financial support to prepare development plans.

Funding is also available for community groups or non-profit societies who want to establish a community land trust in their area.

### **The CHCBP seeks to achieve the following objectives:**

- Maintain existing supply of affordable housing owned and operated by co-ops and non-profits.
- Increase organizational and governance capacity to ensure long-term sustainability and promote sector growth.
- Ensure community housing organizations are well-positioned to leverage existing and new federal funding opportunities.
- Improve housing outcomes for racialized and marginalized communities.

## Eligible Applicants

There are three (3) general rules to be eligible to apply for the Community Housing Capacity Building Program:

- Be a non-profit society or co-operative seeking to maintain or increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Be a non-profit society with a desire to improve housing outcomes for underrepresented communities.



- Be a community group looking to establish a community land trust.

**In addition, proponents will be required to demonstrate:**

- Need for undertaking capacity building activities under the CHCBP; and
- Capacity to deliver the project and meet all conditions of the contribution agreement.

## Eligible Projects

Eligible proponents can receive funding to cover up to 100% of the costs associated with one or more of the following activities:

## Governance and Operational Review

Given the current housing environment, community housing providers must innovate and adjust their operating models, leadership, governance, culture, and expertise to support successful modernization and transformation. Governance and operational reviews can assist organizations to assess the effectiveness of their current governance and operational structure and identify strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. These reviews typically including the following elements:

- Review of existing governance model, including identification of challenges and opportunities.
- Review of existing operational framework and identification of opportunities to improve financial sustainability through new models, such as merging traditional social service functions with revenue-generating activities; cost efficiency measures; innovation and new enterprise; leveraging asset equity to generate funds for new development or intensification; and diversification into mixed-market rental structures.
- Gap analysis of the skills and competencies of existing staff and elected board members compared to those needed to support modernization and transformation such as contract management, asset renewal and development, market management strategies, development financing and financial planning.
- Review of board policies and procedures.

## Building Condition Assessment

A Building Condition Assessment (BCA) is a report that evaluates the condition of the properties within an organization's portfolio. It includes a review on a building's envelope, structural foundation, superstructure, electrical and mechanical systems, including heating and cooling as well as interior finishes and fixtures. A BCA may also include the exterior elements of the property including site grading and drainage, condition of walkways, roadways and servicing infrastructure and lighting.

**A Building Condition Assessment may also include:**

- **Structural Engineer Report:** A report on the structural soundness of a building's weight bearing components such as foundation, framing, posts, beams, trusses, and or columns.
- **Environmental Site Assessment and Report (Phase 1 & Phase 2):** A report on the existence and scope of soil or groundwater contamination as well as the presence in buildings of products such as asbestos, lead paint or mold. If a Phase I assessment identifies potential environmental issues, a Phase 2 assessment involving more in-depth sampling or testing may be required
- **Electrical Report:** A report produced by a qualified electrician detailing the state of the building's electrical components and defects relative to the latest issue of the Canadian Electrical Code.

- **Energy Efficiency Report:** An Assessment by a certified advisor examining insulation levels, air leakage and mechanical systems of a building. The energy performance of the building is rated. This report can serve as a roadmap for prioritized efficiency upgrades to save energy and potentially money.

## Asset Management Plan

Based on information provided through a Building Condition Assessment (BCA), an Asset Management Plan helps an organization make effective decisions about operation, maintenance, renewal, replacement, expansion, and disposal of its properties. An Asset Management Plan typically includes the following elements:

- Recommended capital repair allocations and development of an annual maintenance plan to inform budgeting.
- Identification of opportunities to reduce operating costs such as increasing energy efficiency
- Accessibility improvements to support aging-in-place.
- Identifying redevelopment opportunities of sites in the portfolio including possible additional new revenue that could be generated.
- Identifying divestiture candidates and a disposal plan.
- Development of a Reserve Fund establish a reserve fund to enable properties to be maintained.

## Portfolio Review

A portfolio review assesses the current state of an organization's portfolio and identifies options for improving the organization's sustainability within the context of the rental market and affordable housing supply. A portfolio review should include, at minimum:

- Analysis of property data, including unit condition, existing zoning, operating cost, market value, rental rates, etc.
- Investment required for any required repair/renewal based on a completed Building Condition Assessment
- Evaluation of sites for potential divestiture or re-development
- Financial analysis
- Identification of opportunities for introduction of mixed-market models.

## Growth and Development Business Plan

Based on information provided through completed Building Condition Assessments, Portfolio Reviews, Asset Management Plan, Governance/Operational reviews, and/or other related documents, a Growth and Development Business Plan identifies the strategies that an organization will implement over a multi-year period to pursue opportunities, optimize outcomes, and address challenges.

## Community Land Trust

Development of a community land trust designed to hold land for community housing organizations and for future development of affordable housing. Funding may cover legal fees associated with establishing the trust.

## Before you apply

You must speak with one of our program specialists before beginning and submitting your application. This will ensure your organization and project meet the eligibility criteria and is ready to be submitted. Our staff can also help you understand the program and learn more about your objectives and priorities.

Once you have determined your needs and a potential project, you should meet with at least two consultants to get cost estimates, where possible.

Make sure you receive approval from your board before applying.

## Application Process

Please ensure your application form is complete and accurate. Provide all required documentation to expedite the approval process. Incomplete applications received on or before the close of the application window will be returned to the proponent. One of our program specialists will contact you to let you know about missing information and assist you in completing the application.

### 1. Steps to submit your application

STEP 1	Review the program objectives and eligibility criteria to ensure your project meets program requirements.
STEP 2	Ensure that you have spoken to one of our program specialists — <b>Jennifer DeWolfe</b> , (902) 755-7027, email: <a href="mailto:Jennifer.DeWolfe@novascotia.ca">Jennifer.DeWolfe@novascotia.ca</a> , OR <b>Simon Odamtten</b> , 902-424-6177, email: <a href="mailto:simon.odamtten@novascotia.ca">simon.odamtten@novascotia.ca</a> .
STEP 3	<p>Download the application form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Right-click the Application for Funding and select 'Save target as' or 'Save link as' to download the Application for Funding to your computer in PDF format.</li><li>• <b>Open the file using a PDF reader.</b> If you do not already have a reader installed on your computer, there are several PDF readers available on the Internet for PC and MAC users. <b>Proponents are required to use Adobe Reader 10 or higher.</b></li></ul>
STEP 4	<p>Complete the application form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Two quotes must be attached to the application</b> form to show detailed project costs.</li><li>• If applicable, attach letters of support or commitment from funders or partners.</li><li>• Please ensure to clearly describe your proposed project, how you will manage the activities, your proposed timeline, and anticipated outcomes.</li></ul>

<b>STEP 5</b>	Create an email and attach your completed application form and any other relevant documentation.
<b>STEP 6</b>	Send your email with all attachments to: <b>communityhousinggrants@novascotia.ca</b> by <b>December 10, 2021, at 4:30 pm.</b>
<b>STEP 7</b>	Once your application package is received, you will receive a response indicating that your email was successfully submitted.
<b>STEP 8</b>	Save an electronic copy of the application package and the confirmation email for your records.

## 2. Evaluation Process

Assessment of completed applications will begin on December 13, 2021. Incomplete applications will be returned to proponents. Applicants will be able to resubmit their application within five (5) business days.

### Mandatory Requirements

- ✓ Eligible applicant
- ✓ Eligible activities
- ✓ Demonstrate need for undertaking eligible activities
- ✓ Capacity to deliver the project and meet all conditions of the contribution agreement

### Priority Assessment Criteria

- ✓ Project meets one or more program objectives
- ✓ Project promotes sector consolidation and scale
- ✓ Project can leverage other sources of funding
- ✓ Project supports the housing needs of underserved communities

### Other important information

Proponents will need to demonstrate a commitment and capacity to execute any plan or implement recommendations received as a result of funded activities. For example, if administrative changes are recommended following the organizational review, the proponent must describe how they will review and advance those recommendations. Proponents should indicate in their application if they anticipate requiring further financial support or resources to act on such recommendations.

## 3. Funding Terms and Conditions

Proponents must accept the terms and conditions as described in Appendix B of the Application Form.

## 4. Project Approval

- If approved for funding, applicants will be required to sign a Contribution Agreement that confirms the applicant's acceptance of the terms and conditions.
- Applicants are required to complete the deliverables identified in the application and submit the following documents to HNS:
  1. Final invoice for payment with confirmation of deliverable, i.e., strategic plan
  2. Draw request letter signed by the applicant (attached to Contribution Agreement)
  3. Statutory declaration signed and witnessed
- Funds will be released upon review and acceptance of the invoice(s)

## [Go to Application Form](#)

### Contact Information

Before you begin the application process or if you have any questions about this program, please contact:

**Jennifer DeWolfe,**  
**CHCBP Program Specialist**  
(902) 755-7027  
[Jennifer.DeWolfe@novascotia.ca](mailto:Jennifer.DeWolfe@novascotia.ca)

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