

Housing Initiatives Under the Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy

The Ministry of Housing (MHO) will be providing funding under the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program for eligible proposals under the Community-Based Supports Fund (CBSF) and the Indigenous-Led Initiatives Fund (ILIF) that will provide dedicated affordable housing for survivors of human trafficking.

The IAH program is a joint initiative between MHO and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) with the objective of improving access to affordable housing that is safe, sound, suitable, and sustainable for households across Ontario. Program requirements – including program design, administration and delivery, payment of funding, financial provisions, accountability, and communications – are set out in the CMHC-Ontario Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing 2011-2015 and subsequent supplementary agreements.

IAH funding provided under both the CBSF and the ILIF could potentially be used in two ways:

1. Creation of New Affordable Rental Housing
 - construction and/or acquisition and rehabilitation/repurposing of buildings/housing spaces for supportive and/or transitional housing;
2. Operating Funding
 - ongoing funding to assist with the shelter costs of survivors of human trafficking

Project proponents would be required to partner with the local Service Manager or Aboriginal Program Administrator (for Indigenous-led proposals) in the development of a “housing initiative” submission.

Service Managers are designated under legislation to administer housing programs in Ontario. A list of Service Managers and their service areas is available on the Ministry’s website at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/page1202.aspx>. MHO works in partnership with two Indigenous organizations (“Aboriginal Program Administrators”) to administer dedicated Indigenous affordable housing funding. Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (<http://www.ontarioaboriginalhousing.ca/>) delivers funding outside of the Greater Toronto Area and Miziwe Biik Development Corporation (<http://www.mbdc.ca/>) delivers funding within the Greater Toronto Area.

Project applicants who are considering including a housing component are urged to contact their Service Manager / Aboriginal Program Administrator early to allow time for all issues to be addressed. Service Managers would take on significant accountability for projects that are funded and require time to fully consider the implications of projects. Time may also be required to secure Council / Board approvals.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Project proposals under both the Community-Based Supports Fund and the Indigenous-Led Initiatives Fund would need to be consistent with the requirements under the CMHC-Ontario IAH Agreement and the relevant supplementary agreements.

As per the IAH Agreement, “Housing” would need to be modest in terms of floor area and amenities, based on household needs and community norms. Housing includes residential accommodation, and facilities, common areas and services used directly with the residential accommodation.

Housing initiative funding could not be used for commercial or institutional premises, social or recreational services, and services or facilities related to mental or physical health care, education, corrections, food services, social support or public recreation.

1. Creation of New Affordable Rental Housing

- Projects could include new construction (including additions and extensions); acquisition and, where required, rehabilitation of existing residential buildings; conversion of non-residential buildings/units to residential buildings/units
- Average rents in a project must not exceed 80% of the Average Market Rent (AMR) for the area, and no unit in a project shall have a rent in excess of AMR.
- Projects must maintain the affordability criteria for a minimum of 20 years.
- Funding must be committed in the fiscal year in which it is approved; otherwise, funding will be lost. Rental Housing funding is committed when a Contribution Agreement is executed between the housing proponent and the Service Manager/Aboriginal Program Administrator. The Contribution Agreement outlines the legal obligations and reporting requirements for the project.
- Maximum funding of \$150,000 per unit is available.
- MHO would advance funding to the Service Manager, who would be responsible for making project payments to housing proponents based on the completion of construction milestones and compliance with requirements.
- Construction must begin within three months and be completed within two years of the signing of the Contribution Agreement.
- Housing proponents would be required to report on rent levels in the project upon occupancy and annually throughout the 20-year affordability period. Other reporting may be required.

2. Operating Funding

- Can take the form of rent supplements to landlords of eligible housing (private, non-profit; co-operative); or housing allowances to eligible renter households for affordable housing.
- Rent supplements can be used in addition to Rental Housing funding to support deeper levels of affordability in projects.

- Units must be modest, rented at or below AMR for the area.
- Operating Funding assistance can be provided up to March 31, 2024.
- Funding would flow to the Service Manager/Aboriginal Program Administrator on a quarterly basis, who would be responsible for making payments to the housing proponents.
- At a minimum, quarterly reporting on households assisted and funding expensed will be required. Other additional reporting may also be required.

The current IAH (2014 Extension) Program Guidelines can be found on the Ministry's website at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=15117>.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Communications

In addition to any communications requirements under the Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy, all participants in the housing initiative will be required to adhere to the CMHC-Ontario Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing 2011-2015 Communications Protocol. This is to ensure open, transparent, effective and proactive communications with citizens through ongoing public information activities that recognize the contributions of both the federal and provincial governments. For instance, no recipient can make any public announcement for a project without first securing agreement of MHO and CMHC.