

HOMES BC - COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVES

Background Information

HOMES BC's Community Housing Initiatives (CHI) component is a grant program aimed at assisting non-profit community housing groups to identify and address their community's particular housing issues.

The HOMES BC CHI grants are designed to meet five key objectives:

- Support public education and community advocacy on housing issues.
- Increase access to affordable rental housing.
- Demonstrate new ways of addressing housing problems.
- Develop new skills and abilities of community groups to preserve and expand the stock of affordable housing.
- Strengthen local and province-wide housing organizations.

Housing organizations can use HOMES BC CHI grants for the following activities:

- Community advocacy aimed at promoting affordable housing and building inclusive neighbourhoods.
- Public information and education, which covers housing, issues not being addressed by other organizations or similar projects.
- Production of tools and strategies that can assist housing groups in other communities.
- Training which gives individuals or groups the tools to begin addressing housing issues in their community.

A total of \$600,000 is available through CHI. Grants for nine regional housing centres were announced today totaling \$500,000. \$100,000 is still available to community-based organizations for time-limited projects. The deadline for grant applications is Monday, November 9 at 4:30 p.m.

1998 Regional Housing Centres

<u>Regional Housing Centre</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Area Served</u>
Active Support Against Poverty	\$50,000	Prince George and Interior north
Okanagan Tenants Advocacy Society	\$50,000	Kelowna and Interior south
Kamloops Active Support Against Poverty	\$50,000	Kamloops and Interior south
Community Housing Services Nanaimo	\$50,000	Nanaimo and Vancouver Island
The Advocacy Centre	\$50,000	Nelson and south eastern Interior
Terrace Anti-Poverty Group Society	\$50,000	Terrace and Interior north
Tenants' Rights Action Coalition	\$50,000	Lower Mainland (South Fraser)
Capital Families Association	\$75,000	Victoria and Vancouver Island
Lower Mainland Network for Affordable Housing	\$75,000	Vancouver and inner suburbs

For more information on CHI or to obtain application guidelines for proposal submissions, contact BC Housing's Community Services department at (604) 433-1711 or 1-800-257-7756.

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BC Housing
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MORE SOCIAL HOUSING ANNOUNCED FOR B.C.

VICTORIA -- The provincial government will support the development and on-going operation of 600 new non-profit and co-operative housing units, and will offer up-to \$600,000 in grants to improve access to affordable housing through this year's HOMES BC program minister responsible for BC Housing Mike Farnworth announced today.

"British Columbia is still the most expensive place to live in Canada, with approximately 47 per cent of renters paying more than they can afford on rent," said Farnworth. "HOMES BC is an important social investment in our province. This program provides affordable housing that allows individuals to live within their financial means, provides a stable foundation for families to raise children, and helps build and maintain healthy and inclusive communities.

"I am confident non-profit societies, municipalities and community groups will come forward with ideas and submissions to fulfill the objectives of the program and take advantage of today's announcement."

HOMES BC is a comprehensive provincial housing program delivered by BC Housing, a provincial agency. Through non-profit societies and co-op associations the program helps to build community support for, improve access to and develop affordable housing for low- and moderate-income British Columbians.

HOMES BC includes three components that support these goals. Through the Community Housing Initiatives component \$500,000 in grants will be used to continue to support nine existing regional housing centres throughout the province. Advocacy work underway through these centres includes a range of housing-related services aimed at increasing affordable, adequate and appropriate housing for renters. Another \$100,000 in grants are available to community-based housing organizations to promote community development, public education and advocacy, research initiatives and training activities. The deadline for grant submissions is November 9, 1998.

Through the Non-Profit and Homeless At Risk components, and the lower-income urban singles housing demonstration initiative of the program, at least 600 units of new rental housing will be developed over the next three years. The program's aim is to create housing for families, seniors, low-income urban singles and second-stage housing for people leaving transition homes or at risk of becoming homeless.

Funding for the Non-Profit and Homeless At Risk components of the program is available to non-profit housing sponsors, municipal or other public agencies interested in developing social housing in their community. Proposal development funding, construction interim financing, mortgage loan insurance, and operating subsidies are available for approved projects.

There is no deadline for Non-Profit and Homeless At Risk project submissions. Sponsors are welcome to apply any time throughout the year. Evaluation of submissions will be based on housing need in a community, partnership contributions, the development's cost-effectiveness and suitability of the proposal for intended clients.

“Since the federal government’s withdrawal from social housing in early 1994, B.C. has maintained its level of funding commitment,” said Farnworth. “Each year we have managed through innovative means and creative partnerships to maximize these funds to create more than the planned 600 units. Once again, I am confident that we will be able to exceed our goal through the 1998 HOMES BC program with support from our various partners.”

British Columbia and Quebec are the only two provinces in Canada still developing new social housing. Since 1992, B.C. has unilaterally funded the development of over 3,800 new rental housing units through programs such as HOMES BC.

BC Housing is the provincial agency responsible for the delivery of social housing in the province. It manages 8,000 units of public housing, administers 29,000 units of housing managed by non-profit and co-operative societies and provides support to sponsors to build and manage new units.

Background information attached:

- Information on Community Housing Initiatives and nine regional housing centres

Information available on request:

- Community Housing Initiatives Application Guidelines
- Introduction to HOMES BC Development Opportunities


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PREMIER ANNOUNCES MORE OPTIONS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

March 19th, 2001

VANCOUVER – The provincial government will continue to lead Canada by funding housing options this year that will benefit another 975 households, Premier Ujjal Dosanjh announced today.

"This mix of funding – with 725 new social housing units and 250 new rent supplements – will benefit low-income families, seniors, urban singles and those with special needs with something I believe is a fundamental right – a home," said Dosanjh. "Many of these new homes will include support to help people live independently.

"In communities where affordable housing is needed but vacant rental units exist, we will be providing new rent supplements," Dosanjh added. "This is a well-rounded program, and it shows this government's continuing commitment to providing safe, affordable and appropriate housing."

These new units will be built in partnership with non-profit housing societies, co-ops and the private sector. Supportive housing is also an important component of the new HOMES BC program funding. These units will be built in partnership with local health authorities and community service providers.

Since 1994 the provincial government has announced funding for more than 8,350 units through BC Housing's HOMES BC program. To date about 4,000 units have been completed across the province, and planning or construction for the remaining units is underway. British Columbia is one of only two provinces in Canada that continues to fund new social housing under a comprehensive program.

"We're making a real difference in the lives of people who need assistance the most," said Mike Farnworth, minister responsible for housing. "Housing is an essential cornerstone. When people have safe and affordable housing they're able to invest in their children, in education or in maintaining or finding employment."

Through BC Housing, the provincial government will provide ongoing operating subsidies for 725 units to be built by the non-profit housing sector. The value of these developments will be nearly \$100 million. The annual cost of providing 250 new rent supplements is expected to be \$1.4 million.

"The residential construction sector is a huge economic driver; each new home creates about 2.5 person-years of employment," said M.J. Whitemarsh, chief executive officer of the Canadian Home Builders' Association of B.C. "The HOMES BC program units announced today will result in 1,800 new jobs in the construction industry,"

"Safe and affordable housing is the foundation for strong, livable communities," said Alice Sundberg, B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association executive director. "The non-profit housing sector has enjoyed a strong partnership with this government and is looking forward to working with BC Housing to deliver these new homes."

"We're fortunate that the provincial government has continued to provide funding for new affordable housing," said Thom Armstrong, executive director of the Co-op Housing Federation of B.C. "Co-op and non-profit housing is about investing in people, and that's something I know our members support."

More information and application forms for BC Housing's 2001 HOMES BC program can be found in this web site's Programs and Services Room. BC Housing will work with funding agencies and non-profit sponsors to develop housing that will meet the unique needs of communities. For more information on submitting a proposal, contact BC Housing's co-ordinator of program implementation at 604-439-4750, ext. 325 or 1-800-257-7756.

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BACKGROUND

What is HOMES BC?

HOMES BC, a provincially funded housing program, helps communities meet their needs for affordable housing. HOMES BC is administered by BC Housing and provides construction financing and operating subsidies to non-profit and co-op housing providers who develop affordable housing for low- and moderate-income British Columbians. Today the provincial government announced funding for 975 units – 725 new housing units and 250 rent supplements.

How will the 250 new rent supplements fit into your existing rent supplement programs?

BC Housing provides rent supplements to nearly 16,000 British Columbians through three rent programs:

- Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) for those 60 and over, living in private market units.
- Supported Independent Living Program for people with severe and persistent mental illness, living in private market units – a program operated in partnership with the Ministry of Health and regional health authorities.

Federal/Provincial rent supplement program, serving those living in non-profit, co-op and private market accommodation – this program is funded one-third by the province and two-thirds by the federal government. It is fully allocated.

Today's announcement of 250 new rent supplements will be fully funded by the provincial government. The new rent supplements are intended for women with or without children who are leaving abusive relationships; people who are HIV-positive or living with AIDS; people with mental illnesses; people with physical disabilities, and large families. Private landlords, non-profit societies and co-operatives will apply for the rent supplement program, not renters.

Who will benefit from these 975 homes?

HOMES BC provides affordable housing for families, seniors, urban singles, people with disabilities and people who are at risk of becoming homeless. The 2001 program includes supportive housing units for seniors and for adults who require support to live independently.

What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing comes with the support services necessary for its residents to live independently in the community. It can be for anyone who, for reasons of health (HIV, AIDS, aged-related frailty, mental illness) or other status (women fleeing abusive situations or youth trying to end street involvement), needs some support services to maintain their independence.

When is the deadline for submitting proposals?

There is no deadline for housing proposals under the 2001 HOMES BC program. However, sponsors are encouraged to submit their proposals as soon as possible as they will be evaluated and allocated on an ongoing basis.

Supportive Housing

Because additional funding partnerships are required for staffing and client programs for supportive housing, BC Housing will work with funding agencies and non-profit and co-op sponsors to develop a housing concept that will meet the unique needs of the community. The review, approval and allocation of funding will be done case by case. Housing sponsors intending to submit these types of proposals are encouraged to contact BC Housing's co-ordinator of program implementation at 604-439-4750, ext. 325 or 1-800-257-7756 before making a submission.

How will proposals be evaluated?

Evaluation of submissions will be based on housing need in a community, development schedule, building design, community amenities, the development's cost-effectiveness and the appropriateness of the proposal for intended clients.

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Media Contacts: