
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Ministry of Natural Gas Development and
Responsible for Housing

Funding opportunities for affordable rental housing in capital region

VICTORIA – People experiencing homelessness and low-to moderate-income families and individuals will have additional housing options, thanks to an innovative partnership between the Province, the Capital Regional District (CRD) and Island Health.

A call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) has gone out to non-profit housing providers, the private sector, and other community groups interested in creating affordable rental homes to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in the region. The EOI also creates an opportunity for projects that address the needs of low-to moderate-income families and individuals in the capital region.

The selection of submissions will be based on criteria that includes the impact the project will have in addressing homelessness and reducing the community's affordable rental housing needs. Non-profit housing societies may partner with other organizations to strengthen their proposed project.

The Regional Housing First Program includes a commitment of up to \$30 million in capital funding from the Province, with a matching contribution of \$30 million from the CRD. The funding will be allocated over five years. Island Health will provide mental health and addiction services for projects where supports are required.

The Province's contribution will be funded through the Provincial Investment in Affordable Housing (PIAH) Program, a \$355 million dollar investment to create more than 2,000 units of affordable housing.

Quotes:

Rich Coleman, Minister of Natural Gas Development and Minister Responsible for Housing –

“We recognize the need, not only for more affordable housing in the capital region, but for additional supportive housing to make sure that people who are experiencing homelessness have the supports they need to maintain stable housing.”

Terry Lake, Health Minister –

“Families need a safe and affordable place to call home, and this is even more important when facing a life of chronic homelessness and mental health and substance use challenges. This partnership will help these individuals prioritize their recovery with a secure and comfortable home first, and allow them to focus on getting the treatments they need.”

Barbara Desjardins, Board Chair for Capital Regional District –

“This is an exciting partnership with the Province to invest in new housing units across the region. The Regional Housing First Program and the process underway will generate creative solutions and help build a liveable, vibrant community.”

Lisa Helps, CRD Director and Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness Co-Chair –

“The Regional Housing First Program and Community Plan are shining examples of working together to help address the needs of those experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Today marks an opportunity for innovation and a positive step forward for the region.”

Quick Facts:

- Interested proponents can find out more about the EOI by participating in an informational webinar on Nov. 8 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. More information will be posted at:
http://www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Creating/PIAH/Regional_Housing_First_Program
- The EOI package is available at MERX Canadian Public Tenders: www.merx.com/bch, and links to MERX are also available at BC Housing: www.bchousing.org/Partners/Call, CRD: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/about/contracts-rfps/current> and BC Bid: www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca
- Funding from the PIAH program is being generated from the Non-Profit Asset Transfer (NPAT) program initiated in 2014, whereby BC Housing is transferring select land and buildings to non-profit housing providers. All net proceeds from the NPAT program will be reinvested into affordable housing.
- The CRD is planning to borrow up to \$30M and finance debt servicing costs over a 25 year period.
- Last year, the B.C. government invested close to \$53.9 million to provide subsidized housing and rent supplements for more than 10,520 households in the Capital Regional District. This includes providing support for more than 5,280 senior households and over than 3,240 family households.
- Since 2001, the Province has invested \$4.9 billion to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals, seniors and families across the province.

Learn More:

To learn more about the Province's actions on housing affordability, visit:

<http://housingaffordability.gov.bc.ca/>

For more information about services and supports for the homeless in Victoria, please visit:

www.housingmattersbc.ca/docs/fs_Homeless%20Supports_Victoria.pdf

For more about the Regional Housing First Program (RHFP), visit:

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/project/regional-housing-first-program>

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