



Housing Priorities Grant Program

For-Profit Homebuilders
Guidance Information
2025



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Section A – Fund Information

The City of Richmond is committed to fostering a vibrant and inclusive community by addressing the growing need for affordable housing. The City’s 2017 Affordable Housing Strategy recognizes the need for housing options that serve low and moderate-income households, seniors, families and vulnerable populations. The Housing Priorities Grant Program builds on this commitment by providing financial support to accelerate the development of affordable rental housing.

This one-time \$10 million Housing Priorities Grant Program is part of a series of housing initiatives enabled through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s Housing Acceleration Fund (HAF) program. These initiatives aim to boost housing supply while supporting affordable, diverse and climate resilient communities.

Funding Streams

The Housing Priorities Grant Program has two main funding streams. One stream is geared towards not-for-profit organizations and housing cooperatives that build, own, and manage affordable rental housing. The second stream, being the focus of this guidance document, provides financial incentives through DCC offsets to for-profit homebuilders to build more than any minimum required supply of affordable rental housing.

All Housing Priorities Grant Funding must be spent before December 14, 2027, so the Program aims to catalyze viable projects that face immediate funding challenges.

Project Eligibility and Eligible Fees

This funding stream can offset 75% of City development cost charges (DCCs) for affordable rental homes delivered voluntarily by for-profit homebuilders.

Voluntary affordable housing is affordable housing delivered in excess of any existing affordable housing delivery targets or requirements set out in the Official Community Plan, Affordable Housing Strategy, Zoning Bylaw and applicable Area Plans.

For the purposes of this program, affordable rental housing has rents that do not exceed the maximums established within the City’s Low-End Market Rental (LEMR) program or, where BC Housing’s Household Income Limits (HILs) are used, housing for which annual rents do not exceed 30 per cent of the HIL.

Table 1: DCC offset funding eligibility

<p>Project Eligibility</p>	<p>The following must be met to be eligible for funding :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant is a business or other for-profit entity not eligible for grant funding from the City; and • The project involves the voluntary construction of new affordable rental housing; and • The proposed project has conditional approval for a development application (i.e. third reading of a rezoning bylaw) and/or a development permit issued; and • Eligible DCC costs to be offset will be incurred before December 14 2027.
<p>Eligible Fees</p>	<p>DCC offsets are limited to a maximum of 75 per cent of the City DCCs applicable to the total floor area of any voluntary affordable rental homes secured through a housing agreement.</p>
<p>Ineligible Fees</p>	<p>Ineligible fees include paid DCCs and third-party DCC charges, including School Site Acquisition Charges, Metro Vancouver Water and Sanitary Sewer DCCs, and TransLink DCCs.</p>

Examples of Voluntary Affordable Housing Delivery

A homebuilder plans to include 20 affordable rental units in a 100% rental project. As no affordable housing requirement applies to a 100% rental project, the 20 affordable rental units qualify as voluntary delivery and are eligible for DCC offset funding.

A homebuilder plans a large mixed-use development in Richmond's City Centre. The development is required to provide 15% of the floor area as affordable rental housing. To enhance community benefit, the homebuilder voluntarily increases the affordable rental housing component to 25% of the total floor area. The additional 10% of affordable rental housing qualifies as a voluntary contribution and would be eligible for DCC offset funding.

Section B – Making an Application

To apply for funding, applicants must complete an application form and submit the completed form to affordablehousing@richmond.ca.

Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted by 5:00pm on March 26, 2025. The City may consider time sensitive applications in advance of the application deadline.

Application Review and Reporting

The following steps will be taken by staff from the City's Housing Office in reviewing and presenting a DCC offset application to Council:

1. Review application for completeness. Where additional information is required staff from the Housing Office will contact the Applicant accordingly;
2. Apply Assessment Criteria (next page) to the proposal and undertake scoring;
3. Prepare a report to the City's General Purposes Committee to present the application and a recommendation regarding whether or not to issue funding. Staff will confirm the date of the Committee meeting with the Applicant so that they may request a delegation to speak to their proposal. If a delegation is permitted by the Committee Chair, the Applicant will be provided five minutes to speak to their proposal;
4. If the recommendation is supported by the majority of Committee members the application and recommendation will proceed to the next Council meeting for a decision;
5. If the recommendation is not supported by the General Purposes Committee, the Application may be referred back to staff to work with the Applicant on refinement of the proposal or to provide the Committee with additional information, as required;
6. If the application is approved by Committee and subsequently Council, City staff will work with the Applicant to prepare and execute a project-specific DCC bylaw. DCC bylaws will only be approved alongside or after a housing agreement that secures the affordable housing units. The City may also make an announcement, potentially with CMHC, to celebrate the award of funding;
7. If the application is not approved by Council, the Applicant may request a debrief with City staff to gain insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their application. Should further funding rounds occur applicants will have the opportunity to submit a new application;

Assessment Criteria

Applications deemed complete will be assessed against the following criteria.

Criteria (weighting)	Components of Criteria
<p>Housing Benefits (45%)</p> <p><i>Proposal needs to show how they create additional affordable housing for the target cohorts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of additional affordable rentals and depth of affordability that the investment will enable relative to demand in that area. The proportion of affordable houses expected to be enabled relative to specific housing needs of that area (i.e. family friendly 2- to 3-bedroom homes and accessible homes).
<p>Cost and Co-funding (20%)</p> <p><i>Proposal represents a cost-effective solution</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the proposal leverages other funding sources to deliver additional housing and provides value for money. The impact that this funding will have on the housing development advancing, or on the pace and scale at which it will advance compared to what is currently expected.
<p>Capability and Immediacy (20%)</p> <p><i>Proposal provides assurance that if funding is approved, the project will advance at pace</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence in the ability of all parties to deliver the housing as proposed and at pace. Demonstrated alignment where relevant between all necessary parties including provincial government, development partners and affected persons needed to advance the proposal.
<p>Supports Long-term Sustainable Affordable Housing Delivery (15%)</p> <p><i>Proposal supports long-term housing outcomes for Richmond</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the proposal addresses recycling or reinvestment of funding for future housing needs. The extent to which the delivery model enables local leadership, collaboration or use of prudent commercial partnerships to deliver projects. The extent to which the proposal enables wider well-being outcomes (e.g. job creation, utilization of Indigenous enterprises, climate change adaptation, etc.)

Questions Regarding the Application

If anything is unclear or you have questions about the Program or the application process, email the Housing Office at affordablehousing@richmond.ca.