



PRESS RELEASE



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Bridgewater Residents Get New Affordable Rental Housing

BRIDGEWATER, Nova Scotia, November 25, 2005 — People living in Bridgewater will have access to more affordable rental housing thanks to a \$1.63 million, 25-unit development approved under the Canada–Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement.

The Honourable Robert Thibault, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and MP for West Nova, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, and Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Minister of Human Resources, on behalf of David Morse, Minister of Community Services made the announcement today.

"Thanks to the co-operative efforts between both levels of Government, this greatly needed project has become a reality," said MP Thibault. "Shelter is one of the foundations upon which healthy communities and individual dignity are built, and the Government of Canada is committed to helping local organizations develop housing solutions that meet the needs of their community."

"Affordable housing ensures people have a home, that families are safe and secure and that our communities are strong, healthy and diverse," said Ms. Bolivar-Getson. "The creation of this safe, affordable, and sustainable housing is essential to addressing that need in Bridgewater."

The project involves the renovation of a three-storey former commercial building on Pleasant Street and will provide 25 units of affordable rental housing for small families and singles. It will include three barrier-free units that reduce obstacles for people with physical disabilities or reduced mobility.

This development will receive \$500,000 in up-front capital funding from the federal government. The province will commit \$225,000 in rent supplement funding. The developer will provide 27 per cent of the total development cost. The development is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2006.

To date, nearly \$27 million in funding has been announced by the Government of Canada, and the Province of Nova Scotia and its partners, for the construction or renovation of almost 625 units in the province. A total of \$56.18 million will be invested under the Canada-Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement. The federal assistance is part of the \$1 billion announcement under a 2001 federal-provincial framework, and the 2003 Federal Budget, to create affordable housing.

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Information on the Canada–Nova Scotia Affordable Housing agreement is available at local housing services offices or on the Department of Community Services website at www.gov.ns.ca/coms/

Backgrounder

Canada–Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement

First Phase

The Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia signed an Affordable Housing Program Agreement on September 13, 2002 — the first phase provided federal funding of \$18.63 million together with matching contributions of \$18.63 million from the Province of Nova Scotia.

The 2001 Speech from the Throne indicated the Government of Canada would help stimulate the creation of more affordable rental housing. The federal/provincial/territorial housing ministers met twice to finalize details of an affordable housing initiative that would address the needs and priorities of individual jurisdictions while meeting the goal of increasing the supply of affordable housing. The final framework was developed and agreed to on November 30, 2001 and includes the following:

- Provinces and territories have the primary responsibility for housing program design and delivery;
- Provinces and territories require flexible programs to address their housing needs;
- The initiative needs to create affordable housing for low- to moderate-income households;
- Units funded will remain affordable for a minimum of 10 years;
- Maximum subsidy is \$50,000 and;
- Provinces and territories will be required to match federal contributions overall.

Second Phase

The new agreement was signed March 3, 2005 and will see each level of government contribute \$9.46 million for the creation or renovation of affordable housing in Nova Scotia. The second phase reflects the framework determined in phase one of the Affordable Housing Program Agreement, with the exception that the maximum subsidy is greater.

Other Government of Canada Housing Support in Nova Scotia

The \$28.09 million federal contribution builds on current Government of Canada expenditures on housing in the province of Nova Scotia. The Government of Canada annually supports housing with approximately \$70.6 million in grants, contributions and subsidies which primarily serve some 23,400 lower-income families, seniors, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people, and victims of domestic violence.

This includes funds for existing social housing and approximately \$7 million for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence (HASI), Emergency Repair Program (ERP) and the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP).

Other Government of Nova Scotia Housing Support Programs

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The provincial government offers a number of programs to help lower-income households maintain, acquire, or rent safe, adequate, and affordable housing. Through housing authorities, we own and operate over 12,000 rental housing units for families and seniors. Rent is based on household income. We also provide grants and loans for home repair and additions, as well as mortgage funds to purchase or build modest houses.