



PRESS RELEASE



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CMHC Helps to Improve Housing Affordability and Choice

OTTAWA, Ontario, January 25, 2010 — Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) today announced 22 new grants to improve housing affordability for Canadians. The grants, totalling \$99,700, are being awarded under CMHC's Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) Initiative.

"CMHC is pleased to support the many municipalities, home builders and non-profit housing providers working to develop local housing solutions that will benefit the economy and revitalize communities across the country," said Douglas Stewart, Vice President, Policy and Planning of CMHC.

In operation since 1990, ACT provides grants of up to \$5,000 to teams of municipalities and private or non-profit home builders who promote the improvement of planning and building regulations in their communities to make housing more affordable and responsive to local needs. ACT also offers a wealth of proven best practices and lessons learned so that communities can benefit from the innovations of others.

ACT is funded by CMHC and administered and delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), with the participation of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA).

"ACT assists municipalities, home builders and housing groups to work together on regulatory reforms that support innovation. ACT has a significant impact leading to the creation of new affordable housing options," said FCM President Basil Stewart.

"By sharing information about how housing providers, builders and municipalities implemented changes, other local teams across the country can benefit when adopting those changes in their own communities," added CHRA President David Eddy.

"ACT grants have helped home builders to work with municipalities to streamline approvals and eliminate hurdles in planning and building regulations in order to improve housing affordability and choice," said CHBA President Gary Friend.

As Canada's national housing agency, CMHC draws on more than 60 years of experience to help Canadians access a variety of quality, environmentally sustainable, and affordable homes — homes that will continue to create vibrant, healthy communities and cities across the country.

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ACT Grant Projects — January 2010

Tamworth Hotel Conversion, Tamworth, Ontario

A \$5,000 grant to develop and adopt an alternative standard to the fire code to renovate and re-use an historic hotel on a village main street. The project will lead to the retrofit of the vacant second and third floors into five apartments, providing needed rental housing, giving new life to an historic building and revitalizing the main street.

Affordable Housing Speaker Session, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

A \$1,800 grant to host an information session to learn from the City of Saskatoon about the unique policies and initiatives it has adopted to create a stable supply of affordable housing and entry-level homes. The session will help the Housing Advisory Committee pursue innovative approaches to increase the supply of affordable housing in the City of Prince Albert.

Housing Options for the Workforce, Revelstoke, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to hold a session that will help develop policies and regulations encouraging secondary suites and other housing options for the workforce. The project will encourage the construction of accessory units in all zones, and best practices for housing conversions.

Vernon's Open Housing Strategy Open House, Vernon, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to organize an open house session for stakeholders to communicate the policy changes to the development charge structure and encourage developers to construct multi-family units within the city's downtown neighbourhoods.

Public Engagement for Additional Housing Options, Irricana, Alberta

A \$5,000 grant to research best practices and to hold a consultation session on how best to incorporate in the zoning by-law higher residential densities, seniors housing options, secondary suites and multi-family dwellings.

Secondary Suites Regulation, Williams Lake, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to undertake a public information and engagement process to implement a more flexible secondary suites policy and to address issues of safety, building code compliance, servicing and parking.

Affordable Housing Projects in New Residential Developments, St-Albert, Alberta

A \$4,400 grant to hold three workshops and to research options and make recommendations to City Council for changes to by-laws and policies to facilitate the development of medium-density housing.

Building Community Consensus & Momentum for Supportive Housing, Squamish, British Columbia

A \$1,500 grant to host a series of forums as part of a strategy to build community acceptance for supportive housing projects proposed for downtown Squamish.

Development Community Workshop — Healthy and Affordable Housing, Meaford, Ontario

A \$5,000 grant to hold a workshop informing the development community of recent updates to the development review process and the new zoning by-law permitting new housing options and higher densities. The project will also produce information materials outlining the updated development process and affordable housing resources.

Residential Development of 2nd Storeys and Vacant Sites, Québec, PQ

A \$5,000 grant to review success stories and best practises implemented by municipalities in Quebec and elsewhere to encourage residential development of vacant lands downtown and the reuse of unoccupied 2nd storeys for residential

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units. The results of the research and analysis will provide content for a half-day training session for municipalities and the creation of an advisory fact sheet summarizing the best practices and success factors.

Affordable Housing Lessons Learned Consultation, Calgary, Alberta

A \$5,000 grant to hold six focus groups, undertake interviews and research to gather reactions and identify lessons learned from the City of Calgary's development approval process and community engagement policies aimed at the building of affordable housing units. This information will be used to inform and improve future processes.

Built Green™ B.C. Municipal Tool Kit, West Vancouver, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to develop a Built Green™ B.C. Municipal Tool Kit for new and renovated residential projects. The Tool Kit will assist builders and municipalities in breaking down regulatory and approval barriers to building green residential projects.

City of Quesnel Secondary Suites Survey, Quesnel, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to undertake a survey to understand residents' perceptions and concerns regarding secondary suites in order to determine the actions and conditions necessary to permit secondary suites.

Child-Friendly Housing, Abbotsford, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to host workshops involving representatives from the development community, housing and social agencies, child and youth agencies and City staff to complete child- and youth-friendly policy recommendations, design guidelines and a checklist for reviewing housing developments with a child- and youth-friendly lens.

Intensification and Redevelopment Workshops, West Lincoln, Ontario

A \$3,000 grant to host an open house and workshops in order to identify the various ways in which residential intensification can occur using visual aids to assist the public in understanding how the density targets can be met. The events will inform the community about the benefits of intensification and seek feedback on the best ways to achieve intensification targets.

Micro Suite Housing, Abbotsford, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to organize two workshops to determine the feasibility of retrofitting single-residential dwellings into multiple micro suites providing affordable housing options. The project will assess the economic feasibility of micro suites, residents' requirements and City regulatory issues.

Affordable Housing Strategy, White Rock, British Columbia

A \$5,000 grant to host a workshop that will provide input to the development of an affordable housing strategy for families, low-income and special-needs residents. The workshop will focus on reducing development costs and increasing housing options through policies and regulations.

Wolfville Housing Development, Wolfville, Nova Scotia

A \$5,000 grant to make regulatory changes needed to develop a compact residential project with efficient infrastructure and green features catering to empty-nesters and young families. The project will serve as a design and regulatory model for future medium-density residential projects in the town.

Development of Housing Action Plan, Whitehorse, Yukon

A \$5,000 grant to develop a strategy and an action plan, including regulatory improvements, to address the housing needs of Whitehorse residents. The draft will be presented at a one-day workshop to seek input from the community.

Secondary Suite Communication Strategy, West Kelowna, BC

A \$5,000 grant to host a workshop to inform community stakeholders of the new secondary suite policy and to encourage new units within the permitted zones as well as the upgrade of illegal suites.

Zoning Standards for Prefabricated Singles, Cardston, Alberta

A \$5,000 grant to prepare technical documentation in order to permit the as-of-right construction of prefabricated single-family homes without garages and basements for modest-income earners, which will avoid repeat applications, fees, and delays and help to reduce housing costs.

Tadoussaction pour les Tadoussaciens, Tadoussac, Québec

A \$4,000 grant for workshops to analyse challenges and options and to proceed with the adoption of new regulatory tools to respond better to the lack of housing choice for the aging population and seasonal workers.

Backgrounder

Affordability And Choice Today (ACT)

Regulatory reform is a major concern to home builders and non-profit organizations looking for new ways to make housing more affordable and in line with the changing needs of today's communities. Municipalities also want to modify their regulations and update their procedures to make service delivery more efficient, while enhancing their community's quality of life.

The Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) Initiative was created in 1990 to address these issues by funding and promoting practical solutions at the local level that overcome planning and building regulatory barriers to housing affordability and choice. ACT has documented these ideas in case studies and information sheets that can be downloaded from ACT's website www.actprogram.com. This information is promoted at workshops, conferences and other events.

ACT provides grants of up to \$5,000 to local teams made up of municipalities, private and non-profit home builders and other housing participants. These teams use the grants to promote or initiate regulatory reform in their communities, aimed at increasing housing affordability and offering housing options that meet the community's needs. Eligible projects must include a specific activity or product, such as a stakeholder consultation, survey, background research, workshop, open house or promotional material.

The initiative is funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and administered and delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) with the participation of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA), and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA).

Grant applications are selected by ACT's National Management Committee, which represents the four partners. Applications can be submitted at any time.

With 172 projects complete, ACT has a rich database of solutions that local partners can benefit from in their future housing projects. Solution sheets and case studies from previously completed ACT grants are available on the website www.actprogram.com.

ACT's knowledgeable staff can also help find solutions and assist local stakeholders in addressing regulatory issues. For more information about the ACT grant application process and about ACT solutions call 613-907-6242, email info@actprogram.com or consult the CMHC web site at www.cmhc.ca.