

# Information Package

## Goals:

The City of Lethbridge will partner with eligible not-for-profit organizations and private organizations to provide financial support through the Community Affordable Housing Project Grant for eligible affordable housing projects. This grant is in pursuit of the following goals:

1. Support not-for-profit organizations and private organizations to in the development of affordable housing options for people living with low incomes in Lethbridge;
2. Provide financial assistance and opportunities for partnerships for not-for-profit organizations in their efforts to construct, renovate existing housing or retrofit facilities or existing housing stock;
3. Maximize and leverage the use of funds from other sources for investment in community affordable housing.

## **2016 Application Deadline:**

**Friday, March 18th, 2016**

## **Submit to:**

**Community & Social Development – Bringing Lethbridge Home  
3rd Floor City Hall  
910 — 4th Avenue South  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6**



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*

## Community Affordable Housing Project Grant

The City of Lethbridge partners with private and not-for profit organizations to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Lethbridge through access to affordable housing.

The Community Affordable Housing Project Grant has been established to assist private and community not-for-profit organizations to expand and upgrade the stock of affordable housing. The use of this grant is intended to leverage funding and support housing project requests on a consistent basis, encouraging partnerships, innovation, flexibility and creative housing models and solutions. The grant is designed to assist with smaller housing projects.

### Organizations Eligible for Funding:

Registered private or not-for-profit community organization or public institutions with demonstrated experience in housing management that is legally registered (and in good standing) under one of the following:

- Societies Act of Alberta;
- Companies Act of Alberta, Part 9 (Companies with objectives other than the acquisition of gain.)
- Business Corporations Act of Alberta, Part 21
- Special Act of the Parliament of Canada (e.g. service club).

Those **NOT** Eligible include:

- Churches and religious organizations
- Schools/School Boards and post-secondary institutions
- Provincial/ federal government and affiliated bodies.
- Community, private and family foundations (other funders)
- Hospitals/medical facilities, Regional Health Authorities and provincial boards

- Municipal/regional government

### Eligible for Funding:

The Affordable Housing project is appropriately zoned according to the City of Lethbridge Land Use Bylaw or the proponent is prepared to complete the re-zoning process as required.

The housing must be located within City of Lethbridge city boundaries.

The housing project must be under the organization's jurisdiction or have written approval from the owner and be accessible to the general public through land ownership, long-term lease (minimum of five years) or another instrument of occupation.

**Projects Eligible for Funding:**

- **New housing construction** – the housing project is for provision an existing or new program that is aligned with the mandate of Social Housing in Action, the City of Lethbridge Affordable Housing Capital Project Grant Policy, and the renewed 5 year Plan to Bring Lethbridge Home.
- **Housing expansion** – expansion of an existing housing facility beyond the existing footprint.
- **Retrofit existing facility space** – redevelop existing space for a new housing use or purpose.
- **Renovate existing housing facility/ space** – remodel or restore condition of current housing.
- **Housing facility upgrade** – upgrade housing mechanical, utility, security and other systems essential to the safety and livability of the housing space.
- **Capital equipment** – replacement or addition of major equipment (fixed asset or operational equipment essential to direct delivery of program and services) supporting program and maintenance programs and services which have a lifespan of **five years** or greater.
- **Planning Assistance** - for professional assistance in planning and designing capital construction projects for proposed or existing facilities (50/50 matching).

**Projects NOT eligible include:**

- tools and small equipment
- furnishings (excluding appliances)
- office equipment and supplies
- entertainment and gaming systems
- artwork, signage, books
- land or facility purchase
- debt retirement (includes completed projects)

**Level of Funding****Community Affordable Housing Capital Projects:**

Maximum level of funding for any **one affordable housing project** will be up to \$300,000.

**Planning Assistance:**

Applicants can apply for up to 50% of total cost of consultant fees to a maximum of \$30,000 per project. (\$15,000 AHCP Grant) if not eligible for CMHC Seed Grant.

**Matching Funds Requirement:**

**The Community Affordable Housing Project Grant** funding is approved on a matched-grant basis – *1/3 Community Affordable Housing Project Grant, 2/3 other sources.*

**City of Lethbridge operating or capital budget funds cannot be used for matching.**

An organization's contribution may be in the form of any combination of money, volunteer labour or donated materials, services and materials. The volunteer labour must be directly related to the project for which the funding is being requested. The valuation of the volunteerism and donations is based on:

- \$15.00/hour for unskilled labour working directly on the project (must report actual hours in final accounting report);
- \$30.00/hour for skilled labour (must report actual hours in final accounting report);
- Donated materials and professional services at verified fair market value; and
- \$60.00/hour for heavy equipment (with operator) (must report actual hours in final accounting report).

Those **NOT** eligible for matching purposes:

- Time and labour provided towards preparation of the grant funding application, committee planning meetings, fundraising and similar activities
- Field trips/tour costs
- Advertising or promotional cost
- Other municipal funds or services
- Funds will not be released in advance of confirmation of matching funding

**Operating Cost Responsibility:**

Operating costs resulting from completion of the project must be identified and a financial plan must be provided detailing how the organization intends to meet the operating costs.

Impact on the Municipal operating budget or the organization's ability to operate will be considered in the criteria for evaluation.

## Funding Obligations

**Project Funding:**

Organizations must provide proof of receipt of matching grants and/ or other matching funds within 18 months of receiving approval for the Community Affordable Housing Project Grant. If the verification has not been received, the grant approval is withdrawn and the organization must reapply for the grant in the next grant year and be re-evaluated for funding.

Upon verification of matching funds, the organization will receive 90% of approved grant. The final 10% grant payment will be released upon completion and provision of a financial report to the City of Lethbridge.

Organizations must expend all funding accrued interest and any project specific GST rebates on the approved project within two years of the

cheque date. Organizations can only spend grant funds for what has been approved and prior written consent from the Grant Administrator must be obtained if changes to the budget and/or a reporting time extension are required. Unspent grant funds must be returned to the City of Lethbridge.

**Project Accounting:**

Within two years of cheque date, the applicant **MUST** submit a financial accounting statement for the project to support the expended grant amount and matching components.

**Project Reporting and Recognition:**

In addition to a financial accounting statement, a project completion report including outcomes is required upon completion of the project or no later than two years of receiving the initial grant cheque. All reporting must be in accordance with the original project budget and description as presented and approved. Credit to the City of Lethbridge for financial support will be acknowledged in any publicity prepared in relation to the project.

## Grant Application & Allocation

**Application:**

A **deadline** will be used for grant allocation and all organizations must apply to receive consideration. The application deadline is:

**March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Applications must be fully completed and received at the office of Community & Social Development, 3rd Floor City Hall, 910 – 4th Ave South, Lethbridge by 4:30 pm of the application deadline date.**

**Incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

Please review the application instructions for full details.

Applications must be approved for grant submission by the organization's governing executive body. Priority consideration will be given to applications which have been approved for submission at a Organization AGM or a Special Meeting of the membership for all projects which change or increase the services of the organization e.g. facility addition, facility retrofit.

Applications must include a letter of support and agreement from the registered owner and lease holder (where applicable). Leases must be a minimum of five years.

**Application Assistance:**

Annually an orientation meeting will be hosted to describe the grant program, outline the grant process, review application forms and requirements, review accounting and reporting obligations, review assistance available from city staff and to answer questions regarding the program.

Organizations are invited to contact Vlessy V. Sanchez (403-320-4768) to discuss the proposed project, to determine what information is required and if necessary, assistance in obtaining information necessary to complete the application.

The applicant is requested to call at least three weeks prior to the application deadline to allow time to gather additional information, if needed.

**Allocation:**

A City of Lethbridge, Grant Administrator will review the organization's status and verify project details and completeness of application. Incomplete applications will not be submitted for review.

Each application will be assessed against evaluation criteria by a Review Committee.

City Council will only allocate funding based on evaluation criteria scoring.

The Affordable Housing Grant funding approved will equal application request. Partial project funding will not be permitted.

Due to limited funds and the anticipated volume of applications, not all applicants meeting the established criteria may receive grant funding.

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions six weeks after the application deadline.

Applicants will receive a grant agreement outlining the approved grant amount and obligations following organization verification of matching funds.

**General Funding Criteria:**

Concurrence with one or more of the following Guiding Principles is required for all approved projects.

1. Funded projects will sustain at least twenty five percent (25%) below market rental rates for at least 20 years.
2. Successful applicants will demonstrate an ability to leverage value through partnerships, including the City of Lethbridge.
3. The City will practice due diligence and minimize risks associated with the approval of grant allocations and property acquisition.
4. All projects will include lifecycle funding to be maintained through a reserve fund.
5. All funded projects will be administered through an agreement with the City of Lethbridge.
6. Allocation of the grant funds shall be governed by the Municipal Government Act.

7. Highest priority for affordable housing is “core need households” that spend more than 50% of their income on shelter

In applying for Community Affordable Housing Project Grant Funding, note that the following will be taken into consideration in assessing your application:

- The demonstrated need for the housing project, including description of special circumstances and/or emerging needs. Accessibility must be a consideration.
- Property management and life cycle planning must be a consideration in the budget.
- Project must be aligned with the goals of the renewed Bringing Lethbridge Home 5 Year Plan to End Homelessness.
- The location of the housing project must align with the following:
  - Access to schools
  - Public transportation available
  - Close to employment opportunities
  - Adjacent to green space
  - Access to basic services including grocery, drug store, post office, bank etc.
- The combination of monthly rents and utilities (or utility allowance) must be affordable to the targeted households in Lethbridge.
- How the project will benefit the community, citizens and residents.
- Benefits related to the improved access to safe and affordable housing.
- Benefits related to the organization goals and housing stability.
- Impact of operating costs on the organization and housing operating budgets.
- Financial investment in affordable housing from other sources and relevant partnerships.

- An applicant’s ability to communicate the viability of the organization, its mandate and goals, and the current operational and financial situation.
- An applicant’s ability to complete the project successfully, including how the project will be funded, the timelines, and ability to complete the accounting requirements.

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (F.O.I.P.)**

City of Lethbridge operates under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. All records in its custody or under its control are subject to the provisions of this Act.

**Definitions:**

**Affordable Housing:** means housing that is modest in terms of floor area and amenities that meets household needs and that rents or leases below market rent in the community or area in which the unit is located (Municipal Sustainability Housing Program Conditional Grant Funding Agreement (2007-2010).

**Life Cycle Funding:** Protects the investment of the City of Lethbridge through a negotiated amount of rental revenues for the purpose of maintenance. This funding will be designated for this purpose and is a requirement of the Agreement.

**For information & assistance with the Community Affordable Housing Grant, contact:**

**Vlessy Villaneuva-Sanchez**  
**Phone: 403-320-4768**  
**Email:**  
**Vlessy.VSanchez@lethbridge.ca**

**Notes/Questions**
