

Victoria Housing Reserve Fund Program Guidelines

Program Overview

The Victoria Housing Reserve Fund was established for the purpose of the providing grants for funding to:

- assist in the development and retention of affordable housing for households with **very low**, low or moderate incomes to support community diversity and infrastructure; and
- facilitate the development of affordable rental housing, and affordable home ownership projects.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Housing Agreement with the City of Victoria to ensure the units receiving funding remain affordable housing in perpetuity, or for a time approved by Council. A final report is also required.

For the purposes of this program, the following definitions will be used:

Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs no more than 30% of gross household income; for rental units targeted to no income individuals or families, affordable housing may also be defined as housing with rents set at or below the maximum shelter allowance as defined by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Affordable Home Ownership is defined as units developed for purchase at a cost below market value with affordability secured for a set period of time.

Very Low Income is defined as households earning no employment income and/or in receipt of Income Assistance;

Low Income is defined as households with a gross annual income at or below current Housing Income Limits, as published by BC Housing on an annual basis. Current HILs are available here: <https://www.bchousing.org/publications/HILs.pdf>

Moderate Income is defined as households with incomes at or below the latest available census data for the Victoria census metropolitan area median total income, as defined by Statistics Canada. The median total income table by census metropolitan area is available on the Statistics Canada website (www.statscan.gc.ca).

Who can apply?

Typically, eligible applicants must be a registered non-profit society or partner with a registered non-profit society that will own and operate the housing. Exceptions may apply for affordable home ownership projects, where it can be demonstrated that funding will directly offset the price of unit purchase; however, several restrictions apply. If you are *not* a registered non-profit society, please contact the City of Victoria to determine eligibility prior to submitting a funding application.

Project Eligibility

All projects must:

- include financial leveraging and partnerships with other government funding agencies, private industry, community agencies and/or individuals;
- target housing for **very low**, low or moderate income households as defined above;
- **adhere to the Tenant Assistance Policy and submit a Tenant Assistance Plan for staff approval;**
- be located in the City of Victoria

- Utilize Housing Reserve Funds for construction, development, purchase, or other one-time costs at the discretion of Council.
- If approved, enter a Housing Agreement securing units funded as affordable housing in perpetuity, or for a time negotiated and approved by Council motion.

Project Priority

All projects with a completed application package submitted will be evaluated based on the above eligibility criteria and available funds. However projects that will serve key target populations as identified in the Victoria Housing Strategy will be prioritized:

- affordable family housing with two bedroom or larger units
- projects targeting youth, or women and children
- accessible units for seniors
- mixed affordability/inclusive projects
- projects within the City of Victoria
- housing for individuals and families who are either experiencing homelessness or are at risk
- projects that receive no other supports from the City of Victoria.

Funding Assistance

Maximum funding for eligible projects under this program is allocated on a per unit basis as follows:

	1 bedroom unit	2 bedroom unit	3+ bedroom unit
Low income Rental	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000
Moderate income Rental	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000
Affordable Home Ownership	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000

Important Notes:

- **All projects are eligible for funding only once, and the grant is non-renewable.**
- Should construction of a project for which a grant is approved not commence within two years of the Development Permit approval or should a Development Permit in respect of an approved project not be issued within two years of Council's approval of the grant, the approved grant shall be rescinded.
- The City reserves the right to accept or reject any application, or to grant funding different from the funding framework above without limitation.
- All housing projects will be required to pay Development Cost Charges.
- Applicants are advised that the City will publish project eligibility information from applications to demonstrate that the projects have met all the eligibility requirements. The eligibility information that will be published includes the following:
 - Completed application checklist
 - Letter to Mayor and Council describing project and how it meets Victoria Housing Fund Program objectives as outlined in the Program Guidelines

- o Completed Application Form
- o Building plans and site plans.

Affordable Home Ownership Projects

Applications for Affordable home ownership projects must clearly outline how the project will work, including how the fund will improve the affordability of the units; how the units will remain affordable over time, project administration, tenant eligibility criteria, rental and resale restrictions, and other relevant details.

At Council's sole discretion, higher income thresholds for affordable home ownership projects than affordable rental may be considered; however typically units must be offered at a minimum of 10% below market value, with greater consideration for maximum grant funding for projects that offer better affordability.

How to Apply

Applications are accepted on or before the bi-annual deadlines of **March 31 and September 30**, and are assessed concurrently. Project approval is subject to Council's sole discretion and availability of funding.

1. Review the Program Guidelines to determine eligibility. If you are unsure if your project is eligible or if you have questions about the process, contact the Community Planning Division. A pre-application meeting is strongly encouraged.
2. Complete the application package, ensuring inclusion of all documents identified on the Application Checklist
3. Submit the application in person, by mail, or email, confirming receipt by contacting the Community Planning Division
4. Applications are targeted to be assessed concurrently within one month after the intake deadline, and two months to receive a Council decision.

Process Chart

[No change]

Contacts

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