

Aboriginal Housing Initiative (“AHI”)
Province-wide Call for Expressions Of Interest
Issued March 2007

Questions and Answers (from March 30 to April 19, 2007)

Question:

What construction standards do we assume for the projects? Will projects be required to be 25% more efficient?

Answer:

BC Housing did not develop separate construction standards for this call as we anticipated many different project types, from transition housing to elders and youth housing. The Energy Efficiency requirements for any new construction project are identified in BC Housing construction standards. We suggest that you reference the latest Provincial Homelessness Initiative (PHI) standards for smaller units, and Independent Living BC (ILBC) standards for seniors or elders units. Please pay particular regard to the energy efficiency requirements. There will be more flexibility around the unit sizes and layouts. The following links will take you to the BC Housing construction standards on the website:

- PHI construction standards
<http://www.bchousing.org/programs/homelessness/guidelines>
- ILBC construction standards
<http://www.bchousing.org/programs/independent/developers>

Question:

For interest rate calculations, is the interest on the amount borrowed by the society or on the entire capital cost?

Answer:

As with our other grant programs, if the society has to borrow money to make the project viable, the interest rate is for the money that the society has to borrow, including interim financing and take out financing.

Question:

For insurance purposes, should we allow for on site security?

Answer:

Yes, you should allow for site security during construction. There are specific insurance requirements which need to be a part of the budget if the project is a new, wood frame building and you are using owner controlled insurance for the night once framing has begun.

Question:

Do we have to use an architectural firm for draw advances or can independent Quantity Surveyors be used if the society determines it is better for them?

Answer:

Typically, the payment certifier is the architect. A Quantity Surveyor is acceptable for the payment certifier.

Question:

How will cost increases be handled if there is a delay in processing the project? Will the society be responsible for all cost increases?

Answer:

The funding commitment by BC Housing will be based on the budget submitted by the society.

Question:

Can projects be granted a preliminary Project Approval prior to July 1 if it is proved that a project can benefit from an earlier date?

Answer:

The EOI documents indicate that July 1, 2007 start date be used for scheduling purposes in the development timeline. Timing for approval of proposals will depend on the volume of applications received.

Question:

Has BC Housing created any project development and viability spreadsheets for both new construction and renovations under this new funding? Has BC Housing provided an operating budget with the existing budget norms for this call?

Answer:

BC Housing did not create any viability spreadsheets for new construction or renovation projects under this call. In the EOI Applications documents that are on our web under the description of the proposal call itself, there are some standard forms to fill out, and a standard letter to send in. As the funding for this EOI is for capital grants only, we did not include any operating budget forms, only some basic guidelines for you to consider when submitting your operating budget. Illustrating the viability of the project is the responsibility of the sponsor.

Question:

Our mandate is to serve First Nations and all our Board of Directors are Aboriginal. I am not sure if the third requirement - to have housing as a purpose - is covered in the constitution and bylaws of the Society. Do we need to meet all three requirements?

Answer:

Your society must meet all three requirements. If your constitution and bylaws do not include housing as a purpose, your society will have to add this to their constitution, and this can be done after submitting your proposal.

Question:

Is the funding for only off-reserve housing?

Answer:

Yes, the funding is for off-reserve housing only.

Question:

How would a redevelopment of an existing project be viewed by BC Housing?

Answer:

This type of project will be reviewed on a case by case basis, as there are so many variables to consider. If your society has an idea like this, you should submit your concept to BC Housing as part of this call.

Question:

We have a very good proposal for housing that is needed in our community, however, we don't have a piece of land or a building to submit as part of our proposal. How should we present this in the application?

Answer:

If your society doesn't have land or an existing building as part of the application, but you are in negotiations with the municipality, or with a developer who can option a piece of land, you should submit an application, and indicate that you are in the process of securing the land or building.

Question:

Our non-profit society has been approached by a private land owner who wants to upgrade his rental building. The tenants living in the building are all Aboriginal. Is it possible for our society to partner with this land owner to ensure better quality housing for the tenants?

Answer:

This type of partnership would be considered if your non-profit society is going to be the owner of the building, or has secured a long term interest in the building, such as a long term lease, or another type of agreement.

Question:

Our non-profit society wants to partner with another society that has ongoing funding for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) clients and their families. We would purchase an existing building, and our society would be the land owner and would manage the project. The other society would provide services to FASD tenants in the building. Is this kind of partnership appropriate and would we be eligible for a capital grant?

Answer:

Yes, this type of project and partnership would be eligible for consideration.

Question:

Our society has done a lot of work on understanding the need for housing for young women who require prenatal and postnatal support and education. Would our project be an appropriate use of this funding program?

Answer:

Yes, this kind of project would be eligible for consideration.

Question:

Families are having a very difficult time finding affordable housing in Campbell River. I understand that our governments have pledged money to help create more affordable housing. Are there any programs that developers can get involved in where they build or renovate housing that will help these low income families find housing. My partner and I

believe that there is a great demand for a drug and alcohol free affordable housing complex in this area.

Answer:

Thank you for sharing your concern about creating low-income housing, and drug and alcohol-free affordable housing complex. This current Expression of Interest for Aboriginal Housing off-reserve provides capital funding for new or renovated rental housing. Developers can partner with Aboriginal non-profit housing societies to build or renovate rental housing for low income Aboriginal families and you may want to consider such an approach. The deadline for sending in applications is April 26th, 2007. The proposal call documents are on our web at www.bchousing.org under Proposal Calls, BC Wide.

Questions and Answers (from March 15 to March 29, 2007)

Question:

I am an Aboriginal, and I am living off-reserve; do I qualify for funding?

Answer:

No, the call for Expressions of Interest is meant for Non-Profit Societies who develop and manage housing for aboriginal people with low incomes.

Question:

We are new to partnering with Non-Profit Societies. Do you have a list of non-profit societies in our area that we could approach to work with us?

Answer:

BC Housing does not have a list of Non-Profit Societies to give you. Your community or municipal office may have a list of societies in your community or area.

Question:

Are First Nations bands or councils eligible to apply for funding?

Answer:

If the First Nations band or council has a non-profit society whose main purpose is housing, the non-profit society would be eligible to apply.

Question:

I work for an Aboriginally owned and managed energy company. We are interested in building or renovating some housing and using it as employee housing for Aboriginal people in the area. Would we qualify for funding?

Answer:

In order to qualify under the Aboriginal Housing Initiative, proposals must be submitted by an Aboriginal non-profit society with housing as a main purpose. If you are not a non-profit society, there may be an opportunity to partner with a non-profit society.

Priority will be given to proposals for low-income Aboriginal people, and for groups that bring forward partnership contributions, such as money, land and operating funds.

Question:

The Tenant profile on page 6 of the EOI states “Aboriginal Canadians”. Does the tenant group have to be Aboriginal?

Answer:

Yes. The Aboriginal Housing Initiative (AHI) is intended to provide affordable, stable housing for low-income Aboriginal people living off-reserve. The term Aboriginal includes First Nations and Metis. Funding for the AHI was provided through the federal government to the Province of B.C. explicitly for Aboriginal off-reserve housing. Successful proposals must be submitted by an Aboriginal non-profit society and provide housing options for Aboriginal people in need.

Question:

Is there a target for dividing the funds amongst different regions of the province?

Answer:

There are no specific regional targets, however, as with previous programs we expect to achieve a regional distribution.

In addition to capital funding, we expect there will be societies who will benefit from Project Development Funding as outlined in the proposal call document. This will enable them to develop their plans further so they might qualify for future allocations.

Question:

Is there a maximum amount set that any proposal could receive?

Answer:

No, but we want to maximize the amount of housing created so projects that include partnership contributions will be more successful.

Question:

I have had a request from an architect starting some schematic design work for our society. Can you send me the link to the design guidelines that we will be using? I could not find it on the webpage.

Answer:

Specific design guidelines were not developed for this call as proposals may cover a wide range of housing such as emergency shelters and transition housing, elders or family housing. Please refer to the last design guidelines for the Provincial Homelessness Initiative (PHI) proposal call or the Independent Living BC (ILBC) Proposal call with regard to the energy efficiency requirements. We anticipate we will be more flexible on other aspects of the design. Please find the link below.

www.bchousing.org/programs/homelessness/guidelines