



Community Housing Operating Support
(CHOS)

Proponent Guide

2023-24



Canada 

Proponent Guide

Community Housing Operating Support (CHOS)

Introduction

For Community Housing organizations who demonstrate financial need, Community Housing Operating Support (CHOS) provides time-limited operating subsidies to help meet immediate need. As a condition of this funding, the organization must produce a preliminary Sustainability Plan to demonstrate steps they are taking to develop their business model and achieve financial self-sufficiency after this short-term funding ends and into the future (see Part E of Application Form for further information).

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants are non-profit housing providers, including housing cooperatives, that:

- Have a mandate to provide affordable housing in Nova Scotia to low-income households.
- Are in good standing with Joint Stocks in any Canadian province or territory and authorized to operate in Nova Scotia.
- Can demonstrate a financial need.
- Submit a Sustainability Plan describing initiatives for long term financial self-sufficiency.

Prioritization and Assessment of Applications

Assessment of applications:

Financial Need: Applicants must demonstrate a budget shortfall, operating deficit or evidence of significant deterioration in their financial position. Applicants may provide documents including pro forma statements, Statement of Income (Profits and Losses), and/or audited financial statements. Staff will assess recent financial statements as well as any other documents provided by the applicant to demonstrate financial need.

Sustainability Plan: Applicants must provide a Sustainability Plan to demonstrate how they intend to work towards an improved financial position to ensure the long-term sustainability and financial self-sufficiency of their organization. We recognize that these plans may be preliminary: applicants are encouraged to submit what they can, and we will work with them to identify possible ideas and strategies. Where the Plan is not fully developed, DMAH may reserve the right to hold back a portion of the grant conditional on receipt of a more robust Sustainability Plan.

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Applications may be prioritized based on the following criteria:

- Organizations with a plan to improve housing outcomes for underrepresented and/or equity-seeking communities.
- Organizations that offer deep affordability for low-income households.
- Organizations with potential to achieve increased scale, transformation, or Community Housing sector growth.
- Organizations facing end of long-term subsidy agreements (e.g., CMHC Operating Agreements).
- Funding for the fiscal year is subject to budget allocation and availability of funds.

To Apply for CHOS

- If your organization is considering CHOS, please reach out to DMAH at **CommunityHousing@novascotia.ca** with any questions you may have and/or to discuss the application process.
- To submit your application, carefully read this CHOS Proponent Guide and attachments, which includes Appendix A: CHOS Application Form.
- Complete, sign and witness this attached CHOS Application Form and submit it to DMAH via email to **CommunityHousing@novascotia.ca**.
- Use the Applicant Checklist (page 8) to ensure that you have included all necessary documents.
- Applicants will receive acknowledgement of their submission via email.
- Final decision based on the evaluation of the application will be communicated to applicants via email within 3–4 weeks. The number of organizations approved is subject to availability of funds.

Funding Terms and Conditions

The Terms and Conditions of funding will be described in detail in the Grant Contribution Agreement, which will be signed prior to disbursement of the grant. Key conditions of funding include:

- For the duration of the fiscal year, a minimum of 30% of the organization's units must be offered as affordable units to low-income households with incomes below the Household Income Limits set by DMAH.
- At the end of the fiscal year, the organization will provide a report including Financial Statements, rent rolls, and an updated Sustainability Plan.

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Subsidy Calculation

For eligible applicants, subsidies will be calculated by DMAH according to the following formula:

Subsidy = Difference between actual revenues and 80% of Average Market Rent for a similar-sized and quality unit in the immediate area

Note: Consideration will be given where an organization presents a business case for a greater level of financial need requiring additional supports. Special priority will be given to applications that serve equity-seeking and/or vulnerable populations and for groups that show potential for growth and transformative impact.

Program Process

- If approved for funding, applicants will be required to sign and return a Grant Contribution Agreement that confirms the applicant's acceptance of the terms and conditions.
- Funds will be released upon review and acceptance of the Grant Contribution Agreement.

Appeals Process

If an applicant believes that there has been an error in their eligibility decision or calculation of subsidy, they may appeal to the Housing Development director.

APPENDIX A: CHOS Application

Community Housing Operating Support (CHOS)

Complete this application form and submit via email to communityhousing@novascotia.ca.
Note, the email's subject line should read: [APPLICANT NAME] CHOS APPLICATION 2023-2024.

Part A

Applicant Details

Organization Name: _____

Organization Address: _____

Project Lead: (person implementing and reporting) _____

Position: _____

Phone: Work _____ Cell _____ Email: _____

Part B

Organization Description

Provide a brief overview of your organization, including any challenges or opportunities you currently face. You may wish to include details related to the following:

- How large is your organization? (Number of buildings, number of units)
- Are you still under Operating Agreement and/or Mortgage with CMHC?
- Is your organization in financial difficulty?
- Does your organization have plans or opportunities for future growth?
- How does your organization seek to address housing needs and housing outcomes for equity-seeking groups?

APPENDIX A: CHOS Application

Community Housing Operating Support (CHOS)

Part C

Financial Information

Include financial documents to demonstrate financial need. This may include statements of income (Profits and Losses), audited financial statements and/or pro forma statements.

Part D

Rent Rolls (if applicable)

Include with this application your most recent rent rolls.

Unit Information	
Unit Size	# of Units
1 Bedroom	
1 Bedroom + Den	
2 Bedroom	
3 Bedroom	
4 Bedroom	
Total Units	

Rent Inclusions (select all that apply):

- Heat
- Hot Water
- Domestic Electricity
- Parking
- Storage

Part E

Sustainability Plan

NOTE: Provide the Sustainability Plan as a separate document attached to this application. In general, the document should not be more than two pages. See below for more details on what this document should contain. We recognize that these plans may be preliminary: applicants are encouraged to submit what they can, and we will work with them to identify possible ideas and strategies.

This section is an opportunity for the applicant to describe their vision for the future of their organization. Please describe your future plans, including the steps you will take to ensure the long-term success, viability, and growth of the organization.

APPENDIX A: CHOS Application

Community Housing Operating Support (CHOS)

CHOS is available only to provide short-term funding. This means that organizations must have a plan to achieve financial self-sufficiency to cover ongoing operating and maintenance costs without continuing reliance on government. To be successful as a housing provider, community housing organizations must have a financially sustainable plan for the long term to continue operating affordable units. This plan should strive to be as self-sufficient as possible, with minimal reliance on ongoing government support.

To achieve a sustainable model, we encourage organizations to initiate a process of Sustainability Planning. This includes the changes, reforms, and initiatives that housing providers will undertake to ensure that their future business model is as effective as possible. In the current environment, where long-term operating subsidies and rent supplement agreements are ending, community housing organizations will face increasing responsibility to ensure their own financial viability. Sustainability planning includes the steps that may be necessary to achieve that self-sufficient model of viability.

Examples of initiatives for improved sustainability may include:

- Governance, Operational, and Financial Reviews
- Following a Capital Repair/Asset Management and maintenance plan
- Rent Model Reform to achieve Sustainable Revenue
- Transformation to Mixed-Market and Mixed-Income Models
- Amalgamation
- New Development or Redevelopment
- Additional Income Streams Including Mixed-Use Development
- Research and Innovation

To undertake this work, community housing providers are encouraged to seek other partnerships and sources of funding. In particular, the Community Housing Growth Fund ([link](#)) may be a valuable resource to support some of these initiatives.

Timelines: In describing your plans for Sustainability, please try to provide approximate timelines for when you hope to complete this work.

Supporting documentation: Be advised that staff may request additional documentation to support your plan. If this is the case, Staff will work with the applicant to obtain any necessary documents.

APPENDIX A: CHOS Application

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Part F

Application Checklist

Before submitting your application, ensure you include the following:

- Completed Application Form
- Sustainability Plan
- Rent Rolls
- Financial Documents (May include Statement of Income, audited Financial Statements, and/or Pro Forma Statement)

Part G

Applicant Declaration and Signature

We declare that a minimum of 30% of the organization's units will be offered as affordable units for the duration of the fiscal year, and that those Affordable units will be provided to eligible households (based on the current Household Income Limits) at rental rates below the average market rent for the immediate area.

We have read the Community Housing Operating Support Guide in its entirety including Appendices. We have understood and agree to all the terms and conditions listed therein.

We certify and declare that all the information contained in this application is complete and accurate in every respect to the best of our knowledge. We are aware that the discovery of any false statements made in the application may result in the cancellation of this application and we agree that such action by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) will be without penalty or liabilities for damages.

We understand that our Application is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulations. We certify that neither the officers nor directors have any actual or potential conflict of interest between our interests and the interests of Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing under this unsolicited proposal.

We understand that this application does not obligate DMAH to approve funding.

We have the authority to sign this application on behalf of the cooperative/non-profit.

On behalf of the Board:

Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX B: Communications Protocol

Community Housing Operating Support (CHOS)

The Communications Protocol applies to all communications activities related to projects funded under the CHOS. Communications activities undertaken by proponents related to the activities funded under the CHOS must be pre-approved by Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing to ensure that Nova Scotians are informed of investments made in Housing and that they receive consistent information about funded projects and their benefits. Proponents will provide at least 15 business days' notice to Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. If the communications activity is an event, it will take place at a mutually agreed date and location.

Communications activities can be generally defined as, but not limited to, the following:

- Public or media events and/or ceremonies
- News releases
- Reports
- Web and social media products or postings
- Blogs
- News conferences
- Media interviews
- Public notices
- Physical and digital signs
- Publications
- Success stories and vignettes
- Photos, videos, multi-media content
- Advertising

Joint communications or communications activities that relate to the project and are collaboratively developed and approved by CMHC, Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing and, where applicable, the proponent, should not occur without prior knowledge and agreement of all parties. Each of the parties may request joint communications with at least 15 business days' notice.

Media Relations: Proponent will share information within one (1) business day with Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing should significant media inquiries be received, or emerging media or stakeholder issues arise to a project funded under CHOS.