
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2019

Investing in Innovative Housing Solutions Eleven Solutions Lab Proposals to Receive Funding Through the NHS Solutions Labs

OTTAWA, ON — Finding solutions to housing challenges such as affordability, social inclusion, Northern and remote supports, Indigenous housing provision, and environmental sustainability is key to ensuring that more Canadians have access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford.

Today, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), announced \$2.2 million in funding for eleven projects recipients through the National Housing Strategy (NHS) Solutions Labs Initiative. Funding for successful projects ranges from \$25,000 to \$250,000.

The NHS Solutions Labs initiative provides housing stakeholders with funding and expert innovation lab consultants to help solve complex housing problems using innovation methods and tools.

Outcomes from the Solutions Labs will better-equip housing stakeholders with practical solutions that will support a culture of innovation by fostering partnerships, replication as well as creating and disseminating real-world data for evidence-based decision-making leading to more housing affordability solutions.

Quote:

“Working collaboratively, experts and housing stakeholders with diverse experience and knowledge, are developing solutions to identified housing issues within the Strategy’s key priority areas. The solution lab approach draws on the strengths, empathy, creativity, and wisdom of a collective to explore new ways of making progress on a complex housing problem. These solutions will help strengthen, better equip and innovate the affordable housing sector in Canada. Congratulations to all the recipients and also to all of those who submitted their work to the NHS Solutions Labs Initiative program.” – **The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation**

Quick Facts:

- Funding for Solutions Labs is available to those who wish to address housing related issues identified under the National Housing Strategy’s [priority areas](#).
- The Solutions Labs initiative competitive open-call [process](#) occurs annually. The next one will be held in **May 2019**.
- Experts interested in acting as reviewers are invited to manifest their interest by writing to Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca.
- The NHS includes \$241 million over 10 years to support research on housing needs and conditions, the housing finance system, market stability and housing sector innovation.

- Under the [Investing in Canada Plan](#), the Government of Canada is investing more than \$180 billion over 12 years in public transit projects, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation routes, and Canada's rural and northern communities.

Associated Links:

As Canada's authority on housing, CMHC contributes to the stability of the housing market and financial system, provides support for Canadians in housing need, and offers unbiased housing research and advice to all levels of Canadian government, consumers and the housing industry. For more information, please visit cmhc.ca or follow us on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

The National Housing Strategy is an ambitious 10-year, \$55-billion plan that will reduce or eliminate 530,000 families from housing need across Canada, create 125,000 new housing units, as well as repair and renew more than 300,000 housing units and reduce chronic homelessness by 50 per cent.

To find out more about the National Housing Strategy, visit www.placetocallhome.ca.

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Backgrounder

NHS Solution Labs Initiative 2018 Successful Submissions

| Solutions Labs | CMHC Funding Contribution | Proponent and partners |
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| <p><i>Developing Appropriate First Nations Housing Metrics: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)</i></p> <p>The NAN Housing Strategy Solutions Lab will expand on an existing three-year project launched in September 2018 and will create occupant-focused housing needs assessments, determine local housing needs, and develop housing action plans at the community and regional level. The goal: to end the collective housing emergency declared by NAN chiefs, improve well-being and develop healthier, more sustainable communities.</p> <p>Developing a Solutions Lab rooted in northern Indigenous knowledge and experience, using appropriate tools and recognizing all knowledge systems is an opportunity to reimagine housing program design holistically, and delivery aligns with National Housing Strategy (NHS) priorities.</p> <p>The NAN Housing Strategy will focus First Nations knowledge and lived experience to support the creation of local institutions responsible for the planning, governance and design of their housing systems while continuing to build respectful nation-to-nation relationships with government partners.</p> <p>Capacity building is a cornerstone of the Strategy. Regional, advisory and local labs will provide training and mentorship to housing professionals, so that they can guide and rebuild their housing programs.</p> <p>Creating in-community processes and mentorship among and between First Nations will increase a sense of unity and allow for the identification of and agreement on priorities for action on housing issues.</p> <p>The Solutions Lab will enable this process, supporting micro and macro labs and the development of a toolkit to scale and replicate the process across First Nations in northern Canada, further supporting NHS priority areas.</p> | <p>\$250,000</p> | <p>Proponent: Nishnawbe Aski Nation</p> <p>Partners: Matawa First Nations Management; Windigo First Nations Council; Mushkegowuk Council; Together Design; NAN Housing & Infrastructure; NAN Elder's Advisory Council; NAN Women and Youth; NAN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure; NAN Health Transformation; NAN Environment, Energy and Climate Change; NAN Social Development</p> |

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| <p>Affordable Housing Renewal</p> <p>Affordable Housing Renewal will use a design lab methodology to prototype deep resiliency retrofits for four to six low-rise wood-frame multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs).</p> <p>Multidisciplinary teams will work jointly to design retrofits that aim to be net-zero energy or net-zero energy ready and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve climate adaptation and seismic resiliency; • improve quality of life for residents; • are replicable across a range of buildings; and • can be installed without displacing tenants. <p>The design teams, supported by our market development team, will also explore new business case approaches for these retrofits, considering how the costs of installation can be reduced over time, how benefits are valued and how financing terms can be improved.</p> <p>By working to streamline the procurement process, reduce on-site disturbance, reduce the cost, and facilitate the financing of deep resiliency retrofits for social housing buildings, this Solutions Lab will facilitate the effective deployment of recent provincial and national investments in social housing.</p> <p>Through deep building envelope retrofits and the installation of highly efficient mechanical equipment, the modified Energiesprong model proposed for this Lab is designed to advance the NHS priority areas of community housing sustainability and sustainable housing and communities: accommodating affordability, improving quality of housing, allowing residents to stay in their homes, and reducing emissions and energy demand.</p> | <p>\$250,000</p> | <p>Proponent: Pembina Institute For Appropriate Development</p> <p>Partners: B.C. Housing; BC Non-profit Housing Association (BCNPHA); The City of Vancouver; Natural Resources Canada; The B.C. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources; The Energiesprong Foundation; Real Estate Foundation of B.C. (REFBC); Sitka Foundation; North Growth Foundation; Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation for the Americas; Consulate of the Netherlands; Consulate of the United States</p> |
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| <p><i>Journeys In and Out: Youth Homelessness Solutions Lab</i></p> <p>The goal of the Journeys In and Out: Youth Homelessness Solutions Lab is to understand young people’s journeys into and out of homelessness and housing precarity in large Canadian urban areas, so that we can identify and prototype interventions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevent youth homelessness; • help young people exit housing precarity; and • ease housing pressures. <p>Our Lab will focus on understanding the pathways to homelessness and housing precarity that are not well understood (migration patterns, for example, are a significant research gap).</p> <p>The Solutions Lab methods we will use combine a human-centred design approach with a trauma-informed resiliency approach to working with young people who have experienced homelessness.</p> <p>Lab activities and products include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-creating a resiliency interview model toolkit to capture best practices among theory practitioners, front-line staff and people with lived experience; • 25 user interviews and journey mapping with young people with lived experience, for rich qualitative data; • an archetypal systems map of macro trends; • a prototyping roadmap; and • a scaling and uptake plan. <p>Throughout the lab, we will communicate learnings and knowledge back to the broader sector through our “Priming the Field for Uptake” phase.</p> | <p>\$249,961</p> | <p>Proponent: Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth</p> <p>Partners: The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH), Dr. Vikki Reynolds, Pacific Community Resources Society (PCRS), Dans La Rue (not-for-profit)</p> |
| <p><i>Retrofits in Occupied Residential Buildings</i></p> <p>The Centre for Urban Growth + Renewal (CUG+R) is proposing a Solutions Lab addressing the challenges of conducting deep energy retrofits in occupied multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs) while minimizing disruption to sitting tenants.</p> <p>The retrofit industry is still developing in Canada, and there is a lack of the knowledge, skills, strategies and specialized products needed to effectively carry out retrofits in occupied buildings. This can lead to inflated costs and perceived risk. Retrofits are long, complex construction projects that can be disruptive. Conducting them calls for skilled engagement, communication and means and methods not currently used</p> | <p>\$220,000</p> | <p>Proponent: Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal</p> <p>Partners: ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), Transsolar, British Columbia Institute of Technology’s Zero Energy Buildings</p> |

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| <p>in the Canadian industry to avoid undue disruption to tenants.</p> <p>Through a Solutions Lab process, residents and constructors, along with industry and tenant advocacy partners, will identify and co-create solutions to make retrofits in occupied MURBs easier, faster, cheaper, and less risky, while minimizing disruptions for tenants. Outputs include a field guide and training module that will provide a roadmap for constructors and other stakeholders who want to undertake improved and de-risked retrofit projects.</p> <p>CUG+R has partnered with the consultant group made up of MaRs Solutions Lab, Evergreen and The Natural Step.</p> | | <p>Learning Centre (ZEBLC), NAIMA Canada (North American Insulation Manufacturers Association), United Way, The Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations (CFAA)</p> |
| <p>Affordable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): Leveraging Government Assets for Affordable Housing</p> <p>There's an opportunity to increase the institutional support for, as well as the supply and effectiveness of, affordable housing. How? By leveraging and aligning municipal, provincial and federal government resources to formally tie transit infrastructure delivery to affordable housing provision.</p> <p>Potential solutions require detailed problem definition, ideation and prototyping, and relationship building among key transit and housing stakeholders, as well as engagement with community members.</p> <p>We believe this is an issue facing jurisdictions across the country. However, to facilitate targeted workshops with key stakeholders, this Solutions Lab will focus on the problem as it applies to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Through case study analysis and interviews, workshops and business case modelling, we hope to identify problem-solving tools and solutions that can be adapted and applied to similar contexts across the country.</p> <p>This Solutions Lab addresses primarily the National Housing Strategy priority areas of balanced supply of housing and sustainable housing and communities. However, outcomes from the Lab will also respond to the priority area of housing for those in greatest need.</p> <p>The knowledge product deliverables will include case study summaries, background research summaries, stakeholder interview summaries, workshop outcomes, a challenge brief, solution map(s), business case analysis and methodology, consultation summary, the workshop #2 materials and outcomes, as well as the final Practical Guide for Affordable TOD.</p> | <p>\$171,361</p> | <p>Proponent: Urban Strategies Inc.</p> <p>Partners: MaRS Solutions Lab, Evergreen and The Natural Step (Solutions Lab Consultant); N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited (NBLC); City of Toronto—City Planning, Strategic Initiatives; City of Hamilton—Community Initiatives; Regional Municipality of Durham—Planning and Economic Development; City of Brampton—Planning & Development; City of Mississauga—Planning & Building Department; Infrastructure Ontario; Ryerson City Building Institute; Co-op Housing Federation of Canada; Toronto Community Housing Corporation; Options for Homes; New Commons Development; The Daniels Corporation; Translink BC; Calgary Transit; City of Ottawa; CreateTO; Metrolinx</p> |

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| <p><i>Developing the Resiliency of Affordable Housing for Newcomers</i></p> <p>Affordable housing that is accessible to members of vulnerable populations too often shows signs of early deterioration, wear and tear, disrepair or contamination that affect the quality of the indoor environment and the quality of life of the occupants. Tackling this problem is the objective of our Solutions Lab.</p> <p>We will focus our attention on designing environmentally sustainable solutions (priority area: sustainable housing and communities) by targeting newcomers (a priority population) and the owners or managers of the buildings they live in.</p> <p>Housing-related difficulties can be exacerbated when the household is large, when the heads of the household do not master the language used by the property owner and housing-sector institutions, and when families arrive in the country with health problems or having lived through traumatic experiences.</p> <p>Lack of knowledge of how to operate housing correctly in a northern environment (controlling temperature and humidity) can also contribute to the deterioration of housing conditions and breed distrust of prospective renters, a situation that can lead to discrimination.</p> <p>The goal of Écobâtiment’s Solutions Lab is to improve and maintain access to quality housing for new immigrants in order to facilitate their integration and their participation in the community. It will also contribute to preserving the quality and affordability of Canada’s housing stock.</p> | <p>\$249,558</p> | <p>Proponent: Écobâtiment</p> <p>Partners: Deloitte—Solutions Lab consultant, Vivre en Ville, the Société d’habitation du Québec (SHQ), the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec (CORPIQ), Gérer son quartier, Créneau Écoconstruction</p> |
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| <p><i>Exploring the RDSP for Homeownership and Housing Stability</i></p> <p>Our Solutions Lab will explore how Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs) can be structured and leveraged to address the deep challenges people with a developmental disabilities face in accessing homeownership and long-term housing stability.</p> <p>At least 24,000 Canadians with developmental disabilities are in core housing need, and approximately 100,000 more are living in vulnerable housing situations and unable to access safe, affordable housing.</p> <p>This vulnerable population is facing a poverty and housing crisis. Despite over \$3 billion in RDSPs, current rules governing these plans render the funds unusable for practical purposes, such as addressing poverty and homelessness.</p> <p>Our proposed Solutions Lab will develop a mechanism for leveraging existing RDSP assets to create new housing pathways that promote financial security, housing stability, inclusion, independence, and full citizenship for people with developmental disabilities.</p> <p>The Lab will engage a number of stakeholders and contributors, including people with lived experience, CMHC and policymakers. This is vital to ensuring the product or program design meets the needs and priorities of people with disabilities, incorporates the technical sophistication necessary to be implementable, and considers the positions of those who would be responsible for implementation.</p> <p>A product or program that meets these criteria would advance National Housing Strategy priorities of improving housing and supports for the most vulnerable, including those who are homeless and those with distinct needs, and improving housing affordability for low-income households.</p> | <p>\$250,000</p> | <p>Proponent: Canadian Association for Community Living</p> <p>Partners: Institutes for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS); People First of Canada; Dana Granofsky Ent.; PooranLaw; Ability Tax and Trust Advisors (Ability)</p> |
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| <p><i>Housing Solutions for Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care in Winnipeg</i></p> <p>Our Solutions Lab will address the issues of housing insecurity and homelessness that Indigenous youth in care in Winnipeg face when they age out of the child welfare system at age 18.</p> <p>Our project leverages the processes and methodologies of Solutions Labs to collaboratively explore the specific needs of Indigenous youth in Winnipeg who have grown up in the care of Manitoba’s child welfare system and who are at the point where their institutional supports are removed.</p> <p>Many child welfare advocates and organizations have identified this pivotal point in the experience of a youth in care, a point at which they face a high probability of entering into a cycle of poverty and housing insecurity or homelessness.</p> <p>We will approach this issue from different perspectives and worldviews, including those of people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are or were in the system (young people who have aged out or are aging out of care); • are working in the system (caregivers, child welfare caseworkers or administrators, policymakers, etc.); or • are “around” the system (as advocates or community organizers, or those who work for organizations involved with housing, including the CMHC). <p>In doing so, we aim to build bridges of empathy and provide advocates and policymakers with a more complete picture of the issue.</p> <p>Our hope is that the solutions that are co-developed in this process will be taken up by decision makers to close the gaps and further reduce the number of young people facing homelessness year over year.</p> | <p>\$122,666</p> | <p>Proponent: HTFC Inc.</p> <p>Partners: Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO); HTFC Planning & Design; Ready to Shift and Scale (RSS); Nigaanii Wabiski Mikanak Ogichidaa (NWMO).</p> |
| <p><i>Best Practices for Healthy Housing Quality in Toronto</i></p> <p>This Solutions Lab will identify ways to address housing disrepair and the worsening quality of housing in older rental apartment buildings in Toronto and other cities, through enhanced programs and/or program interventions.</p> <p>The five-stage collaborative process (from early 2019 to early 2020) will involve all main stakeholders, most of whom have confirmed their interest in participating. Related foundational research will be undertaken, and the final phase includes steps to build toward implementation beyond the timeframe of the project. The project team will</p> | <p>\$156,293</p> | <p>Proponent: Wellesley Institute</p> <p>Partners: City of Toronto—Municipal Licensing and Standards Division (ML&S); Toronto Public Health (TPH); Erica Phipps, Principal Investigator, RentSafe; Greater Toronto Apartment Association (GTAA); Federation of</p> |

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| <p>comprise staff of the Wellesley Institute and SHS Consulting, a CMHC-approved Solutions Lab consultant.</p> <p>The project aligns with the NHS priorities of sustainable housing and communities (improving building performance and the durability and energy efficiency of housing) and housing for those in greatest need.</p> | | <p>Metro Tenants' Associations (FMTA); J.D Hulchanski, Principal Investigator, Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership (NCRP); ACORN Toronto (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now)</p> |
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