

# Program Instructions



Please note if your program is not checked, this Program Instruction is not applicable to your project(s)

- Public Housing
- Provincial Reform Housing Programs
- Municipal Non-Profit Housing Programs
- Federal Unilateral Housing Programs
  - Rent Supplement - Commercial
- Rent Supplement - OCHAP & CSHP
  - Rent Supplement Homelessness

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**Subject**                      **Social Housing Innovation Fund**

**Authority**                    Section 111 (2) of the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*

**Effective Date**            Immediately

**What's New**                The Regional Municipality of York has established a Social Housing Innovation Fund to help housing providers pay for playground improvements or replacements and accessibility upgrades that they otherwise could not afford.

**Background**              Social housing providers are challenged by limited funds and aging facilities. In recent times, the Canadian Standards Association imposed higher safety standards for playground equipment. Many housing providers do not have sufficient funds to meet the new standards. Some have even had to remove the playground equipment, leaving the children in those communities without a safe place to play.

Housing providers also struggle to address changing standards and expectations regarding accessibility modifications, such as automatic doors in the building entrances.

## Description

The Social Housing Innovation Fund has been established to help housing providers to pay for:

- Upgrades to existing playgrounds (to meet current safety standards)
- Replacement playgrounds (to meet current safety standards)
- Accessibility upgrades (for senior and/or disabled residents)

Housing providers are expected to share in these costs: 50% of the total cost for playgrounds and 25% of the total cost for accessibility upgrades.

The housing provider's share of the cost can be taken from their accumulated surpluses or can be funded from fundraising initiatives. If the proposed project is considered to be a capital expenditure, the housing provider may be permitted to fund their share from capital reserves.

If a housing provider is unable to raise their share of the costs, and can demonstrate that they need the playground or accessibility upgrade, the Region will consider waiving all or a portion of the provider's contribution, subject to approval of a strong business case.

## What You Need to Do

Housing providers who wish to apply for innovation funds must complete a Social Housing Innovation Fund Request Form (attached) and submit it to their Program Coordinator by June 30, 2008.

Because there are limited dollars in the fund, the Region will need to review all of the applications and fund those with the highest priority. Housing providers will need to clearly demonstrate:

- the need for the project
- a description of the project
- who will benefit from the project
- why it is important
- what other sources of funding have been explored

The application must also contain an estimate of the cost of the project, and an explanation of how the housing provider intends cover their share of the cost. If housing providers can not pay their full share, they will need to provide their most recent audited financial statements as well as details about their efforts to raise their share of the funds.

## What the Region Will Do

After the June 30, 2008 deadline, the Region will review the application and supporting documentation. Priority will be given to those projects which:

- ensure that playground equipment meets prescribed standards (e.g. replace missing equipment or components which are unsafe, etc.)
- move towards compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards by improving opportunities for people with disabilities to fully participate in their housing community (e.g. automatic door openers in building entrances, ramps, renovation of public washrooms to make them accessible, etc.)
- assist people to age in place within their housing community (e.g. lever handles for doors and plumbing, railings in hallways, etc.)

The Region will notify housing providers of the decisions, whether the projects are approved or not, by July 31, 2008.

Should any funds remain after the decisions are made, there will a second opportunity to submit proposals.

Please contact your Program Co-ordinator if you have any questions.

Sylvia Patterson  
Director  
Housing Services Branch  
Community and Health Services Department