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New Affordable Housing in York Region!

The Regional Municipality of York has begun the construction of what is hoped to be the first of several new affordable rental housing projects to be developed over the next few years. Renovations to the remaining wings of the Newmarket Health Centre will create 58 new apartment units. These one and two bedroom units are earmarked for frail elderly residents and residents with disabilities who may benefit from the amenities and services available through the adjoining long term care facility. All of the apartments will be fully or partially modified with ageing in place in mind. Rent subsidies will be available for many of the tenants who need them, making this truly affordable housing.

This project has been made possible through funding from Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, and York Region. The Town of Newmarket also showed their support by waiving a good portion of the fees and charges normally associated with obtaining a building permit. Close partnerships have developed among several York Region departments, notably Community Services and Housing and Health Services, as they take on new roles mandated by the Provincial devolution of responsibility.

This is an exciting first step towards a new affordable housing program in York Region. ❖

Benchmarks & 2004 Budgets

It now appears unlikely that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) will finalize benchmarks before the end of this year. As a result, housing providers with fiscal years beginning early in 2004 will need another set of interim factors to prepare their budgets. The Ministry is currently preparing the cost, inflation and rent factors needed for the co-op, non-profit and municipal non-profit budgets. The Ministry is expected to publish the required information in the next few weeks. York Region will forward this information to all housing providers as soon as possible. ❖

Thank You!

The MMAH periodically audits Service Managers to ensure that housing programs comply with the *Social Housing Reform Act* (the Act) and related requirements. Recently MMAH staff audited York Region's housing programs. As part of the process, the Ministry staff asked several providers to submit a number of files for their review. Although the time frame for submitting the files was very short, housing providers promptly submitted their information, helping the audit run smoothly. Thank you for your quick and co-operative response! ❖

Social Housing Services Corporation Update

The Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) was created to manage specific province-wide programs for service managers and housing providers. Most housing providers, (generally those who were formerly funded and administered by the province), are members of the SHSC. The SHSC is governed by a board of directors with service manager, non-profit and co-op representatives. The first board was appointed by the MMAH. Beginning this year, appointed board members will be replaced by members selected in part by each stakeholder group. The sector associations, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) and Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF) will handle the nomination process for housing provider representatives on the SHSC board. Those housing providers, whether or not they are members of an association, will have an opportunity to nominate candidates. The SHSC will select board members from a short list provided by the sector associations.

The Act gives the SHSC four key areas of responsibility: insurance, capital reserve investment pool, bulk purchasing, performance indicators and best practices. At this point, the SHSC is focused on their insurance and capital reserve investment programs.

Insurance

The new insurance program began September 1, 2003. The program is designed to ensure that housing providers have appropriate insurance coverage at a competitive price.

All local housing corporations and former provincial non-profits must participate in the program. If criteria established by SHSC are met, these housing providers may purchase their insurance from another carrier. However, even if they intend to use another insurer, they must complete the SHSC application form. Co-operative housing providers and federal non-profits may choose to participate in the insurance program, but they are not required to do so.

If you have questions about the insurance program, requirements, or invoicing, please contact Kathi Zarfes-Outram of the SHSC at 1-866-268-4451, ext. 18. If you have questions about coverage, limits, deductibles or filling out the application form, please call the insurance broker, Aon Reed Stenhouse, at: 1-800-711-7511, and ask for Zobeeda Rouch, Paul Speck, or Lyne Turmel.

Capital Reserve Investment

The SHSC investment program was established to give housing providers a larger range of investment options and the opportunity to increase the return on their investments. The SHSC hired the investment firm, Phillips Hager and North (PH&N), to establish and manage the investment funds for housing providers' capital reserves. Each provider chooses the funds in which they will invest. PH&N will give providers prompt access to the reserve money whenever it is needed.

The investment funds have been available since February 2003.

York Region appreciates the efforts of those providers who have already invested with PH&N. All other housing providers are reminded that they are required to transfer their capital reserve funds to PH&N by December 31, 2003. **If you have any questions about the investment process, please call PH&N directly at 1-888-771-7473.** ❖

Education Resources

York Region is committed to providing housing providers with training on an on-going basis. To date, training has been provided on playground safety, mould, West Nile virus, and RGI calculations. If you have any suggestions for other workshops that you would find helpful, please contact your Program Co-ordinator.

There are also a number of other educational opportunities and resources outside of York Region that are available to housing providers. We encourage providers to consider attending educational events sponsored by the sector associations. ❖

Hydro Rebates

Did you know that all social housing providers are eligible for the 4.3 cent per kilowatt hour hydro rate cap, retroactive to May 1, 2003? If you haven't already received your rebate, contact your hydro company as soon as possible. If you have difficulty getting your rebate, contact your Program Co-ordinator. ❖

Dr. Albert Rose Bursary Funding

The Dr. Albert Rose Bursary program was established in 1984. The Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) Board of Directors created the program to help eligible public housing tenants attend post-secondary school. In 2001, the MMAH expanded the Bursary Program to include rent-geared-to-income households in all social housing, including non-profit, co-operative and rent supplement units.

The program offers two types of bursaries. Full bursaries (\$3,000 maximum) are for social housing tenants or members planning to attend a post-secondary institution. Part-time bursaries (\$1,000 maximum) are for tenants seeking academic upgrading and trade or skills-based training. The bursaries are awarded to individuals in financial need, both youth and mature students.

The total amount of the 2003 Bursary Program funded by the Province is \$1.15 million. The amount of each bursary award depends on two things:

- 1) The type of the award requested (full or part-time)
- 2) The number of eligible applicants.

This year, the Community Services and Housing Department, in partnership with housing providers, proactively distributed bursary information and applications to rent-geared-to-income households within York Region. As a result of this very successful partnership, 19 applicants will receive a full-time bursary and 3 will receive a part-time bursary. Due to

the number of applicants, this year's award is \$1680 for a full-time bursary, and \$800 for a part-time bursary. York Region recognizes the importance of education and has committed matching funds to ensure that local applicants receive the maximum bursaries of \$3000 for full-time and \$1000 for part-time. Congratulations to all housing providers who encouraged their tenants and members to participate! ❖

Eligibility Review Officers

During our training sessions in June, Meghan Pepper, Manager, Eligibility Review and Program Audit, outlined the investigative services available to housing providers through the Eligibility Review Officers (ERO).

Investigating suspected misrepresentation of income is difficult. Housing providers may face many roadblocks including insufficient information, lack of co-operation and shortage of time. Providers now have an alternative. At the provider's request, an ERO can investigate on their behalf.

A program instruction explaining the details of the eligibility review process will be issued in the near future. In the meantime, if you need this service, contact your Program Coordinator. ❖

Program Instructions

Please check your binder to be sure you have copies of all of the following program instructions.

Your Program Co-ordinators can provide you with any program instructions you may be missing.

Instruction Topic Number

2003-03	Investing Capital Reserves in the SHSC Investment Program
2003-02	Section 96 documents registered on title
2003-01	Senior Pensions
2002-19	Senior Pensions
2002-18	Subsidy Levels
2002-17	Interim Estimates (URF's cost factor increases)
2002-16	Household Income Limits
2002-15	Maximum Absence
2002-14	Imputed rate of Return 2003
2002-13	Senior Pensions
2002-12	Low End of Market
2002-11	Income Limit Changes
2002-10	Senior Citizen's Government Pension
2002-09	Changes to 2002 Household Service Level Standards
2002-08	Reasonable Efforts to Pursue Specified Income
2002-07	Rent Increase of Less than \$10
2002-06	Interim Application Process Establishment of the Centralized Waiting List
2002-05	Internal Review
2002-04	Opportunity to Comment
2002-03	Senior Citizen's Government Pensions
2002-02	Household Service Level Standards
2002-01	Imputed rate of return for non-income producing assets

Summer Camp

This year a number of children from non-profit and co-op communities in York Region went to summer camp through a Community Services and Housing Department sponsorship program.

In July and August, children ages 4 to 12 attended day camp and teens ages 13 to 17 spent a week at a residential summer camp. To help make their camping experience comfortable, each child received a free camp pack with items such as a sleeping bag, hat, sunscreen and more.

We would like to thank Property Managers and Co-op Co-ordinators for distributing the camp information to parents in their housing communities. Registration was very successful with approximately 90 children attending various day camps and 60 teens spending a week at Camp Rainbow in Algonquin Park. ❖

Dates to Remember!

The *Social Housing Reform Act* establishes the reporting time lines for housing providers. Budget estimates must be submitted 90 days before the fiscal year begins. The annual information return and audited statements are due five months after the fiscal year ends. For example, a provider with a January to December fiscal year will submit budget estimates by October 1, and the annual return package by May 30. Please take particular note of the dates that apply to your corporation as financial penalties can be applied for late submission. Federal housing providers should refer to their operating agreements as their timelines may be different. ❖

c o n t a c t s

The following is a list of our program contacts:
They can be reached by calling (905) 830-4444 or toll free at 1-877-464-9675.

FOR OVERALL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION:

Shereen Day, Administrative Clerk/Secretary	ext: 2119
Heather Simpson, Program Co-ordinator	ext: 2142
Christine Zarebski, Program Co-ordinator	ext: 2035
Margarita Christensen, Tenant Service Co-ordinator	ext: 2029
Kerry Hobbs, Senior Policy Analyst	ext: 2052
Terry McErlean, Supervisor, Housing Programs	ext: 2157
Doug Manson, Manager, Housing Programs	ext: 2071

FOR PROGRAM FUNDING:

Kevin Jennett, Accounting Clerk	ext: 2139
Alice Arnold, Financial Analyst	ext: 2153
Christine Terry, Manager, Housing Subsidies	ext: 2137
Deborah Porter, Administrative Clerk	ext. 2081

FOR CO-ORDINATED ACCESS:

Sharon Lanteigne, Applicant Service Representative <i>Aurora\Newmarket\Georgina</i>	ext: 2708
Diane McCrodden-Kovacs, Applicant Service Representative <i>King\Markham\Whitechurch Stouffville</i>	ext.2733
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