



FOR RELEASE
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New housing initiatives in Yukon

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon is moving forward with five new housing initiatives with funds from the Northern Housing Trust (NHT) and from its Investment in Affordable Housing agreement with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

"These new initiatives will improve the overall quality and accessibility of rental housing in Yukon, while at the same time putting Yukoners to work," Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation Stacey Hassard said. "They address issues that face both rental developers and low- to moderate-income renters seeking accommodations in Yukon's private rental market. This will also provide an opportunity for potential landlords to upgrade illegal suites to approved legal suites, increasing availability to Yukon renters."

One of the proposed initiatives is the Municipal Matching Rental Construction Program. This collaboration between the Yukon government and municipal governments allocates \$3.5 million for the next two years to increase the supply of rental housing.

"Adequate and affordable housing is a critical issue for our association and a key indicator of community health," Association of Yukon Communities president Wayne Potoroka said. "We look forward to working with the Yukon government on addressing our rental-housing needs."

In total, \$6.3 million in NHT funding will be allocated to four of the initiatives. This represents the last of the Northern Housing Trust funds that were made available to Yukon.

The Government of Canada provided Yukon with \$50 million in NHT funding in 2006. Negotiations at that time determined that First Nations would receive \$32.5 million for priority housing needs, with the Yukon government retaining \$17.5 million. Projects funded by Yukon include affordable housing in Carcross and Carmacks (\$1.4 million), the Salvation Army transitional housing project (\$3 million), and Betty's Haven second-stage housing (\$4.5 million).

An additional \$1 million will be allocated over four years to expand the YHC's Rent Supplement Program. This program provides a subsidy to social-housing-eligible individuals and families living in market rentals who pay more than 25 per cent of their income towards shelter.

"We have heard from Yukoners through the development of the Housing Action Plan that there is no single solution to overcoming challenges relating to housing," Yukon Housing Board chair Janet Moodie said. "Guided by the Yukon Housing Corporation's Strategic Plan, and further supported by the Housing Action Plan, a number of solutions will assist Yukoners to acquire the housing options they need."

The programs are currently under development and the Yukon Housing Corporation anticipates they will be application-ready by June.

See backgrounder below.

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Backgrounder**New Rental Housing Initiatives**

Municipal Matching Rental Construction Program: The Yukon government will partner with municipalities in offering one-time capital grant incentives for eligible projects to help increase the supply of rental housing in municipalities. This will match municipal programs that are in place, or will come into place to meet the unique housing priorities in that community. A total of \$1 million has been identified for projects in 2015/16 and \$2.5 million for projects in 2016/17.

Rental Quality Enhancement Grants: This initiative offers grants to landlords with existing approved rental units, or homeowners who want to create an approved secondary suite. A total of \$800,000 will be available for approved projects over two years (\$400,000 for 2015/16 and \$400,000 for 2016/17).

Accessibility Enhancement Grants: This program offers grants to homeowners and landlords for improving the accessibility of homes and rental units for individuals with physical disabilities. These grants are available to homeowners and landlords. A total of \$800,000 will be available for approved projects over two years (\$400,000 for 2015/16 and \$400,000 for 2016/17).

Rental Housing Allowances for Families: The rental subsidy program aims to help families with children better-afford private market rental housing by offering direct rental housing allowances. The program will be targeted to households in core housing need (who pay more than 30 per cent of their income toward shelter costs) and will be income-tested. There is a total of \$1 million in new funding over four years (2015-2019).

Rent Supplement Enhancement: This program is for social housing-eligible clients and matches tenants with participating landlords. The program currently exists in Whitehorse and this new money will extend it to all Yukon communities. Under the program, Yukon Housing Corporation pays the median market rent directly to the landlord, and the tenant pays the corporation 25 per cent of their income. There is a total of \$1 million in new funding over four years (2015-2019).

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