

CANADA-ONTARIO COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVE (COCHI) AND ONTARIO PRIORITIES HOUSING INITIATIVE (OPHI)

APPLICATION GUIDE

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COMMUNITY HOUSING

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WHAT ARE COCHI AND OPHI?

The Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) are federally/provincially funded programs designed to address local housing priorities, including renovation and/or rehabilitation of community housing units.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Housing providers interested in participating in the program must submit a completed Housing Provider Capital Repair Funding Application Form and all supporting documentation within the specified application period communicated by York Region.

The Region will only consider applications for funding made within the application period for this program, unless warranted by an emergency or exceptional circumstance, as determined by the Region. Late submissions or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Housing providers will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

Participating housing providers will be required to:

- Enter into a funding agreement/letter of agreement with the Region
- Provide post-repair occupancy report upon the completion of the project(s)
- Provide annual occupancy reports for the project(s) throughout the affordability period of the project

If you have any questions or need assistance completing the application form, please contact your Program Coordinator.

HOW ARE PROJECTS FUNDED?

A maximum of \$50,000 per unit is available as a forgivable loan for repairs and rehabilitation to bring a unit to an acceptable standard while improving energy efficiency. The loan is not repayable provided housing providers meet the required affordability commitments.

WHAT ARE THE AFFORDABILITY COMMITMENTS REQUIRED?

Housing providers participating in the program must agree to a 10-year affordability period after the completion of the funded work, including a minimum of five years during which they will operate as social housing under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. The affordability requirement applies regardless of any operating agreements or mortgage obligations or agreements between the Region and eligible housing provider.

Following the five-year period, housing providers must maintain a weighted average rent for the building/project at or below 80% of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Average Market Rent for the applicable local municipality. The affordability requirement applies regardless of any operating agreements or mortgage obligations or agreements between the Region and the housing provider.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM?

Housing providers are encouraged to consider strategic capital repairs which preserve and extend the functional lifespan of the building, including capital needs identified through building condition audits.

Eligible projects may include the following activities:

- Repairs and rehabilitation required to bring a home/unit to an acceptable standard while improving energy efficiency, including, but not limited to:
 - Repairs required to address a health and safety or regulatory standard
 - Repairs required to prevent deterioration of the asset
 - Replacement of building elements that have reached the end of their useful life
 - Fire Safety systems (sprinkler systems/fire panels)
 - Heating/Mechanical systems
 - Windows/Doors
 - Foundation repairs
 - Roofs, walls, flooring and ceilings
 - Plumbing, low flow toilets
 - Kitchen replacement
 - Bathroom replacement
 - Electrical systems
 - Chimneys
 - Vents, louvers
 - Septic systems, well water, and well drilling
 - Health and safety repairs (e.g. accessibility renovations)

Other repairs or modifications may be considered, with supporting documentation, at the discretion of the Region. Other eligible costs may include labour and applicable non-recoverable taxes, building permits, legal fees, certificates, appraisal fees, inspection fees, drawing and specification and any other costs that the Region deems reasonable and that are agreed to by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH).

MMAH strongly encourages the use of energy-saving products or systems for the required repairs to housing such as ENERGY STAR certified products.

WHAT ARE THE TIMELINES FOR COMPLETING THE WORK?

Based on current provincial program guidelines, the Region anticipates the program budget will continue to be divided into different funding periods. The table below provides examples. Funds may be awarded in phases for larger projects to allow them to be completed over an extended period of time. York Region will determine the time period in which funding will be allocated based on available budget. Any changes to provincial program guidelines will be communicated to housing providers when funds are awarded.

All repairs must start within 120 days of the signing of the funding agreement/letter of agreement. Projects must be completed by March 31st of the subsequent provincial fiscal year (see below). Copies of all financial invoices must be kept for reporting and audit purposes.

Funding Period	Project Completion Date
April 2025 to March 2026	March 31, 2027
April 2026 to March 2027	March 31, 2028

WHAT PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES WILL YORK REGION PROVIDE TO SUPPORT HOUSING PROVIDERS?

The Region will provide project management support for projects funded through COCHI and OPHI from initiation to closeout. Exemptions for Regional project management support may be considered where the housing provider has provided a Project Management Plan and proof of adequate alternate arrangements such as a professional project management team. The submission for an exemption must be clearly identified in the housing provider’s application and supported through documentation. The Region will have full discretion to grant or deny this exemption.

Project management services provided by the Region include:

Project Initiation

- Initial scope defined
- Identify objectives
- Preliminary project timeline established
- Initial funding requirements
- Identify stakeholders
- Preparation of construction tender documents
- Contract award recommendations
- Oversee all construction activities
- Site inspections – review completed work
- Tracking and reporting project status
- Reviewing progress payments

Project Planning

- Develop scope
- Develop project plan
- Project schedule
- Project budget
- Procurement plan
- Communication plan

Project Closeout

- Finalize all project activities
- Contract closeout documents
- Complete deficiencies
- Final reports, inspections, commissioning
- Training/Operation Manuals

Project Execution (Design, Tender, Construction)

- Preparation of consultant agreements
- Design review

HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE EVALUATED?

Housing provider applications for funding will be evaluated and scored based on the following three criteria:

1. **Project Need** - The information provided should explain why the proposed project is necessary and demonstrate the repairs and rehabilitation required to bring a unit to an acceptable standard while improving health and safety and/or energy efficiency. The information provided should demonstrate any physical, social, environmental, and operational costs and benefits, and outlines the consequence of failure and not proceeding with the project.

The project need will be scored (0-10) with a weighted value of 50 points.

2. **Project Scope and Value** - The description of the proposed project should identify the full scope and impact of the project on residents and how the recommended project will positively affect the overall unit and/or building infrastructure/operations. Where possible, a description of the anticipated return on investment should be provided demonstrating how project savings will pay back the capital investment. The cost shows value by providing estimates or attached competitive quotes from vendors or consultant reports. If project incentives are available, an estimate of anticipated incentive amounts and their source should be provided. For COCHI/OPHI applications, the Region will consider any previously awarded capital repair funding, including the Social Housing Electricity Efficiency Program (SHEEP), Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP), Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program (SHAIP), COCHI or OPHI.

The project value will be scored (0-10) with a weighted value of 35 points.

3. **Project Execution and Timeframe** – The applicant should describe the project timeframe in a methodical way identifying critical milestones and key time stressors that may affect the project. The applicant should include estimated dates for tendering, award of contract, construction start, construction end, project completion and warranty period if available.

If the applicant does not require project management support from the Region, the applicant must include a Project Management Plan that identifies critical process map (e.g. timeline for the project, Gantt chart, etc.), and, where available, a detailed breakdown of the project management team including experience of each team member. An expectation of all applicants is that they will procure professional consultant services for the development of project scope and preparation of specification and drawings to be utilized in a competitive bid process.

The project execution and timeline will be scored (0-10) with a weighted value of 10 points.