



Request for Expressions of Interest to Develop Affordable Family Rental and Cooperative Housing: A Call to Housing Providers

August 31, 2011

Introduction

Manitoba Housing would like to hear from proponents their ideas, concepts, or specific proposals to create new affordable family rental or cooperative housing in Manitoba.

The Province of Manitoba has made a public commitment to add 1,500 new affordable housing units by March 31, 2014. To assist in achieving this goal and, as part of its long-term housing strategy and investment plan, *HOMEWorks!*, Manitoba Housing is offering financial assistance to fund the development of rental and cooperative housing affordable to low- and moderate-income families.

Manitoba Housing is requesting expressions of interest from proponents willing to partner with Manitoba Housing in the development of affordable family rental and cooperative housing in Manitoba. Manitoba Housing will require ownership of the project and can fund up to 100 percent of eligible project development costs.

Manitoba Housing has earmarked approximately \$50 million to support the development of new affordable family housing projects proposed through this request for expressions of interest. Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance is also available to help further decrease rents or cooperative housing charges so that they are affordable to lower-income households.

Expressions of interest must be received by Manitoba Housing no later than November 30, 2011, 4:30 p.m. Central Time.

Process

Submitted expressions of interest will be reviewed by Manitoba Housing with an aim of gauging the general viability of the proposed housing initiative and how it meets Manitoba Housing's mandate and strategic priorities. Further information on Manitoba Housing's *HOMEWorks!* strategy can be found online at http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/pubs/homeworks_booklet.pdf.

Once this initial review is complete, a request for detailed proposals will be extended to those proponents who have expressed a project interest and with whom Manitoba Housing wishes to further explore project development opportunities.

Detailed proposals will be reviewed by Manitoba Housing with the intent to enter into an agreement for project development. Accepted proponents may enter into a Sponsor Management Agreement with Manitoba Housing for post-construction property management of the project. Ownership of the project may be transferred to the proponent at the end of the project's mortgage amortization period, subject to adherence to the Sponsor Management Agreement.

Manitoba Housing reserves the right to develop projects that may not have been submitted under this request for expressions of interest.

Project Specifications

Expressions of interest must target the development of family rental or cooperative housing accommodation that is affordable for low- to moderate-income households.

Eligible projects include permanent multiple-unit rental or cooperative housing projects which increase Manitoba's existing rental/cooperative housing supply. Projects must be comprised of four units or more, and can be developed under any one of, or combination of, the following methods:

- new construction;
- conversion from non-residential to residential use; and
- rehabilitation of vacant, derelict residential buildings.

Projects not eligible under this call for expressions of interest include (a) ownership housing of any kind, and (b) any other project which does not provide permanent affordable housing or security of tenure, such as hostels, shelters, and residential/medical care facilities.

Projects must provide modest, self contained accommodation of suitable space and size to meet household needs. Proponents shall ensure a modest project design in relation to unit sizes, features, and amenities, in accordance with the modesty assurance criteria set out in Appendix A.

Expressions of interest may target the development of affordable rental or cooperative family housing anywhere in Manitoba, with the exception of recognized or designated First Nation communities.

Eligible proponents include municipalities, private and public/municipal non-profit housing corporations, housing cooperatives and private developers.

Eligible households are low- to moderate-income renters and housing cooperative resident members with a total household income at, or below, the upper limit of the Second Quintile of Family Housing Income (2QFI) for Manitoba. At this time, the current upper income limit of 2QFI in Manitoba is \$60,211.

All proposed project units must be leased at, or below, applicable median market rent levels, as outlined in Appendix B. Proponents are encouraged to incorporate a number of units intended for households that are eligible for social or public housing. RGI assistance is available from Manitoba Housing to help further decrease rents or cooperative housing charges so that they are affordable to lower-income households. The amount of such assistance will be dependent upon an approach that best serves the target population and which addresses community need.

Proponents are encouraged to develop their project ideas, concepts, or specific proposals so that they meet the needs of the respective community. Proposed projects may include a range of unit types, however, preference will be given to projects that include a higher proportion of larger units (i.e., three bedrooms and more) where appropriate. Manitoba Housing will not support the development of studio units, except in appropriately documented special circumstances.

In instances where projects are envisioned to include the provision of supportive services or programming related to the special needs of tenants, funding for such services must be obtained independently from Manitoba Housing. Clear evidence of such support will need to be provided prior to Manitoba Housing entering into a prospective development agreement.

All project units will need to be built to the visitable design standards as outlined in Appendix C. Preference will be given to responses that appropriately incorporate energy efficiency measures and accessible design criteria (as defined in Appendix D).

Submission Requirements

Proponents must submit four (4) hard copies of their expression of interest in a sealed envelope, addressed as follows and delivered to:

Manitoba Housing
Housing Delivery Branch
Main Floor – 280 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0R8
Re: Expression of Interest to Develop Affordable Family Rental and Cooperative Housing

Expressions of interest must be received by Manitoba Housing at the above noted address by November 30, 2011, 4:30 p.m. Central Time.

Expressions of interest submitted later than this time will be returned unopened to the proponent.

Manitoba Housing will not accept expressions of interest submitted by facsimile transmission (fax) or electronic mail (e-mail).

Simplicity and clarity of responses are important. Proponents should avoid including extraneous or irrelevant information. All submissions should be submitted in an 8.5" x 11" format and bound in such a manner as to lay flat when opened.

Submission Content

Proponents should include the following in their submitted expression of interest:

- a) The name of the proponent and contact information for the principal contact (namely phone number, fax number, mailing address, and email address).

- b) A profile of the proponent, including the proponent's experience in residential housing development and property management.
- c) A description of the proposed site (if known), including the location/address, current ownership, existing use, availability, envisioned acquisition technique, cost/monetary value, and any services or local public amenities available to the site relevant to families.
- d) The current and required zoning of the site, including any pertinent information that may impact rezoning or necessary variances.
- e) The environmental status of the land, including a statement on the results of any past environmental site assessment work.
- f) A narrative description of the overall project concept and development approach.
- g) Identification of the specific target population(s) to be served.
- h) Proposed number, type and size of units.
- i) Proposed levels of rent / housing cooperative charges.
- j) A preliminary estimate on capital costs, operating costs, and project revenues.
- k) Any preliminary conceptual drawings, including site plans, if available.
- l) Details of any relevant partnerships and/or project support.
- m) A high level description of intended accessibility and energy efficiency features.
- n) A broad outline of the envisioned timelines for complete project development.

Evaluation and Selection

All expressions of interest will be opened immediately following the noted deadline. An Evaluation Committee will be established comprised of representatives from the Department of Manitoba Housing and Community Development. The Evaluation Committee will be responsible for reviewing responses and recommending those projects which Manitoba Housing wishes to receive a second, more detailed project proposal.

All eligible expressions of interest will be considered although preference will be given to responses which:

- Are put forward by proponents with extensive and successful documented experience in the development and/or management of housing, or who intend to link with partners and/or consultants with more substantial experience.
- Are clearly described and are based on a sound/logical project concept.
- Feature energy efficiency measures (which do not compromise overall project feasibility).
- Offer accessibility features for persons with disabilities.
- Target a higher proportion of larger units (i.e., three bedrooms and more).
- Target a specific project site appropriate for the proposed development and where control of the site can be readily transferred to Manitoba Housing.
- Reveal no heightened level of risk which would inhibit project advancement or completion.
- Can move ahead to the construction stage within a reasonable timeframe.
- Are aligned with Manitoba Housing strategic priorities and appropriately meet a demonstrated housing need and demand.

Submission Conditions

No expression of interest will be considered from a proponent where Manitoba Housing, in its sole discretion, determines that a potential conflict of interest exists. No expression of interest will be considered that is in any way conditional or that may impose conditions on Manitoba Housing that are inconsistent with the requirements of this request for expression of interest and the terms and conditions stipulated herein.

The submission of an expression of interest, its receipt by Manitoba Housing, and the opening of an expression of interest, or any one of those, does not constitute Manitoba Housing acceptance in any way. Manitoba Housing, in its entire discretion, may reject or accept all or any part of any submitted expression of interest. Furthermore, an invitation by Manitoba Housing to submit a further detailed project proposal does not guarantee any level of further Manitoba Housing project support.

Manitoba Housing reserves the right to reissue this request for expressions of interest where, in Manitoba Housing's sole opinion, an insufficient number of submitted expressions of interest warrant acceptance or where it would be in the best interest of Manitoba Housing to do so.

Manitoba Housing is not liable for any costs incurred by proponents in the preparation, presentation, or submission of a response to this request for expressions of interest. Manitoba Housing shall not be responsible for any liabilities, costs, expenses, loss of damage occurred, sustained or suffered by any proponent, prior to or subsequent to, or by reason of any delay in the acceptance of an expression of interest.

Proponents are cautioned not to finalize their project designs as Manitoba Housing requirements may impact final design. Manitoba Housing shall not be responsible for any costs required to adjust project designs. In addition, proponents should exercise caution if entering into agreements or options for site acquisition at this stage, as the envisioned project development schedule may not proceed on a timetable dictated by site acquisition requirements. Manitoba Housing will not be responsible for costs incurred by proponents in securing or holding land prior to an executed development agreement with Manitoba Housing.

Manitoba Housing reserves the right to request proponents to clarify any information related to their expression of interest.

Submission of an expression of interest in response to this invitation constitutes an acknowledgement and acceptance of the conditions set forth herein.

All expressions of interest will be kept in the strictest of confidence subject to such disclosure as may be required under the provisions of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or *The Personal Health Information Act*.

Inquiries

All inquiries related to this request for expressions of interest should be addressed to:

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Senior Planning and Program Analyst
Housing Delivery Branch
Main Floor – 280 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0R8
Tel: (204) 945-4985
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Appendices and Resources

Appendix A: Modesty Assurance
Appendix B: Median Market Rents
Appendix C: Visitable Design Standards
Appendix D: Accessible Design Criteria

Template copies of Manitoba Housing's Development Agreement and Sponsor Management Agreement are available for reference purposes upon request.

APPENDIX A – MODESTY ASSURANCE

Modesty assurance refers to modest unit sizes and amenities, with such criteria as follows:

General

- Modesty assurance criteria are applicable for units renting at or below Median Market Rent (MMR).
- The design and provision of modest housing should be governed in all aspects by the “best buy” principle.
- The level of quality offered locally by the private sector should not be exceeded, providing minimum Manitoba Housing standards are met.
- Innovation in construction materials, systems or techniques is acceptable.
- Durability and ease of maintenance should determine the selection of materials.

Dwelling Units

- As a **general guideline**, the following unit areas are considered modest:

1-bedroom	60 sq. meters (643 sq. ft.)	1 – 2 persons
2-bedroom	75 sq. meters (807 sq. ft.)	1 – 2 persons
3-bedroom	89 sq. meters (960 sq. ft.)	3 – 5 persons
4-bedroom	105 sq. meters (1,130 sq. ft.)	4 – 7 persons

- Units of different sizes will be considered, however proposed units sizes should be consistent with unit sizes for rental properties charging MMRs for that geographic area.
- Floor areas for units designed for an individual living with a disability may exceed unit sizes consistent with MMRs for that geographic area, to accommodate mobility requirements.
- Where a design incorporates stacked townhouses with grade access, the minimum gross floor area should be increased by the space required for the additional stairway.

Modesty Standards

- Notwithstanding the unit size guidelines above, projects should generally reflect modest accommodation.
- The assessment of projects will be based on the overall qualities of the project and suites relative to the needs of the client group to be housed and the proposed rent.
- The following elements are considered immodest:
 - Glazed balconies, greenhouses, skylights, special windows
 - Non-standard wall, ceiling and floor finishes
 - Additional baths or half baths for 3-bedroom units; larger units may be allowed an additional half bath if it is not on the same floor level as the main bath
 - Sunken or raised floor levels
 - Communal areas finished with excessively expensive detailing

APPENDIX B – MEDIAN MARKET RENT

The Median Market Rent (MMR) refers to the middle value of all monthly rents paid, inclusive of essential utilities (heat, hydro, and water), when placed in order of value for a designated market area and by unit type. MMRs are established based on annual surveys conducted by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Applicable MMRs for the Province of Manitoba, as they relate to this request for expressions of interest, are currently as follows:

	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
City of Winnipeg and Catchment Areas	\$665	\$890	\$1,100	\$1,325
All Other Rental Market Areas	\$590	\$740	\$1,015	\$1,140

APPENDIX C – VISITABLE DESIGN STANDARDS

Visitable housing is the concept of designing and building homes with a basic level of accessibility. Visitable homes provide independent access for everyone, including people with limited mobility for those with disabilities.

A level of entrance provides easier access to the home for all ages and abilities. People who may require the use of mobility aids such as wheelchairs, walkers or scooters, as well as seniors and families with small children, can benefit from visitable homes.

Visitable Design Features

- One level, no-step entrance – minimum 36 inches (91.4 centimetres) wide – on an accessible route;
- Wider doorways – minimum of 32 inches (81.3 centimetres) clear passage throughout; and,
- A wheelchair accessible bathroom on the main floor.

Other Visitable Design Features that can be included to improve a home

- Reinforced bathroom walls (for the installation of grab bars, if desired);
- Levered door handles and single-lever kitchen and bathroom faucets;
- Raised electrical outlets – 18 inches (45.7 centimetres) from the floor;
- Lowered climate controls; and,
- Lowered light switches – 48 inches (121.9 centimetres) from the floor.

APPENDIX D – ACCESSIBLE DESIGN CRITERIA

Required Features for Accessible Units		Minimum (mm)	Maximum (mm)
Doorways	Clear Width	850	915
Peep Hole	Height from floor	1,100	
Hallways	Width	915	1,220
Window Sills	Height from floor	800	915
Outlets (telephone, cable, etc.)	Height from floor	450	
Light switches, Intercom, thermostat	Height from floor	1,220	
Turning Radii (all rooms)		1,500	1,525
Rods in Clothes Closets/shelves	Height from floor	450	1,220
Kitchen Counter	Height from floor	810	850
Lateral transfer area – by toilet		915	
Bathroom Sink	Height from floor	800	860
Level threshold at entrance			
D-type handles			
Lever-type faucets			
Easily opened doors			
Grab Bars in Bathroom		2	
Hand-held shower on an adjustable rod			
Pull-up space under bathroom sink			
Pull-down seat in shower			
Mirror	Height from floor	1,000 or tilted	
Medicine cabinet	Height from floor		1,220
Rocker-style or large knob light switches			
Flooring- securely fastened to floor – low level carpet			
Offset pipes under sinks			
Knock-out cupboards below kitchen sink			