

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Affordable Housing Catalyst Grant Allocations 2020

Date Prepared: January 28th, 2020

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Sheilagh O'Leary, Council Lead Housing

Ward: Not ward specific

Decision/Direction Required: Seeking Council approval on 2020 Housing Catalyst Grant allocations

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City of St. John's approved the Affordable Housing Strategy, 2019-2028, in November 2018. The strategy will address the municipality's housing needs by working in step with partners, stakeholders and residents to create and maintain safe, suitable and affordable housing throughout the city.

Leading innovation is a strategic direction of the new strategy, intended to inspire and facilitate creativity in affordable housing projects. Implementation action 3.1 *Continue to offer the Housing Catalyst Fund grants yearly for affordable housing projects* is found under this direction.

\$50,000 has been approved for the Housing Catalyst Fund for 2020. The Housing Catalyst Fund allows the City to be a catalyst for practical and collaborative projects that produce tangible housing solutions for people. The City's role through this fund is to work collaboratively with community groups and other stakeholders (Builders, Developers, etc.) to facilitate and plan housing solutions that will enhance the quality of life for individuals and families and build a healthier community.

A Housing Catalyst Grant selection committee was established to review submissions. It included the CMHC Affordable Housing Specialist, NLHC Manager of Affordable Housing programs and the following internal staff: Chief Municipal Planner, Supervisor– Tourism & Events, Manager- Housing and the Affordable Housing and Development Facilitator.

The following matrix was used to evaluate projects:



Housing Catalyst Fund 2020: Selection Criteria		
Item No.	Criteria	Weighting
1	Application is in line with the Affordable Housing Strategy and meets identified priority areas	40%
2	Project idea is solutions focused, action oriented and realistic	20%
3	Project idea will have significant impact on creating, maintaining, and/or supporting local affordable housing	20%
4	Quality of the application	10%
5	Cost Proposal (including whether project may or may not qualify for other funding currently available)	10%

Please note that while our budget is \$50 000 for 2020, there was \$10,000 remaining in the Housing Catalyst grant fund from 2019.

The selection committee is recommending seven applications be approved for funding. They are as follows and brief summaries of each can be found attached.

Organization	Project	Grant Amount
Fundamental Inc	Net Zero Ready Affordable Tiny Home- Prototype Unit	\$10 000
Power Brothers Inc	Design costs to make affordable housing units accessible as part of retrofit build	\$10 000
Stella's Circle Community Services	Consultant costs to expand housing portfolio and maximize current units/land	\$10 000
L'Arche Avalon	Floor plan design for the construction of two l'Arche Avalon homes and a day centre	\$10 000
Connections for Seniors	Supportive Housing Needs Assessment for Older Adults	\$10 000
NL Gray Gays	Housing and care needs assessment for LGBTQI2S community	\$ 5 000
Universal Design Network	Universal Design Education	\$ 5 000

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Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications
\$50 000 has been approved for the 2020 Housing Catalyst Fund and \$10 000 remains from the 2019 fund
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders
The above recommendations will support four partners in their affordable housing efforts
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans
Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028- 3.1 Continue to offer the Housing Catalyst Fund grants yearly for affordable housing projects
4. Legal or Policy Implications
n/a
5. Privacy Implications
n/a
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations
Housing staff will work with Marketing and Communications in releasing information
7. Human Resource Implications
n/a
8. Procurement Implications
n/a
9. Information Technology Implications
n/a
10. Other Implications n/a

Recommendation: Council accept recommended 2020 Housing Catalyst Grant allocations

Prepared by/Date: Simone Lily, Affordable Housing & Development Facilitator January 29th. 2020

Approved by/Date: Judy Tobin, Manager of Housing

Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager Community Services

Attachments: Brief Summaries of Recommended Housing Catalyst Projects

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Organization	Project
Fundamental Inc	The team is proposing to build an affordable, net zero ready tiny home unit. They intend to build the tiny home unit using an up-cycled shipping container as the structure, and including fit and finish with non-traditional materials to provide a high quality and affordable final product. This will be a modular demonstration unit showing that a high quality living space can be provided by using innovative design, materials and built form while still meeting the City's affordability targets. They plan to showcase the project for one year after construction and then donate the unit to Choices for Youth to function as an available housing option for an individual in need.
Power Brothers Inc	Design costs to make affordable housing units accessible as part of retrofit build. They commit to having at least 1/3 of the 32 units as affordable and likely 75% accessible. This will address the growing need of people requiring these units.
Stella's Circle Community Services	Stella's Circle owns 79 units of supportive housing in St. John's. From this existing stock, they have identified 13 housing units/property that have potential for expansion, thus adding additional housing units to offer to individuals who require supportive housing. The requested funds will be used for portfolio planning and analyzing assets with the intent to develop a plan that aims to increase their total number of units.
L'Arche Avalon	Funds will be used to offset the cost of floor plan design for the construction of two L'Arche Avalon homes and a day centre. The homes will each house four adults with intellectual disabilities and their assistants.
Connections for Seniors	The requested funds will be used to conduct research that studies senior-specific housing and support services needs in St. John's and the Metro area. The research will specifically examine existing housing models, existing support services for older adults, and will extensively investigate supportive housing needs based on a needs assessment of the chosen demographic and community.
NL Gray Gays	Housing and care needs assessment for LGBTQI2S community. The result of this research would provide NL Gray Gays with an assessment of the needs of the LGBTQI2S* community for the next 20 years. It will provide invaluable information about the situation facing LGBTQI2S* Elders and may be used to form the basis of funding proposals to the federal and provincial governments and any other foundations or agencies. It is intended to identify the planning and design of facilities that meet the emerging needs of this emerging demographic, as well as if there are gaps in service provider awareness.
Universal Design Network	To develop and distribute educational materials to engage stakeholders regarding the flexibility of use and cost saving properties of universal design in building. For the purpose of this project, stakeholders will include municipalities, developers, contractors, new and existing enterprises and individuals.