

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

### **REACHING HOME IN RURAL & REMOTE COMMUNITIES FOR 2024-26**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS) is the Community Entity contracted by Infrastructure Canada (INFC) to administer the Reaching Home program for Rural and Remote Communities in Nova Scotia, both mainland and Cape Breton Island<sup>1</sup>. The Reaching Home program is a community-based program dedicated to preventing and reducing chronic homelessness across Canada by supporting evidence informed programs and system-level initiatives that meet the needs of local housing and support realities. Reaching Home is part of the [National Housing Strategy in Canada](#).

During the 2022-24 fiscal years, AHANS administered approximately \$2.8 Million to support capital projects to enhance housing supply, system level advancements tied to Coordinated Access and HIFIS improvements as well as enhanced support services to assist people recover from the housing crisis and homelessness in rural communities throughout Nova Scotia. The commitment to prevent and reduce homelessness continues for AHANS and its community partners.

#### **Invitation to Submit Proposals for Available Reaching Home Funding for 2024-26 for the Rural & Remote Community Stream**

**Deadline: 11:59pm Atlantic on May 3, 2024**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

This Call for Proposals (CFP) seeks to fund capital investments as well as sub-projects dedicated to preventing and reducing homelessness for households at the greatest risk of long-term homelessness in communities supported by the Rural and Remote Funding Stream. Only by ensuring that sufficient housing options and supports are available to meet the unique needs of people experiencing homelessness can the other community-level outcomes endorsed by Reaching Home and local priorities can be met.

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<sup>1</sup> Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) is excluded from this process since CBRM receives its own Reaching Home – Designated Community investment.

- Chronic Homelessness is reduced *via Capital Investments in Housing Options & the delivery of specialized housing stability supports for people recovering from chronic homelessness.*
- Homelessness in the community is reduced overall and for specific populations such as *Indigenous Peoples, African Nova Scotians and other racialized communities that face structural and systemic discrimination.*
- New inflows into homelessness are reduced through *evidence informed prevention and diversion strategies that support highly vulnerable households remaining in the community in safe, appropriate housing options.*
- Returns to homelessness are reduced *through person-centred, strength based, and trauma informed support models dedicated to long-term housing stability.*

Historically, Reaching Home for Rural and Remote Funding Stream has invested in sub-projects in such communities/regions as Bridgewater/Southern Shore, Truro, Kentville, Yarmouth, Colchester County, Amherst/Cumberland County, Antigonish and Pictou County. Previously funded organizations that wish to deliver Reaching Home sub-projects in 2024-26 must reapply. Given the diverse needs of communities, ***the Rural and Remote Advisory Board (RRAB) is also looking forward to receiving proposals from other communities throughout the Province where housing and homelessness needs may currently remain unmet.***

## **PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDANCE**

**In preparing submissions for this Call for Proposals**, proponents are expected to identify the unmet needs of local households experiencing housing precarity and homelessness locally and determine the capital projects and support models that would fill current gaps in service. Duplication of service should be avoided. Proponents must demonstrate their commitment to Housing First as a philosophy and an intervention. Assertive engagement and individualized support approaches provide a mechanism to ensure that households experiencing housing precarity and homelessness are provided with the housing options and support opportunities to return to housing stability.

**If your agency is re-applying for Reaching Home funding**, proponents are expected to identify the successes, challenges and opportunities of current practices and approaches while identifying how the proposal for Capital Investments and/or Supports will meet the current needs of people experiencing lengthy periods of homelessness and housing precarity. Historically, many Reaching Home investments in Rural and Remote Communities supplemented the activities funded by Provincial, Municipal and/or Philanthropic investments. Moving forward, it will be essential that selected sub-projects demonstrate the outcomes and impacts achieved by these Reaching Home investments.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**

- 1) **Reaching Home Contribution Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with AHANS:** All proponents funded by Reaching Home are required to have an active Contribution Agreement that outlines the rights and responsibilities of Recipient of funding, the Community Entity, and the Government of Canada
- 2) **Coordinated Access (CA) Participation, where applicable:** All Reaching Home Programs must actively participate in local Coordinated Access processes, where applicable. This includes adding people experiencing homelessness to the By Name List as well as filling all vacancies (housing and caseload) from the By Name List. Staff are required to submit CA intake forms and bi-weekly caseload updates to ensure that the By Name List is up to date and outcomes are being met. Agencies that do not participate in Coordinated Access will be ineligible to receive (continue to receive) Reaching Home funding during 2024-26 fiscal years. Participation in Coordinated Access will be monitored on a monthly basis for all successful proponents. Failure to participate may result in termination of Reaching Home funding.
- 3) **HIFIS 4.0:** Proponents are required to collect data in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS 4.0). All successful proponents will be required to participate in the community data sharing implementation and sign the approved community Data Sharing Agreement if they haven't already done so. Participation in HIFIS activities will be monitored on a monthly basis for all successful proponents. Failure to participate may result in termination of Reaching Home funding.
- 4) **Good Standing with AHANS (for previously funded agencies):** Proponents must be in good standing as a Recipient of Reaching Home funding (in terms of any previous funding agreements) and a contracted partner with AHANS as Community Entity of Reaching Home. Timely completion of financial reporting as well as outcome-based reporting and monitoring expectations will be reviewed quarterly.
- 5) **Sustainability:** Funded agencies must have an organizational infrastructure in place (or be willing to work towards such sustainability expectations) to ensure the success of the project with respect to supervision, policies and procedures, human resources, finance, and other administrative activities. AHANS is open to supporting new and small agencies in ensuring that such activities are completed appropriately but the building of internal infrastructure must be a priority for all successful proponents.
- 6) **Demonstrated Ability to Achieve Reductions in Homelessness (for previously funded agencies):** Proponents who are reapplying for funding must have demonstrated their ability to reach the outputs and outcomes of the previous funding agreement. Some examples may include maintaining a full caseload, targeted diversion services, actively supporting participants to find and maintain

housing, conducting regular in-person/in-home visits, successfully housing participants, submitting accurate and up-to-date weekly caseload updates, being responsive to housing needs, and maintaining a housing-focused approach.

## **PRIORITIES FOR REACHING HOME INVESTMENTS 2024-26**

In the coming months, AHANS and community partners throughout the Province will begin community planning discussions to establish investment priorities for 2024-2029. Given the current Federal, Provincial and Municipal investments impacting the homelessness and re-housing system of care throughout Nova Scotia, the realities facing people experiencing homelessness and the current limited supply of available housing options, the following Priorities have been identified for the Reaching Home 2024-26 Call for Proposal Process with a focus on meeting the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness:

- 1) **Capital Investments:** AHANS and its Rural and Remote Advisory Board are interested in investing in the development of housing solutions for people experiencing chronic homelessness and demonstrating higher depths of support needs. For a review of some of the housing models that have demonstrated success in supporting the recovery journey from homelessness to housing stability, see **Appendix A: Additional Information and Definitions**. In addition to increasing housing options, the Rural and Remote Communities Funding Stream also allows for capital investments for emergency shelter facilities, including shower and laundry facilities, food preparation and drop-in centre infrastructure. Review <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/directives-eng.html> for additional details on eligible capital investments.
- 2) **Finding & Maintaining Appropriate Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness:** The solution to homelessness is housing. AHANS is interested in supporting housing location and housing stability services dedicated to supporting households in their return to housing within the community. Although housing options may vary from shared housing, family/friend reunification, long term care, private market rental, supportive housing options, etc., specialized housing location services will be committed to assisting people experiencing chronic homelessness return to community via a housing option that works for them. Once housed, housing specialists will focus on delivering evidence informed stability supports and case planning to meet the individualized needs of the people supported. The use of a valid assessment process to guide case management, wellness promotion and recovery from homelessness is recommended for successful proponents.
- 3) **Targeted Housing Loss Prevention & Shelter Diversion for People at Imminent Risk of Homelessness.** Reaching Home focuses on preventing and reducing

homelessness for those households that are deemed to be at the greatest risk of entering sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Beyond an eviction notice, households at the greatest risk often experience circumstances and realities that resemble community members already experiencing homelessness. As the last opportunity to prevent households from experiencing literal homelessness, shelter diversion programs help individuals and families seeking shelter to explore safe and appropriate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connect them with services and financial assistance to help them find secure housing within the community. The housing focused problem-solving approach used is designed to find safe, appropriate housing options and avoid sheltered and unsheltered homelessness for the households served. Follow-up supports to assist the household in resolving the housing crisis is provided, when appropriate.

- 4) **Client Support Services Dedicated to Community Reintegration, Improved Wellness and Stability as well as Enhanced Access to Basic Needs.** Client support services include individualized services to help improve integration and connectedness to support structures, such as the provision of basic needs and wellness services. They may also include services to support the economic, social, and cultural integration of individuals and families. To explore eligible activities for Reaching Home Rural and Remote Communities Stream, visit <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/directives-eng.html>

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

**Financial Reporting:** Successful proponents must submit a financial claim and all supporting documentation on a quarterly basis, within 30 days after the end of the quarter. At least once each fiscal year, funded agencies must participate in a financial monitoring visit.

**Service & Activity Reporting:** Reports outlining the activities and services delivered by agencies funded by Reaching Home will be submitted quarterly with each funded agency meeting with AHANS staff multiple times throughout the year to discuss progress, challenges, and opportunities. All funded agencies are required to participate in a formal on-site Service and Activity Monitoring process once per year. Program Outcome Reports will be generated via HIFIS on a quarterly basis. Collecting and updating client, activity, and outcome data within HIFIS 4.0 is mandatory for all funded agencies. Lack of compliance with data entry may result in termination of Reaching Home funding.

**Reports on Coordinated Access Participation:** The addition of clients to the Coordinated Access process is a mandatory requirement for Reaching Home funded agencies in communities where Coordinated Access processes are in place. In addition to adding new clients to the Coordinated Access process (including the By Name List intake processes), completion of bi-weekly caseload updates for BNL clients regarding current housing

status, participation in relevant case conferencing sessions and the entering of client data into HIFIS 4.0 are mandatory administrative activities for all funded agencies. Lack of participation in Coordinated Access may result in termination of Reaching Home funding.

### **PROPOSAL EVALUATION BENCHMARKS**

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria. Points will be assigned for each criterion based on the information provided in the application (see table below). Scoring for each criterion is awarded on a scale of 0 to 10. Total score is based out of 100 points.

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Points (max)</b>	<b>Score (max)</b>
<b>Ability to meet requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agency is willing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AHANS that governs service delivery expectations, collaboration, communication, and a grievance process.</li> <li>▪ Agency commits to participation in Coordinated Access (CA) as applicable, including all vacancy matches made through CA, completion of BNL Intake Forms, weekly caseload updates, etc.</li> <li>▪ Agency commits to regularly entering and updating client, activity, and outcome data in HIFIS 4.0</li> <li>▪ Agency has the organizational and administrative infrastructure to support the success of the position(s)/project</li> <li>▪ Agency is able to support staff to meet participants in the community</li> </ul>	1.0	10	10
<b>Approach to Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proposal clearly articulates a model that focuses on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increasing Housing Stock through Capital Developments,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finding Housing via Specialized Housing Location</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining Housing via Specialized Housing Stability Support</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Service model articulates a team-based approach (including</li> </ul>	2.5	10	25

**REACHING HOME FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR 2024-26**  
**RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITY FUNDING STREAM**

	partnerships and in-kind resources, if applicable)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service Model emphasizes an assertive engagement approach with people experiencing chronic homelessness</li> </ul>			
<b>Alignment with purpose of RFP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proposal addresses the purpose of this RFP</li> <li>▪ Proposal addresses Reaching Home Directives</li> <li>▪ Proposal demonstrates Housing First approach</li> </ul>	1.0	10	10
<b>Sustainability and organizational infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proposal outlines how it leverages the proponent’s strengths and expertise</li> <li>▪ Proposal demonstrates the agency’s ability to supervise and coach project staff</li> <li>▪ Proposal identifies and mitigates any organizational challenges, including staff turnover, unique needs of clients. etc.</li> <li>▪ Does the proposal include in-kind or other forms of financial and/or staffing supports to support the project?</li> </ul>	2.0	10	20
<b>Demonstrated commitment and ability to serve people experiencing chronic homelessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agency demonstrates commitment and /or approach to assertively engage with people recovering from chronic homelessness through in-home and community-based service delivery</li> <li>▪ Previously funded agencies: how well this has been done to date in relation to positive housing locations, housing stability supports and/or development of housing developments.</li> </ul>	2.0	10	20
<b>Good standing with AHANS as Reaching Home Community Entity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proponents must be in good standing with AHANS in terms of previous funding agreements, including completion of financial and activity monitoring, as well as Coordinated Access and HIFIS participation.</li> </ul>	1.0	10	10



**REACHING HOME FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR 2024-26**  
**RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITY FUNDING STREAM**

<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>CUTOFF THRESHOLD:</b> Proposals must score a minimum threshold of 70 to be considered for Reaching Home funding	<b>70</b>

The proposal evaluation and review process will be completed by the Funding Panel of the Reaching Home Community Advisory Board, using the evaluation benchmarks identified above. The Funding Panel consists of non-service provider members of the Community Advisory Board, with clear policies regarding conflict of interest.



## **HOW TO APPLY**

### **To Submit Proposals...**

- 1) Complete the Reaching Home 2024-26 CFP Application Form
- 2) Submit the application (and any supplementary information) to [info@ahans.ca](mailto:info@ahans.ca) by **11:59pm Atlantic on Friday, May 3, 2024**
- 3) AHANS will follow up within 2 business days with a receipt confirmation notification

If you have questions about this Call for Proposal process. Please submit these questions via [info@ahans.ca](mailto:info@ahans.ca). All questions will be answered within 2 business days. A summary of questions and responses will be posted at <https://www.ahans.ca>.

**AHANS will host a virtual information session/Q&A for interested agencies on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00am Atlantic.**

**The deadline for the submission of applications to [info@ahans.ca](mailto:info@ahans.ca) is Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, by 11:59pm Atlantic.**

All questions related to this Funding Call for Proposal process are invited to connect with:

Tracy Flaherty-Willmott  
Director, Programs  
AHANS  
[tracy@ahans.ca](mailto:tracy@ahans.ca)

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## **APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & DEFINITIONS**

### **For Additional Information on Eligible Activities:**

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Reaching Home has a wide range of eligible activities which it will fund to fulfill the mandated outcome of a reduction in chronic homelessness. These activities are described in greater detail the Reaching Home Directives at <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/index-eng.html>

### **Financial & Program Considerations**

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1. Reaching Home has guaranteed funding to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026.
2. Under Reaching Home the maximum amount of administrative costs that are eligible toward the project/program is 15% of the project/program's approved budget.
3. Eligible Capital investments to increase Housing Options under Reaching Home include:
  - The acquisition of housing or facilities through purchase.
  - The acquisition of housing or facilities through construction.
  - Renovations to existing housing or facilities.
4. Operational cost for capital projects (utilities, debt repayment, maintenance, and all other operational costs) are ineligible.
5. All approved sub-projects must participate in HIFIS and Coordinated Access processes if these exist in your region. Failure to participate in these system level activities may result in termination of Reaching Home funding.

### **Description of Potential Capital Housing Projects**

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**Bridge Housing (a.k.a. Short-term Supportive Housing Option)**<sup>2</sup>: Temporary lodging for people experiencing homelessness that are on a clear pathway to Supportive Housing, Housing with Supports or a Housing First program. Participants in this form of temporary lodging are in the process of becoming document ready or are already document ready for the housing that follows their Bridge Housing stay. Participants are invited to stay in this housing type if it is determined through local assessment that the household would benefit from intensive supports being available on-site, 24/7 while working on finalizing the move to the appropriate permanent housing solution. Fixed site housing or motels are the most frequent forms of lodging used for Bridge Housing as greater privacy is afforded than in most shelter environments. Units in Bridge Housing may be fully self-contained, or offer a private bedroom with shared congregate dining, programming space, kitchens, and

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<sup>2</sup> As defined by OrgCode Consulting, Inc. (2022)

restrooms. Exits from Bridge Housing should happen as rapidly as possible - as soon as a spot becomes available in Permanent Supportive Housing, Housing with Supports or Housing First program, and should rarely exceed 12 consecutive months.

**Supportive Housing**<sup>3</sup>: Supportive Housing, also known as Permanent Supportive Housing, is permanent housing. Participants are offered this type of accommodation when they would benefit from on-site support staff, most often available 24/7. Supportive Housing can be provided through self-contained units with private bedroom, restroom, kitchen(ette), and living space; or it can be provided through private or semi-private bedrooms with shared common areas, programming space, kitchens, and restrooms. The housing most often has expectations or requirements to participate in support services. Program fees and service agreements with residents are common. Supports are available permanently, but the intensity of engagement with services can vary over time.

**Shared Housing**<sup>4</sup>: Shared housing is defined as two or more people who live in one permanent rental housing unit, sharing costs associated with maintaining housing such as rent and utilities. All assisted tenants are listed on the lease and their portion of the rent must be proportional to the amount of private space that tenant has in relation to the other tenants. The overall size of the unit is dictated by the co-housing tenants' preferences, available income, and the cost of rent and utilities. What's important to remember is that shared housing is permanent rental housing, in that the participant is on the lease and has full tenancy rights.

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<sup>3</sup> As defined by OrgCode Consulting, Inc. (2022)

<sup>4</sup> As defined by Veterans Affairs at [https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/Shared\\_Housing\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/Shared_Housing_Fact_Sheet.pdf)