

Background

Funded through proceeds from the Provinces' carbon market, the Green Ontario Fund (GreenON) is a not for profit provincial agency tasked with reducing greenhouse gas pollution in buildings and industry while helping Ontarians save money on energy costs. Through various programs and partnerships, the Green Ontario Fund helps people, communities, and businesses take action towards climate change.

On February 9, 2018, the Green Ontario Fund (Program) announced the GreenON Social Housing Program for eligible social housing apartment buildings across Ontario. The Program, which will be administered by the Housing Services Corporation (HSC), will invest \$25 million to support Green House Gas (GHG) reducing retrofits in social housing apartment buildings across the province with less than 100 units. With buildings generating almost one quarter (1/4) of Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions, this funding announcement supports the Province's Climate Change Action Plan.

The majority of Ontario's social housing apartment buildings were developed at a time when little attention was paid to energy-efficient design. Many of these buildings are at a stage in their life-cycles when their mechanical systems and building equipment need to be replaced. Investments in energy efficiency upgrades in these apartment buildings will reduce emissions and operating costs; improve the performance of social housing stock in Ontario, and enhance resident comfort.

Key outcomes expected from the Program include reduced GHG emissions; increased comfort and quality of life for Ontario's low-income and vulnerable tenants; decreased operating costs for social housing providers through the energy savings resulting from the retrofit activities, increasing long-term sustainability of existing social housing stock; and supporting the GHG retrofit sector and creating local jobs across Ontario.

The objective of GreenON Social Housing Program is to fund eligible retrofits including those that utilize the latest low-carbon or carbon-free energy technologies/systems in social housing apartment buildings with less than 100 units to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Housing Provider Eligibility

Social housing projects that are eligible to receive funding need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Must be a single social housing apartment building;
- Must contain less than 100 units;
- Must be social housing; i.e. must be subject to a transferred housing program under the Housing Services Act, 2011; and

- Must not have previously received or be receiving funding under existing GHG reduction programs including Social Housing Apartment Retrofit Program (SHARP), Social Housing Apartment Investment Program (SHAIP), Social Housing Electricity Efficiency Program (SHEEP), or Municipal GHG Challenge Fund funding.

Eligible Building Retrofits

To support the Program objectives, the following retrofit activities are eligible to be funded:

- Providing costs of required building pre and post energy audits;
- Replacing building heating and/or cooling systems and associated sub-components of these systems including mechanical insulation;
- Upgrading exterior or interior insulation;
- Installing solar walls (must be off-grid);
- Upgrading building windows and/or exterior doors;
- Upgrading building lighting systems, including converting to light-emitting diode (LED) lighting systems, lighting controls or sensors;
- Re-cladding or upgrading building envelopes; and
- Completing proposed retrofits that utilize latest low-carbon and carbon-free energy technologies / systems, subject to review and approval by the Green Ontario Fund.

To ensure that Program funds are able to maximize reduction in GHG emissions, eligible work must be prioritized, where possible to:

- Focus on retrofits that target building heating and/or cooling equipment; and
- Applications that seek to combine several retrofits – new and/or pre-existing retrofits – in order to achieve higher emissions reduction in the buildings.

Associated costs required as part of eligible work, such as enhanced insulation or siding, would be eligible. However, these associated costs must not represent a disproportionately large percentage of the overall work.

Project Submission Process

Housing Services is responsible for selecting and approving all eligible projects, monitoring progress and completion of projects and quality of work, and for the adhering to the reporting requirements for the advancement of funds.

Twenty Four (24) Social Housing Projects that qualified (social housing apartment building with less than 100 units) were contacted regarding the GreenOn Funding Program. Projects were asked to complete a business case (as per guidelines) indicating what type of retrofits they would be interested in completing.

Twelve (12) business cases were received. The business cases received formed the submission to Housing Services Corporation. The business cases totaled \$3,298,824. On April 24, 2018 a letter was received from the Housing Services Corporation advising Housing Services had been awarded a funding allocation of \$130,380. The eligibility panel determined that all Service Manager applicants would be given the opportunity to undertake at least one (1) project in their region that contributes to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Next Steps

A Transfer Payment Agreement needs to be executed and returned to Housing Services Corporation by June 29, 2018 under the guidelines of the GreenON Social Housing Program.

Housing Services will work with Building Services to review the business cases received in order to select the recipient(s) of the funding received.

References

Housing Services Corporation, GreenON Social Housing Program,
<https://www.hscorp.ca/our-programs-and-services/energy-services/greenon-social-housing/>