



# Reaching Home: Distinctions-Based Funding

The Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC) is a non-profit organization formally established in 1995 to provide expert technical advisory services to the First Nations of Ontario. OFNTSC also provides training and capacity development to First Nations communities in Ontario. By offering a wide range of specialized services and expertise, OFNTSC helps to enhance the quality of life, promote technical self-sufficiency, and foster economic growth within these communities.

## Project Overview

*Reaching Home* is a distinctions-based initiative that provides funding to help prevent and reduce homelessness in Canada by funding service delivery projects aligned with First Nations needs. The Ontario First Nations Reaching Home Funding Initiative (OFNRHFI) empowers First Nation communities to provide safe, stable, and affordable housing solutions that reflect cultural values. Reaching Home is designed to support the goals of the First Nations Housing Strategy by enhancing housing stability and culturally relevant, community-led solutions.

The project is proposal based with successful applicants demonstrating the need, capacity and alignment to the project objectives. The Eligible project expenses can be found in Appendix A.

## Eligible Applicants and Eligibility Criteria

The funding is focused on First Nations communities in Ontario or First Nations Organizations that have the support of the First Nation they are representing.

Project Activities may take place either on-reserve or off-reserve.

### **NOW ACCEPTING PROPOSALS!!**

\*\*Capital costs may be limited\*\*

**\*\*DEADLINE TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS IS JANUARY 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025\*\***

Proposals must include:

Criteria	Evaluation
First Nation – If the applicant is a First Nation organization, please include a support letter from your First Nation.	Organization overview, if applicable. The applicant has a mandate to deliver and support homelessness prevention and reduction activities. The application demonstrates the ability to deliver the projects and past experiences with projects.

Project Location	Will the project take place on-reserve or off-reserve?
Project Description	The project description has a clear alignment with the identified eligible activities and expenses (Appendix A). Should include responsibilities, project timelines, project milestone indicators and expected measurable outcomes/results, results measurements – how you will meet and track the expected results of the project
Project Budget	Detailed project budget for proposed initiative with an itemized list of expenses
Reporting Requirements	The proposal demonstrates the ability to provide and meet all reporting requirements. How will you gather, measure, monitor, and report on the project?  Reporting requirement related to measurable outcomes and alignment with the Reaching Home Funding objectives will be outlined in the agreement. Meeting the reporting requirements will be a condition to receiving future funding allocations for the approved proposal.
Project Contact Information	Name, position, and contact information included

For more information, application guidelines, or support, please contact us:

**[reachinghome@ofntsc.org](mailto:reachinghome@ofntsc.org)**



## Appendix A: Eligible and Ineligible Expenses and Activities

### Eligible expenses:

- Overhead costs, including costs related to central administrative functions of the recipient organization that are drawn upon to support agreement activities (such as postage, telephones, IT maintenance and head office support);
- Costs of materials and supplies;
- Wages and mandatory employment related costs (MERCs);
- Staff training and professional development costs;
- Honoraria;
- Printing and communication costs;
- Professional fees, such as consultants, audit, technical expertise, facilitation, legal, and construction contractors;
- Participant costs;
- Costs associated with conferences and knowledge sharing; and,
- Capital costs (may be limited) including purchase of land; purchase of building, cost of construction/renovation of a building including materials, supplies, and labour costs.
- Any other costs that are considered to be direct and necessary for the successful implementation of the Project and that are approved in advance by OFNTSC.

## Eligible Activities

### Housing Services

- Housing services that lead to an individual or family transitioning into more stable housing that has been deemed appropriate and safe, housing can include;
  - Transitional Housing – housing intended to support living environments for its residents, including offering them the experience, tools, knowledge and opportunities for social and skill development to become more independent. It is considered an intermediate step between emergency shelter and supportive housing and has limited on how long an individual or family can stay. Stays are typically 3 months to 3 years. housing placement, emergency housing funding and housing set-up, housing search support
  - Permanent Supportive Housing – housing that combines rental or housing assistance with individualized and flexible support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use. Permanent supportive housing maybe:
    - placed-based: Congregate or independent permanent supportive housing units situated in 1 building or location; or,



- scattered-site: The provision of permanent supportive housing services in the community, delivered through home visits or community-based agencies.
- Housing: housing that is not supportive housing and that can be long-term. Includes a house, apartment or room (including social housing) that a family or individual rents or owns. Housing may include living arrangements with friends or family members that are expected to be long-term.
- Indigenous housing options: Housing options that reflect Indigenous values, beliefs and practices (for example, community/family living environment) and are delivered by Indigenous organizations.

### **Eligible activities include:**

#### **Housing placement**

- Determining an individual's or family's preferences and needs for housing and type of supports.
- Securing housing for individuals and families by working with private and public local real estate, landlord associations, home communities (for example, First Nation band, Inuit community, Métis settlement), to identify available housing units.
- Time-limited rental assistance in the context of a rapid rehousing project. While at the discretion of the community to establish parameters for the rental assistance, rapid rehousing usually consists of 3 to 6 months of support.
- Providing landlord-tenant services for an individual or family that was placed into housing, which includes providing landlord mediation and training on roles and responsibilities of tenants and landlords.
- Re-housing (if required)

#### **Emergency Housing Funding**

- Within parameters that are established by the community, funding to help cover housing costs in the short term while awaiting access to longer-term housing supports, including the Canadian Housing Benefit or benefits from provincial, territorial or municipal programs.

#### **Housing set-up**

- Activities which cover costs associated with setting up a housing unit, including: insurance, damage deposit, first and last months' rent, maintenance (for example, painting), moving, furniture, kitchen, basic groceries and supplies at move-in, etc. Available to all individuals and families, not just those in receipt of rental assistance or Emergency Housing Funding.
  - If a provincial social assistance or other program offers first and last month's rent or damage deposits, this funding should be exhausted first before Reaching Home funding is used for these purposes.



**Ineligible activities include:**

- Emergency Housing funding while the individual or family is supported by the provincial, territorial or municipal welfare and rent supplement programs; and
- Level of funding provided for Emergency Housing Funding must not exceed amount of financial assistance provided by provincial, territorial or municipal rent supplement programs.

## Prevention and Referral to Services Outside Shelters

**Eligible activities include:**

- Discharge planning services for individuals being released from public systems (for example, health, corrections, and child welfare)
- Help obtaining or retaining housing, including shared housing
- Landlord liaison and intervention to prevent eviction and preserve tenancy
- Advice on budgeting, credit counseling and debt consolidation
- Legal advice, advocacy and legal representation in order to avert eviction
- Emergency assistance to help avert eviction (for example, food, clothing, transportation vouchers, cleaning/repair of damage to a rental unit)
- Moving costs; and
- Short-term financial assistance to help avert eviction or loss of housing with rent, rental arrears, and utility deposits or payments.

**Ineligible activities include:**

- Provision or payment for student housing for students who are not at imminent risk of homelessness; and
- Supports for low-income individuals or families who are not at imminent risk of homelessness.

## Client Support Services

Funding for basic needs services support outcomes that contribute to a reduction in homelessness. For example, short-term food and emergency shelter assistance are eligible activities as a means to assist homeless individuals to obtain placement in more stable housing. Longer-term food programs can also be funded if they are part of another intervention that is considered an eligible activity. For Indigenous individuals and families, funding could support culturally appropriate services and connection with community (for example, local and/or home community, including First Nation band, Métis settlement, etc.).



**Eligible activities include:**

- Essential services related to the provision of emergency shelter beds, food and shelter, including shower and laundry facilities, food banks, soup kitchens, community kitchens and drop-in centres.
- Life skills development (for example budgeting cooking).
- Longer-term food programs that are part of another eligible activity (for example, activities that assist with community reintegration).
- Culturally relevant supports for Indigenous people (for example, cultural ceremonies, traditional supports and activities with the goal of increasing cultural connections and an individual's sense of belonging in a community).
- Groceries, personal hygiene and supplies.
- Clothing, footwear and blankets.
- Storage for belongings (up to 3 months).
- Access to traditional foods and medicines.
- Repair or replacement of eyeglasses (if not otherwise covered through medical services).
- Disability supports (for example mobility and other assistive devices if not otherwise covered through medical services).
- Personal identification.
- Access to technology (for example phones, community voice mail, safe apps, computers, etc.) in a community setting (for example in a resource or drop-in centre).
- Bus or public transit tickets related to integration activities (for example, job search/interviews, appointments/reconnecting to family).
- Transportation to home community (mileage eligibility to be determined by community).
- Access to oral care programs (if not covered by a provincial/territorial government).

**Ineligible activities include:**

- Purchase of alcoholic beverages.

## Clinical and Treatment Services

- Clinical and treatment services are activities that seek to improve the physical, emotional and psychological health and well-being of individuals and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

**Eligible activities include:**

- Brokering and navigating access to clinical, health and treatment services (includes mental health and addictions support) through case management, including through an Intensive Case Management team.
- Partnership development, liaison and integration to bring together services to support the needs of individuals or families or to establish case management teams where none exists
- Delivery of harm reduction activities that seek to reduce risk and connect individuals and families with key health and social services.



o These activities may include, for instance, storage, distribution and provision of materials and/or supplies (for example, needles), prevention interventions (for example, targeted programming to prevent substance abuse in homeless youth and/or youth at-risk of homelessness; managed alcohol programs, connecting individuals to harm reduction services).

- Professional fees for services provided in support of Indigenous individuals and families (for example services provided by Indigenous Elders or traditional healers). The value of professional fees, gifts or honoraria must be proportional to the service rendered and should not exceed the reasonable and customary amount for each service; and
- Supports to access traditional or culturally sensitive healing services (for example, healing circles, sweat lodges ceremonies, access to traditional medicines) that are not offered through provincial programming. Eligibility is not based on service location (for example, may be local or require travel to a non-local Indigenous community).

## Economic Integration Services

### **Eligible activities include:**

- Income assistance: services directed towards individuals and families to help them access Income benefits (for example, provincial/territorial social assistance, child benefits, disability benefits, veterans' allowance, old age security, or employment insurance).
- Employment assistance: pre- and post-employment services (for example, job search assistance, interview preparation) that bridge individuals and families to the labour market and assist them to maintain employment and build self-sufficiency.
- Education and Training assistance: services to support essential skills development (for example, reading, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking, computer use and continuous learning), services to connect individuals and families to education and training programs and services to support the successful participation in these programs (for example, bus passes, clothing or equipment, food and non-alcoholic beverages, internet access for the duration of the program).

### **Ineligible activities include:**

- Employment activities normally delivered by other federal, provincial or territorial labour market Programs
- Job wages for individuals participating in an education, training, or pre-employment program
- Salary for a full-time teacher to provide an alternative to provincial or territorial education
- Tuition
- Workplace skills development; and
- Apprenticeship grants



## Social and Community Integration Services

### **Eligible activities include:**

- Supports to improve social integration, for example, costs of participation or provision of recreational/sports activities; and
- Indigenous Elder consultation, gathering and preparation of traditional foods. Establishing and maintaining culturally relevant responses and supports to help Indigenous individuals and families (for example, navigation of urban services including to help establish and maintain culturally relevant support networks within an urban environment; Indigenous language and culture classes).

## Capital Investments

Capital investments are intended to increase the capacity or improve the quality of facilities that address the needs of individuals and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, including those that support culturally appropriate programming for Indigenous individuals and families. Capital Investments will need to meet the requirements of Duty to Consult. Capital investments are limited.

### **Eligible activities include:**

- Renovation of emergency shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, or non-residential facilities, including:
  - Renovating an existing facility for upgrades and to meet building standards;
  - Removing asbestos, mold, rodents; and
  - Repurposing an existing property to create transitional housing or permanent supportive housing, and expanding an existing facility.
- Repairs of damages resulting from housing placements (includes private market housing).
- New construction of transitional or permanent supportive housing, or non-residential facilities (for example, community hubs to include furniture banks, drop-in centres, resource centres, outreach worker spaces, counselling spaces, laundry facilities, food banks), including if applicable, tearing down an existing facility to build a new one.
- Purchase of transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing, and non-residential facilities to create new space or units.
- Eligible costs related to professional fees, such as consultants, audit, technical expertise, facilitation, legal, and construction contractors, and capital costs of the purchase of a land or building.
- Purchase or construction of new emergency shelters
- Purchase of furniture, appliances, machinery (for example, lawnmower, woodworking tools), electronic equipment and vehicles (for example, to be used for outreach, transportation for furniture banks).





**Ineligible activities include:**

- Construction and renovation of housing units funded through the bilateral Housing Partnership Framework agreement with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and most provinces/territories.
- Investments in social housing, including:
  - Repairs to social housing units;
  - Renovation of social housing units; and
  - Creation of social housing units.

## Resource Coordination and Data Collection

Coordination of resources refers to activities that: (1) enable communities to organize and deliver diverse services in a coordinated manner and/or (2) support the implementation of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) or the alignment of an existing Homeless Management Information System with federal coordinated access requirements.

**Eligible activities include:**

- Mapping of the housing and homeless-serving system to identify existing programs and services and assess current capacity, program funders, and program requirements.
- Developing and implementing coordinated access, including:
  - Developing partnerships with service providers and other community organizations as necessary;
  - Establishing governance structures and developing privacy tools (for example, data management protocols, data sharing agreement, consent form) for coordinated access and HIFIS implementation;
  - Delivering Change Management activities, such as developing and implementing a communication strategy (for example printed or web-based communications, training, including travel to HIFIS/Coordinated Access training);
  - Designing the access model;
  - Selecting an assessment tool and a referral and matching process for the coordinated access system; and
  - Implementing a by-name list where applicable.
- Hiring a project manager for coordinated access, including for HIFIS implementation/maintenance:
  - Consultant fees or staff wages (for example, community coordinator, analyst, and information technology (IT)), and the corresponding benefits and mandatory employment related costs (for example, Canadian Pension Plan, Québec Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, etc.).
- Acquiring hardware/software IT infrastructure, such as HIFIS server and other necessary IT equipment, and related office furniture (for example, computer):
  - Additional support as necessary, for example, legal advice, network security,



development of tailored HIFIS reports.

- Developing partnerships to support a broader systematic approach to addressing homelessness (for example, partnerships with health services, corrections, housing providers).
- Conducting point-in-time counts or surveys of homeless populations (for example, coordinator, assistant coordinator, data analyst, project supplies, printing, Volunteer Training, Meeting Space).
- Acquiring additional support (for example, contracts, consultants) related to project activities.
- Improving services (for example, staff training on activities in support of a broader systematic approach to addressing homelessness). System support projects to strengthen the organizational capacity of networks, coalitions and other sector organized groups to develop best practices in terms of service delivery and more responsive, better-integrated services and partnerships.
- Projects that facilitate the coordination of housing and homelessness services, the development of system-wide strategic responses, and foster creative new approaches to addressing issues faced by people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.
- Informing the public and soliciting feedback on activities intended to reduce and prevent homelessness.

**Ineligible activities include:**

- Software and/or hardware purchase and/or development for the collection and management of homelessness data that constitutes a redundant use of funds and duplicates activities already offered through HIFIS; and
- Administrative costs incurred by the Recipient in the delivery and management of contribution funds under Reaching Home to a third party.

The Recipient may also undertake data collection activities, which may be unrelated to the design and development of coordinated access and a Homelessness Management Information System that enhance understanding of local homelessness issues and help support decision-making and longer-term planning.

**Eligible data collection activities include:**

- Collection of data to demonstrate accountability, support decision-making and develop an understanding of the homelessness situation
- Activities intended to build partnerships for data collection and analysis
- Gathering, sharing and disseminating information with other interest parties
- Technical support for data collection, analysis and management
- Purchase of equipment to collect and compile data

**Ineligible data collection activities include:**

- Local research other than the data collection activities described under "eligible activities; and
- Information gathered or refocused primarily for the purpose of advocacy, public education or awareness.

