



Placemaking For Inclusion

A Guide To Tenant-Based Initiatives



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Community Housing
Transformation Centre
Centre de transformation
du logement communautaire

.

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Placemaking For Inclusion: A Guide To Tenant-Based Initiatives

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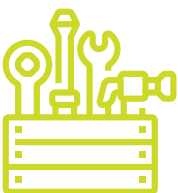
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Land Acknowledgement:

RDN's physical office and this project is located on the Traditional Territories of Treaty 6 and is home to many Métis and Inuit Peoples. As a national organization, we acknowledge that RDN staff and the communities we support live, gather, and organize across Turtle Island. We also recognize that this land acknowledgement is just that, an acknowledgement; it is but one step in our journey. We commit to working to uphold the conditions of the treaties that govern this land.

Inuit, Métis, and First Nations Peoples are experiencing homelessness at disproportionately high rates compared to non-Indigenous people in Canada. We also recognize the ways in which our presence on this land continues to uphold colonialism and reproduces dispossession and violence for Indigenous people, further perpetuating experiences of Indigenous homelessness.

In an ongoing effort to support Indigenous communities in addressing issues of housing, homelessness, and service needs, we are committed to working to decolonize affordable housing research and advocate to funders for Indigenous self-determination in the housing and social sectors. We share this acknowledgement to reaffirm our responsibility and commitment to reconciliation.

It is our sincere hope that the findings provided in this document will serve to uplift, empower and foster greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples living within or trying to access affordable housing across Alberta.

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Lastly, we would like to thank the Government of Canada's *New Horizons For Seniors Program*, who graciously funded the community events and mural mosaic that is now proudly on display at the Saint-Joachim residence.



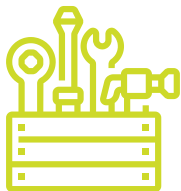
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STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY



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Background & Context

The "Placemaking for Inclusion Project" which is funded in part by the Community Housing Transformation Centres', Community-Base Tenant Initiative, began in July 2022 and concluded in December 2023.

The project's central focus was to confront and address the prevalent stigmatization of affordable housing and its tenants. It begins with a deep exploration into the root causes and manifestations of this stigma, recognizing that affordable housing communities often face negative stereotypes and misperceptions.

The project's other research focus revolved around tenant-based initiatives aimed at dispelling these misconceptions. The objective is to empower and involve the individuals and families residing in affordable housing communities to take an active role in transforming the narrative surrounding their homes.

This effort included developing strategies, programs, and resources that encourage social inclusion within these communities. By actively involving the tenants in the process and promoting their voices and perspectives, the project seeks to redefine what social inclusion means in the context of affordable housing, and promote it through tenant-inspired initiatives.

Project Goals

This project could not have been possible without the collaboration between the Rural Development Network's Sustainable Housing Initiative and La Société Des Manoirs Saint-Joachim, an affordable seniors residence in Edmonton, AB.

Seniors, particularly those in affordable housing, often face challenges related to social isolation and a lack of opportunities for active participation. Recognizing this, the Sustainable Housing Initiative and La Société Des Manoirs partnered together to address these issues directly. Their primary goal was to **empower senior tenants** to actively participate in developing an initiative tailored to their community's needs, **fostering a sense of togetherness and reducing social isolation**

By placing the tenants at the forefront of the Placemaking for Inclusion project, this initiative not only provided a platform for them to voice their ideas and desires but also enabled them to actively participate in its implementation. This approach not only amplified tenant's voices, but also helped create a more inclusive and vibrant environment within La Société Des Manoirs, serving as an exemplary model for how affordable housing communities can harness the strengths and aspirations of their tenants to **build a stronger sense of community and social connection.**



June 16, 2023 – Tenants from La Société Des Manoirs Saint-Joachim gather for food and festivities during their community mural-painting event.

Section 1

Addressing the Stigmatization of Affordable Housing

Despite being an essential component of the housing continuum, affordable housing often bears an unfair burden of negative stereotypes and misconceptions. To create equitable, inclusive, and thriving communities, it is essential to recognize and understand these stigmas, in order to effectively identify strategies and solutions for overcoming them.

Affordable housing provides a stable foundation for individuals and families from diverse backgrounds and income levels. However, tenants of affordable housing often face biases that extend beyond their choice of residence, impacting their overall well-being and access to opportunities.

The stigmatization of affordable housing can manifest in various forms, from the assumption that affordable housing is synonymous with substandard living conditions, to unfounded judgments about the individuals who call it home. These preconceived notions can result in social isolation, limited economic mobility, and even the perpetuation of cycles of poverty.

To break down these barriers and promote a more equitable society, we must delve into the roots of this stigmatization, confront its consequences, and develop strategies and solutions to challenge the stereotypes that burden affordable housing and its tenants.

Did You Know?

A recent study by Canadian Housing Renewal Association, Housing Partnership Canada, and their sector partners commissioned Deloitte to produce a study on the impact of community housing on Canada's economic productivity.

The study found that In Canada, increasing the proportion of affordable housing to 7% would increase economic productivity from 5.7% to 9.3% and increase GDP growth to \$136 billion from \$67 billion per year.

Resource: [*The Impact of Community Housing on Productivity*](#). Deloitte

1.1 Unpacking & Understanding Stigmas

Affordable housing is often unfairly stigmatized due to a complex array of **historical, socioeconomic, and perceptual factors**, and can often be rooted in **systemic racism**. These stigmas are perpetuated by historical precedents, stereotypes linking affordable housing with poverty and crime, and opposition from those who fear change in their neighbourhoods. To challenge these stigmas effectively, it is important to work towards reshaping public perceptions of affordable housing and its residents. As such, this section explores the following:

- **Understanding the Impacts of Historical Precedents**
- **Socioeconomic Stereotypes of Affordable Housing Tenants**
- **NIMBYism & Community Opposition to Affordable Housing**



The Housing Continuum - [Obtained From CMHC](#)

Did You Know?

In Canada, housing is considered “affordable” if it costs less than 30% of a household’s before-tax income. Many people think the term “affordable housing” refers only to rental housing that is subsidized by the government.

In reality, it’s a very broad term that can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors. It also includes all forms of housing tenure: rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing (CMHC, [About Affordable Housing in Canada](#)).

Resource: [About Affordable Housing In Canada](#). CMHC

1.1.1 Understanding Historical Precedents

Historical precedents have played a significant role in the stigmatization of affordable housing. Canada has a complex history of urban development, social policy, and housing practices, which has influenced the way affordable housing is perceived. Here are some **key historical factors** that have impacted the stigmatization of affordable housing in Canada:

Early Social Housing Programs

In the early to mid-20th century, Canada introduced social housing programs to address housing shortages and improve living conditions, particularly for low-income individuals. These early programs were often criticized for **creating segregated communities**, which contributed to the stigmatization of social housing. Low-quality construction and concentrated poverty in some of these developments further perpetuated negative perceptions.

Urban Renewal Projects

Urban renewal initiatives in the mid-20th century often involved the demolition of older housing stock and the construction of large public housing complexes. These projects led to the **displacement of existing communities** and the perception that they were detrimental to the social fabric of neighborhoods.

Discriminatory Practices

Like many other countries, Canada has a history of discriminatory housing practices, such as **racial segregation and discriminatory lending**, which affected the accessibility of housing for marginalized groups. While these practices are less overt today, their historical impact can still be felt and contributes to stigmatization.

Economic Downturns

Economic downturns, like the recession of the early 1980s and the economic challenges faced by many regions, have sometimes led to **concentrated poverty** and **economic disparities** in specific neighborhoods. These conditions have reinforced stereotypes about the residents of affordable housing.

1.1.2 Socioeconomic Stereotypes of Affordable Housing Tenants

In Canada, there are socioeconomic stereotypes associated with affordable housing that link it to **poverty, crime, and social issues**, contributing to the stigmatization of these housing options. These stereotypes can vary in intensity depending on the region and community but are prevalent in many areas across the country. The following takes a closer look at common stereotypes and their impact:

Low-Income Residents

One common stereotype is the assumption that affordable housing is primarily occupied by **low-income individuals and families**. While this is often the case, it doesn't reflect the full range of tenants in affordable housing, as it can include working-class families, seniors on fixed incomes, and individuals facing temporary financial challenges.

Dependency on Social Assistance

Affordable housing is sometimes associated with a **dependency on social assistance programs**, perpetuating the misconception that tenants are not contributing to the workforce. In reality, many tenants work and contribute to the economy but still require affordable housing due to the high cost of living in Canada.

Social Dysfunction

Affordable housing can be stigmatized with the assumption that tenants face more significant **social challenges**, such as substance abuse or mental health issues. This stereotype can lead to discrimination and prejudice against those living in affordable housing.

These stereotypes can have significant consequences. They may result in residents of affordable housing experiencing discrimination in various aspects of their lives, from employment opportunities to social interactions. Moreover, these stereotypes can contribute to a lack of support for affordable housing initiatives, resistance to new developments, and a perpetuation of housing inequality.

1.1.3 NIMBYism & Community Opposition to Affordable Housing

NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard) is a prevalent phenomenon in Canada, and it can often be rooted in stigmatization of affordable housing. When it comes to affordable housing developments, NIMBYism often manifests in **opposition from residents** of other neighborhoods who resist having such developments in their vicinity. This phenomenon is influenced by various factors:

Property Values: One of the most common concerns expressed by NIMBY opponents to affordable housing is the potential **impact on property values**. There's a fear that having affordable housing nearby could lead to a decrease in home values. This concern can be related to the perception that affordable housing may attract lower-income tenants and that their presence might negatively affect the neighbourhood's perceived desirability.

Safety Concerns: NIMBY opponents may express **neighbourhood safety** concerns, often due to misinformation about affordable housing. There's a perception that having affordable housing in the neighborhood might lead to higher crime rates or an increase in social issues. These concerns are rooted in stigmatization and can result in opposition to affordable housing projects.

Fear of Change: In many cases, NIMBYism is driven by a **fear of change**. Residents may be accustomed to their neighbourhood's current character and may resist any alteration to it, including the introduction of affordable housing developments. This resistance can be exacerbated by concerns about potential disruptions to the existing social fabric and lifestyle.

Did You Know?

Affordable housing developments reduce violent crime (robbery & assault) and increase housing valuations for every home on average \$16,000.

Resource: *Affordable Housing Decreases Crime, Increases Property Values*. UCI School of Social Ecology.

Overcoming NIMBYism and the stigmatization of affordable housing in Canada is a critical step in creating more equitable and inclusive communities. Affordable housing is essential for addressing housing inequality and ensuring that all Canadians have access to safe and decent housing options, regardless of their income or socioeconomic status. Efforts to counter NIMBYism should be part of a broader approach to promoting affordable housing and combating housing discrimination.

1.2 How Stigma Impacts Affordable Housing Tenants

As we've explored, stigmatization leads to negative stereotypes about affordable housing tenants, implying that they are of lower socioeconomic status, may have social issues, or are somehow "undesirable" neighbors. Unfortunately, these stereotypes and negative perceptions can have negative impacts on affordable housing tenants. They may experience **social isolation, discrimination**, and feel the **impacts of NIMBYism** in their communities. Such stigmatization can create a hostile environment, exacerbating social inequalities and further marginalizing individuals and families who rely on affordable housing.

1.2.1 Impacts of NIMBYism

Increased Housing Costs: Delayed or halted projects due to NIMBYism can lead to **increased development costs**, making it more difficult for builders/developers to provide affordable housing at a reasonable cost to prospective tenants.

Policy Challenges: NIMBYism can create **political obstacles** to the development of affordable housing, making it harder for policymakers to implement effective housing solutions that address a community's affordable housing needs.

Limited Housing Options: NIMBYism can result in the restriction of affordable housing development in certain areas, which can limit the amount of **housing options** available to tenants. This can force tenants to live in areas with fewer economic opportunities or social amenities.

To address these impacts, it is essential to engage in community education, foster dialogue, and implement policies and initiatives that promote the equitable development of affordable housing. Encouraging communities to embrace affordable housing as a valuable and inclusive asset can help overcome the challenges posed by NIMBYism and create more opportunities for affordable housing tenants.

Relevant Resources:

- [*Democracy in Action?: NIMBY as Impediment to Equitable Affordable Housing Siting.* Scally and Tighe.](#)
- [*The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy.* Centre for Human Settlements](#)

1.2.2 Impacts of Social Isolation

Similar to NIMBYism, **social isolation** can have a profound and detrimental impact on affordable housing tenants. It is a condition where individuals or groups experience limited social interactions and a lack of connection to their communities. Here are some ways in which social isolation affects affordable housing tenants:

Limited Support Systems:

A lack of social connections means that tenants have fewer people to turn to for **support in times of need**. In the absence of supportive relationships, they may find it challenging to address personal or family challenges, making it difficult to overcome difficult circumstances.

Economic Disadvantages:

Social isolation can lead to reduced access to **job opportunities and networking**, limiting **economic mobility**. Tenants may miss out on employment leads, career advice, or other work-related opportunities that often come from social connections.

Sense of Belonging & Community Cohesion:

Social isolation can create a sense of not belonging to the broader community. This lack of belonging can affect one's **self-esteem** and **sense of identity**, leading to feelings of exclusion and marginalization. Furthermore, when social isolation is widespread within affordable housing communities, it can hinder the development of strong, supportive communities. This can have broader societal implications, as community cohesion is essential for social resilience and well-functioning neighborhoods.

“Having an isolated feeling here would be tragic – but having the choice of interaction is absolutely huge and is a contributor to contentment.”

– Senior Tenant from St. Joachim

1.3 Strategies For Overcoming Stigmas & Stereotypes:

Overcoming the stigmatization of affordable housing requires **strategic and collaborative approaches**. This section explores key strategies aimed at reshaping public perceptions, fostering community engagement, and promoting positive narratives surrounding affordable housing. Through **public education and awareness** as well as **community engagement and collaboration**, we aim to address the root causes of stigmatization and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for affordable housing tenants.

These strategies emphasize the importance of informed public discourse, community involvement, and changing public perceptions to help build a foundation that empower those who live in affordable housing.

1.3.1 Public Education & Awareness

Public education and awareness is a comprehensive approach to address and counteract the stigmatization of affordable housing. It involves disseminating accurate information, fostering understanding, and challenging misconceptions to reshape public perceptions. Here are key components of this strategy:

1. Campaigns & Initiatives:

- Develop targeted **public awareness campaigns** that define what affordable housing means, as well as highlight the importance and benefits of affordable housing for communities and neighbourhoods.
- Use a variety of media channels, including social media, to **share positive stories and testimonials** from affordable housing tenants in the community.
- Offer **educational workshops and seminars** on affordable housing, what it is, and why it is important. This could include covering topics such as housing policies, economic benefits, and the importance of diverse communities. Providing accurate information can help dispel misconceptions and increase awareness of the positive aspects of affordable housing.

2. Address Misconceptions and Misinformation:

- Create **informational materials** debunking common myths and misconceptions associated with affordable housing.
- Provide **data and statistics** demonstrating the diversity of affordable housing residents and the positive impact of affordable housing on communities.
- Engage in **open and transparent communication** to clarify misunderstandings and foster a more informed public perception on affordable housing.

Did You Know?

In Canada, housing is considered “affordable” if it costs less than 30% of a household’s before-tax income. Many people think the term “affordable housing” refers only to rental housing that is subsidized by the government.

In reality, it’s a very broad term that can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors. It also includes all forms of housing tenure: rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing (CMHC, About Affordable Housing in Canada).

Resource: *About Affordable Housing In Canada*. CMHC

Relevant Resources:

- *Understanding and Addressing Community Opposition to Affordable Housing Development*. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
- *Public Opinion and Affordable Housing: A Review of the Literature*. J.R. Tighe
- *Approaches to Social Inclusion, Community Resilience, and Homelessness in the Context of Emerging Asocial Societies*. Sibley et. al

1.3.2 Reducing Stigma Through Community Engagement & Collaboration

Community engagement and collaboration focuses on fostering meaningful connections between affordable housing tenants and the broader community. By actively involving tenants, collaborating with various stakeholders, and facilitating open dialogues, this approach seeks to bridge gaps in understanding and dispel misconceptions.

This can be accomplished through **community workshops, tenant-led initiatives, and participation in decision-making processes** – which allow for a more inclusive and informed conversation about the importance of affordable housing in creating vibrant and diverse neighborhoods.

1. Establish Regular Community Forums on Affordable Housing

- Organize regular **community forums** where residents can openly discuss their concerns, ask questions, and share their perspectives on affordable housing.
- Encourage participation from a variety of community members as well as affordable housing advocates within the community to ensure that a **diverse array of perspectives are heard**.
- **Share information** about criteria for eligibility, the economic benefits, and the positive impact of affordable housing projects on neighborhood diversity and stability.

Relevant Resources:

- [Community Acceptance of Non-Market Housing](#). BC Housing Research Centre.
- [Community Acceptance of Affordable Housing](#). National Association of Realtors
- [Strategies For Responding to Community Opposition For Affordable Housing Providers](#). Civida

2. Involve Affordable Housing Tenants in Engagement Processes:

- Encourage affordable housing tenants to **share their stories and experiences** with the broader community, through community forums, open houses or other engagement platforms.
- **Showcase success stories** of individuals and families who have thrived in affordable housing through various media channels and forums.
- **Facilitate tenant-based initiatives** that contribute to the betterment of the community, showcasing the positive impact of affordable housing tenants.

3. Collaborate with Local Stakeholders:

- Engage with local stakeholders to **help create advocates** within the community who can champion the benefits of affordable housing. Their support can influence public opinion, generating positive narratives and dispelling myths or misconceptions surrounding affordable housing.
- Collaborate with local businesses, schools, and community organizations to **build partnerships** that support affordable housing initiatives.
- Collaboration with **local government officials** ensures alignment with existing policies and regulations regarding affordable housing. This can help streamline the approval process for affordable housing projects and reduce bureaucratic barriers.

Relevant Resources:

- [*Public Engagement on Affordable Housing in Edmonton*](#). Edmonton Social Planning Council.
- [*Understanding Social Inclusion and NIMBYism in Providing Affordable Housing*](#). Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- [*NIMBY: When Affordable Housing Development Meets Community Opposition*](#). Housing Strategies Inc.

Section 2

Tenant-Based Initiatives in Affordable Housing

Tenant-based initiatives refer to programs or projects that focus on improving the living conditions and overall well-being of tenants in rental housing. These initiatives are designed to empower and benefit the tenants themselves, addressing their specific needs and concerns within their residence or community.

But what makes an initiative **“tenant-based”**? Typically, these initiatives begin when a facilitator brings together a group of tenants to discuss potential projects and, hopefully by group consensus, initiate **a project that serves their community**.

Such projects or programs can vary in scale, duration and overall purpose. For example, tenant-based initiatives can involve organizing tenants for collective advocacy, **empowering tenants** to negotiate with landlords and address shared concerns. Other examples take the form of **community-building initiatives**, which can be achieved through events, social activities, and creating shared spaces. These initiatives **create a sense of belonging and mutual support** amongst tenants and their community.

This section explores the power of tenant-based initiatives and how to best empower tenants to take action within their own communities. Additionally, it discusses the benefits and critical importance of **tenant decision-making**, and encourages affordable housing residences to utilize **social groups and leaders** in their community to help initiate community projects or programs. Furthermore, it also emphasizes the critical need for building **stronger social networks** in the surrounding community, so that tenant-based initiatives can become collaborative processes that are strengthened through shared resources, knowledge and community support.

2.1 Empowering Tenants in Affordable Housing

Empowering tenants lies at the heart of successful and impactful tenant-based initiatives. By enabling active **tenant decision-making**, fostering the involvement of **social groups** and **tenant leaders**, and building robust **social networks** within communities, tenants are given the agency and resources needed to succeed with local projects or programs.

This empowerment not only ensures that initiatives align with the specific needs of tenants but also creates a collaborative framework where shared resources, ideas, and support amplify the overall effectiveness of community-driven projects.



October 13, 2023 – Senior tenants from the St. Joachim Residence in Edmonton, AB gather with community members to celebrate the unveiling of the community mural they painted together. *Photo courtesy of Julianne Damer.*

2.1.1 Enabling Tenant-Based Decision-Making

Tenant-based decision-making gives tenants the authority and responsibility to participate in making decisions that affect their living environment. This approach recognizes that including the people who directly experience the outcomes of their decisions in the decision-making process allows them to feel empowered and take responsibility in their communities. **Effective tenant participation** is essential to creating sustainable and safe communities.

Benefits of Tenant Participation

- Gaining insights and input from tenants to improve housing management and maintenance.
- Empowers tenants to feel a sense of agency in their residence
- Reduces social isolation.
- Building community support.
- Creates an inclusive governance of housing.

Barriers to Tenant Participation

- Feeling their participation will have little influence.
- Tenant participation may conflict with landlord culture.
- Difficulty in ensuring a widespread representation of tenants
- Concern that having tenant participation may only be tokenism.

“When people are isolated in their rooms, it makes a dent in the atmosphere of the building [...] We all live in the building at the same time and are all part of the same fabric. If you don’t communicate or have discussions, you don’t learn how to work together.”

St. Joachim Tenant on tenant-participation in the building

2.1.2 Empowering Social Groups & Tenant Leaders in Affordable Housing

For tenant-based initiatives, the ability to utilize existing **social groups, clubs, and community leaders** is a considerable asset. Often, these groups can offer additional capacity and help provide effective coordination and communication with others in the residence. By tapping into the leadership and organizational skills in these groups, tenant-based initiatives can benefit from their collective knowledge and experience.

How Social Groups & Leaders Can Contribute To Initiatives:

- Empowered social groups can be a platform for collective problem-solving, utilizing each member's **unique skillsets** for projects or initiatives.
- Social groups can facilitate the **sharing of resources**, localized **knowledge** and often know how to best **utilize assets** in the community.
- Tenant leaders can **inspire** and motivate fellow tenants to **participate** in community engagement and initiative activities.
- Tenant leaders facilitate **effective communication** and **coordination** among residents, ensuring a cohesive approach to address common issues and goals.

Relevant Resources:

- *[Empowering Communities to Claim the Right to Housing: A Resource For Tenant Leaders.](#)* Canadian Centre For Housing Rights.
- *[Empowering Tenants: Protecting Human Rights. Effective Tenant Participation in the Management of Local Authority Housing.](#)* NUI Galway.
- *[Social Housing & New Forms of Tenant Engagement: Welfare, Governance & Active Citizenship.](#)* Wainright & Marandet, Brunel University London.

2.1.3 Building Strong Social Networks Within The Community

Building stronger social networks in communities with affordable housing is critical for fostering a sense of belonging, support, and resilience. Social networks within your community can be enhanced through community events, community centers, communication platforms (ie. Community Facebook Pages), community gardens, collaboration with local businesses and regular opportunities for community members to provide feedback.

Similar to utilizing social groups and community leaders, tenant-based initiatives can be strengthened through social networks and help make local projects or programs a success.

How Social Networks Strengthen Tenant-Based Initiatives

- Social networks provide a platform for **sharing resources**, whether they are financial, material, or human resources.
- Strong social networks facilitate the **exchange of information** and knowledge. Tenants can share insights, best practices, and lessons learned from similar initiatives, promoting a more informed approach to projects or programs.
- A well-connected community has **greater visibility** both within the residence and the surrounding area. This visibility can attract additional support, resources, and partnerships, amplifying the impact of tenant-based initiatives.

Relevant Resources:

- *[Building Ties: The Social Networks of Affordable Housing Residents](#)*. Elyzabeth Gaumer.
- *[Power of Placemaking: Engagement Summary Report](#)*. Healthy Communities Initiative.

2.2 Empowering Tenants: Case Studies

Case Study 1: Startblok Riekerhaven in Amsterdam

Background: Startblok Riekerhaven is a housing project in Amsterdam, that serves a unique population group; young Dutch Adults and refugees with asylum status. The project was initiated by De Key, a housing corporation. The project reflects a growing interest in citizen participation in urban policy, particularly in the context of fostering community engagement and social cohesion.

Startblok Riekerhaven accommodated 565 young adult tenants aged 18 to 27. To sign a lease, tenants were required to have a low to lower-middle income, aligning with the objective of creating affordable housing options.

The project was built upon two fundamental concepts: **self-organization and self-management**. Self-organization involves the unintentional and unconscious coordination of individuals in the urban development process. Self-management empowers tenants to **actively participate** in the day-to-day management of their housing without transferring ownership from the landlord.

Self-management cultivates a sense of community among the diverse tenant population. The strategy aims to cut costs, increase efficiency, and lower rents to create a more sustainable and affordable housing stock.

The self-management model comprises four core elements: a significant transfer of responsibilities, monetary compensation for tenants assuming organizational roles, hierarchical setup, and the **appointment of tenants to organizational roles**.

Research: The research took place over an 11-month period to understand the impact of self-management on the community. The methodology included participant observation at tenant meetings, complemented by semi-structured interviews and interactive workshops. The research engaged 8 tenants who were in organizational roles and 3 representatives from the housing corporation.

Conclusion: The implementation of self-management has proven beneficial by increasing interactions among tenants, **stimulating social connections**, and creating a more **involved community**. Tenants participating in certain management tasks enhance their control over their immediate environment, creating a sense of empowerment and shared responsibility.

Startblok Riekerhaven is an example of how successful **self-organization and self-management** can create inclusive and empowered communities through **tenant-based decision-making**.



Tenants from Startblok Riekerhaven gather together in the residence's common outdoor area.
Photo Courtesy of World Habitat

Case Study 2: Toronto Community Housing Authority Tenant Engagement System and Tenant Action Fund

Background: Toronto Community Housing (TCH), houses over 164,000 tenants and hosts a large number of new immigrants and refugees in its residences. In 2019, TCH created the Tenant Engagement System to provide engagement options that **encourage and empower** more tenants to be involved in their community. The goal of the system is to be inclusive, accessible, transparent and ultimately increase **tenant participation in local decision-making**.

A key feature of the the new Tenant Engagement System is to ensure that tenants receive the resources they need for community initiatives through **Tenant Action Funds**. These funds can be used towards community projects or initiatives that respond to **tenant-identified priorities** in the community.

In September 2023, a **tenant leader and representative** in TCH's Dan Leckie Community was able to utilize the Tenant Action Fund to host a community barbecue event. The event was designed to be appealing to everyone in the community, consisting of delicious food, live music and even face-painting opportunities for children.

Hosted at the residence's outdoor courtyard, the community gathering area provided a **safe, inclusive and welcoming** space for tenants to interact with one another and enjoy the event. During the event, tenants engaged in conversations about additional initiatives that could be held in the community, such as wellness or exercise initiatives.

"Here, we have one shared goal. We all appreciate where we live. We all have something affordable. We all want to make sure the building is treated with respect; that we treat each other with respect. I think people do feel connected. It's a very vibrant community with a lot of positive energy"

-Dan Leckie Community Member



September 2023 - Dan Leckie Community Members enjoying the barbecue event. [Photo courtesy of Simon Son.](#)

Research: In 2018, the TCH conducted community consultations in which over 3,000 tenants participated in building and townhouse meetings to identify local priorities. An additional 10,000 tenants participated in TCH’s online Dot-mocracy process to identify **community priorities**.

Overall, tenants that participated in the consultation process identified that that they hoped the Tenant Engagement System would result in increasing **tenant participation in local decision-making**, as well as **providing capacity** for tenants to engage in a meaningful and accessible way.

Conclusions: Following the consultation process, TCH established Interim Funding Tables to help distribute Tenant Action Funds to tenants or tenant groups, who may want to initiate a project or event that responds to their community’s needs.

This organizational structure effectively **empowers and enables tenants** to access the resources they require, while allowing **tenant leaders** to initiate their own projects or events. In the case of the Dan Leckie Community barbecue, having a tenant representative apply for funding and organizing the event was a huge asset to their community. It ultimately encouraged tenants to participate and help out with the event, providing **a sense of ownership and inclusion** in the community.



September 2023 –Community members lining up at the Dan Leckie Community barbecue event. Photo courtesy of Simon Son.

Section 3

La Société Des Manoirs – Saint Joachim: A Case Study On Placemaking For Inclusion

Located in the heart of Edmonton, Alberta, La Société des Manoirs – Saint Joachim (LSM) is an affordable seniors residence that has recently demonstrated the **power of tenant-based decision-making** within affordable housing communities. This section delves into the inspiring narrative of how tenants utilized their stories, experiences and wisdom to help bring their community together. Through creativity, collaboration, and a shared commitment to fostering a sense of belonging, tenants helped initiate two community events at the residence in June and October of 2023.

These events not only brought the community together but also resulted in the creation of a **vibrant mural mosaic** that is now on display at the residence. This symbolic mural, reflective of inclusion, unity, and the rich Francophone history of the neighborhood, demonstrates an affordable housing residence’s potential when tenants are empowered to lead community initiatives.



June 16, 2023 – Tenants and community members participate in painting mural tiles at the St. Joachim residence.

“Community for me represents something like a village. A village where you have many streets, inhabited by different people, from various origins.”

– St. Joachim Social Club Member on the meaning of community.

3.1 Mural-Making For Inclusion:

Background: La Société des Manoirs Saint-Joachim (LSM), situated in Edmonton's Oliver neighbourhood, serves as a vibrant home to approximately 150 senior tenants. Characterized by its rich mosaic of cultural diversity, this affordable seniors residence stands out its significant Francophone population and its ties to the Francophone history of the neighbourhood.

On **June 16, 2023**, senior tenants from LSM helped organize and lead a **community mural-painting event at the Saint-Joachim residence**. This event allowed tenant participants, local community members and students from the neighbouring elementary school to come together to paint individual ceramic tiles, which were later assembled and arranged by a local artist to create a mural mosaic. In addition to painting, tenants were able to enjoy food and drinks provided by local food trucks as well as live music performed by a local Francophone band.

Following the assembly of the mural, a formal mural-unveiling event was held on **October 13, 2023**. This subsequent event allowed senior tenants at the residence to once again celebrate the mural they had created together,



What is A Tile Mural Mosaic?

Ceramic tile murals are artistic ornaments used to enhance a space. Art or decoration can be applied to the surface of ceramic tiles, or colored tiles can be used to form a mosaic.

Each tile on this mural was personally painted by senior tenants at St. Joachim and then arranged by local mural artist Lewis Lavoie

Initial Research - Phase 1: In December 2022, the Rural Development Network, with the assistance of three students from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's (NAIT) Bachelor of Technology Capstone Program, sat down with several Saint-Joachim tenants to discuss **what inclusion means to them**, and what that looks like in their community. These conversations took place in the form of semi-structured interviews and focus groups, and were held in the common social area of the residence building.

Findings: A common theme that emerged from these interviews was the importance of **hosting social events as a means of fostering inclusion** in their community. According to several interviewees, COVID-19 had severely impacted the residence's ability to organize events, and that tenant participation had been gradually decreasing since the pandemic. In the interviewee's perspectives, it was critically important to host social events that prioritized the **safety and comfortability of tenants**, while ensuring there were activities that everyone could participate in.

"We are not just talking about inclusion, but making that inclusion have a benefit while providing a service. There is currently not enough support, services, and what not to contribute to community well-being. People need to feel they are part of the answer and not part of the problem. The community needs to blend and inclusion has become the password but so many people do not understand what it means.

Who Does Inclusion Apply To?

Inclusion applies to people in the pride community, people with special needs, applies to parents that are struggling, it applies to refugees and it applies to the whole general population of being considerate to your friends, neighbours, family and your COMMUNITY and working together as a team."

- St. Joachim Tenant on Inclusion



Tenants writing down what community and inclusion mean to them. Photos courtesy of Julianne Damer



Initial Research – Phase 2: Following the completion of the Phase 1 interviews, the Saint-Joachim residence received funding from the **Government of Canada’s New Horizons For Seniors Program** to organize and host a senior-led community mural-painting event that would promote the inclusion and participation of seniors.

In **March 2023**, RDN and NAIT conducted another focus group session with Saint-Joachim’s social committee, to help plan and coordinate the mural-painting event. The **focus group session** was essential for successful event planning, as the residences’ social committee brought extensive experience, ideas and recommendations to the table.

Following the focus group session, the social committee suggested conducting a **residence survey** that would allow senior tenants to provide input and feedback on how to coordinate the mural event.

Several important topics were covered within the focus group session and the subsequent residence survey:

- How the mural could be designed to reflect what **inclusion means to the community**.
- What other activities could be featured at the event to **encourage people to participate**.
- What other considerations need to be made to **accommodate the diverse needs** of the senior tenants at St. Joachim.

“There were people there who don’t normally show up to different functions. Everybody was doing something somewhere and were happy to participate and help others (for example getting food for those with mobility or accessibility issues).”

– St. Joachim Tenant on the Community Mural-Painting Event

Findings: Findings from the focus group and residence survey indicated there was a strong desire from tenants on to incorporate natural imagery and multiculturalism into the mural, to represent the **diverse ethnic backgrounds** of Saint-Joachim tenants.

Additionally, respondents indicated what food and beverages would be most appreciated at the events, along with mentioning that live Francophone music would attract more tenants to the event.

Lastly, respondents noted that the events should allow for ample seating space and provide **greater accessibility** for tenants with mobility issues, to ensure that all tenants could enjoy the event's activities.

“The atmosphere was quite welcoming for everyone. One person said they had been here for 20 years and this was the best event they had seen. The busyness of the room encouraged cliques to break up and this increased mingling. Impressive as this has been difficult to do in the past.

*– St. Joachim Social Club Member
on the Community Mural-Painting
Event*



Tenants applaud at the mural-unveiling ceremony. Photo courtesy of Julianne Damer

Conclusions: The success of both the mural-painting and unveiling events points towards the importance of **meaningful community engagement, enabling tenant decision-making and utilizing social groups** in affordable housing communities.

By conducting semi-structured interviews, focus groups and distributing surveys to tenants, **community engagement** allowed tenants to amplify their voices throughout the event-planning process. At Saint-Joachim, this effectively allowed tenants to be at the forefront of decision-making, resulting in meaningful events that were informed by tenants who call St. Joachim their home.

Lastly, the events were significantly supported by the **strong social networks** within St. Joachim’s community. Students from the neighbouring school, along with local elected officials and other local business members attended the events to show their support for Saint-Joachim and its senior tenants.

“ It really brought the community together. Overall it was a great success. We also really enjoyed the painting, it was a great opportunity for those who never painted before.”

- St. Joachim Tenant on the Mural-Painting Event



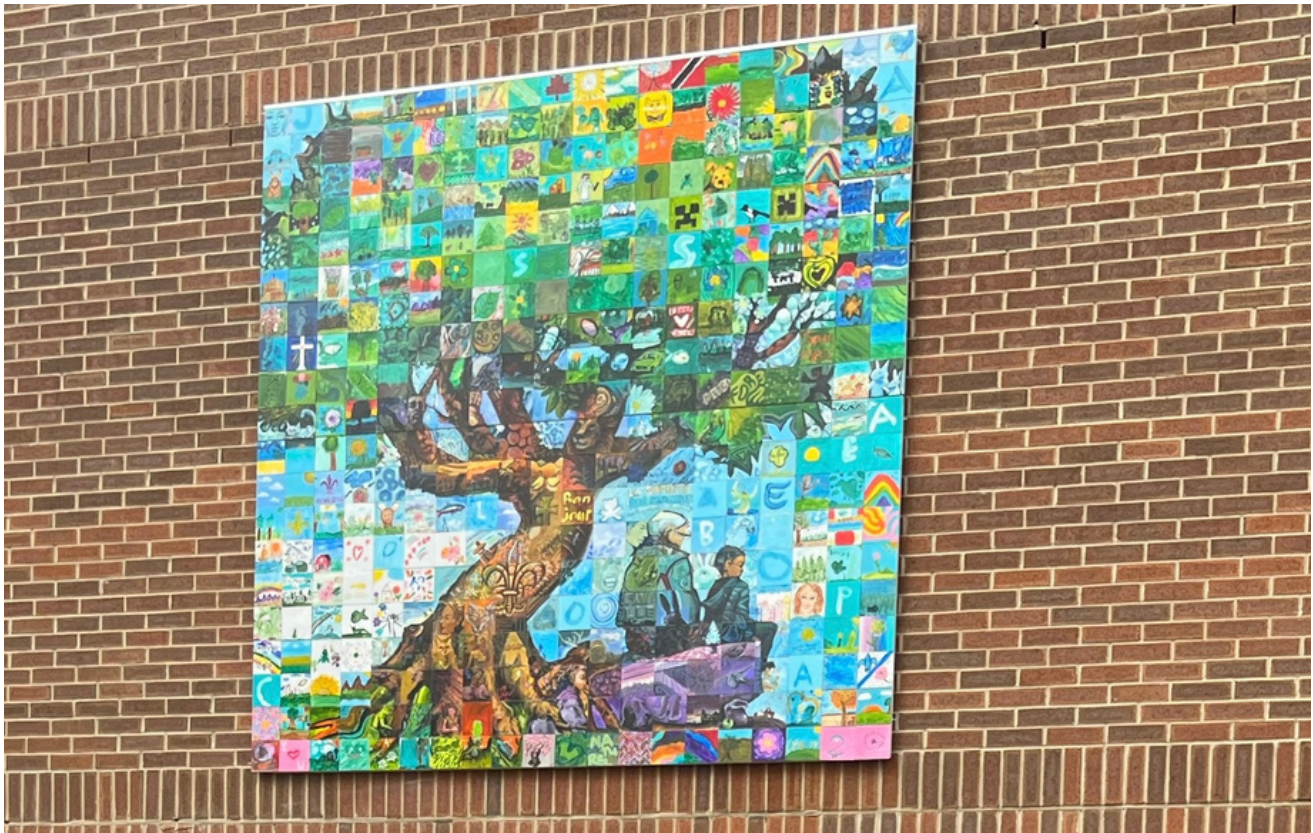
October 13, 2023 - The Honourable Randy Boissonnault (left), Lorraine Kuffner (middle) and mural artist, Lewis Lavoie (right) point to the tile Lorraine had painted. Photo courtesy of Julianne Damer



October 13, 2023 - Senior tenants embracing each other. Photo courtesy of Julianne Damer.

“We brainstormed and some said nature and multiculturalism because we are a multicultural building, with people from many different countries and ethnicities here. So we wanted something to represent that, and the mural will make us a landmark in the community as there is a lot of foot-traffic in the community.”

- St Joachim Tenant on the Community Mural



October 13, 2023 - The community mural mosaic, assembled by local mural artist Lewis Lavoie, is installed on the east wall of the St. Joachim residence. *Photo courtesy of Julianne Damer.*

"I really like that the tree is not straight, because at our age, sixty plus, we have lived. Everyone has a story and it's quite rare that we go straight down one path. And the trunk of the tree represents that."

- St. Joachim tenant on the symbolism of the mural



October 13, 2023 - Tenants are invited to write down what community and inclusion means to them. *Photo courtesy of Julianne Damer.*

Section 4

Exploring Grants & Funding Opportunities For Community Initiatives

The success of tenant-based initiatives such as the Don Leckie Community barbecue event or the Saint-Joachim mural-painting events could not have been accomplished without significant financial support from various sources of grant funding.

Whether funding is available locally through streams such as Toronto Community Housing's *Tenant Action Fund*, or nationally, such as the Government of Canada's *New Horizons For Seniors Program*, there are numerous funding sources available that can **empower affordable housing tenants to undertake similar initiatives of their own**. As such, this section is intended to equip affordable housing providers, tenant leaders or social committees and community groups in navigating what can often be lengthy funding application processes and procedures, to provide an an initial starting point in applying for initiative funding.

For additional grant and funding information, please refer to **Appendix A** attached to this report, for an overview of current and ongoing funding opportunities for tenant-based initiatives.

Relevant Resources:

- [*Introduction to Grant-Writing*. Purdue University](#)
- [*Planning and Writing a Grant Proposal: The Basics*. The Writing Centre. University of Wisconsin.](#)
- [*Writing A Grant Proposal*. Government of Alberta](#)
- [*The Nonprofit Grant Writing Guide: How to Apply for Funding*. Snowball Fundraising](#)

4.1 Guidance on Navigating the Application Process

Success in receiving grants and gaining funding, is dependent on convincing the funding organization that your initiative is critical for addressing an urgent need in the community you are working with. In order to do this, a few strategies and good practices can be helpful in the process, including doing your research – knowing the need, knowing your project and organization, and knowing the funder **priorities, requirements, and guidelines** – and being able to write effectively – clearly communicating your information and arguments in ways the funder will understand and can get behind.

4.1.1 Initial Research For Funding Applications:

In order to streamline the process and increase the chances of success, generally it is recommended to start the application process by gathering as much information as possible about all aspects and parties that will be involved in the application and subsequent funding and project delivery processes.

Step 1: Knowing Your Project and Organization

An important initial step is to develop a clear picture of what you are seeking funding for. If you have a specific project in mind, work out as many of the details as you can. Identify the need it will address, the anticipated benefits it will bring about, the activities it will involve, the time frame it will realistically take place over, the resources it will require and where you expect these resources to come from. In addition to allowing you to search for the most relevant and closely aligned funding opportunities, having this information collected and organized in advance will make the later steps of actually developing the application documents a simpler matter of tweaking, tailoring, and formatting as opposed to starting from ground zero.

Initial information gathering should also involve an introspective look at your organization. In addition to the details of the specific project, most funders will also want to know about your organization in general – who are you and what do you do? In regards to your organization, you should know your mission, values, goals, and purpose, be familiar with the work your organization has previously or is currently doing in the field, and the resources and assets you can bring to the table.

Step 2: Finding and Prioritizing Relevant Opportunities & Determining Eligibility

Once you have an idea of what you are looking for funding for, you can begin to look for opportunities to acquire that funding. There are many different places, groups and organizations that can be looked to for funding. Consider programs and support from municipal, federal, and provincial governments, family and private foundations or donors, community foundations, service clubs, and corporate or business grants, donations and funding.

It is much easier to convince funders to provide you with support if the project you are proposing already falls within their area of interest or priorities. Putting in time to do a little bit of research on the funder and funding program can save significant time and effort later. In most cases, one can find information about a funder's main interests and priorities, what they are looking to provide funds for, eligibility requirements for both the project activities/expenses and the applicant organization/individual, formatting/documentation directions, and other important funding or application requirements through a funder's website or posted application guidelines. Many funders will also hold information sessions for their programs or grants, and give contact information for further questions or advice with applications. Being aware of the technicalities and priorities of funders and their programs will allow you to spend valuable time and effort applying for those that you are eligible for, that you realistically have enough time before the deadline to prepare all the necessary parts of the application for, and that most closely align with your project, and thus have the highest chances of being successful.

4.1.2 Writing Funding Applications:

Once the necessary information about your project and organization and the relevant funders and opportunities has been gathered and it has been decided which opportunities to pursue further, applications can begin to be written and put together. The two main aspects to consider when writing applications are the content and how it is structured, and the specificity and clarity of how your information and content is presented.

Step 3: Target Guidelines and Consider Your Audience

While it is likely that you will be submitting multiple applications or proposals based on one project, and much of the information and content can be reused, most funding opportunities and programs have specific requirements that necessitate tailoring individual applications. There are many common components involved in most applications, but the exact components asked for, what order and format the funder would like to see them in, and what specific information the funder is hoping to gain from each component do vary by funder and by program, and so it is important to carefully review all provided instructions and guidelines and follow the funder's directions. Following technical and formatting guidelines demonstrates attention to detail and ability to abide by funder guidelines, and using language in your application similar to that that the funding organization themselves use to talk about their programs and priorities can help create a clear link between your project and their funding goals.

Step 4: Being Specific and Clarifying Details:

The goal of an application or proposal should be to clearly and concisely state your needs, and reflect your planning, research, and vision behind your proposed project or activities. This can be achieved through using specific language when stating your issue and how you will use the funding, stating clear and measurable objectives, and describing specific methods to achieve and measure those objectives. Avoiding using jargon and making a conscious effort to reduce redundancy and use clear, simple language are other recommended strategies for developing strong proposals.

Additional Resources:

- [*Applying For Grants. Community Toolbox.*](#)
- [*The 5 R's of Grant Writing: Tips For Creating Compelling Applications. Charity Village.*](#)

4.1.3 Post-Application

Following the submission of an application, it is important to follow-up with the funding organization, to track the overall progress of the application. The following steps clarify some important details with respect to the post-application process, to ensure you receive important information and feedback connected to your proposal.

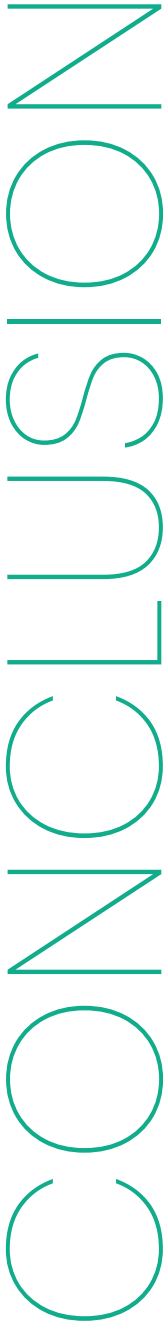
Step 5: Following Up and Obtaining Feedback

While researching, planning, and preparing the application is the bulk of the application process, the work does not always end with submission of the application. It is important to check funder preferences, as some funders specifically discourage reaching out directly or contact through certain avenues, but some funders do give opportunities for following up after submission of an application. Thanking funders for opportunities, regardless of the success of your proposal can help build relationships that can foster future opportunities, and in some cases applicants can also request and receive feedback from granting organizations on their applications, allowing them to learn and develop stronger applications in the future..

Step 6: Agreements & Reporting

In the case of a successful application, agreements and contracts must be carefully reviewed and understood, and often subsequent reporting is necessary to fulfill the terms of funding. Care and attention in these activities is important to develop positive relationships with funders and avoid any conflict or misunderstandings throughout the life of the project.

As an important note for the post-application process, if your initial proposal is unsuccessful - **do not be discouraged!** Often, funding and grant opportunities can be a competitive process and may have numerous applicants for one opportunity. This emphasizes the importance of exploring as many funding opportunities as possible, absorbing learnings from the application process, and to continue applying until you are successful. As such, we encourage readers to refer to **Appendix A**, which contains current and ongoing funding opportunities for community initiatives and projects.



Final Words:

Recognizing and addressing the stigma associated with affordable housing is crucial for fostering inclusive and cohesive communities. **Tenant-based initiatives** play a pivotal role in dispelling misconceptions surrounding affordable housing, providing a platform for community engagement and collaboration.

By promoting understanding and breaking down stereotypes, these initiatives create opportunities for meaningful connections between tenants, fostering a sense of unity and shared responsibility. Embracing affordable housing tenants as valued members of a community contributes to the broader goal of building resilient and supportive neighborhoods where **everyone feels valued and included**. Through such efforts, communities can work together to overcome challenges, strengthen social bonds, and create a more harmonious living environments.

A Word of Encouragement:

To affordable housing providers and tenants eager to embark on their own tenant-based initiatives, remember that you hold the power to shape positive change within your community. Embrace local leaders, tap into the strength of your social networks, and foster collaborative environments that empower tenants to lead the way. By harnessing collective strengths, you can overcome challenges and build a more inclusive and supportive living environment for all.

In your journey, consider referring to **Appendix A**, an ongoing compendium of grants and funding opportunities tailored for tenant-based initiatives. This valuable resource can guide you in securing the support needed to bring your initiatives to life. For those keen on staying updated, **subscribe to our quarterly email updates through the email address provided at the top of Appendix A**, ensuring you don't miss out on the latest opportunities to make a lasting impact in your community.

Appendix A

Funding and Grant Opportunities For Your Initiative

The following list consists of current and ongoing **funding and grant opportunities** that are **available in Alberta** to help assist organizations with local projects and initiatives that empower communities. This list of resources will be updated quarterly with new funding opportunities, **so be sure to email:**

info@ruraldevelopment.ca

Just let us know if you're interested in receiving regular updates on funding opportunities for community initiatives and projects, and we'll keep in touch!

Edmonton & Area Opportunities:

Grant Name: Neighbourhood Connections Grant

Granting Organization: City of Edmonton

Location: Edmonton

Amount: \$500 - \$2,500

Deadlines: yearly intakes, intake dates for 2024 are still being finalized

Eligible Applicants: Registered organizations (i.e. community leagues, condo boards, homeowner associations), registered charities, businesses and Business Improvement Areas, event organizers who partner with a fiscal agent (registered organization)

Description: Funding opportunities to enhance neighbourhood liveability through partnerships. At least 2 program outcomes must be addressed:

- Empower and engage citizens to become community leaders, and to strengthen existing community leadership
 - Enhance community safety
 - Increase community connections and inclusion opportunities
 - Celebrate Indigenous culture
 - Deepen multi-cultural connections
 - Create and promote beautiful and clean spaces
 - Advance arts in the community
 - Animate City of Edmonton parkland
-

Grant Name: Community Gardens Grant

Granting Organization: Sustainable Food Edmonton

Location: Edmonton

Amount: Up to \$5,000 for new garden projects, expansion or renovation projects, up to \$1,000 for pilot projects or emergency needs projects

Deadlines: Yearly (multiple intake periods)

Eligible Applicants: Community garden organizations (not individuals) that are associate members of Sustainable Food Edmonton

Description: Funding to support the costs of goods and services needed to start, expand, or repair a garden site on City or private land

Grant Name: Community Investment Operating Grant

Granting Organization: City of Edmonton

Location: Edmonton

Amount: Eligible operating expenses up to \$500,000

Deadlines: Yearly (awaiting to reopen in 2024)

Eligible Applicants: Non-profit organizations with 75% of participants living in Edmonton

Description: The program provides operating assistance to non-profit organizations working within Edmonton on increasing social inclusion and equitable access to participation. Organizations' primary mandates must fall within either social services or recreation/amateur sport.

Grant Name: Small Grants

Granting Organization: Edmonton Community Foundation

Location: Greater Edmonton Area

Amount: Typically \$10,000 – \$15,000

Deadlines: Yearly (awaiting to reopen in 2024)

Eligible Applicants: Registered charities or qualified donees with the CRA

Description: Support for one-time, stand-alone needs as opposed to contributing a small part towards a larger project.

Grant Name: Community Grants

Granting Organization: Edmonton Community Foundation

Location: Greater Edmonton Area

Amount: \$50,000 for organizations that have not received a Community Grant in the last five years, up to \$80,000 for organizations that have received a Community Grant in the last five years and reported on it

Deadlines: Two-stage application process, with two yearly deadlines for stage one applications. Stage one application periods for 2024 are February 1 - March 1 and August 15 - September 16.

Eligible Applicants: Registered charities or qualified donees with the CRA

Description: Diverse granting program that supports the local community by providing funds to help with a variety of organizational needs that can include, for example, renovations, equipment purchases, program support, and more.

Grant Name: Shape Your Community Grant

Granting Organization: City of Fort Saskatchewan

Location: Fort Saskatchewan

Amount: Up to \$1,500

Deadlines: Open intake until yearly total funding is allocated

Eligible Applicants: Fort Saskatchewan residents, civil society organizations run primarily by volunteers, school groups, classrooms and/or clubs, registered charities and non-profit organizations

Description: Grant supports resident-led initiatives that build social capital, which can be done through small-scale neighbourhood improvement projects such as planting gardens, installing public art, beautifying underutilized or vacant spaces, hosting workshops or events that bring people together, and/or celebrating diverse cultures. Program is divided into two funding streams: Connection Events and Place-Making Projects

Grant Name: Grants to Organizations

Granting Organization: City of Fort Saskatchewan

Location: Fort Saskatchewan

Amount: Unspecified

Deadlines: Offered Yearly.

Eligible Applicants: Community non-profit organizations

Description: Grant program investing in the operations and capacity of community-based organizations to support the delivery of initiatives and to support a vibrant and thriving community. The program seeks to fund initiatives that support one or more of the following priority areas:

- Enhances the quality of life by providing programs, projects, and events that address social issues
 - Creates equitable access to human, social, and economic resources and services for all
 - Supports community collaborations, involving multiple organizations, in addressing broader human or social issues
 - Supports the promotion, protection, and preservation of arts, culture and human or natural heritage
 - Offers opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in arts and heritage
 - Supports a vision of getting and keeping residents active in community sport, recreation and physical activity
 - Improves the environment, protect and preserve natural habitats, and improve open spaces and make nature accessible
 - Furthers the social, economic and environmental well-being of local residents and organization
-

Grant Name: Community Change Grants

Granting Organization: Strathcona County

Location: Strathcona County

Amount: Up to \$2,000

Deadlines: Closed for 2023; Expected to open in 2024

Eligible Applicants: Individual citizens, formal or informal groups (excluding businesses and for-profit organizations)

Description: Grants to support innovative projects and ideas that bring people together for positive social change and enhance community safety and well-being.

Calgary & Area Opportunities:

Grant Name: Building Communities Grant

Granting Organization: Parks Foundation Calgary

Amount: Up to \$30,000

Deadlines: February 1, May 1, October 1

Eligible Applicants: Registered non-profit organizations, educational institutions, societies and groups

Description: Program helps to support a variety of community-led park or playground initiatives with a goal to build community capacity and promote stewardship among children and community residents by supporting the development of valued community spaces.

Grant Name: Grassroots Grants

Granting Organization: Calgary Foundation

Location: Calgary and Surrounding Area

Amount: Up to \$10,000

Deadlines: Dependent on specific program

Eligible Applicants: Dependent on specific program

Description: Grants to help people implement their own small acts of community, right in the communities where they live, by offering small amounts of money for project expenses. Grants are divided into three different programs:

- **Stepping Stones:**

- Grants of up to \$1,000, ongoing intake, applications accepted from registered charities, non-profit societies, and informal grassroots groups (excludes businesses)

- **Neighbour Grants:**

- Grants of up to \$10,000, regular application periods, applications accepted from registered charities and other qualified donees according to CRA

- **Pitch Night – Neighbour Grants LIVE:**

- Grants between \$3,000 – \$10,000, yearly application period opening in January, applications accepted from registered charities and other qualified donees according to CRA

Grant Name: Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grant

Granting Organization: City of Calgary

Location: City of Calgary

Amount: Total program budget allocation is \$150,000. Program is a matching program, applicants must contribute an amount equal to or exceeding the grant amount requested.

Deadlines: Ongoing online intake

Eligible Applicants: Community Associations in good standing with The City of Calgary and/or the Societies Act of Alberta

Description: Program supports community-led projects and initiatives with the objectives to support communities in becoming more socially cohesive with safe, inclusive spaces and programs that respond to residents' needs, help residents feel an increased sense of belonging and contribute meaningfully to their neighbourhood, and/or develop community organizations that are resilient and working towards achieving greater sustainability. Grants can be used for projects involving:

- Beautification and placemaking
- Communication and engagement
- Community education and safety
- Social and recreation programs
- Technology

Grant Name: The Home Program

Granting Organization: City of Calgary

Location: Calgary

Amount: \$25,000 - \$200,000

Deadlines: Re-opens in 2024

Eligible Applicants: Non-Profit Organizations

Deadlines: Re-opens in 2024

Description: Provides funding to non-profit organizations to deliver projects that increase housing stability and successful tenancies for affordable housing residents or people in housing need. Priority areas are:

- Education and skill building
- Financial empowerment
- Community inclusion and integration
- Support for Indigenous People
- Support for Black and Racialized People and equity-seeking communities

Grant Name: Community Grants

Granting Organization: Town of Canmore

Location: Canmore

Amount: Not specified

Deadlines: Re-opens in 2024

Eligible Applicants: Canmore-based not-for-profit societies and community organizations

Description: Funding to support local initiatives and local/regional events that promote a circular economy, a sense of belonging, community affordability, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Grant Name: Municipal Community Wellbeing Grants

Granting Organization: Town of Banff

Location: Banff

Amount: up to \$10,000

Deadlines: Re-opens in 2024

Eligible Applicants: Registered non-profits, charities, societies or community groups that serve Banff

Description: Funding to support projects, programs, events, operating costs, equipment, or start-up funds that benefit Banff residents and enhance their quality of life in accordance with the Town of Banff's vision, goals, and strategic priorities.

Southern Alberta Opportunities:

Grant Name: Henry S. Varley Fund for Rural Life

Granting Organization: Lethbridge + Southwestern Alberta Community Foundation

Location: Region from the U.S. border north to Arrowwood, and from the B.C. border west to Grassy Lake

Amount: Not specified

Deadlines: March 15, October 15

Eligible Applicants: Federally registered charities or qualified donees with a business number

Description: The purpose of the fund is to provide support for a high quality of life throughout rural Southwestern Alberta, through organizations, projects, and initiatives that enhance rural communities. Granting areas include: community connections, environment, lifelong learning, living standards, healthy communities, and cultural life. Does not fund proposals focusing mainly on capital expenses (applications of this nature should be directed to the Community Priorities Grant Program).

Grant Name: Community Priorities Fund

Granting Organization: Lethbridge + Southwestern Alberta Community Foundation

Location: Region from the U.S. border north to Arrowwood, and from the B.C. border west to Grassy Lake

Amount: Up to \$15,000

Deadlines: March 15, October 15

Eligible Applicants: Federally registered charities or qualified donees with a business number

Description: Funding to support the needs of the day and that supports a wide range of projects from communities throughout the region. Grant will cover one-time capacity building, capital, and operating costs, funding for initial phases of a program with demonstrable future funding from other sources, and strengthening the governance of an organization.

Alberta-Wide Opportunities:

Grant Name: Communities ChooseWell Healthy Community Grants

Granting Organization: Alberta Recreation and Parks Association

Location: Alberta

Amount: Up to \$5,000

Deadlines: Yearly intake runs from January to February

Eligible Applicants: Registered not-for-profits or charities, First Nations or Métis Settlements, municipal governments and public schools

Description: Program is designed to support and promote the improvement of healthy eating and active living opportunities in communities.

Grant Name: Capital and Equipment Grants

Granting Organization: United Way Central Alberta

Location: Alberta

Amount: Up to \$500

Deadlines: Open intake, agencies can only receive these funds once per fiscal year

Eligible Applicants:

1. Be either a qualified or non-qualified donee.
2. Provide programs and services which align to one of United Way Central Alberta's priorities.
3. Provide programs and services in the geographic area served by United Way Central Alberta.

Description: Funding to support capital or equipment costs to assist agencies in making the necessary improvements to meet licensing or safety requirements, or to renovate facilities to improve or expand services.

Grant Name: Community Facility Enhancement Program (Small Funding Stream)

Granting Organization: Government of Alberta

Location: Alberta

Amount: up to \$125,000 on a matching basis

Deadlines: Annually January 15, May 15, and September 15

Eligible Applicants: Community non-profit organizations registered under a specific list of Acts, First Nations and Métis Settlements, Foundations established and regulated under the province's Regional Health Authorities Act, Universities, colleges, and institutes defined under Alberta's Post-secondary Learning Act

Description: Program aims to foster healthy, vibrant communities across Canada by providing financial assistance to acquire, build, purchase, repair, renovate, upgrade or expand sports, recreational, cultural or other related public-use community facilities.

Grant Name: Community Facility Enhancement Program - Large Funding Stream

Granting Organization: Government of Alberta

Location: Alberta

Amount: \$125,000 - \$1,000,000 on a matching basis

Deadlines: Annually June 15

Eligible Applicants: Community non-profit organizations registered under a specific list of Acts, First Nations and Métis Settlements, Foundations established and regulated under the province's Regional Health Authorities Act, Universities, colleges, and institutes defined under Alberta's Post-Secondary Learning Act

Description: Program aims to foster healthy, vibrant communities across Canada by providing financial assistance to acquire, build, purchase, repair, renovate, upgrade or expand sports, recreational, cultural or other related public-use community facilities.

Grant Name: Community Initiatives Program - Project-Based Stream

Granting Organization: Government of Alberta

Location: Alberta

Amount: Up to \$75,000 on a matching basis

|

Deadlines: Annually January 15, May 15, and September 15

Eligible Applicants: Community non-profit organizations registered under a specific list of Acts, First Nations and Métis Settlements, Foundations established and regulated under the province's Regional Health Authorities Act, Universities, colleges, and institutes defined under Alberta's Post-Secondary Learning Act

Description: Provides grant support to non-profit organizations for community projects, new programs, one-time initiatives, program expansions, community events, gender equity projects, technology, and portable equipment with outcomes to strengthen leadership and organizational capacity of community organizations, support community driven goals that have a public benefit, and create opportunities for Albertans to engage with and develop their communities.

Grant Name: Built Together

Granting Organization: Alberta Blue Cross

Location: Alberta

Amount: \$50,000

Deadlines: Re-opens in 2024

Eligible Applicants: Community leagues, school councils, municipalities, or other non-profit community groups or organizations

Description: Funds infrastructure projects that foster active living. Some examples include outdoor gyms, cycling paths, construction/replacement of playground, skate parks, outdoor rinks, etc. Projects must be publicly accessible and free of a membership charge. Prioritizes projects reflective of the mandate of promoting active living and wellness at a grassroots community level, with an emphasis on children.

Canada-Wide Opportunities:

Grant Name: TD Friends of the Environment Foundation Grant

Granting Organization: TD

Location: Canada-Wide

Amount: No set minimum/maximum, majority of grants are between \$2,000 - \$8,000

Deadlines: January 15, July 15

Eligible Applicants: Registered charities, educational institutions, municipalities, and Indigenous groups/communities

Description: The grants support a wide range of environmental initiatives, with a primary focus on environmental education and green space programs. Eligible projects include schoolyard greening, park revitalization, community gardens, park programming and citizen science initiatives.

Grant Name: New Horizons For Seniors Program – Community-Based Projects

Granting Organization: Government of Canada

Location: Canada-Wide

Amount: Up to \$25,000

Deadlines: Re-opens in 2024

Eligible Applicants: Non-profit organizations, municipalities, provincial/territorial government/institution/Crown Corporation, Indigenous organizations (band council, tribal council, self-government entity), coalition/network/committee, research organization/institute, educational institution, public health/social services institution, for-profit organization (provided nature and intent of activity is non-commercial and does not generate profit)

Description: Federal grant that supports community-based projects that are designed for seniors by seniors, and that empower seniors in their communities and contribute to improving their health and well-being. Projects must meet at least one of the program objectives:

- Promoting volunteerism among seniors and other generations
 - Engaging seniors in the community through the mentoring of others
 - Expanding awareness of elder abuse, including financial abuse
 - Supporting the social participation and inclusion of seniors
 - Providing capital assistance for new and existing community projects and/or programs for seniors
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Grant Name: Scotts Gro for Good Grant

Granting Organization: Scotts Miracle Gro

Location: Canada

Amount: \$2,500 (with opportunity to compete for one additional \$2,500 grant through a social media contest)

Deadlines: Yearly Intake

Eligible Applicants: Communities, schools, and non-profit civic organizations

Description: Funding to develop sustainable gardens and green spaces that improve communities throughout Canada and help our youth and communities enjoy the benefits of gardening. Funding is awarded based on community impact, youth involvement, and sustainability. Applications need to demonstrate one or more of the following benefits to the community:

- Addressing health and wellness needs
 - Enhancing the environment
 - Engaging with youth
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Grant Name: Community Spaces Funding

Granting Organization: Co-op

Location: Western Canada (BC, AB, SK, MB)

Amount: \$25,000 - \$150,000 in capital funding

Deadlines: Yearly, 2024 application period is February 1 - March 1

Eligible Applicants: Registered charities and non-profit organizations, community service co-operatives

Description: Program established to improve community health and well-being by creating spaces for people to come together, build social connections, and enable community development. Projects can apply for funding in three areas: recreation, environmental conservation, and urban agriculture.



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK

2023/2024