

Investment-Ready Community Initiatives

Investable Opportunity #1 - Community Fund for Accelerated Retrofits

<p>Opportunity</p>	<p>There are an abundance of existing underutilized non-residential properties that can be repurposed into housing for vulnerable Edmontonians. Yet timely investment of risk capital is required to evaluate the technical feasibility and financial viability of a retrofit before property owners will commit to significant shifts in an asset's purpose and business model. This initiative will look to incent and expedite the retrofit of underutilized properties into housing for vulnerable Edmontonians.</p> <p>As the funding agreement is developed, the Task Force recommends that City Administration explore flexibility in the agreement to adapt funding distribution to various affordable housing use cases dependent on demand and feasibility.</p>
<p>Solution</p>	<p>An established foundation will create a fund to support the retrofit of underutilized properties into housing for vulnerable Edmontonians by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Task Force investment and, later, community contributions to offer grants for pre-development costs - Soliciting contributions from the community (ex. funds, land, property) to supplement the Fund, providing tax receipts as an incentive - Enlisting professional & industry associations to provide in-kind contributions to projects funded by the Foundation Fund, providing tax receipts as an incentive, where feasible. In-kind services may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feasibility studies on converting underutilized properties into necessary forms of housing - Architectural, consulting or construction management services for retrofit projects as appropriate
<p>Outcome</p>	<p>Community investment, whether through donations or in-kind contributions, accelerates the assessment and transformation of underutilized commercial properties into sustainable housing for vulnerable Edmontonians.</p>
<p>Catalyst investment <i>Value of agreement</i></p>	<p>Up to \$1.5 million (one time funding)</p>
<p>Lead organization <i>Party to the agreement</i></p>	<p>Edmonton Community Foundation</p>
<p>Length/term of the agreement</p>	<p>Up to two years, or as determined by City Administration</p>

Investable Opportunity #2 - Bridge Between Housing Platform

<p>Opportunity</p>	<p>Social service providers face challenges navigating the administrative requirements of housing providers, such as explaining why a domestic violence survivor lacks a credit history, facilitating rent payments on behalf of tenants, or securing appropriately sized and located housing.</p> <p>Landlords may hesitate to receive payment from social service agencies, lack solutions to support tenants in crisis, and have limited tools to assess the risks associated with tenants from unfamiliar backgrounds or circumstances.</p> <p>Stronger systems and clear protocols between social service organizations and housing providers are needed to streamline the housing process and improve tenant stability.</p>
<p>Solution</p>	<p>The Bridge Between Housing Platform reduces evictions by connecting market/non-market housing providers and social service agencies and reduces friction for housing placements by building trust and systems between housing providers and social service agencies. This program is founded on meaningful consent based data sharing between agencies who address housing security. This work will be done in two parts, or phases as described below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Phase One</u> - Development of partnerships and systems that enable more productive and collaborative relationships between social service and housing providers. This phase includes research, engagement, evaluation, referral processes, service agreements, workflows and a sustainability plan. 2. <u>Phase Two</u> - Development and implementation of a system for shared intake, assessment, and consent-based data sharing between organizations involved in housing security, such as multiple social service agencies and housing providers. This system would improve coordination, streamline services, and enhance support for individuals seeking stable housing. <p>Although a lead organization is accountable for the solution development, this platform will be leveraged by non-profit organizations that support many different populations experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.</p>
<p>Outcome</p>	<p>Collaboration increases through shared assessment/protocols, a secure platform for information sharing and collaborative service agreements, ultimately improving efficiency for residents engaged with social service providers and landlords.</p>

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Catalyst investment <i>Value of agreement</i>	Up to \$1.0 million (one time funding) for the coordinating non-profit organization to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire two employees for one year to provide administrative and promotional support - Engage a social service development team to create the technology solution - Pay for an initial hosting and web service fees
Lead organization <i>Party to the agreement</i>	Islamic Family and Social Services Association
Length/term of the agreement	Up to two years, or as determined by City Administration

Investable Opportunity #3 - Peer Support Services for Vulnerable Tenants

Opportunity	<p>A mental health crisis, without adequate support and affordable housing, can lead to homelessness. Edmonton’s growing mental health needs are driving demand for upstream prevention programs with holistic wrap-around support. Existing housing and homelessness services largely prioritize crisis intervention over prevention, highlighting the need for early intervention strategies to address risk factors before housing loss occurs (Pivotal Research Inc., 2024).</p> <p>The Task Force identified a lack of peer-based programming in Edmonton’s prevention ecosystem, which could reduce reliance on high-intensity services and improve housing stability. While peer support programs have traditionally depended on government funding, their high demand and value to housing providers suggest an opportunity for community involvement in their implementation and expansion.</p>
Solution	<p>Homelessness can be prevented by mobilizing well-trained Peer-Based Housing Support Workers to provide culturally adequate, low-intensity support for individuals with a history of housing instability. Several Edmonton organizations are benefiting or could stand to benefit from an intentional, peer-based housing services program, including housing first programs, housing outreach programs, community housing programs and private market housing.</p> <p>Trained peer supporters with lived experience will offer guidance, social support, and practical assistance to help tenants navigate complex systems, develop essential life skills, and build social connections. For peer-support programs to be effectively scaled in the community, a non profit organization needs to be committed and resourced to hire, train and coordinate peer support workers to deliver this program.</p>

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	Leveraging catalyst funding from the Task Force, this non-profit organization could strengthen and expand their program offerings to housing providers through a financially sustainable, fee-for-service model. This model could itself be couched within a social enterprise model and philanthropic investment could be leveraged towards developing this vision.
Outcome	Early intervention services, available to housing first programs, housing outreach programs, community housing programs and private market housing, reduce houselessness and/or housing loss resulting from mental health challenges
Catalyst investment <i>Value of agreement</i>	Up to \$1.0 million (one time funding) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire, train and deploy peer support workers with lived experience - Complete administrative support towards coordination of participants - Engage housing providers towards validation and piloting of fee-for-service model - Offset any fees to users during the pilot period
Lead organization <i>Party to the agreement</i>	Canadian Mental Health Association - Edmonton Region
Length/term of the agreement	Up to two years, or as determined by City Administration