Housing Access Program (HAP) – Tech Grants: Grant Guidelines

These guidelines provide information on the Tech Grant application process. We encourage all applicants to contact HousingAccessProgram@calgary.ca to have questions answered before applying.

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What is the Tech Grant?

The Tech Grant is a one-time funding opportunity that supports non-profit organizations that own or operate non-market housing units in Calgary to build or enhance their digital presence, improve access to accurate information, and prepare for future integration with the city-facilitated centralized housing portal (refer below for more information on the centralized portal).

The **Tech Grant** is part of the City's broader commitment under Home is Here: The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy 2024-2030 to improve system navigation and increase access to affordable housing through the ''Housing Access Program''. This one-time fund supports technology-related improvements.

What does the Tech Grant cover?

This Tech grant supports the **awareness** and **research phases** of the housing journey, helping Calgarians understand their options and access reliable, easy-to-navigate information about affordable housing. It supports the following technology improvements:

- **Website Development & Enhancement:** Build or upgrade websites to improve accessibility, functionality, and mobile responsiveness.

- **Content Management & Information Accuracy:** Ensure listings, eligibility requirements, and application processes are up-to-date, and connect with other relevant resources like the City's Affordable Housing Information Resource for enhanced visibility.

- **Digital Marketing & SEO Support:** Increase online visibility through improved search engine optimization and social media presence.

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

Organizations must meet **all of the following criteria:**

1. Non-Market Housing Provider: .
   - Develop, own, and/or operate non-market housing (Transitional, Supportive, Community, and/or Affordable housing) rented below the market average for Calgarians in housing needs within the Calgary city limits. '*'Non-market housing" means property that is used to provide rental housing for income groups not served by the private market where: i. the provider has an income verification process in place to qualify its tenants for housing services, and ii. the rent is no more than 80 percent of the average market rent listed in the most recent Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) rental market report for the City for properties that have a similar number of bedrooms*
      i. **Transitional Housing:** Housing that is intended to offer a supportive living environment 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 limits on how long an individual or family can stay. Stays are typically between three months and three years.

ii. **Supportive Housing:** Supportive housing is housing that provides a physical environment that is specifically designed to be safe, secure, enabling, and home-like, with support services such as social services, provision of meals, housekeeping, and social and recreational activities, to maximize residents' independence, privacy, and dignity.

iii. **Community Housing:** The term "community housing" is an umbrella term that typically refers to either housing that is owned and operated by non-profit housing societies and housing co-operatives, or housing owned by provincial, territorial or municipal governments.

iv. **Affordable Housing**: Housing is considered "affordable" if it costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income.

2. Non-Profit Organization:
   - Registered under the *Societies' Act of Alberta* or the *Companies' Act of Alberta*.

   OR

   - Indigenous Organizations: Indigenous non-profit housing provider or signatories of Treaty 7, the Métis Nation of Alberta (Calgary offices), and/or an Indigenous urban social or housing organization planning affordable housing in Calgary.

3. Has costs that qualify under the eligible expense list (see full list below)

4. Holds $2,000,000 in liability insurance:

5. Has limited or no web presence: such as no website, an outdated or inactive website, minimal information about their services online, poor mobile accessibility, or a low search engine ranking, making it difficult for the public to find or engage with them digitally.

Limited Web Presence Self-Assessment Checklist (If you check one or more of these, you may qualify)

• We do not have a website
• Our website is outdated (e.g., old information, broken links, unclear eligibility or application info).
• Our website is not mobile-friendly.
• Our organization is hard to find through Google or other online searches.
• We do not have clear application forms or documents available online.
• We rely on phone calls, emails, or in-person visits for most application steps.
• We have minimal or no presence on social media platforms.

> - Our website does not connect to broader housing resources (like the City's and Provincial resources).

Funding is not guaranteed, and not all applications will be accepted or receive the full grant amount.

What are eligible expenses?

Funding can be used for costs directly related to improving your online presence and housing information delivery. All expenses must align with the approved project plan and budget and must be incurred within the timeframe of the project.

Covered expenses may include:
- Website domain and hosting services
- Contracting a web designer or developer
- Adding or Upgrading translation tools and accessibility features
- SEO or digital marketing services ((e.g., keyword research, on-page SEO, social media marketing, paid digital ads, email campaigns, local SEO, website performance improvements, digital analytics)
- Integrating tools to connect with external portals that provide additional information on non-market housing.
- Salaries directly related to this project implementation ((e.g., software developer, IT support, UX designer, data specialist, project coordinator)
- Subscriptions or software to support website functionality
- Training staff on new systems or tools that will improve the organization's online presence and housing information delivery
- Content creation (e.g., photos, videos, graphics for the website)
- Accessibility testing or user experience evaluation

What are expenses that are **NOT** eligible?

Funding cannot be used for the following:
- General operating or administrative wages unrelated to the technology project
- Capital upgrades, building maintenance, or asset improvements
- Activities not directly connected to housing services
- Ongoing or core organizational operations
- Rent subsidies or direct financial support to individuals or families
- Academic research or studies
- Conference attendance or travel unrelated to project implementation
- Religious activities or proselytizing
- Fundraising events, activities, or salaries of fundraising staff
- Any expenses incurred before formal grant approval
- Debt payments or emergency financial assistance
- Purchase of land, buildings, or vehicles

- Debt retirement or contributions to endowments
- Any expenses not directly related to the approved project and project plan or that do not align with the objectives of the program may also be deemed ineligible.

How much can my organisation get for the Tech Grant?

Eligible organizations can apply for up to a one-time $25,000 grant, disbursed as a lump sum, based on the scope of their proposed project and alignment with program objectives. Funding amounts will be determined according to need, project readiness, and budget reasonableness.

Funding is not guaranteed and not all applications will be accepted or receive the full grant amount.

What should be included in the application budget?

Your application budget should clearly outline all project-related expenses and show how the grant funds will be used. This includes:
- A breakdown of costs by category as represented in the table below
- Cost estimates or vendor quotes for contracted services
- Justification for each expense, explaining how it supports your project goals
- Any in-kind contributions or additional funding sources, if applicable
- A total project cost, including the amount requested from the grant

Budgets should be realistic, aligned with your project plan, and focused on eligible expenses only, and should follow the template sample below (The Application form will provide a section to enter this information):

Expense Category	Item Description	Estimated Cost ($)	Grant Funded? (Y/N)	Amount Requested ($)	Justification / Purpose
Personnel/Staffing	E.g., Project t/Management				
Website Development & Design	E.g., contracting a web designer or developer. Website domain and hosting services				
Digital Marketing & SEO	SEO (Search Engine Optimization) services				

Tools, Licenses, Subscriptions	e.g., CMS tools, security plug-ins, translation tools				
Content Development	(e.g., professional photography, video production, graphics, copywriting				
Total Estimated Cost					

Note:
- Include both your total estimated cost and the portion you are requesting from the grant.
- All items must be tied to eligible activities and aligned with your project plan.

How does my organization apply for funding?

- Please ensure you meet the eligibility requirements.
- Complete the Tech Grant Application online on our website (http://www.calgary.ca/HAPtechgrant)
- Provide all requested Documentation
- Only electronic applications will be accepted. If support is required, please email the Tech Grant administrator at HousingAccessProgram@calgary.ca

All recipients will be required to demonstrate a basic output of an updated website. For those without an existing and updated website, website development will be a mandatory activity. Applicants with an existing updated website may instead apply for add-ons such as digital marketing, translation, or accessibility enhancements.

What Supporting documents are required for your application Supporting Documents to submit as part of the application will be needed to apply for this grant?

- Audited or Board-Certified financial statements
- Proof of registration under the Societies Act of Alberta or the Companies Act of Alberta.
- Proof of registration as an Indigenous organization (i.e., planning affordable housing in Calgary, signatories of Treaty 7, the Métis Nation of Alberta). **(If applicable)**
- Organization mandate, mission, and vision
- Proof of adequate liability insurance (at least $2,000,000)

How does 'Commitment to Joining the Centralised Portal' Affect my application?
One of the objectives of the Tech Grant is to prepare housing providers for future integration with the City-facilitated Centralized Housing Portal. Applicants who demonstrate a commitment to joining the centralized affordable housing application portal once launched will receive

additional points toward their evaluation and may be prioritized over those who do not. The application form includes a section to indicate this commitment.

What is the City-facilitated Centralized Housing Application Portal?
An online platform supported by The City of Calgary that connects applicants with non-market housing providers through a streamlined application process. The goal is to improve access to affordable housing and reduce barriers for Calgarians seeking housing. Development of the portal is well underway—**facilitated by the City but led and owned by the housing sector—** to ensure the platform reflects sector needs and supports long-term collaboration.

What is the Evaluation criteria for applications?

Applications will be evaluated based on:

Criteria	Description	Weight
Basic requirements	Meets all basic eligibility requirements (non-profit in good financial and reputational standing, Provides non-market housing, liability insurance and agrees to reporting requirements).	Mandatory (pass/fail)
Demonstrated Need	Strength of case showing limited or no web presence and a clear need for digital upgrades.	40%
Implementation Capacity	Capacity of the organization to complete the project (e.g., project plan, staff time, vendor secured or plan to secure vendor).	30%
Budget Reasonableness	The clarity, realism, and appropriateness of the proposed budget for the upgrades.	15%
Commitment to Join the Centralized Portal	Indicates the organization's intent to participate in the City's Centralized Affordable Housing Application Portal once it is launched, helping streamline access to housing for applicants. (Assessed based on declaration on the application form)	15%

Applications will first be screened for eligibility. Eligible submissions will be assessed based on demonstrated need, operational readiness, budget reasonableness, and commitment to joining the centralized portal. Funding will prioritize those with the greatest need and capacity to deliver results.

How many application rounds are there?

Applications will be accepted through multiple intake rounds until all approved project funding has been allocated to eligible applicants. If funding remains after the first round, additional intake rounds will be opened. This process will continue until all funds are allocated or if there is a change in administrative direction. All eligible expenses will be approved to a maximum of $25,000 per provider. The funding is one-time only, which means recipients of the first round will not qualify for subsequent rounds.

What are the reporting and other grant administration requirements?

- Approved applicants must sign a grant agreement with the City of Calgary. All required documents must be submitted before funds are disbursed.

- All funded activities must be completed **within 6 months** of receiving funds, otherwise, a full refund of funds disbursed will be required.

- **Final Report:** A detailed evaluation report is due within 60 days of the project's completion. A template will be provided that includes the following:
   - Financial breakdown of funds used.
   - A summary of completed work with details of each completed deliverable.
   - Before-and-after screenshots or links
   - Web analytics (if available) such as traffic or engagement changes
   - Reflection on outcomes and lessons learned

- **Interim Updates:** Less formal project updates (i.e., email update or phone call) may be requested during the project term.

- **Unspent Funds:** Any unused funds or incomplete projects by the project end date must be returned to the City.

What is the application deadline for the Call for Funding?

- Applications will open on **June 25th, 2025,** on http://www.calgary.ca/HAPtechgrant .

- Application submissions will be accepted during a set intake period. Applications will close **on August 27th, 2025**.

- If funds remain, a second round of application intake will be opened. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to apply in the first round, as future funding rounds are not guaranteed.

Who reviews and approves funding applications?

- Applications for grant funding will be reviewed by an internal evaluation panel through a competitive review process.
- Final funding recommendations will be approved by designated City signing authorities.