

Call for Proposals

Small-scale homebuilder outreach and content development – OCAF's Secondary Suite Initiative

Proposal Deadline: June 26, 2026

Contract Start Date: Week of July 20, 2026

Overview

Ottawa Climate Action Fund (OCAF) is seeking a qualified and experienced proponent to deliver components of an OCAF-led initiative designed to encourage the uptake and completions of additional residential units (ARUs) in Ottawa. ARUs also are known as secondary suites or accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

The City of Ottawa recently reformed its zoning bylaws to enable a range of missing middle housing in existing neighbourhoods. The reforms include permissions for additional residential units on single-family properties, allowing up to 4-units. Changing zoning alone will not necessarily drive uptake and successful completions of ARUs. More is needed to support property owners to navigate the City's application process and the steps involved with taking on a building project.

In response, OCAF is developing a *Secondary Suite Initiative*, centered on an interactive portal that guides users through the step-by-step process of adding suites to their single-family house and/or backyard. The portal, being developed in partnership with Toronto-based non-profit ReHousing, is independent of the City's application process. It will be a homeowner-facing portal to support homeowners before, during and after they decide to pursue an ARU with the City. OCAF's broader secondary suite initiative also encompasses a resident awareness campaign and promotional activities.

ReHousing is developing the core step-by-step elements of the portal, including:

- Property assessment
- Design options for adding suites
- Cost calculator and budget tool
- Individualized guide to the city's application and permitting process

This call for proposals is seeking a proponent to develop and manage additional steps to be offered in the portal, including:

- Finding a builder
- Financing options
- Cost-competitive options to build energy efficient units

The proponent's scope of work will also involve industry consultations, navigation of the city's application process and more broadly supporting OCAF's secondary suite initiative. The proponent should review [ReHousing's Toronto platform](#) which features elements comparable to what they are developing for Ottawa.

Scope of Work

The proponent will take on three iterative streams of work: developing the additional portal steps outlined above, industry engagement to inform portal development, and identifying and helping to address barriers in the permitting process. This scope of work will (or may) require the proponent to:

- Source and curate information and develop content for portal users to find the right builder or home renovator for their projects - provide the portal user with homebuilder options to add a detached backyard suite ("coach house") and/or renovator/contractor options to add suites within or attached to the main house (ie: basement suite, dividing into a triplex).
- Convene and solicit input from builders, pre-fab manufacturers, renovators and other key stakeholders, and curate this information into the development of content for the platform and to yield insights to inform/ improve other aspects of the portal.
- Through consultations, convening or other activities, identify barriers in the City's ARU application process to inform the content of the portal and to provide feedback to the City of Ottawa to improve its ARU permitting process to accelerate ARU completions.
- Liaise with City officials to ensure the portal effectively navigates the City of Ottawa's ARU application process and incorporates pre-approved designs.
- Correspond and coordinate with the City of Ottawa on application processes, building codes, permits and progress of specific applications, cross-referencing portal users with the City's applications.
- Provide expertise and undertake additional work and necessary outreach for additional portal steps: information on financing options, cost-effective options for energy-efficient suites, and resources for renting suites.
- Provide advice and ideas for OCAF's secondary suite initiative more broadly.

Time Commitment

The scope of work runs for approximately five months, working collaboratively with OCAF staff and partners involved with the project, in parallel with the development of the full OCAF secondary suite initiative. OCAF anticipates the proponent's time commitment to be the equivalent of 2 – 3 days per week. Specific deliverables will be established with OCAF and the proponent at the time of developing the contract agreement to reflect the timing of activities.

The contract may be extended or renewed beyond five months if there is a need to continue the work and both parties agree to any modifications to the scope of work and deliverables.

Qualifications

This contract is structured with experienced individual consultants, local firms, and not-for-profit organizations in mind. We recognize that proponents may bring different combinations of experience and expertise, and we encourage applications from those whose overall fit is strong, even if every qualification is not met individually.

What we are looking for:

- Professional experience in housing, planning, residential development, homebuilding, or a directly comparable field.
- Demonstrated working knowledge of Ottawa's zoning, permitting and building code environment, or equivalent experience or knowledge in a comparable Canadian municipality.
- Familiarity with housing policy related to ARUs (also known as ADUs and secondary suites) and multiplexes, including bylaws and codes affecting single-family properties.
- Demonstrated experience with outreach, relationship-building, convening and facilitating input from stakeholders in general and if applicable industry stakeholders such as builders, lenders, manufacturers, and renovators.
- Capacity to commit 2- 3 days per week over a five-month contract and to work collaboratively with OCAF staff, ReHousing, and external partners.
- Established connections to, or knowledge of how to access, Ottawa-area or Ottawa-serving small-scale builders, prefabricated homebuilders, renovators, and related trades.

Assets

- Experience working with or alongside municipal staff on permitting, planning, or housing programs.
- Familiarity with homeowner financing options (mortgages, HELOCs, refinancing) and Canadian or Ontario incentive or grant programs relevant to ARUs, or capacity to consult and curate this information.
- Knowledge of retrofits, energy-efficient design, and low-carbon construction approaches for residential infill.
- Ability to translate technical, regulatory, or industry information into accessible content for non-expert audiences (homeowners, residents).
- Prior experience contributing content to digital platforms or user-facing tools.

Application Details

Who can apply

The contract is open to individual consultants, firms, and not-for-profit organizations who have the working knowledge and experience required for the contract's scope of work. Proponents based in or working closely within the Ottawa region are particularly encouraged to apply.

Interested proponents are invited to submit a complete application using the [OCAF Application Template](#).

Completed applications can be sent to ocaf@ottclimatefund.ca.

Budget

OCAF has set a maximum budget of \$60,000 inclusive of all fees, taxes and disbursements. Proponents are asked to propose a fee structure within their application; OCAF will negotiate final terms with the selected proponent.

Key dates

- **Application deadline:** June 26, 2026
- **Notification of selection:** Week of June 29, 2026
- **Contract start date:** Week of July 20, 2026

Questions

Questions about this Call for Proposals can be directed to ocaf@ottclimatefund.ca.

About OCAF

The Ottawa Climate Action Fund's purpose is to accelerate Ottawa's transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient future through convening and partnership-building, impact investments, community grants, research and programming.

OCAF leads programs and initiatives that fit with its priorities, fill gaps in the Ottawa climate sector, and advance the transition to an equitable, net-zero future. Our work emphasizes collaboration and bringing people together to multi-solve climate and adjacent issues. Priority areas include climate and affordable housing, local energy resilience, gentle density housing and livable communities.

OCAF is part of the Canada-wide [Low Carbon Cities Canada](#) (LC3) network, whose seven centres have collectively received endowment funding and initial operating funds from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), funded by the Government of Canada. Each centre operates independently but the centres regularly collaborate to share with and draw from others in this unique network.

About OCAF's Secondary Suite work

OCAF's *Fill it First* Program aims to add new infill housing options in existing neighbourhoods alternative to urban sprawl to cut emissions related to transportation and built form, while improving livability and affordability. [OCAF-commissioned research](#) investigated the carbon implications of Ottawa's housing growth targets. The analysis found that emissions vary significantly depending on where housing is built and the typology, with secondary suites in existing neighbourhoods offering the greatest climate benefits.

The timing of this analysis coincided with the City of Ottawa's zoning reforms to enable gentle density, including additional residential units (ARUs) up to 4-units on single-family properties. OCAF is developing a broader program to promote and enable gentle density in existing urban and suburban neighbourhoods in Ottawa. This proposal is to support a homeowner-facing initiative to drive successful uptake of secondary suites as an alternative to new subdivisions and urban expansion. OCAF's broader Secondary Suite Initiative encompasses communications and promotion, resident awareness, activities to drive homeowner uptake, and analysis to provide feedback to the City.

It's important to note that the OCAF-ReHousing support portal is *not* part of the City's ARU application process; it is independent and aimed at providing tools and resources to support homeowners before, during and after they decide to enter the City's application process. While the portal provides interactive tools, the portal is not a "retail" support centre and will not be assisting users directly.