

**COWICHAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
WORK PLAN  
OPEN SESSION  
2024**



**CHA  
WORK PLAN  
OPEN SESSION  
INDEX  
2024**

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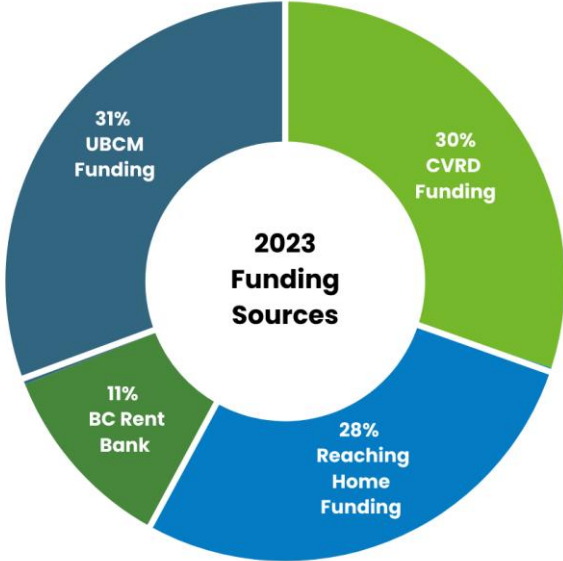
**CHA WORK PLAN**  
**January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024**  
**OPEN SESSION**

	CHA 2023 PERFORMANCE	
<b>CHA OPERATIONS</b>	<p><b>Management and Administration</b></p> <p>Managed operation of CHA including yearly budgeting and financial planning, office and records management, HR and Staffing, Societies regulatory and reporting requirements, monitoring Regional Housing Service (RHS) funding applications and disbursed approved funds.</p> <p><b>Program Management</b> (funded outside of the CVRD Regional Housing Service)</p> <p>Supervised/Oversaw Housing Loss Prevention (HLP), Cowichan Rent Bank (CRB), Community Programs, A Place to Be and Cowichan Coalition, represented CHA with funders, UBCM and UWBC</p>	
<b>Duncan Manor Replacement Project</b>	CHA provided \$300,000 from the Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHTF) to Duncan Housing Society to pay for pre-construction costs of the new affordable housing Duncan Manor project at 486 Jubilee St.	
<b>Magdalena Apartments</b>	The Magdalena apartment building faced structural issues resulting in tenant evictions. CHA provided advocacy and financial assistance towards the costs of relocating. Advocacy was provided to 15 households with financial assistance provided to 9 households in the amount of \$20,000 from the Emergency Contingency Fund.	
<b>Cowichan 2023 Homelessness Point In Time Count</b>	CHA conducted the 2023 Point-In-Time (PIT) Homelessness Count with support from the Community Action Team (CAT) Peers. The 2023 Count included the whole of the Cowichan Region, from Malahat to Ladysmith. The last PIT Homelessness Count for the Cowichan Region was conducted in March 2020, just as the COVID 19 pandemic was beginning. Since that time, service providers and others who work with those experiencing homelessness noted a significant increase in the number of people they serve and in the complexity of their service and support needs. To validate this perspective, there was a strong interest in the community to conduct a post-Covid 19 PIT Count to better understand what was happening in relation to homelessness and the needs of those counted among the homeless.	
<b>The Village Project 610 Trunk Road</b>	CHA applied and received funding from Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for the continued operation of The Village from end of 2022 into 2023 for just over \$1,200,000. In 2023 CHA was successful in extending the Temporary Use Permit for the continued operation of the Village project. CHA worked with Lookout Housing and Health Society, to secure operational funding from BC Housing as the funds from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) was exhausted. CHA worked closely with	

	service partners, local government, and others to ensure the ongoing operation of the Village for the longer-term while also preparing CHA's turnover of The Village project scheduled for 2024.	
<b>A Place to Be – Daytime Resource for Unsheltered People</b>	<p>"A Place to Be" provides a safe space for unhoused individuals in the Duncan/North Cowichan Region during daytime hours. Established in the back of the Cowichan Valley Basket Society (CVBS) facility, individuals have access to washrooms, warming and cooling stations to help mitigate the effects of increasingly extreme weather conditions, as well as connections to outreach teams, local service providers, and healthcare professionals. This project is intended as a pilot program to provide semi-permanent daytime shelter options that can be relocated as required by future demands. Access to additional resources, such as clothing and toiletries is available.</p> <p>CHA provided the essential flow through of funds applied for and approved from the UBCM Strengthening Communities Services being more than \$150,000. Each year the community struggles to find a location and staff to operate a designated space for extreme weather. A Place to Be, in a centralized location known to many unhoused offers a critical resource to the community. CVBS also provides easy carry street food hampers that are more manageable for those living rough. Approximately 90 of these hampers were distributed per month with 60% of the food provided at CVBS regularly accessed by those utilizing the Place to Be shelter.</p>	
<b>Coordinated Access</b>	<p>CHA continued to operate as the Coordinated Access Lead Agency managing the development and implementation of a Coordinated Access System (CA) in the region. In 2023, CHA applied for and was funded over \$170,000 through the Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy for this program.</p> <p>CA is an integrated process by which individuals and families are directed to community-level Access Points, where they are supported through a consistent triage and assessment process that is trauma-informed and culturally appropriate. At the triage stage, people can be supported through diversion or prevention to other services and resources. Following assessment, people are prioritized for resources and support based on the system's identified outcomes and goals, as defined by the community.</p> <p>In late 2023 CHA began examining existing programs to establish appropriate fit with its mandate. In the last few years, during and resulting from the pandemic, CHA accepted many diverse roles. At that time, these were important for CHA to fill in the community however, many were service-oriented projects distracting CHA away from its core mandate of facilitating and developing affordable housing in the Cowichan Valley. With the pandemic in the distant past CHA is refocusing to its core mandate no longer participating in programs that do not align. CA does not align.</p>	
<b>Housing Navigator</b>	CHA applied and was awarded funding for a Housing Navigator to provide one-on-one support to individuals in their housing search, and their application to the BC Housing Registry. Funding was provided via Cowichan Designated and Duncan Indigenous Streams of Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy provided by the United Way British Columbia. As the community experiences a housing crisis, CHA continues to receive a high number of inquiries for those who are seeking support in locating rental housing. Many inquiries are from seniors and individuals with limited access to technology or other barriers impacting their ability to successfully search for homes. The Housing Navigator service began in April 2023 and has been a well-	

	received support within our community. With the awarding of additional funding, the Housing Navigator transitioned into the Housing Loss Prevention Coordinator under the Housing Loss Prevention program.	
<b>Housing Loss Prevention</b>	<p>CHA applied and was awarded over \$110,000 funding for Housing Loss Prevention via the Cowichan Designated and Duncan Indigenous Streams of Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy provided by United Way British Columbia. Under the lead of the Housing Loss Prevention Coordinator this program features a suite of services including Emergency Assistance, Information and Referrals, Housing Placement, and a Food Voucher program.</p> <p><b>Emergency Assistance Program</b></p> <p>CHA's Emergency Assistance Program assisted applicants with a one-time financial grant towards eviction due to rental arrears or hydro disconnection for unpaid bills. In 2023 the funding allowed CHA to support over 75 applicants at imminent risk of losing their housing or utilities.</p> <p><b>Duncan Indigenous Stream</b></p> <p>In 2023, utilizing the Duncan Indigenous funding, CHA supported over 40 Indigenous applicants living off-reserve by preventing over 20 evictions and maintaining utilities for a similar number of households.</p> <p><b>Cowichan Designated Stream</b></p> <p>In 2023, utilizing the Cowichan Designated funding, CHA supported over 36 applicants from the entire Cowichan Region by preventing over 27 evictions, 4 households maintaining utilities and 6 damage deposits provided to assist in securing new housing.</p> <p><b>Information &amp; Referrals</b></p> <p>The Housing Loss Prevention Coordinator responded to inquiries via email, telephone, and in person drop-ins. Through this program individuals and families gained knowledge and support regarding housing services, community services, and tenancy issues. In 2023 CHA received over 985 inquiries up from 371 in 2022.</p> <p><b>Housing Navigation</b></p> <p>The Housing Loss Prevention Coordinator offered weekly emails to individuals and service providers with curated local private market rentals resulting in their exposure to CHA supports, other community resources, and reducing the risk of scams in their rental search. In 2023 over 100 families, individuals, and service providers received assistance with over 36 reporting acquiring permanent rental housing through this program.</p>	

	<b>Food Vouchers</b>  CHA continued to implement the Food Voucher Program assisting in offsetting the high cost of living for individuals and families that faced difficulty meeting monthly costs. The Food Voucher Program provided one gift card per household every two months. In 2023 CHA provided over 109 gift cards to individuals and families.	
<b>Coalition to Address Homelessness and Affordable Housing</b>	CHA applied and was awarded over \$96,000 in funding from the Union of BC Municipalities, specifically the Poverty Reduction Stream. This resulted in CHA retaining a part time Coalition Coordinator in October 2023. The first few months involved meeting the CHA team, reviewing all historical work of the coalition back to 2016 and engaging current coalition members for a sense of their expectations. Work moved to the planning of a “Re-Invigoration Event”, a large gathering with broad community representation – local government employees, elected officials, business/chamber community, service providers, Island Health, the local school district, the local library, faith community and more. Results culminated in identification of 4 work groups that will meet in 2024 to work on the following streams of work: (i) Stigma Reduction & Education; (ii) Homeless Response & Prevention; (iii) Affordable Housing; and (iv) Leadership.	
<b>Housing Forum</b>	In November 2023, CHA hosted a Housing Forum at the Cowichan Community Centre. The purpose of this forum was to bring together leaders from the public and private sectors with an interest in and means to address our housing crisis and work towards affordable housing in the Cowichan Valley. Key participants included municipal staff from the City of Duncan, CVRD and North Cowichan, BC Housing, CMHC, planners such as Toderian Urban Works, Nexus and Lu’ma Native Housing Society, local organizations interested in providing affordable housing, as well as Fortis BC and Vancity. Over 60 participants joined for the daylong event and presentations that sparked meaningful conversations, innovative ideas, and provided an opportunity to network with others to address the affordable housing crisis within our community. This CHA Housing Forum was funded by the CVRD Regional Housing Trust Fund, Vancity Community Foundations, and Fortis BC.	
<b>Workforce Housing</b>	CHA worked with Economic Development Cowichan assisting in the development and implementation of a Workforce Housing Survey to set up the foundation for the Workforce Housing Strategy plan that was conducted with several meetings and workshops throughout 2023 into the first quarter of 2024 to: (i) identify a collaborative and regional solution to workforce housing; (ii) to identify potential solutions to attract and retain staff within various industries; (iii) to foster sustainable economic growth in the Cowichan Region. CHA Board of Directors meet with the CVRD Consultant CitySpaces to have the CHA Board fully endorse and approve at the Board level CHA transitioning into a Housing Corporation to effectively confront and deal with the major Housing Crisis in the Province of BC but specifically the Cowichan Valley.	
<b>Festubert St. (New Foundations Project)</b>	CHA and Cowichan Tribes (CT) applied and were awarded funding in the amount of \$800,000 through Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy – Capital Funding, to purchase a property in Duncan, BC with a deadline of March 31, 2024. The Reaching Home funding is for land, capital expenses, and/or soft costs to aid in the development of affordable housing for adults. CHA and CT agreed to collaborate on a housing project referred to as the New Foundations Project (NFP) using this funding. The final development is intended to be transitional, substance-free, recovery and/or second-stage housing for community members on their healing journey with the goal of housing at least 50% indigenous residents.	

	Due diligence was undertaken for: (i) zoning confirmation, (ii) environmental studies, and (iii) retaining a consultant to provide background information so CHA/CT could confidently move forward with purchasing the NFP and to understand the range of options available for development of the NFP including but not limited to current land opportunities that were available under the parameters of the Reaching Home funding and CT requests. Prior to purchasing the property CT removed themselves as a CHA joint venture partner to taking a collaborative role in the project. CHA is the sole owner registered on title to the property and is 100% responsible for all development activities.											
Executive	In the last quarter of 2023, the former Executive Director of CHA resigned leaving CHA with the task of recruiting a new Executive Officer to lead CHA into the future. A professional recruitment agency was engaged to conduct a nationwide search for a CHA leader with extensive real estate development and senior executive experience.											
CHA 2023 Funding Sources	 <p>A donut chart titled "2023 Funding Sources" in the center. The chart is divided into four segments: a dark blue segment for "31% UBCM Funding", a green segment for "30% CVRD Funding", a blue segment for "28% Reaching Home Funding", and a smaller green segment for "11% BC Rent Bank".</p> <table><tr><th>Funding Source</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>UBCM Funding</td><td>31%</td></tr><tr><td>CVRD Funding</td><td>30%</td></tr><tr><td>Reaching Home Funding</td><td>28%</td></tr><tr><td>BC Rent Bank</td><td>11%</td></tr></table>	Funding Source	Percentage	UBCM Funding	31%	CVRD Funding	30%	Reaching Home Funding	28%	BC Rent Bank	11%	
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	CHA 2024 WORK PLAN OPEN SESSION	
CHA OPERATIONS	<p><b>Management and Administration</b></p> <p>Manage operation of CHA including yearly budgeting and financial planning, office and records management, HR and Staffing, Societies regulatory and reporting requirements, monitoring Regional Housing Service (RHS) funding applications and disburse approved funds. CHA strategic plan and professional recruitment process for new directors to be developed.</p> <p><b>Program Management</b> (funded outside of the CVRD Regional Housing Service)</p> <p>Supervise/Oversee Housing Loss Prevention (HLP), Cowichan Rent Bank (CRB), Community Programs, A Place to Be and Cowichan Coalition, represent CHA with funders, UBCM and UWBC. CHA is committed to searching for potential new programs and funding that align with our mandate.</p>	
	<p><b>447 Festubert St. (New Foundations Project)</b></p> <p>This property was successfully purchased in February 2024 with CHA as the sole owner. Funds to purchase were awarded through Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy – Capital Funding Program. The funds awarded are a grant and do not have to be repaid. CHA will be in the predevelopment stage during 2024 and will be seeking funds through the RHTF in the closed section of this Work Plan.</p>	
Housing Trust Fund or MRDT		ALLOCATION
Communications Plan	<p><b>447 Festubert St. &amp; CHA Cowichan Valley Communications Plan 2024</b></p> <p>CHA will be seeking \$50,000 in funds from the Housing Trust Fund or the Municipal Regional District Tax to implement a communications plan to engage local landowners, developers and Not in My Back Yard (NIMBYs) throughout the Cowichan Valley with input and assistance from coalition members. CHA intends the communications plan to provide assurances about the long-term benefits of having supportive, subsidized or affordable housing projects in local neighborhoods. The communications plan will offer regular communications over the duration of the Festubert St project and extend throughout the Cowichan Valley for other similar projects when required regardless of ownership of the respective projects.</p> <p>CHA communications plan will address misconceptions and concerns resulting from fear and lack of control due to ongoing changes in the number of projects being announced and developed. CHA intends to provide information to alleviate concerns, promoting CHA as the first contact for information on affordable housing projects throughout the Cowichan Valley.</p>	\$50,000