

DISCUSSION

The NRRB would initially operate as a one-year pilot project. The rent bank will be managed by a lead agency (the John Howard Society has been identified for Nanaimo) with support from a Board of Directors and a Loan Evaluation Committee. If successful, the rent bank will continue on a sustainable long-term basis. Staff may then request Housing Legacy Funds continue to be directed towards the NRRB to support ongoing operation costs and loan capital requirements. In addition, Staff will look for other revenue streams.

If the NRRB is selected as a member of the BC Rent Bank network as the lead agency the John Howard Society will receive some seed and operating funding, mentorship and in-kind support from BC Rent Bank. Available seed funding from BC Rent bank cannot exceed 80% of projected first annual operating costs. Details regarding the extent of the operating funds have not yet been made available; however, BC Rent Bank has noted that “operating funds fill gaps that have been left after lead agencies and partners bring their resources together; other investors are needed to support the ongoing costs of operating a rent bank.” Other sustainable funding will be required to support the NRRB.

Online Accommodation Platform Funding

In 2018, the Province of British Columbia extended the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) that is applied to hotels, motels and resorts, to include an Online Accommodation Platform (OAP) tax. The MRDT includes up to 3% tax on the purchase of accommodation within select regions on behalf of municipalities, regional districts or eligible entities. The City pays all funds to the Nanaimo Hospitality Association, except for the portion collected through OAP from online accommodation providers (short-term rental platforms). The revenue collected through OAP is directed to the Housing Legacy Reserve Fund.

The Housing Legacy Reserve Fund was established in 2005 for “use as a resource for municipal support to affordable housing initiatives.” Between December 2018 and December 2019, the City received \$90,603 OAP funding toward the Housing Legacy Reserve.

Based on a review of existing rent bank budgets and discussion with BC Rent Bank, the proposed \$90,604 with anticipated additional funding from BC Rent Bank will be sufficient to establish an effective rent bank for the Nanaimo region. While the rent bank may ultimately have a regional focus, Housing Legacy Reserve funds will be used only to support Nanaimo residents.

OPTIONS

1. That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council provide \$90,603 from the Housing Legacy Reserve funds received through the Online Accommodation Tax (OAP) to the Nanaimo Region John Howard Society in order to operate a local rent bank as a temporary pilot project.
 - The advantages of this option: The proposed rent bank and funding request supports the implementation of Section 5.7 of the Affordable Housing Strategy - Support the Development of a Rent Bank Program. The rent bank will help Nanaimo and area residents stay in their homes during a temporary financial crisis.

- The disadvantages of this option: The proposal requires Staff and financial resources which could be otherwise directed to other housing priorities.
 - Financial Implications: The requested \$90,603 from the Housing Legacy Fund is equivalent to the contribution the City received through our share of the OAP funds with the calendar year. The amount represents approximately 3% of the existing Housing Legacy Fund balance of over \$2.6 million.
2. That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council not provide \$90,603 from the Housing Legacy Reserve funds received through the Online Accommodation Tax (OAP) to the Nanaimo Region John Howard Society in order to operate a local rent bank as a temporary pilot project.
- The advantages of this option: The funding would remain available for other future housing priorities.
 - The disadvantages of this option: BC Rent Bank requires local rent bank operators to provide proof of other funding sources. If the City is unable to provide funding, the John Howard Society will not be able to secure funding and support from BC Rent Bank. The City would miss an opportunity to fulfill a key goal of the Affordable Housing Strategy and help Nanaimo citizens avoid homelessness. Nanaimo residents would continue to have to rely on traditional lending providers only when facing a temporary financial crisis. Those unable to find traditional financing may risk homelessness or be forced to rely upon predatory lending practices.
 - Financial Implications: The requested \$90,603 will remain in the Housing Legacy Reserve and be available for other supportive or affordable housing opportunities.
3. That the Health and Housing Task Force provide alternate direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Supporting the development of a rent bank is included as an objective within the City's Affordable Housing Strategy.
- With support from City staff and the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, the Nanaimo Region John Howard Society submitted an expression of interest application to BC Rent Bank for in-kind and financial support to support a Nanaimo rent bank.
- Staff are recommending that funding directed to the Housing Legacy Reserve through the Online Accommodation Platform (OAP) tax be used to provide the additional funding required to support the rent bank.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: BC Rent Bank Expression of Interest: Guide for Expression of Interest
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Submitted by:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Manager, Community Planning

Concurrence by:

Laura Mercer
Director, Finance

Bill Corsan
Director, Community Development

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services

ATTACHMENT A



BC Rent Bank **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST** **Guide for Expression of Interest**

We thank Foundry (www.foundrybc.ca) for giving permission to repurpose their EOI template and guide in support of this call.

Thank you for your interest in joining the BC Rent Bank Network and for your interest in offering rent bank services in your community as a BC Rent Bank Partner.

In December 2018, the Provincial Rental Housing Task Force, led by the premier's advisor on residential tenancy, MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert, along with MLA's Adam Olsen and Ronna-Rae Leonard, released 23 recommendations to the premier, including recommendation #4, provincial funding for rent banks.

BC Rent Bank is the title of the project established by Vancity Community Foundation in response to that recommendation and the funding provided by the Province of BC. The project dates are April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2022. The funding from the Provincial Government was given as a one-time financial contribution and there is no financial commitment beyond March 31, 2022. Therefore, a sustainable growth plan must address issues of sustainability. The funding allocated by the Province will be used to support existing rent banks and to help establish a province-wide rent bank system.

As of April 1, 2020, BC Rent Bank is now in year two of the three (3) year pilot project! During the first year, we learned many valuable lessons from the existing rent banks and from the expansion of two new rent bank sites. This year, we want to continue to test and learn from our Lead Agencies what successful expansion might look like and use this information to inform the development of the larger rent bank system.

We have created this guide to provide you with more information about our expansion process, as well as information about BC Rent Bank and the role we play in establishing a provincial rent bank system.

As of June 8, 2020, BC Rent Bank is announcing a call for an Expression of Interest (EOI) from communities across British Columbia interested in joining the BC Rent Bank network. **This EOI is the first phase of a two-phase expansion process that will identify and begin operations as four (4) new rent bank sites across BC by March 2021.**

In this "Test" Phase, BC Rent Bank will seek to establish four (4) new rent banks. Two (2) of these sites will serve populations of 50 000 people or less; and, two (2) sites will serve populations of 50 000 and greater.

It should be noted that we anticipate that there will be additional phases to the expansion of rent bank services in the Province of BC. We trust that lessons learned through this phase of the project will direct and inform future decisions about expansion and ultimately the development of a larger provincial system.

Questions?

Communities are invited to submit questions regarding the EOI and 2020-2021 Expansion Process through our email: info@bcrentbank.ca

Definitions:

- **BC Rent Bank:** Inclusive term for the overall provincial initiative
- **BC Rent Bank Lead Agency:** A not-for-profit organization or agency identified to lead the establishment, opening and operations of a BC Rent Bank project in their community.
- **BC Rent Bank Network:** The group of organizations/agencies currently partnering to deliver rent bank services in their communities.
- **BC Rent Bank Partners:** Official partners of BC Rent Bank who are operating rent bank services within a designated catchment area within the Province of BC. These partners are listed on our website at www.bcrentbank.ca/locations

SECTION 1: ABOUT THE 2020-2021 EXPANSION PROCESS

BC Rent Bank has learned many valuable lessons during our first year of operation, and specifically, during the COVID19 crisis. We had anticipated launching an EOI process much earlier, but due to the impacts of COVID19 we delayed this process for several months. We feel we are in a much better position now to support onboarding new Lead Agencies. The information and experiences we have gained during this time have been influential to our approach and our understanding of the expansion of services that we anticipate will ultimately serve the development of a provincial rent bank system, which is our mandate.

We are excited to launch the 2020-2021 BC Rent Bank Expansion Process. Our goal is to make this expansion process as fair, transparent and inclusive as possible, while also ensuring that any new Lead Agencies identified through this process are successful in launching and operating their rent bank project.

In Year One of the pilot project (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020) we learned many valuable lessons from the existing rent banks in BC. Their knowledge and expertise as collaborative partners are helping to shape and form the development of the larger BC Rent Bank system. With their support, we saw the establishment of two new rent banks during Year One, bringing the total number of rent banks in BC by the end of March 31, 2020 to ten (10).

Eligibility

Not-for-profit organizations/agencies with experience in providing housing services or working with vulnerable populations needing to maintain their housing, including First Nations, Metis, and Urban Indigenous service-providers, are eligible to express interest.

We will **not accept applications** from organizations or agencies that propose offering rent bank services where BC Rent Bank already has the following Partners:

Location	BC Rent Bank Partner	Area(s) Served
Abbotsford	Mennonite Central Committee	Abbotsford, Agassiz, Chilliwack, Harrison, Hope, Mission
Columbia - Shuswap	Kamloops District & Elizabeth Fry Society	Regional District (Salmon Arm and Area)
Coquitlam	SHARE Community Resources Society	Anmore, Belcarra, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody
New Westminster	Purpose Society	New Westminster
North Vancouver	Harvest Project	North Vancouver (District and City), West Vancouver
North Okanagan	Kamloops District & Elizabeth Fry Society	Regional District (Vernon and Area)
Prince George	Aboriginal Business Development Center	Prince George
Richmond	CHIMO Community Services	Richmond
Sechelt	Sunshine Coast Community Resource Society	Sunshine Coast
Surrey	Sources Community Resource Society	Delta, Langley, Surrey, White Rock
Thompson-Nicola	Kamloops District & Elizabeth Fry Society	Regional District (Kamloops and Area)
Vancouver	Vancouver Rent Bank (NICCSS)	Vancouver

Existing Lead Agencies within the BC Rent Bank network are eligible to express their interest for a second rent bank project site, provided the second project site serves a distinct catchment of low to moderate income earners that is different from those served by their existing project. To avoid conflict of interests, existing Lead Agencies submitting an EOI must recuse themselves from participating in any aspect of the network’s involvement in the expansion process.

Organizations that intend to serve larger populations, such as regional districts, are advised to define a distinct catchment area and include in their submission a listing of each municipality to be served.

Ineligibility

For profit-organizations and post-secondary institutions are ineligible to submit an EOI but may partner with local community agencies submitting an EOI.

Key Dates

Monday, June 8, 2020	Launch of the EOI phase
Friday, July 3, 2020	EOI submissions are due by 4:00 pm PST. No late submissions will be accepted.
Tuesday, July 14, 2020	All participating organizations are informed of outcomes of the EOI evaluation process; shortlisted organizations contacted
Thursday July 16, 2020	Full Proposal process launches
Thursday September 3, 2020	Proposal submission are due by 4:00 PST. More details to come.
Friday September 18, 2020	Final Decisions made and communicated
Thursday October 1, 2020	Proposed start date of new rent bank sites

Process Overview

There will be two phases to the 2020-2021 expansion process:

Phase 1: Expression of Interest

From Monday, June 8, 2020 to Friday, July 3, 2020, BC Rent Bank will accept EOI submissions from agencies across BC interested in launching and operating a rent bank.

BC Rent Bank will accept an EOI submission from a community partnership or coalition, allowing for up to four (4) partners to be listed, but with the understanding that if shortlisted, the requirement will be for a single lead organization to submit the full proposal. Letters of support are not required at the EOI phase.

BC Rent Bank will invite four (4) groups from the EOI phase to participate in the Full Proposal submission. **We will award two invitations based on EOIs that propose serving a catchment area with a population size of less than 50 000 people and two invitations for EOIs that indicate serving a catchment area of a population size greater than 50 000.**

If your submission does not move forward, BC Rent Bank is interested in remaining in contact with you, as it is anticipated that additional partnership opportunities will arise. If you are successful, BC Rent Bank will send you information to support your preparation for the Full Proposal submission.

Phase 2: Full Proposal Submission

Between July 16, 2020 and September 3, 2020, BC Rent Bank will be receiving Full Proposal Submissions by organizations or partnerships who were invited to the process.

The focus of the Full Proposal will be to assess the Lead Agency's readiness to successfully open and operate a rent bank. The proposal will include more detailed information around the Lead Agency's capacity to open and operate a rent bank, and this will include letters of support from partners. This phase will include interviews and reference checks.

Fuller details around the proposal will be offered to those that have been identified as moving forward to this phase.

Funding

Funding will be provided to the Lead Agency that has successfully moved through the EOI phase and to the Full Proposal phase.

BC Rent Bank acknowledges that a Lead Agency will require a larger financial investment in the startup phase of a rent bank project as they build relationships with diverse investors that will support the rent bank in subsequent years. A reminder that the project end date is March 31, 2022.

The resources required to open a rent bank include:

1. Existing, in-kind contributions by Lead Agencies and partners
2. One time – Seed Funding costs to help establish a new rent bank
3. Ongoing annual operations costs (which may include contributions towards staffing, loan capital or administrative costs)

In-kind Contributions

In-kind resources include the existing staffing and resources that you and your partners will commit in order to complete your rent bank service model. These contributions could include resources to cover staffing costs, loan capital or administrative costs. Lead Agencies should expect to contribute 20% of their projected budget in their first year of operation.

Seed Funding (2020-2021)

The funding provided by the Province of BC is Seed Funding that is to be used in the establishment of a Provincial Rent Bank system. The total Seed Funding awarded will vary depending on several factors. They will include, but are not limited to, the location of the rent bank, the proposed model of service delivery, the proposed population being served, and consideration will be given to key housing statistics such as % of renters, and % of renters spending 30% or more on housing.

Seed Funding is a one-time contribution and will be granted to a rent bank during its first year of operation. Seed funding can be used to cover expenses related to staff salary and benefits, loan capital, and administrative costs. Seed funding will not exceed 80% of the projected first annual costs to operate a rent bank.

Operating Funds (April 1, 2021-March 31, 2022)

Lead Agencies will receive funds to support the operation of their rent bank. These funds will be awarded based on continued participation in the network, ability to provide accurate and timely reporting, demonstration of other funding supports, and demonstration of strong policies and procedures that support the ongoing work of providing a rent bank project.

This will be the last year of the pilot project, and as such, operating funds fill gaps that have been left after Lead Agencies and partners bring their resources together. Other investors are needed to support the ongoing costs of operating a rent bank and there must be funding diversity.

Budgets are developed in collaboration with BC Rent Bank and are approved by BC Rent Bank Loan Review Committee. Operating funds are often directed toward staffing costs, loan capital and administrative costs associated with operating the project. More details will be available on funding proposals.

Other Resources

Beyond financial contributions there are several key resources that BC Rent Bank offers Lead Agencies.

Mentorship Support

BC Rent Bank has developed a mentorship component where onboarding rent banks will be matched with an existing rent bank to receive training on administering a rent bank program. Lead Agencies should understand they will be asked to participate in this component of the program as part of their orientation and on-boarding as a new rent bank.

A Network of Support

We work in collaboration with ten rent bank partners. We are intentional about creating a network that is open handed with each other, offering resources, experience and information that strengthens the work that we do together. BC Rent Bank regularly schedules meetings where the network gathers (virtually or in person) and it is anticipated that a Lead Agency will participate in these gatherings.

Database and Client Management System

Lead Agencies should be aware that BC Rent Bank is currently working on a larger database and client management system. It is anticipated that this system will include an online pre-assessment that will help in determining eligibility for a rent bank loan. On the backend, the system will create a client file that will be used by the rent bank staff person to keep case notes and track the progress of loan application. Lead Agencies should understand they will be required to use this system as part of being part of the rent bank network.

Timelines

Lead agencies which are awarded Seed Funding for the start of up a rent bank in their community will need time to hire staff and become operational. It is anticipated that the official start date of new rent banks will begin on **October 1, 2020**.

SECTION 2: ABOUT BC RENT BANK

Our Beginning

On December 2018, the Provincial Rental Housing Task Force, led by the premier's advisor on residential tenancy, MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert, along with MLA's Adam Olsen and Ronna-Rae Leonard, released 23 recommendations to the premier, including recommendation #4, to implement a B.C. wide rent bank system for people living on low incomes.

BC Rent Bank is the title of the project established by Vancity Community Foundation in response to that recommendation and the funding provided by the Province of BC. The funding will be used to support existing rent banks and to help establish a province-wide rent bank system. This funding cannot be used to replace existing funding or replace financial contributions already committed to operate a rent bank. The long-term goal is that regardless of where you live in the province you can be supported to help maintain your housing.

BC Rent Bank is guided by an advisory Steering Committee made up of key stakeholders from the housing sector. These members include Lu'ma Native Housing, Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC), BC Housing, LandlordBC, Vancity Community Foundation, Vancity Credit Union, the Province of BC (Office of Homelessness), Union of BC Municipalities, a rent bank participant, and two rotating members of the existing Rent Bank Network.

Role of BC Rent Bank

Our posture is one of learning and listening. We acknowledge that while we lead the discussion and work on the development of a provincial rent bank system, we rely heavily on community partners and stakeholders in helping to provide feedback on the development of the Project. As such we seek collaborative partners, and our relationship with rent banks is built on values of reciprocity and mutuality.

BC Rent Bank supports the development, operations and evaluation of rent bank partners. We intentionally foster a community of learning across the network of rent bank providers through training, mentorship, and ongoing support. The project has one staff, the Project Lead, who is responsible formally to VCF and informally to the Steering Committee.

Role of BC Rent Bank Partners

BC Rent Bank currently works with ten Rent Bank Partners who provide services to the Sunshine Coast, a large portion of Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Columbia Shuswap, North Okanagan, Thompson -Nicola, and Prince George. To find out more information please check out www.bcrentbank.ca/locations.

Currently, each Rent Bank Partner is a not-for-profit organization that is accountable to their own Board of Directors. Each Partner is responsible for the operations of their rent bank and for ensuring that the community and regional needs are reflected in the model of service delivery. The activities being provided by each Partner includes the administration of rent bank loans but also includes the provision of supplemental and referral services such as advocacy, landlord mediation, financial literacy, or debt counseling.

While BC Rent Bank acknowledges that this is the current system, it is open to, and seeking of, new models of working in the future in what will be the development of a provincial rent bank system.

Partnerships

Strong partnerships are essential to the BC Rent Bank project as we seek to test and develop a model for a provincial rent bank system. Lead Agencies will need to collaborate with local government, not-for-profits, the development community, the business sector, and other investment partners in helping to create a sustainable rent bank. While there is an acknowledgement that BC Rent Bank can provide seed funding and operating funds, the project will not be able to sustain the ongoing financial support that will be needed to operate a local

rent bank. Lead Agencies must be rooted and supported through local community partnerships. To thrive, there needs to be a focus on intentional and collaborative working relationships.

Lead Agencies are encouraged to develop a cross-sector planning team. More information can be found on page 8 of the Vancity Rent Bank Toolkit (<https://bcrentbank.ca/get-started/>). It is common that many of these planning team members then become members of a voluntary loan review committee that meets regularly to review applications and approve loans.

We acknowledge that building successful partnerships take time and as such we encourage this work on establishing, building and sustaining partnership right away.