

Province unveils granny suites program

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The province unveiled a new \$1.4-million program today to help families build more granny suites in new and existing homes. Housing and Community Development Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross said the program will help address the shortfall of low-rent housing in the city.

Homeowners are eligible for a forgivable loan up to \$35,000 to cover up to 50 per cent of the cost of constructing self-sufficient suites, which can be added to existing homes or created within an residence, like a basement suite. Under the program loans will be limited to one secondary suite per principle residence. Property owners will be responsible for any costs over the maximum forgivable loan.

Homeowners must demonstrate that the main dwelling meets minimum health and safety standards before funding is approved. Manitoba Housing must approve the project before work is started. Forgiveness is earned over a 10-year period on a pro-rated basis.

Homeowners can rent out the suite to a relative, nanny or caregiver, and there must be a legitimate rental relationship under the Residential Tenancies Act.

The rent for the secondary suite must be set at or below the Median Market Rent for the area the dwelling is located and must remain affordable to 10 years. The loan must be paid back on a pro-rata basis if the homeowner sells the house, stops renting out the suite, or rents it out above the maximum allowable rent.

The loan does not cover bringing existing secondary suites up to minimum standards.

It's expected most of the uptake for the program will be from residents in municipalities that already allow secondary suites, including Winnipeg. Construction of a secondary suite must follow proper zoning regulations and building codes.

The program is based on legislation introduced this spring by NDP Maples MLA Mohinder Saran. Saran said the program extended families around the province the chance at spending more time together.

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June 29, 2010

PROVINCE LAUNCHING NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTION OFFERED WITH SECONDARY SUITES INITIATIVE

To increase the supply of quality, affordable housing, the Manitoba government is launching a \$1.4-million initiative to support the construction of secondary suites in homes, Housing and Community Development Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross announced today.

Under the initiative announced today, forgivable loans up to \$35,000 will be available to cover up to 50 per cent of the cost of constructing a self-sufficient suites, which can be added to existing homes or created within residences.

"Secondary suites are an innovative response to dealing with our province's housing needs and help to build healthy, vibrant communities," said Irvin-Ross. "Secondary suites can provide a creative and affordable alternative form of housing for the growing number of renters in the province."

"This new secondary suites initiative is a welcome affordable housing option - especially for seniors and new Manitobans," said Winnipeg realtor Minnie Mavi. "This initiative will streamline the process for creating secondary suites, which can boost the incomes of new home buyers. Realtors can expect to make more sales as a result of this new program."

Loans will be limited to the development of one secondary suite per principle residence. Property owners will be responsible for any costs over the maximum forgivable loan.

A secondary suite is considered secondary to a primary residence. It normally has its own entrance, kitchen, bathroom and living area. Such a suite is often one of the following types:

- . a suite below the main floor of a single-detached dwelling (a basement suite);
- . a suite attached to a single-detached dwelling; or
- . a suite detached from the principal dwelling such as a guesthouse.

The initiative announced today is targeted at property owners who occupy the principal dwelling where the secondary suite will be built.

It is expected that most of the uptake under this program will be from residents in municipalities that already allow secondary suites, either as a permitted or conditional use. This includes Winnipeg.

For more information on participating in the Secondary Suite Program call toll-free 1-866-689-5566 outside Winnipeg.