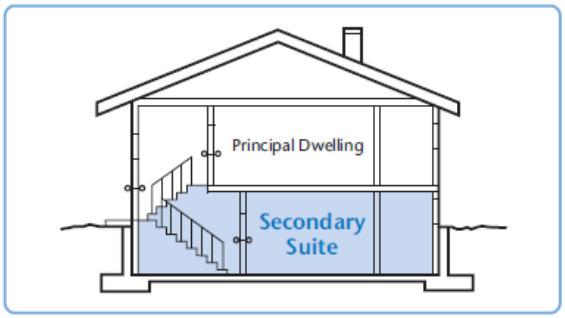
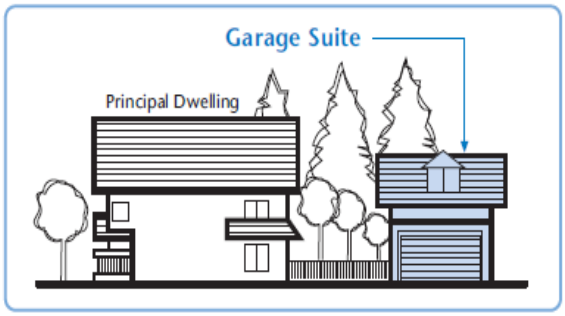
Cornerstones II Grant Program
Information Guide and Application Form

Upgrading an Existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite





Upgrade Existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite in Existing Home

Housing and Economic Sustainability

Introduction

Interested in **upgrading an existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite?** You may be eligible for up to $20,000 in funding through *Cornerstones II: Edmonton's Plan for Affordable Housing 2012 – 2016*. This guide will give you the information you need to begin the application process.

Please note there is a separate Information Guide for **building new suites**. Further documentation may be required and applicants should contact the Secondary Suites Grant Coordinator with questions. Call 311 and ask for the Secondary Suites Grant Coordinator, or e-mail secondarysuites@edmonton.ca.

Grant Application

- The Secondary Suites grant application form is attached. The City will evaluate completed grant applications and the following required documentation:
  - Two itemized estimates of the total construction cost of the proposed Suite;
  - Copy of a valid Development Permit and Building Permit;
  - Copy of a floor plan of the proposed Suite approved by a City Plans Examiner;
  - Copy of land title or valid offer to purchase to confirm ownership of the property;
  - Copy of a current property tax notice/assessment;
  - Confirmation of project financing.

- Complete grant applications packages must be submitted to:

  Mailing Address:
  Real Estate and Housing
  Secondary Suites
  2nd Floor, Edmonton Tower
  10111 – 104 Avenue
  Edmonton, AB T5J 0J4

- Funding will be committed based on the figures submitted and no cost over-runs will be covered by the City of Edmonton. The Housing Branch decision is final.
- The City of Edmonton will make every effort to notify an applicant within 10 working days on the status of their completed application and required documentation.

Definitions

- A “Secondary Suite” is a self-contained dwelling located within a single detached house and has separate cooking, sleeping and bathing facilities. A Secondary Suite also has a separate entrance from the single detached house, either from a common indoor landing or directly from the exterior of the house. Secondary Suites include the conversion of basement space to a dwelling, or the addition of new floor space to an existing single detached house. Secondary Suites do not include housing that was initially designed for two or more dwellings such as Duplex Housing, Semi-detached Housing, Apartment Housing, or Boarding and Lodging Housing.

- A "Garage Suite" is a self-contained dwelling located above or attached to a detached garage which is accessory to a single detached house. A Garage Suite has an entrance that is separate from the vehicle entrance and can be from the exterior of the structure or from an independent or common (shared) interior landing. Common landings must be separated from the storage garage in a manner that conforms to the requirements of the current Alberta Building Code.

- A “Garden Suite” is a self-contained single-storey dwelling which is accessory to, but detached from, the principal single detached house. It has separate cooking, sleeping and bathroom facilities.

Program Purpose

- The *Cornerstones II Secondary Suites Grant Program* is intended to improve the condition of long-term affordable housing rental units that conform to City zoning and Provincial building code requirements.

Program Details

- The Secondary Suite Program provides funding to assist a property owner to upgrade the condition of an existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite.

- **Secondary Suite grants provide conditional funding assistance to qualifying applicants on a first-come-first-served basis, up to a maximum of $20,000 per Secondary Suite and no greater than 50% of the eligible construction costs. A flat rate for maximum reimbursement on selected eligible costs will be applied.**

  <u>Please note:</u> The property is security for the obligation of the owner up to the maximum grant funding amount and constitutes a charge against the property. The City will file a caveat that will be discharged upon expiry or termination of the 5-year operating agreement.

- In Edmonton, there are many existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suites that do not have approved City Development and/or Building Permits and may not have been built to meet zoning and/or safety code requirements. Existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suites that are not built to building code requirements present significant risks to residents, owners and surrounding neighbours.

- Upgrading Secondary, Garage and Garden suites to City zoning and Provincial Fire Code safety requirements will help reduce health and safety concerns and extend the life of existing Suites as an affordable housing option for lower income households in Edmonton.

- The Program is not designed to convert an existing developed basement as part of a primary residential unit as a Secondary Suite. In these cases, you may wish to apply for a grant through the "Building a New Secondary Suite in an Existing Home".

- The City funded Suite must be rented to an eligible tenant earning within the maximum income by household size thresholds during the 5-year operating agreement.

- Sale of the property prior to the terms of the 5-year operating agreement will result in full repayment of the entire grant amount.

- There is a maximum allotment of two grants per applicant per year. Applicants who wish to construct more than one Secondary Suite must apply for both properties simultaneously on two separate application forms.

- Proposed Suites must comply with the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw prior to being considered for funding.

- The Secondary Suite Program requires the property owner to use their own funds and not other government funding for their proportionate share of the Program Funded Suite.

- The Secondary Suite Program total annual budget is based on the City's limited Provincial and City *Cornerstones II* funding sources. Therefore, funding commitments to the Secondary Suites Program is conditional on budget availability.

Eligible Applicants

- Applicants to the Secondary Suite Program must:
  - Show commitment to the purpose of the Program and demonstrate ability to oversee the construction and manage the suite over the full 5-year term of the operating agreement with the City;

- Can be a homeowner, registered company, property management company or numbered company;
- Provide receipts indicating that project costs beyond the grant funding amount have been paid prior to accessing grant funding.

- Prior to applying for the "Upgrading an Existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite" grant, the owner must agree to allow the appropriate Inspectors to enter the premises to assess the existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite.

- An applicant who is in property tax arrears is not eligible for Program funding

- The applicant/owner must have secured the property, as evidenced by holding title or having a valid offer to purchase, before applying for Program funds.

- An applicant approved for funding under this Program must abide by the requirements for a landlord under the Residential Tenancies Act.[1]

Eligible Costs

- Eligible costs means all reasonable costs related to upgrading of a modest, self-contained Program-funded Suite.
  - Eligible costs include: required servicing, building materials, and qualified labour for construction to meet minimum health and safety code requirements for Secondary Suites, development and construction permits;
  - Ineligible costs include: furnishings, appliances, site development and costs incurred prior to approval of Cornerstones II grant funding.

- A flat rate for maximum reimbursement on selected eligible costs will be applied.

- Inspection staff will provide a specification report outlining "qualifying" and "mandatory" repairs required under the Program. Repairs must bring the Suite up to a minimum level of health and safety.

- All construction costs must be approved by the Housing Branch and meet all applicable Codes. Any construction costs beyond the scope of the Program will not be covered by Program funding.

- Additional funding may be available for disability modifications.

[1] For additional information please contact the Landlord Tenant Advisory Board (LTAB) at: 8904 – 118 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5B 0T6, (780) 496-2978, www.edmonton.ca/ltab

Eligible Properties

- The project must be located within the boundaries of the City of Edmonton.
- The project can only be developed in, or accessory to, a single detached house.
- Only one Secondary Suite is permitted per property.
- The property must meet City zoning, Alberta Fire Code and Alberta Building Code requirements to permit a Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite.
- A Suite must comply with Edmonton Zoning Bylaw minimum and maximum suite size requirements:

Suite Type	Required Suite Size/Floor Area	
	Minimum	**Maximum**
Secondary or Basement Suite	30 square meters (322.92 square feet)	Not more than the total floor area of the first storey of the building. Suites on or above the first floor: 40% of the total floor area of the building, or 70 square meters (753.48 square feet), whichever is less.
Garage Suite (above grade)	30 square meters (322.92 square feet)	60 square meters (645.84 square feet). May be increased by up to 7.5 square meters only where additional amount is used for a platform structure associated with the Suite.
Garden or at grade Garage Suite	30 square meters (322.92 square feet)	50 square meters (538.2 square feet), excluding garage portion of the building. May be increased by up to 7.5 square meters only where additional amount is used for a platform structure associated with the Suite.

Eligible Tenants

- A Program funded Suite must be rented to a household with less than maximum income[2] that is capable of independent living without in-situ Support Services; requires no ongoing housing operating subsidies from the government.
  - Every effort must be made to accommodate an existing tenant in a Secondary Suite requiring upgrading.

[2] The City determines whether a tenant qualifies based on its determination of maximum income in the City of Edmonton. Information on the maximum income for specific household sizes in Edmonton is available from the City's Housing Branch as well as on the City web site http://www.edmonton.ca/cornerstones. It is the responsibility of the Owner to inform the City that the tenant is earning less than maximum income for their household size.

- An existing tenant, regardless of income, will be permitted to remain in an upgraded suite.

Grant Approval Process

- The City will issue a letter to an approved applicant enclosing a draft 5-year operating agreement that specifies the amount approved and the terms and conditions of the grant approval. In response, the applicant shall sign and return all copies of the agreement.

- One hundred percent (100%) of Program approved funds may be paid to the applicant upon a final inspection by the City Housing Branch after all work is completed and receipt of all required final inspection reports which confirm compliance with appropriate governing codes and legislation. All grant funding cheques will be made payable to the applicant.

- The City retains the right to access the property and monitor the project and ensure compliance with all terms and conditions of the operating agreement over its 5-year term. The City may inspect a Program-funded property on an annual basis. The applicant and tenant must provide a City Inspector access within one week of a request being made to enter the premises for up to 5 years after the receipt of Program funding.

- The applicant is required to notify the City of any ownership or Suite tenancy changes before the 5-year term has completed.

- Approval of applications will be revoked if the work is not completed within 12 months of the date of the approval letter. All required documentation and a request for final inspection by the City must be submitted by this time.

- An applicant who breaches the terms of the signed operating agreement will be required to repay the entire grant amount in full.

Application Form **Cornerstones II-A Grant Program**

Upgrading an Existing Secondary, Garage or Garden Suite

☐ **Secondary Suite** ☐ **Garage Suite** ☐ **Garden Suite**

Note: Incomplete applications will not be accepted. A complete application includes attaching:

- **Valid Development and Building Permits;**
- **Two itemized estimates of the total construction cost of the proposed Suite;**
- **Copy of a floor plan of the proposed suite approved by a City Plans Examiner;**
- **Copy of land title or valid offer to purchase;**
- **Copy of current property tax notice or assessment;**
- **Confirmation of project financing.**

Completed applications will be considered on a first-come-first-served basis.

Approved homeowners may be eligible for a reimbursement of up to 50% of the project's eligible costs, to the maximum grant amount.

APPLICANT(S) – All persons on Title

Property Owner(s)	Contact Name (if different)
Name of spouse (if not on title)	Does the spouse reside (or have they ever resided) on the property? YES/NO

MAILING ADDRESS/CONTACT INFORMATION

Street No.	Street Name	Unit/Apt. No.	City	Province	Postal Code
Telephone Numbers	Home ( )	Work ( )	Cell ( )		
Email					

PROPERTY TO BE DEVELOPED

Street No.	Street Name	City	Province	Postal Code
Legal Description (Plan, Block & Lot)				

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST DETAILS

Item	Estimate 1	Estimate 2
Total Estimated Construction Costs Inc. GST		
Other Costs: i.e. Building Permits, Drawings, etc. Inc. GST		
Total Estimated Project Costs		

DECLARATION

1. I/We hereby grant permission to the City of Edmonton to carry out necessary inquiries to verify accuracy of information contained herein.
2. I/We hereby confirm that I/we am/are the owner(s) of the said property.
3. I/We hereby authorize an inspection of my/our property at any reasonable time with the appropriate advance notice.
4. I/We acknowledge that any work carried out prior to receipt of written confirmation of Cornerstones II funding approval is not eligible for Program funding.
5. I/We hereby commit to make available for rent the Suite to a household earning less than the maximum income for their household size in Edmonton for a period of 5 years. (Please note the 5-year term commences from the first day of the month following the date the final Grant Funding cheque is issued.) Every effort will be made to accommodate an existing tenant in a Secondary Suite requiring upgrading. An existing tenant, regardless of income, will be permitted to remain in an upgraded suite.
6. I/we will notify the City of any and all building ownership or Suite tenancy changes within the 5-year term.
7. I/We acknowledge that I/we must expend one hundred percent (100%) of required owner contribution prior to receiving any City grant funding.
8. It is understood by the parties that the Cornerstones II Secondary Suite Grant Program requires the Owner to use the Owner's funds and not other Government funding for its proportionate share of the Program Funded Suite.
9. I/We acknowledge:
   (a) that I/we have read and understand the terms and conditions of the information guide that shall govern any funding that may be approved;
   and, (b) that I/we will enter into an operating agreement.
10. The information contained herein is true.

Date	**Signature(s) of Applicant(s) on Title**

The personal information requested in this form is collected pursuant to Section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. It will be used for the purpose of operating the City's Cornerstones II Grant program and may be disclosed to the Government of Alberta for purposes of oversight and to ensure accountability. Your personal information will be protected in accordance with the FOIP Act. Any questions may be directed to the Secondary Suites Coordinator, 5th Floor, 10250 - 101 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3P4. Phone: 311 or (780)-442-5311.