

Housing Services Fact Sheet

Niagara Renovates Program - Homeowner

Description

The Niagara Renovates Program - Homeowner is a program for low and modest-income households in Niagara that funds:

- Affordable housing repairs
- Housing modifications for persons with disabilities

To qualify, existing homes must need repairs to bring them up to a minimum level of health and safety, and/or permanent modifications to increase accessibility for the occupant's disability. All repair work must include energy-saving products where possible.

Eligible Projects

Examples of eligible repairs include:

- Structural (including building exterior such as roofs, foundations or walls)
- Plumbing
- Fire safety
- Electrical and/or heating

Examples of eligible accessibility work include:

- Ramps
- Handrails and chair/bath lifts
- Height adjustment to counter tops
- Cues for doorbells/fire alarms

The improvements must be permanent and remove physical barriers, safety risks and improve daily living within the home.

Ineligible Projects

Examples of projects that are **not** eligible include:

- Landscaping
- Routine maintenance
- Cosmetic renovations and repairs
- Repairs on any detached dwellings

Funding

Households are allowed one application under the Niagara Renovates Program. Funding is provided as a fully forgivable loan, which is written off at an equal rate over a 10-year period. The loan is not repaid if the homeowners remain as owners and live in the home during the 10-year forgivable period.

The maximum loan amount includes a portion for accessibility repairs, if required, of up to \$5,000 that does not need to be repaid.

Program Default

If any of the following occur, the homeowner is considered to be in default and the balance of the loan amount must be repaid:

- The home is sold
- The homeowner stops living in the unit as the primary residence
- The funding is used for other purposes
- The homeowner has misrepresented information about program eligibility

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Eligibility

To be eligible, households must meet the following criteria:

1. The total income of all household members must be at or below the following, based on the number of bedrooms in the home:
 - 1 Bedroom - \$46,000
 - 2 Bedroom - \$55,000
 - 3 Bedroom - \$63,800
 - 4+ Bedroom - \$83,000
2. Homeowners must own the home for a minimum of five years
3. The home must be valued below the average MLS (Multiple Listing Service) resale price:

St. Catharines	\$639,258
Thorold	\$689,935
Niagara-on-the-Lake	\$1,239,504
Welland	\$568,461
Fonthill	\$922,185
Niagara Falls	\$679,086
Fort Erie	\$569,358
Lincoln	\$766,788
Port Colborne /Wainfleet	\$597,898
West Lincoln	\$826,500
Grimsby	\$856,692

4. The latest Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) Assessment or Property Tax Bill must be provided
5. Homeowners who have previously received Homeownership funding are **not** eligible
6. Homeowners who have previously received CMHC and/or Niagara Renovates funding are **not** eligible until the 10 year forgivable period expires

Note: Housing Services will determine the homeowner's financial capacity to make the repairs requested, based on their income, savings and other liquid assets.

Homeowners whose assets exceed \$30,000 will not be eligible for funding.



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Homeowner Requirements

1. Complete and sign an application and provide all supporting documentation, including:
 - Copy of Driver's License(s), passport(s) or other photo identification to verify owners of the property
 - Proof of income for all members of household
 - MPAC Assessment or Property Tax Bill
 - Insurance coverage
2. Housing Services will conduct a title search on the property. Associated costs will be included in the total approved funding amount.
2. The mortgage/charge will be registered on title by Housing Services. Associated legal costs will be included in the total approved funding amount.
3. Homeowners are to start work within 30 days of receiving final approval. Work that started prior to written approval by Housing Services is not eligible.
4. Homeowners must allow inspections by Housing Services:
 - Prior to start of work
 - During construction (as required)
 - When project is complete

These inspections are over and above the required inspections for building permit work.

Conditional Approval

1. If the application is complete and meets eligibility requirements, an inspection will be conducted on the property. A report will be provided to the homeowner with *Conditional Approval*.
2. Homeowners are to obtain estimates from professional contractors and provide copies to Housing Services
3. Contractors must provide copies of WSIB coverage and Insurance Coverage as part of the quote process

Final Approval

1. Quotes will be reviewed by Housing Services. *Final Approval* will be issued via a Letter of Agreement outlining the scope of work, funding amount, and roles/responsibilities of both the homeowner(s) and Housing Services.

CONTACT

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