City of Winnipeg Housing Accelerator Fund

Vacant Building Grant

Information Session

July 22, 2026

Land and water acknowledgement

Winnipeg is located in Treaty One Territory, the home and traditional lands of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Ininew (Cree) and Dakota peoples, and in the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. Our drinking water comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, in Treaty Three Territory.

Agenda

1. Land + water acknowledgement
2. Overview of Grant
    a) Background and Purpose
    b) Eligibility
    c) Timeline and Evaluation Criteria
    d) How to apply
3. By-law Enforcement:
   Vacant Building Programs
4. Affordable Housing Concierge Service
5. FAQ
6. Next steps
7. Questions
8. Opportunity for individual discussions

Housekeeping

Background

- December 2023 — $122.4 million **Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) agreement** between City of Winnipeg and CMHC (now $126.5M)
- Previous HAF initiatives focused on **"net new" units** (rehabilitated units not counted) — to meet HAF agreement targets
- *2025 Housing Needs Assessment* reported **535 vacant residential buildings** with active orders — a combined 980 previously inhabited housing units

Background (cont.)

- City takes **enforcement** approach to vacant buildings
- From 2020-25, the City collected $878,711 in **Empty Building Fees** (EBF)
- Vacant Building Grant pools EBF and 2026 HAF funding for **$3 million** total grants available
- **One-time grant** (no ongoing funding source) – up to **$35,000/unit**
- Vacant Building Grant approved by Council June 25, 2026

Purpose of Vacant Building Grant

- **Mitigate loss** of existing buildings, including previously affordable housing, to fire, deterioration, or demolition due to prolonged vacancy
- **Reduce risk and cost** to the City associated with vacant buildings, including by-law enforcement and fire and paramedic services
- **Generate new/replacement housing units** rapidly and cost effectively
- **Generate affordable housing units**, with 20-year affordability commitment
- **Revitalize neighbourhoods**, especially with more vacant buildings
- Target the rehabilitation/re-occupancy of about **100** dwelling units

Eligibility

A project may be eligible to receive a Vacant Building Grant of **up to $35,000 per unit** if it meets the following criteria:

1. Building and project criteria
2. Affordability criteria
3. Other criteria (eligible applicants, permit requirement)

Eligibility

Building and project criteria

- At least **20 years old**
- **Vacant or underutilized** (min. 2 years)
- May be multi-unit residential, single-unit residential, or converted from another use
- **Minimum 4 housing units** per project
  - Can be on multiple lots
  - At least same # units as previous

Eligibility

Affordability criteria

- **100% affordable homeownership** units, *OR*
- **Min. 30% affordable units rented** at:
  - a) <80% median market rent (20 years);
  - b) Province of Manitoba Affordable Housing Rental Rates (20 years); or
  - c) Other criteria approved by the CAO (must explain why needed)

Eligibility

Other criteria

- **Eligible applicants**: for-profit, non-profit, or Indigenous government
- Property must be **owned or leased** by the applicant before release of all funds
- Housing units must receive an **occupancy permit** (or equivalent) by the end of the fourth calendar year after the project receives conditional approval

Timeline

Council approval
June 25, 2026

Intake opens
July 2, 2026

We are here!

Information session
July 22, 2026

Intake closes
August 17, 2026

Adjudication & notification
Fall 2026

Expense deadline
October 1, 2027

Occupancy deadline
4 years after approval

Evaluation criteria

Component	%	Description/Examples
Readiness to Construct and Applicant Experience	**35%**	ability to complete project on time, experience of applicant and/or partners
Social Impact	**25%**	ownership, # units, target population, tenant supports, location, unit mix, alignment with 2025 Housing Needs Assessment
Financial Feasibility and Efficient use of Funding	**15%**	# units, operating and capital feasibility, ability to secure funding/financing, proof of need
Neighbourhood Revitalization Impact	**15%**	repair or re-occupancy of problematic/long-term vacant/underused buildings, areas with higher vacancy, increased unit count
Planning Alignment	**10%**	e.g., OurWinnipeg 2045, Complete Communities 2.0

How to apply

1. Download Application Workbook from winnipeg.ca/vacantbuildinggrant
2. Submit completed Workbook by **August 17, 2026**
   - Email to HAF@winnipeg.ca with subject line "Vacant Building Grant"
   - ***Optional:*** can include supporting documents (e.g., drawings, budgets, support letters)

By-law Enforcement

Vacant Building Programs

- Starting July 1, 2026, two new programs will support owners of vacant buildings who are taking steps to repair, redevelop, reoccupy, or remove these buildings.
- These programs encourage investing in vacant buildings and support the work that brings them back into productive use.

1. Renovation Fee Waiver Program
2. Vacant Building Exemption Program

Renovation Fee Waiver Program

Under this program, we will provide a dollar-for-dollar credit toward vacant building fees based on:

- The value of a City grant issued for the renovation or redevelopment of a vacant building, or
- The cost of a City construction permit used to improve the building

Eligibility

- Must apply within 12 months of when the City grant was issued, or the date the City construction permit was closed by inspection.

Use

- Current Invoices only while vacant.
- All outstanding debt when occupied or demolished.

Renovation Fee Waiver Program

Important conditions

- Fee waivers are not cash refunds and cannot be used to recover fees already paid
- Fee waivers can only be used for Vacant Building By-law fees. They cannot be applied to tickets, fines, administrative penalties, or any other debts owed to the City
- Fee waivers are building specific

Vacant Building Exemption Program

The Vacant Building Exemption Program supports owners who are actively working to redevelop a vacant building.

The program allows us to exempt the vacant building from the Vacant Building By-law and related fees.

Eligibility

To qualify, you must show that you are actively moving forward with redevelopment and meet **all of** the following requirements:

- You have an active Development Permit for the project
- You have obtained and paid for all required building and construction permits
- You have submitted a complete Vacant Building Exemption Program application form

Vacant Building Exemption Program

Conditions

If approved for the program, you must continue to meet your responsibilities as a property owner. You must:

- Keep the building safe and secure at all times
- Keep the property clean and in compliance with all applicable City by-laws
- Ensure the building is officially occupied or demolished before your development permits close

If the project is not completed

The purpose of this program is to support successful occupancy or removal of vacant buildings.

If your project is not completed, or if your permits expire, are cancelled, or are withdrawn, the exemption will end. If that happens, you will be required to pay all vacant building fees that would have been charged during the exemption period.

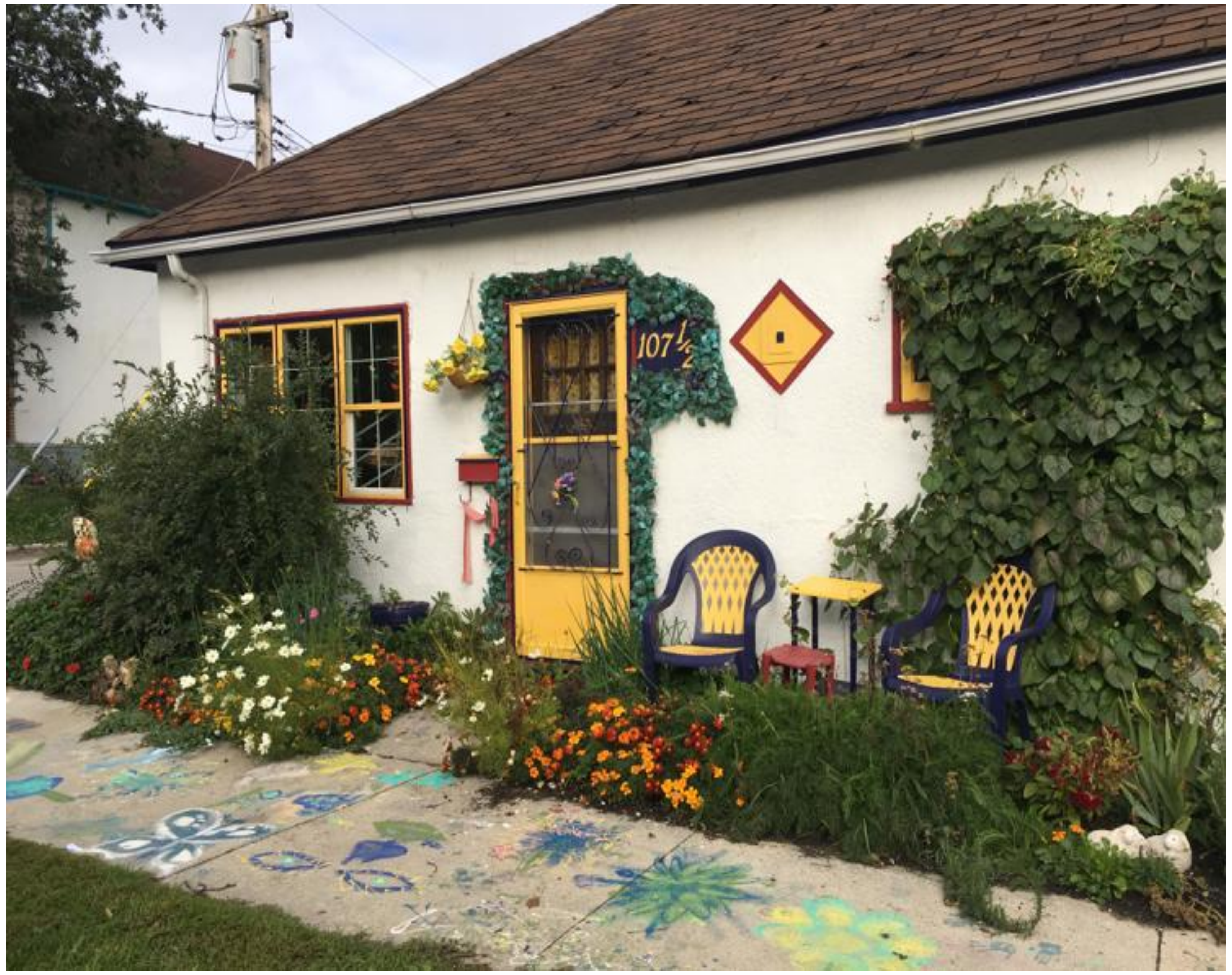
How to apply

(Renovation Fee Waiver Program or Vacant Building Exemption Program)

- **Apply by email**
  - CMS-LBE@winnipeg.ca
- **Apply by mail**
  - Renovation Fee Waiver Program or Vacant Building Exemption Program
  - Licensing and Bylaw Enforcement
  - Main Floor 395 Main St.
  - Winnipeg, MB R3B 3N8
- **Apply in-person**
  - 395 Main St.

Affordable Housing Concierge Service

Acts as a single point of contact to assist non-profit housing providers and Indigenous organizations plan their affordable housing applications, coordinate expedited review times where possible, and provide guidance on next steps at different stages of the development and building permit processes.



winnipeg.ca/building-development/housing/housing-accelerator-fund/affordable-housing-concierge-service

Affordable Housing Concierge Service

- Developments with a minimum of 5 residential units and where a minimum of 30% of the total dwelling units are being rented at either of the following affordability criteria:
  - at less than 80% of the median market rent for the area, in line with CMHC's Affordable Housing Fund Criteria for a minimum of twenty (20) years; or
  - at Province of Manitoba Affordable Housing Rental Rates for a minimum of twenty (20) years.
  - Social housing rented at rent-geared-to-income or rented at Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) Rates.
- Developments that are affordable homeownership, meaning they are developed to sell to individuals or families with low to moderate income, at a maximum sale price and maximum income limit directed by government funding source (i.e. Province of Manitoba)

Vacant Building Grant: Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

1) How do I know/prove that a building has been vacant or underutilized for at least 2 years?

a) Check this **list** of vacant buildings that are not compliant with *Vacant Building By-law* orders: https://data.winnipeg.ca/Neighbourhood-Liveability-Property-Standards-Licen/Active-Vacant-Building-By-law-Compliance-Orders/qe3f-4r3j/data_preview (any building with a Schedule A order for last 2 years would qualify, but not exhaustive)

b) **Ask** the current owner – if they are interested in selling, they should disclose City involvement

c) **Check title** for the property – Orders and outstanding invoices can be caveated to the title

d) **Any other documentation** is helpful – we may do our own research and request additional evidence

FAQ

2) How is affordability determined/monitored?

- Successful applicants will enter into an agreement for monitoring affordable rents over 20 years
- Depending on the level of affordability and whether any other funders are supporting the project, monitoring may be done by the City, Province, or Federal government
- For affordable homeownership, must demonstrate that the home will be sold to a household with income below the provincial Affordable Rental Program Income Limit and that all shelter costs will be less than 30% of household income – provide details of affordable homeownership structure in application

FAQ

3) Can I demolish a vacant building and build new on the site with this grant?

- No, total demolition is not an eligible expense of the Vacant Building Grant.
- This grant is designed to mitigate the loss of existing buildings.
- Previous HAF grants have focused on new builds, and rehabilitation of vacant homes had been ineligible under those grant programs, so this program is intended to address that gap.

FAQ

4) Doesn't this grant just reward negligent building owners?

- This is an effort to marry the City's enforcement "sticks" with some "carrot" incentives to address buildings currently sitting vacant that could be re-occupied – to prevent further deterioration and eventual loss of buildings.
- Grants may go to:
    - Non-profits/ affordable housing providers to purchase buildings
    - Non-profit housing providers with units currently vacant because they cannot charge enough in rent to afford repairs
    - Responsible building owners, compliant with by-laws, who face cost barriers to the major repairs needed for aging buildings
- As part of adjudication of the "applicant experience" criteria, we will consider the applicant's track record

FAQ

5) Will there be another intake for this grant at a later date?

- No, the Vacant Building Grant is a one-time grant funded through 2026 Housing Accelerator Funding and 2020-25 Empty Building Fees. There is no ongoing revenue source to fund this grant on an ongoing basis.

Next steps

- PowerPoint added to Grant website
- Applications accepted until August 17, 2026
- Adjudication by City of Winnipeg committee
  - Includes research, potential requests for additional information
- Decision communicated Fall 2026
  - All applicants will be notified
- Grant agreements signed
- Development/renovation
- Occupancy of units

Questions?

Winnipeg