

Co-op Housing News

An e-bulletin for municipal service managers

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In this e-bulletin:

- Latest *Downloading Details*
- Good governance in housing co-ops
- Updated guide to tendering for management services
- Training on funding model and benchmarks
- Working for SHRA changes
- Changes make annual meeting more affordable
- Co-op locator

Latest *Downloading Details*

CHF Canada's Ontario Region has recently sent two issues of *Downloading Details* to housing co-ops:

[*Downloading Details #24, An overview to the new funding model*](#) explains the key features of the new funding model.

[*Downloading Details #25, More changes to regulations 298/01 and 339/01*](#) reviews the recent set of regulation changes.

Good governance in housing co-ops

At the 2004 Annual General Meeting, CHF Canada's members adopted Core Management Standards for housing co-ops. Members also decided that these standards, set out in [*Managing to Our Strengths*](#), should be promoted across the country. The attached article, *Good governance in your housing co-op*, from our national *Newsbriefs*, is the first in a series about management and governance and what co-ops can do to improve them.

Also attached is a model ethical conduct agreement that we recommend to co-op housing boards.

Updated guide to tendering for management services

The *Social Housing Reform Act* requires co-ops and non-profits to use competitive and open practices when hiring staff or choosing a management company. The Ontario Region has published an updated *Guide to Tendering for Co-op Management in Ontario Housing Co-operatives*. It takes co-ops through the process of hiring a company to provide management services and gives them tools to use. It includes

- a model contract
- a sample bid form
- instructions to bidders
- a model information protection agreement
- a sample of manager's job description.

The insurance and privacy sections of the guide have been updated with new information.

Co-ops that are members of CHF Canada and service managers that are associates can get their free copy of the guide on the [Ontario Region pages](#) of our website. CHF Canada holds copyright to this material.

Training on funding model and benchmarks

This winter, CHF Canada's Ontario Region will be conducting training across the province on the new funding model and benchmarks. The all-day sessions are designed to give co-op managers the detailed information they need to

- understand the new funding model
- evaluate the adequacy of their draft benchmarks
- implement the new funding model.

A shorter session for directors, treasurers and finance committee members is designed to give them an overview of the new model and a basic understanding of the effect on their co-op's funding levels.

We are working with local federations, where they exist, to plan these workshops. Service managers will be invited to attend the day-long sessions.

Working for SHRA changes

Ontario Region staff attended the Ontario Region's Social Housing Group meeting this fall to update service managers on our work to get changes to the *Social Housing Reform Act* (SHRA).

While there are clear differences between co-ops and service managers on some issues, there is significant consensus on the need for changes in key areas. As a starting point,

we want the government to implement the October 2002 and January 2004 consensus recommendations for changes to the SHRA regulations.

The Ontario Region's reform proposals focus on four goals:

- a renewed commitment to a community-based housing model
- a simplified accountability framework
- adequate and predictable funding
- a fair and workable RGI program.

Despite some differences, we believe service managers and co-ops have a shared interest in a stable, workable program framework that all stakeholders accept.

Changes make annual meeting more affordable

CHF Canada's annual general meeting will be held from June 16-18 in Edmonton. The Ontario meeting is always held in conjunction with the national meeting, which moves from city to city across the country.

We have made some changes to the meeting to make it easier for co-ops to send delegates. The event has been shortened by one day, saving co-ops one night's accommodation and one day of meal expenses. Registration costs have also been reduced slightly.

The workshop program will feature over 50 workshops in the Member Education Forum and about 20 workshops in the Co-op Management Conference. There will be a series of workshops for Ontario-program co-ops. Already, a number of service manager representatives have accepted our invitation to participate as panellists in the workshop program.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable John Gerretsen, has made a preliminary commitment to attend as has the federal Minister of Labour and Housing, the Honourable Joe Fontana.

Our special guest speaker will be Stephen Lewis. Mr. Lewis is the Secretary General's Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa and Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations.

It promises to be an action-packed three days with lots of opportunities for co-op members and managers to get the tools they need to effectively run their co-ops.

Information will be posted on our website as it becomes available, www.chfc.coop.

Co-op locator

A valuable new feature has been added to CHF Canada's website to help applicants who want to live in a co-op find one in their area. The [co-op locator](#) includes information about co-ops across Canada and an e-mail address to contact.

For those looking for a rent-geared-to income unit in an Ontario-program co-op there are links to service manager websites with information on central waiting list systems.