

Heritage Helping Housing 2026

Proposed: **Heritage Building Grant for Housing**

Older buildings have inherent sustainability and provide economic, environmental and social benefits.

To support Ontario's housing objectives while advancing ACO's strategic goal to Keep | Fix | Reuse our heritage assets, the province should:

Create a new, application-based, matching grant program of \$10M/year to generate new housing. The grant program would incentivize owners to revitalize vacant or under-utilized heritage buildings to create new housing units.



*Top: Port Hope. Commercial building with upper floors converted to residential use.
Bottom: Kitchener. Former button factory converted to supportive housing units.*

Heritage Helping Housing 2026 Request

Create a new, application-based, matching grant program of \$10M/year, modelled on an existing Alberta program. The grant program would incentivize owners and smaller developers to **Keep | Fix | Reuse** heritage buildings to create new housing.

Benefits of a Heritage Building Grant for Housing

- Increased housing;
- Reuse of existing buildings, minimizing use of infrastructure, such as sewer and water;
- Rehabilitation of older buildings, which is generally less expensive, uses more local resources and creates more local jobs;
- Keeping older buildings helps a community remain visually richer and enhances identity while building its tourism brand and appeal;
- Alternative to the Ontario heritage property tax relief program, which has limited impact on developers and reduces municipal revenues;
- Simpler and more direct way for heritage building owners to fund renovations or conservation;
- Incentive for owners to work with their municipality to have their property recognized under the Ontario Heritage Act; and
- Alberta grant program has a simple application process that provides half the grant up front (both elements are popular with developers).

Developers' Perspective

Ontario developers surveyed by the National Trust for Canada in 2014 ranked a heritage revolving fund as their top incentive to encourage heritage development if:

- the grants are simple to apply for and to administer; and
- the fund is large enough to meet at least 33% of the demand (so that applicants have a reasonable chance of recovering the cost and effort of applying).¹

Heritage Helping Housing demonstrates that heritage properties can play a strong supporting role in addressing Ontario's housing crisis.

Click here for more information on the proposed program or contact Debra Crawford at president@acontario.ca .

¹ [Final Report -Financial Measures-2016 use this.pdf \(nationaltrustcanada.ca\)](#), p. 24.