

RELEASE

Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

**Minister Solberg Announces
Renewal of Initiative to Promote Housing Affordability**

OTTAWA, May 30, 2008 – Grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to local housing teams that increase housing affordability and choice under the renewal of the Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) initiative, the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development and Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) announced today.

The two-year \$650,000 initiative provides these grants to local teams of municipalities and housing stakeholders, who promote the improvement of planning and building regulations in their communities to lower the cost of housing. ACT also offers a wealth of proven best practices and lessons learned so that communities can benefit from the innovations of others.

"Our government is committed to making housing more affordable for all Canadians, and ACT provides the incentive for housing stakeholders to find innovative ways to do this," said Minister Solberg. "ACT brings all levels of government and the private- and non-profit housing sectors together to work in partnership toward this goal."

ACT is funded by CMHC and administered and delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), with the participation of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA).

In addition to providing grants, ACT experts promote best practices and lessons learned from the projects undertaken by grant recipients at workshops, conferences and other events attended by municipalities and housing stakeholders.

"Municipalities of any size and region can turn to ACT for good ideas that other communities have successfully used to encourage urban intensification and sustainable communities," said FCM President Gord Steeves. "This makes housing more affordable."

CHBA President John Hrynkow applauded the federal government's decision to renew the ACT initiative.

"ACT promotes actions that help the home building industry and municipalities to streamline approvals and pursue initiatives that enhance housing affordability and choice," Hrynkow said.

"Non-profit housing groups can benefit from the best practices that are showcased by ACT to address housing needs in their communities since the projects encourage a broad range of affordable housing options, such as secondary suites, smaller infill lots, new rental housing and housing for youth and independent seniors," said CHRA President David Eddy.

As Canada's national housing agency, CMHC draws on more than 60 years of experience to help Canadians access a variety of quality, environmentally sustainable, and affordable homes — homes that will continue to create vibrant and healthy communities and cities across the country.

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A backgrounder is attached.

For further information please contact:

Lesley Harmer
Director of Communications
Office of the Honourable Monte Solberg
Minister of Human Resources and
Social Development
819-994-2482

Kristen Scheel
CMHC
Media Relations
613-748-4632
Cell 613-513-6546

Julie Girard
CMHC
Media Relations
613-748-4684
Cell 613-295-6330

BACKGROUNDER

AFFORDABILITY AND CHOICE TODAY (ACT)

ACT was created in 1990 to fund and promote projects spearheaded by local teams of municipalities, non-profit housing groups and other housing stakeholders to overcome regulatory barriers and make regulations more responsive to the housing needs of communities across Canada.

ACT is funded by CMHC and administered and delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), with the participation of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA).

The ACT national management committee reviews the project proposals submitted by local teams from communities across Canada. The committee is made up of representatives from CMHC, FCM, CHBA and CHRA. The projects selected receive grants of up to \$5,000. ACT grants can be used to finance activities such as obtaining input and direction on a regulatory reform initiative, facilitating local implementation, or advancing efforts to overcome specific regulatory barriers.

The best practices and lessons learned from regulatory reform projects are promoted by ACT staff at workshops, conferences and other events and are made available on the ACT website.

ACT projects have led to a range of actions, including:

- Changes in bylaws and regulations to improve housing affordability and choice;
- Streamlining of building permit approval processes for greater efficiency;
- Enhancing working relationships between municipalities and housing sector stakeholders;
- Creating alternative development standards;
- Removing regulatory barriers to the creation of secondary suites and rooming homes.

With 137 projects complete, ACT has a rich database of housing regulation solutions that communities across Canada can benefit from when planning their future housing projects. Information sheets and case studies on regulatory reform projects are available on the website www.actprogram.com.

For more information about the ACT grant application process and about ACT solutions call (613) 907-6242, email info@actprogram.com or consult the web site above.