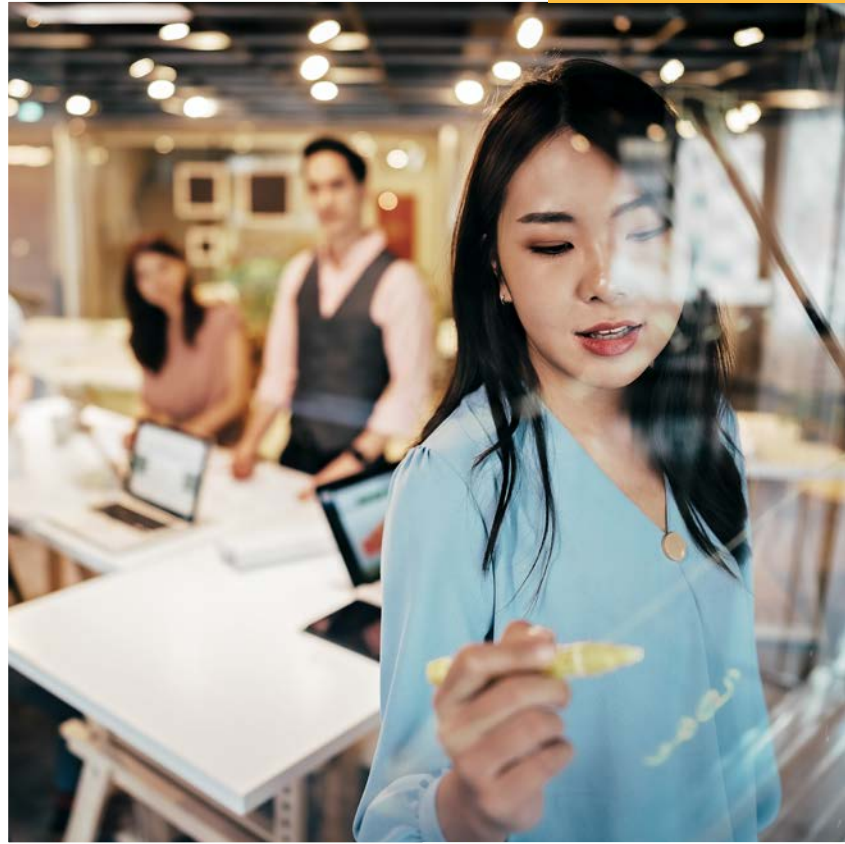


NHS Solutions Labs

APPLICANT GUIDE
2021



*Photos taken prior to COVID-19
physical distancing safety measures*

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PART 1—GENERAL INFORMATION

Overview

The purpose of this section is to provide general information about Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and this solicitation for Solutions Lab tasks and activities.

Introduction

CMHC wishes to enter into **agreements** with multidisciplinary, holistic and committed project teams (hereafter referred to as the “applicant”) for the purpose of supporting Solutions Lab activities that will develop roadmaps to implement innovative solutions to address identified housing problems within the **National Housing Strategy (NHS)** priority theme areas and priority populations.

This application guide provides an overview of the application intake process, guidance on the information to be included in the application, the criteria which will be used in evaluating the application and selecting successful applicants, and outlines the terms and conditions under which the successful applicant will be awarded the agreement. By submitting an application, applicants agree to be bound by the terms of this application process, and the terms of the application that they submit.

CMHC Background

CMHC is the Government of Canada’s National Housing Agency, with a mandate to help Canadians meet their housing needs. As Canada’s authority on housing, we contribute to the stability of the housing market and financial system, provide support for Canadians in housing need, and offer objective housing research and advice to Canadian governments, consumers and the housing industry. Prudent risk management, strong corporate governance and transparency are cornerstones of our operations.

CMHC is a Crown Corporation, with a Board of Directors, reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

CMHC has approximately 2,000 employees located at its National Office in Ottawa, and at five business centres throughout Canada: Atlantic; Quebec; Ontario; British Columbia; and Prairies and Territories.

National Housing Strategy (NHS) Overview

Affordable housing is a cornerstone of inclusive communities. It helps to strengthen the middle class and grow the economy. Canada's first-ever National Housing Strategy is a 10-year, \$70+ billion plan that will give more Canadians a place to call home and will create a new generation of housing in Canada. Through the National Housing Strategy, the federal government is re-engaging in affordable housing and bringing together the public, private and non-profit sectors to ensure more Canadians have a place to call home. The goal of this historic strategy is to make sure everyone in Canada has a home that they can afford and that meets their needs. To achieve this goal, the strategy will first focus on the most vulnerable Canadians.

The NHS will create livable communities where families thrive, children learn and grow, and their parents have the stability and opportunities they need to succeed. It will spearhead innovative new housing research, data and demonstration projects to fill gaps in our knowledge, share the best ideas and shape the future of housing policy in Canada. It also creates new opportunities for the federal government to innovate through partnerships with the community housing sector, co-operative movement, private sector, and research community. More information on the NHS can be found at <https://www.placetocallhome.ca/>.

National Housing Strategy—Innovation and Research Program Descriptions

Starting in 2018, and over the next 10 years, \$241 million will be invested under the NHS in new data collection tools, demonstration projects and solutions labs, and efforts to spur more housing-related research to help diversify information sources and perspectives. Each of the NHS Innovation and Research programs has a specific purpose and it is important that applicants apply to the one that is the most relevant. Here are some brief descriptions of the programs that receive applications on a yearly basis. More information can be found in the links provided.

The **Solutions Labs**¹ program provides housing stakeholders with funding and expert innovation lab consultants to help solve complex housing problems using innovation methods and tools.

The **NHS Research and Planning Fund**² provides funding for not-for-profits and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (housing providers, charities, Indigenous governments/organizations, etc.) to undertake housing-related research or research planning activities.

The **NHS Demonstrations Initiative**³ is for organizations that partner with affordable housing providers to showcase innovative practices, technologies, programs, policies and strategies.

The **CMHC Housing Research Scholarship Program**⁴ builds Canadian expertise and promotes excellence in housing research by providing financial assistance to post-doctoral fellows undertaking housing research through partnerships with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

¹ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/solution-labs>

² <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/research-and-planning-fund>

³ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/nhs-demonstrations-initiative>

⁴ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/housing-research-scholarship-program>

The **Housing Research Awards**⁵ recognize world-class housing research being conducted in Canada and provide funding for research teams to promote and expand their work.

The **Expert Community on Housing (ECOH)**⁶ is a collaborative, online network of housing experts that is about sharing housing knowledge and contributing to the development of housing solutions. Applicants to all Innovation and Research programs are encouraged to be part of this network.

Program Overview

The Solutions Labs program provides housing stakeholders with funding to help solve complex and persistent housing problems and foster innovation in the housing sector. Solutions Labs co-develop innovative, bottom-up solutions to specific problems that have not been able to be solved using traditional approaches. Solutions Labs funding will focus on:

- resolving **affordable housing problems** within the National Housing Strategy's key **priority areas**⁷ and/or priority populations;
- targeting the rapid creation of solutions such as technologies, policies, programs or standards;
- gathering a wide range of stakeholders, including those with lived experiences, to find solutions that are practical, replicable, implementable and deliverable within a realistic time frame;
- requiring inclusion of Solutions (Social Innovation) Lab expertise to advise on the design and delivery of the lab in order to achieve the desired results; and
- applying innovation lab tools and methods commonly used to solve persistent and complex affordable housing problems.

Characteristics of Social Innovation Labs or Solutions Labs for the purpose of this program:

- Aids the move from round-table talks to action, a promising approach has emerged in the social innovation ecosystem.
- Draws on the strengths, empathy, creativity, and wisdom of a collective to explore new ways of making progress on a complex housing problem.
- Creates a safe zone for a collective to explore, question assumptions, be bold, be agile enough to adapt as learning emerges and experiment with solutions.
- Convenes diverse perspectives on an issue, gains insight from people with lived experience of a problem, facilitated ideation, building prototypes of solutions, and tests them to see how they work on the ground with people.
- As evidence emerges of what prototyped solutions are working, solutions can be scaled and spread to impact systemic change.

(Ben Weinlick, 2017)

⁵ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/housing-research-awards>

⁶ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-collaboration/expert-community-on-housing>

⁷ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/guidepage-strategy/priority-areas-for-action>

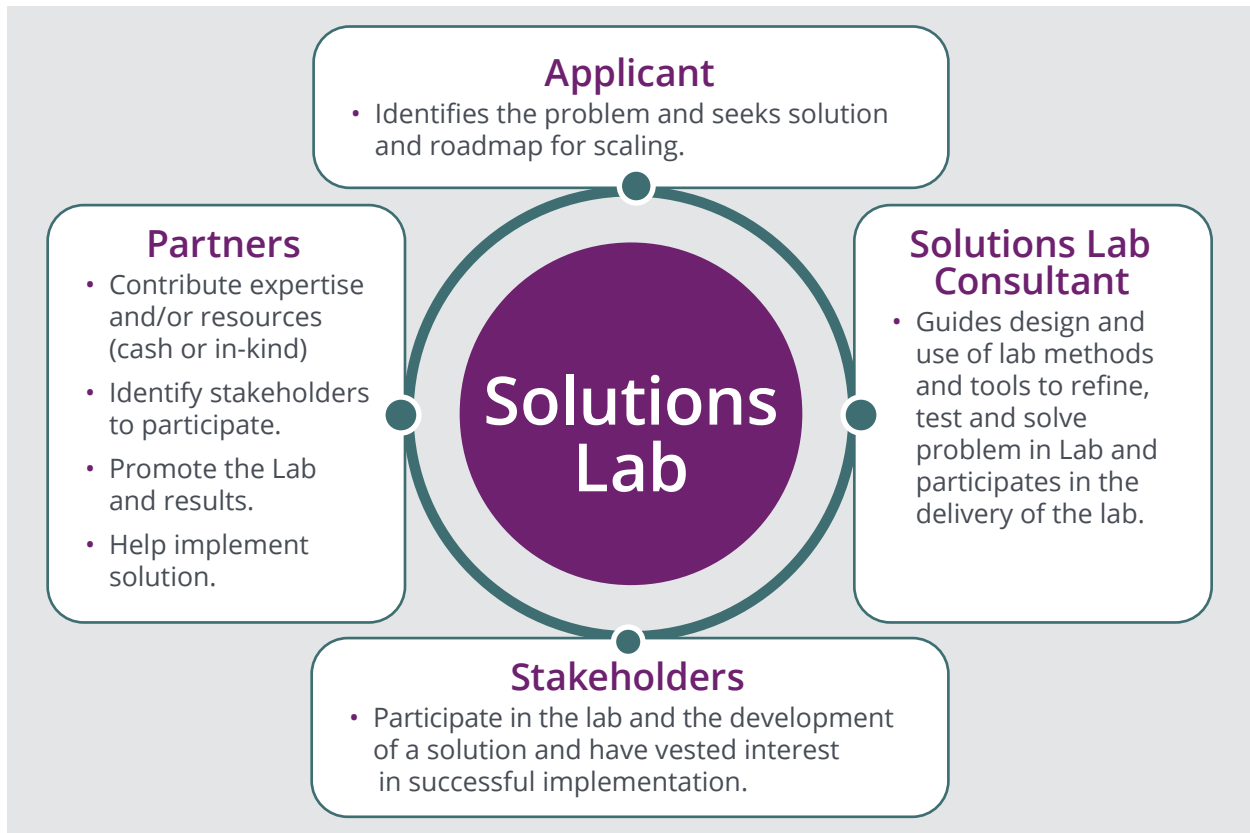
NHS Solutions Lab teams will be comprised of the following:

1. **Applicant.** The applicant will be the organization who has identified the affordable housing problem that needs to be addressed and listed in section 1.1 of the application form. The main role of the applicant is to seek out partners when relevant, confirm the problem to be addressed and develop clear problem statement with the consultants input.
 - Provide input and agree on the consultants proposed design and implementation, including methods and tools for the Lab. Select a Solutions Lab consultant. Confirm working relationship before application starts.
 - Determine who does what for writing the application.
2. **Partners.** Partners can be individuals, including those with lived experience, organizations, other levels of government, and communities that will fund, sponsor, or support the project with in-kind resources. They may also support scaling and implementation of the solution roadmap. Applicants are required to include/submit letters of confirmation regarding the nature of the partnership identified.
3. **Solutions Lab consultant.** A Solutions Lab consultant is required as part of the project team and is someone with expertise and experience (see appendix 3 for minimum requirements) in designing and delivering the methods and tools used in innovation labs. The main role of the consultant is to guide all participants, the applicant, partners, stakeholders, etc. to provide necessary input on defining a problem, developing ideas on prototypes, experimenting on and testing solutions and end products, including roadmaps/blueprints.

In addition, applicants should consider inclusion and participation from a wide range of stakeholders with diverse perspectives that can contribute to and support the implementation of solutions that are developed post-project completion. Please see appendix 4 for further details on designing your lab for inclusion. The Lab team is key to designing and delivering the specific activities in the Lab. The Lab team will engage stakeholders in the specific co-development of lab solutions.

Stakeholders are individuals, including those with lived experience, organizations, other levels of government, and communities who have an interest in or will be impacted by the solution. They have an interest in solving the problem identified and providing input into potential solutions. Stakeholders can bring valuable ideas, expertise, backgrounds and knowledge on the particular issue identified and to be addressed (including academia, government officials, subject matter experts, NGOs, private sector, and particularly the end user—those with lived experience). See figure on next page.

Figure 1—NHS Solutions Lab Structure



Additional Guidance on the Solutions Lab Consultant Role

Why do applicants require a Solutions Lab consultant?

The emphasis of the Solutions Lab funding is to help housing stakeholders tackle complex and persistent housing problems for which normal approaches have not yielded solutions. The expectation is that stakeholders tackle a problem through an innovation lens and the methods and tools that have emerged from Social Innovation Labs. The program requires applicants to seek out and partner with experts in the design and implementation of innovation labs on their team. Applications will be evaluated on the innovation approach proposed and the innovation tools and methods used to solve the problem. It is highly recommended to have the Solutions Lab consultant involved as early as possible in the development of the proposal and developing the approach that will be used in problem definition, project scoping and writing of the proposal. CMHC has identified and vetted a number of **Solutions Lab consultants**⁸ who can play this role for the applicant. However, the applicant has the option to use other similarly qualified innovation consultants if they prefer.

Note: It is the applicant's responsibility to seek out and obtain an innovation consultant.

⁸ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/solution-labs/solution-lab-consultant-information>

The following information provides some definition of the expected and possible roles the innovation consultant can play:

Minimum Expected Role for the Innovation Consultant

- Advise on the design of the Solutions Lab, including methodology and tools.
- Contribute to or write the section on tools and methods in the application.
- Deliver technical innovation aspects of the activities in the Solutions Lab.
- Contribute to any reports on results of the Lab, etc.

Negotiable Based on the Applicant's and their Partners' Needs/Capacity

- Write and/or coordinate the writing of the proposal submission.
- Manage the project and coordinate activities, if funded.
- Provide subject matter expert advice, analysis, etc.
- Undertake research as required to support the Lab.
- Report writing and knowledge product development.
- Act as the lead party on contract and for the administration of financial or budgetary responsibilities on behalf of applicant. (This may be useful for some organizations where contractual requirements, for example, insurance requirements and/or time and resources are limited.)

Role played by CMHC in the Program

- Funds Solutions Labs.
- Administers the evaluation and selection of applications for funding.
- Acts impartially.
- Cannot be listed as a formal partner in an applicant's submission.
- Can be listed as a stakeholder who participates in and contributes to the Lab, if successful.
- Cannot comment on the content of the submissions while the application period is open.
- Can comment on requests for the clarification of the application process and/or answer application questions.
- If your application is selected for funding, we would encourage you to engage CMHC subject matter experts to observe or actively participate in your Lab.

If you would like CMHC subject matter experts to participate in your Lab, please discuss with CMHC at the earliest opportunity. You can send a request to Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca.

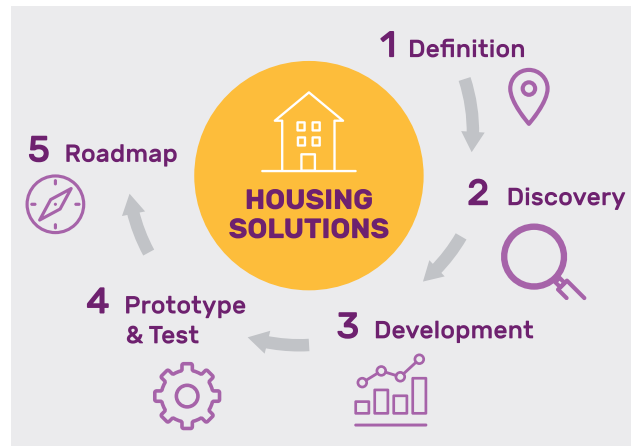
The Lab (The Project)

The Lab should be considered a complete end-to-end approach to a project, not just a face-to-face event or planning and consultation meetings in a physical or virtual space—it includes all aspects of the project using an innovation approach to achieve a solution and an implementation roadmap applicable to solving a complex housing problem.

Under the NHS, CMHC will support Solutions Labs ranging in duration from one to three months (Lab sprints) to up to 18 months. At CMHC's discretion, flexibility may be given to the duration of the lab beyond 18 months. If you have an outstanding project that is expected to take longer than 18 months please contact CMHC prior to beginning your application to determine if it can be considered. Solutions Labs can be held anywhere across the country and seek to find innovative solutions to a range of housing problems under NHS priority areas and populations listed in appendix 1. Through the Solutions Lab process, prototype solutions should also be tested to assess feasibility, applicability and potential uptake.

Depending on scope, complexity and duration, Solutions Labs can follow the proposed innovation methodology below that includes a toolkit of generally accepted best practice activities:

- **Definition**—establish scope and reframe the problem.
- **Discovery**—generate insight through big data and user insight.
- **Development**—co-develop new ideas through stakeholder input.
- **Delivery**—test and refine shared ideas and proposals.
- **Roadmap**—communicate clear path to solution implementation and uptake or replication.



For more information on Solutions Labs and how they work, consult our document [**What is a Solutions Lab?**](#)⁹

Applicants may propose alternative or additional methods or strategies that best meet their needs and offer the best chances of success. Further detail can be found in appendix 2.

Note: Mid-stream submissions where previous work has been done may be considered. Proposals of this nature should be discussed with CMHC. It is recommended that applicants contact CMHC to discuss these types of applications before they begin the application process. The applicant will need to describe the innovative process or tools used in previous activities and demonstrate that an equivalent degree of innovation expertise, to that used by Solutions Labs consultants, was utilized in designing and delivering that work.

⁹ <https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sites/cmhc/nhs/solutions-labs/nhs-solutions-labs-what-is-solutions-lab-en.pdf?rev=76168853-598a-434d-9ca4-549273ad709b>

Useful Resources

Additional information regarding Solutions Lab consultants, as well as resources on innovation methods and tools used in Solution Labs can be found at <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/solution-labs>.

For previously funded Solutions Labs and information on the problems already being addressed through these labs, please visit <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/nhs-project-profiles>

CMHC has provided a list of Solutions Lab consultants that meet the requirements to deliver Solutions Labs. To consult this list, visit <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/solution-labs/solution-lab-consultant-information>.

Application Intake Process—Inclusion of Solutions Lab Consultant

CMHC is seeking detailed proposals that explain how the Solutions Lab applicant, their partners and solution lab consultant, will work together to identify, refine and develop solutions to a housing issue, problem, challenge or opportunity within an NHS priority area theme and priority population.

Applicants must include a Solutions Lab consultant versed in designing and delivering Solutions Labs, as outlined in appendix 2. CMHC has a list of recommended Solutions Lab consultants that applicants may choose to contact. However, applicants may identify and include other Solutions Lab consultants not on the CMHC list in their applications. In either case, applicants should work with the Solutions Lab consultant to develop the proposal and submit the application.

Note: It is recommended that you select a consultant before you begin the application. If not on the CMHC recommended list, you should contact CMHC as soon as possible at Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca so that CMHC can review the minimum qualifications of the consultant. Applications that include Solutions Lab consultants not on the CMHC list must provide additional details on the Solutions Lab consultant's background, expertise and ability to provide Solutions Lab consultations.

PART 2—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Overview

This Applicant Guide provides information, to assist the applicants in presenting a complete response that includes all the mandatory requirements (as indicated below). Non-compliance with a mandatory requirement will result in the application being eliminated from further consideration.

Submission Instructions and Deadline (mandatory)

The purpose of this section is to inform applicants about CMHC's procedures and rules pertaining to the application process. It is useful to consult this section prior to submitting an application to make sure that the response is complete and includes all the mandatory requirements (as indicated below).

Before you Submit your Application

Please consider the following tips as you begin to write and prepare to submit your application.

- Try not to leave submission to the day of the deadline;
- Review the Checklist provided (appendix 5) and make sure everything required is included;
- If you have any questions, or if something is not clear, reach out to CMHC as soon as possible. We are there to help.

Language of Application

Applications may be submitted in English or French.

Delivery Instructions and Deadline

The NHS Solutions Labs application form and the intake portal for submitting the NHS Solutions Labs application form (including all supporting documentation) can be accessed at <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/solution-labs>.

Note: The portal to upload your completed application will be open on October 25, 2021. The deadline for submissions is January 17, 2022.

For any issues related to the Application portal, please submit your issue to the Innovation and Research inbox email at Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca

In the event that the platform for submitting an application cannot be accessed, such as in remote regions for example, it will be possible to send proposed Solutions Labs applications, including all supporting documentation, by mail or courier. However, in such cases, the responsibility will be on the applicant to allow sufficient time from the mail drop-off or courier pickup to ensure the application is received by CMHC ahead of the closing date and time.

The provision to send applications in the mail is considered exceptional and is permitted only in situations where it is not possible to use the web portal platform. Therefore applicants should consult with CMHC at Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca before submitting an application by mail.

Timely and correct submissions of NHS Solutions Labs applications in the exact specified delivery platform is the sole responsibility of the applicant. All risks and consequences arising from a failure to submit an application to CMHC are borne by the applicant. CMHC will not assume those risks or responsibilities under any circumstances.

The time of delivery for the purposes of this section is deemed to be time recorded by the CMHC system receiving the application, and not the time the application was sent by the applicant.

Upon receipt of an application, an automated confirmation will be issued by CMHC to the sender's email address. It is strongly recommended that applicants follow up by email to **Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca**, should they not receive a confirmation within 30 minutes of submission.

Only applications submitted via the NHS Solutions Labs application form portal (or on an exceptional basis as previously indicated, by mail where it is not possible to use the portal) will be considered for further evaluation.

Application Opening, Verification Period and Deadlines

Note: Information on the deadline for submissions can be found at **<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/solution-labs>**.

Please note CMHC requires the original unlocked, un-scanned version of the application so that it may access the information for administrative and evaluation purposes.

All Solutions Labs applications received on or before the closing date and time specified below, will be opened and reviewed for verification by CMHC. If at that time, CMHC is unable to open the application, the applicant will be so advised and provided an opportunity to resubmit a version that can be opened within 2 hours of notification.

Your application must be submitted and received at the location specified in the "Delivery Instruction and Deadline Section" on or before the submission deadline.

Applications arriving late will be automatically rejected, and the sender will be so notified by e-mail.

Inquiries

All questions regarding this application (including contacting a Solutions Lab consultant) must be sent by email or facsimile to **Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca**

Changes to the Applicant Guide document will only be effective if issued by CMHC in writing as described below. Applicants are therefore strongly cautioned to request that all clarifications, directions and changes to the application process provided by CMHC be in writing, as information given orally by any person within CMHC shall not be binding upon CMHC.

All written questions submitted, which in the opinion of CMHC raise an issue that has the potential to affect all applicants, will be answered by CMHC in writing and distributed to all applicants by facsimile or email. The identity of the applicant making the inquiry will not be included in the response. Any questions of a proprietary nature must be clearly marked as such.

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the application process as a result of any inquiry or for any other reason, an addendum to this application process will be provided to applicants by facsimile or email.

CMHC has no obligation to respond to any inquiry and will determine, at its sole discretion, whether it will respond to inquiries that are submitted. CMHC cannot guarantee a reply to inquiries received less than **7 calendar days** prior to the submission deadline.

Communication

During the application evaluation period, CMHC reserves the right to contact or meet with any individual applicant in order to obtain clarification of its submission, including clarification of the scope of services offered. Any such communication is limited to clarification purposes only, and applicants will not be allowed to revise their application during this process.

Applicant Contact

The applicant identified in section 1.1 of the application form, including name and contact information shall be the primary contact for CMHC during the evaluation period.

Offering Period (mandatory)

It is a deemed condition of every application that the terms of the application shall remain valid and binding on the applicant until such time as an agreement is negotiated and executed, not to exceed 90 days following the application submission deadline.

Changes to Application

Applicants are permitted to include additions, deletions, make edits and changes to the application form at any time before the posted submission deadline as noted above.

Changes to an application is permitted, provided that they are received as an addendum to, or clarification of, a previously submitted application, or as a new application that replaces and supersedes the application that was previously submitted.

Any addendum, clarification, or new application must be submitted as per the delivery instructions outlined in the guide, be clearly marked "REVISION," and be received no later than the submission deadline. Where the new application is intended to replace all or part of an earlier application, it must be accompanied by a clear statement specifying the sections of the earlier application that are replaced by the new application.

No Liability

While CMHC has made considerable efforts to ensure that the information in this Applicant Guide is accurate and complete, it is possible that errors may exist. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be accurate by CMHC, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. CMHC will have no liability of any kind to applicants for losses or damages arising from any errors that may be found in the Applicant Guide, regardless of how the errors are caused. Applicants remain obliged to make their own investigation of relevant information and to form their own opinions and conclusions in respect of the matters addressed in this application. By submitting an application, applicants waive any claim or cause of action that they may have against CMHC or its representatives as a result of the conduct of this application process or any resulting contract award, except insofar as they have proof of willful misconduct on the part of CMHC or its representatives. Applicants agree that they will not

bring a court action or institute any other proceedings against CMHC for damages arising from the conduct of this application or any resulting award of an agreement. This section is intended to be a complete waiver of the applicant's right to claim damages subject to the limited exception noted above.

Verification of Application

The applicant authorizes CMHC to conduct such investigations as it deems appropriate to verify the contents of the application.

Corporation Identification

Applicants agree that they will not make any use whatsoever of CMHC's name, logo or other official marks without the express written consent of CMHC.

Declaration with Respect to Gratuities

By submitting an application, the applicant certifies that no representative of the applicant, or any individual or entity associated with the applicant has offered or given a gratuity (for example, an entertainment or gift) or other benefit to any CMHC employee, Board member or Governor-in-Council appointee with the intention of obtaining favourable treatment from CMHC.

Conflict of Interest

The applicant and its principals, employees and agents shall avoid any real, potential or apparent conflict of interest during the application process, and upon becoming aware of a real, potential or apparent conflict, shall immediately declare the conflict to CMHC. The applicant shall then, upon direction of CMHC, take steps to eliminate the conflict, potential conflict or perception that a conflict of interest exists.

The successful applicant must not provide any services to any third party in circumstances that might reasonably give rise to a conflict of interest between the applicant's duties to that third party and the applicant's duties to CMHC.

In the event that a conflict of interest, real, potential or perceived, cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of CMHC, CMHC shall have the right to immediately eliminate the applicant from consideration under the application or to terminate the resulting agreement. Upon such elimination or termination, CMHC shall have no obligation of any nature or kind to the applicant.

CMHC's Obligations

By issuing this **Solutions Labs application** intake process and accepting applications, CMHC assumes the obligation of conducting the process in a fair and transparent manner. CMHC has no obligation to accept any application or services, or to compensate any applicant for work done other than as may be set out in a written contribution agreement with that applicant.

PART 3—APPLICATION FORM GUIDE

How to Apply

The NHS Solutions Labs application process involves an online application intake process. See “Delivery Instructions and Deadline” in part 2 of this guide for information on obtaining an application form and accessing the intake portal for submitting an application.

The application form must be submitted in accordance with the conditions and requirements (as set out below) in order to be considered for evaluation by CMHC. In preparing and submitting an application for a proposed Solutions Lab, the applicant must consider the following eligibility requirements under the Solutions Labs program:

Eligible Solutions Lab Projects

Under the Solutions Labs program, CMHC will support and leverage Solutions Labs that are aligned with federal NHS priorities, including addressing problems associated with housing for priority populations in greatest need. To be eligible for funding under the Solutions Labs funding, projects must be compliant with the following required objectives:

- Be aligned with and address issues under the NHS priority areas.
- Bring together a wide range of stakeholders to provide adequate representation to the issue at hand, including those with lived experiences.
- Seek to find solutions that are practical, replicable, implementable and deliverable within a realistic time frame.
- Target the creation of solutions for technologies, policies, programs, standards and other such tools that can advance the overarching goals of the NHS.
- The Solutions Labs approach, methodology, results, and lessons learned, can be leveraged to solve similar problems in other communities or organizations.

To be eligible for funding under the Solutions Labs program, projects must also be compliant with the following requirements:

- Applicant lead must be a Canadian citizen. The Lab team must include a majority of Canadian representation.
- Activities must address an issue pertinent to Canadian housing. Labs must physically take place in Canada.
- Individuals and teams may submit only one Solutions Lab issue per submission. However, they are permitted to present more than one submission, for example, on a separate issue.
- CMHC now has 3 years of Solutions Labs funded. When reviewing and evaluating submissions, CMHC will assess if a lab with a similar issue has already been funded. This may impact the decision to select a submission for funding. Project profiles for all previously funded labs can be found online: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/nhs-project-profiles>. Please review these profiles to determine if any previously funded labs have addressed the issue or problem you are trying to solve.
- Solutions Labs should be delivered and completed within an 18-month time frame. CMHC is open to longer lab durations on a case by case basis. Please contact CMHC to discuss.
- Project teams must include a Solutions Lab consultant. Note that the degree of effort made by the Solutions Lab consultant to design and deliver innovation methods and tools should be considered a substantial project cost and is an eligible cost of Solutions Labs project funding.

Eligible Solutions Lab Activities

Eligible activities include the following:

- Travel, accommodation and per diem for project team participants, Solutions Lab consultant costs.
- Solutions Lab activities, including event coordination, background research and analysis, Solutions Lab engagement and facilitation activities, material development, summary reporting and development of summary roadmap report on prototype to uptake.
- Compensation for people with lived experience to participate in Solutions Lab workshops, sprints and other face to face activities.

Ineligible Solutions Lab Activities

The following provides examples of activities that are not eligible for funding under the Solutions Labs program:

- Funding for physical Solutions Lab construction, alterations to existing Lab space.
- Activities related to post-prototype concept to market development for technology solutions.

Application Form—Section 1—General Information

General information regarding the proposed Solutions Labs, including the identification and contact information of the applicant, as well as the key personnel representing the Solutions Lab consultant, project partners and other contributors to the proposed Solutions Lab is required in section 1.

Application Form—Section 1.1 Eligible Applicants

Section 1.1 is intended to identify applicant contact information, the name of the project and the duration. Eligible applicants listed in section 1.1 include the following:

- Affordable housing providers
- Government agencies—Federal, provincial, territorial, municipal
- Indigenous organizations—Métis, First Nation, Inuit
- Agencies and NGOs involved in NHS priority area activities—seniors associations, veterans associations, mental health advocates, homelessness hub, non-profit organizations, sustainability agencies
- Academic institutions involved in NHS priority area activities and audiences
- End users, individuals with lived experiences that can provide first-hand expertise to the co-development of solutions
- Private sector stakeholders—builders, developers, designers, planners, etc.

Application Form—Section 1.1 Solutions Lab Program Eligible Time Frame

The applicant must clearly identify the project “Start Date” and “End Date.” The duration of a Solutions Lab is up to 18 months from the signing of the contribution agreement, although consideration will be given by CMHC to longer periods, if warranted.

Application Form—Section 1.2 Solutions Lab Solution Type

While it may not be possible to confirm at this time the exact solution to the proposed issue or problem identified, the applicant can identify potential solutions that may arise from the proposed Solutions Lab, such as a technology, practice, policy or program. It is important to note to applicants that Solutions Labs does not fund the development of a traditional plan or strategy. The applicant can select “Other option,” but must provide a clear description.

Application Form—Section 1.3 What Is the Housing Problem You Are Trying to Solve?

In this section, please clearly describe the housing problem that the project team proposes to explore and resolve through a Solutions Lab process. The applicant shall clearly describe what is the problem being addressed and how the proposed Solutions Lab will be undertaken to address the problem.

Provide a brief description regarding the scope, depth, pervasiveness and complexity of the problem to be solved. Please also describe why a Solutions Lab process is needed to help advance solutions to the problem and why the problem has not been resolved using traditional approaches. How can a Solutions Lab lead to the development of a unique, innovative solution that might not otherwise be developed using traditional approaches?

Application Form—Section 1.4 Solutions Lab Relevance to NHS Priority Areas

The applicant will check which primary NHS priority area (as outlined in appendix 1) the Solutions Lab intends to address. Please select only one priority area.

In this section, the applicant will describe how the outputs from the proposed Solutions Lab will align with the identified NHS priority area(s). The applicant will clearly describe how the solution or opportunity targeted by the Solutions Lab will benefit or address issues or challenges within a given priority theme area. What will be the potential outcome or impact? The applicant should emphasize the *primary priority* area the solution will address and distinguish between other secondary priority areas.

Note: If it is unclear what the primary priority area that is being addressed the applicant risks receiving a lower score.

Application Form—Section 1.5 Solutions Lab Relevance to NHS Priority Populations

Select up to a maximum of 2 priority populations that your lab is addressing. In this section, the applicant describes which applicable NHS priority population(s) the project is aligned with (see appendix 1 for more information). They must clearly indicate the primary priority population that the project intends to address. If there is more than one population, then they should list the secondary populations and describe any differences regarding the anticipated benefits or impact. The applicant will clearly describe how the outputs from the proposed Solutions Lab will benefit the identified NHS priority populations. What will be the potential outcome or impact?

Application Form—Section 1.6 Solutions Lab Alignment with NHS Expected Outcomes

In this section, the applicant will describe how the proposed Solutions Lab will support or contribute to the identified NHS expected shared outcomes (see appendix 1 for more information).

The applicant will clearly describe how solutions co-developed in the lab could contribute to one or more of the NHS shared outcomes and should explain the potential short, medium and long-term impacts as well as the scale of that impact (local, regional, national) if the solution(s) are implemented and scaled.

Application Form—Section 1.7 Solutions Lab Projects That Impact Indigenous Communities or Organizations

Please note this section **does not** apply to Indigenous organizations or communities applying for Solutions Lab.

If you are a non-Indigenous applicant and the proposed Solutions Lab intends to address an issue specific to First Nations, Métis, or Inuit nations then consultation may be required. The applicant must identify which Indigenous Nations would be impacted by the proposed Solutions Lab, the engagement process to be used, confirmation of ethics guidelines to be followed, and provision of Indigenous representation as part of the Solutions Lab team. (If your project does not impact or require consultations with Indigenous communities or organizations, respond “Does not apply”.)

Application Form—Section 2—Project Details

Note: It is strongly recommended that the applicant select their expert innovation consultant before the development and completion of the application in order to ensure that problem definition, innovation methodology and subsequent activities are designed to reflect the Solutions Lab program objectives and allow for the best possible chance of success in the evaluation process.

In this section, the applicant must clearly identify and describe all key activities, innovation methodologies and tools to be used during the Solutions Lab, number and location of engagement events, and team participation. Solutions Labs are intended to address the development of a solution to a complex or persistent housing problem. Along with a number of products that are derived from the Solutions Lab process, the final deliverable for all Solutions Labs is a roadmap/blueprint. The blueprint is intended to communicate a clear set of priorities and time frames for action to deliver the identified solution, including clear connections between developed solutions and authorities having jurisdiction to implement change, and clearly articulated value and benefits of solutions implementation to all stakeholders. Clearly indicate how Lab activities align to the proposed methodology outlined in appendix 2. Provide an overview of all key activities and tasks to be undertaken during the project. Identify the anticipated duration of the project, number of face-to-face (lab) events, location of Lab events, travel requirements, background research requirements (for example, literature reviews, ethnographic studies, etc.). Describe the different phases, milestones, tasks, activities, and any stage gates or dependencies. Describe the expected deliverables (for example, reports, profiles and other documentation, roadmap, videos, web content, presentations, papers) and the expected outcomes of the Solutions Lab. The phases/activities of the Solutions Lab must align with the milestone activities listed in section 2.5, including knowledge products and knowledge dissemination activities.

Application Form—Section 2.1 Solutions Lab Methods and Tools

CMHC has proposed an innovation methodology that is outlined in appendix 2 of the Applicant Guide. Describe how this methodology is appropriate to address the complexity of the problem; if the proposed methodology does not entirely meet the needs of your Lab, identify the gaps and how you may supplement the approach. Please describe if you will use any additional unique innovation lab approaches or processes as well as related innovation tools and expertise that will help find a solution. Please seek out advice from your Solutions Lab consultant to assist you with designing the best approach and using the relevant and appropriate innovation tools that will facilitate a solution.

Application Form—Section 2.2 Solutions Lab Milestone and Key Activities

This section is intended to provide context and describe the key activities, milestones and expected outputs of the Lab and when they will occur. Describe the different phases, milestones and timing, tasks, activities, and any stage gates or dependencies. Describe the expected deliverables (for example, reports, profiles and other documentation, roadmap, videos, web content, presentations, papers) and the expected outcomes of the Solutions Lab. The phases/activities of the Solutions Lab must align with the milestone activities summarized in the table in section 2.4 below.

Application Form—Section 2.3 Solutions Lab Knowledge Products and Knowledge Sharing

The applicant must clearly describe how knowledge gained, lessons learned and solutions developed from the Solutions Lab will be communicated to targeted audiences, including information product development, audience determination and dissemination channels to be used.

This includes activities as the Solutions Lab is being performed and after the Lab has been completed. This is not a promotional plan but rather a plan that describes how the information and knowledge products generated over the course of the Solutions Lab will be transferred to raise awareness, knowledge and support further development of the solution developed through the Lab process. The plan will detail what information products will be developed, audiences targeted, channels to be used to reach the audience and what activities will be undertaken at various times throughout and after the Solutions Lab. The descriptions must align with the knowledge products and knowledge dissemination activities summarized in the table in section 2.4 below.

Application Form—Section 2.4 Work Plan and Funding Requested

In this section, the applicant must summarize, in the table provided, key activities, milestones, outputs or deliverables, knowledge products and knowledge transfer activities that are described above in sections 2.2 and 2.3. If the applicant chooses to use a different approach to the phases described in column 1 of the table, they must indicate the changes to that approach in the first column labelled Phase. Full descriptions of each activity are not required if the activities listed are described in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

Application Form—Section 3—Project Collaboration

In this section the applicant is to provide information regarding the proposed Solutions Lab project partners and team members, including respective contributions to the Solutions Lab activities.

There are no restrictions in the Solutions Labs program with respect to joint ventures, partnerships and collaborations with third parties; in fact, partnership arrangements and leveraging opportunities are encouraged. However, the application must clearly articulate the key roles and contributions each team member brings to the project and how the team brings (added) value as an ensemble to the Solutions Lab project.

Application Form—Section 3.1 Project Partners

Partners can be individuals, including those with lived experience, organizations, other levels of government, and communities that will fund, sponsor, or support the project. They are not necessarily members of the project team that conduct the actual Solutions Lab.

Consider the following items in completing this section of the application:

- How well do the proposed project partner's needs, interests and mandates align with the Solutions Lab objectives (that is, are they a good fit)?
- Does the support of the partners demonstrate the need for the Lab solution to the problem?
- Do the partnerships strengthen leveraged outcomes through collaboration?
- Will partners be critical to implementing the solutions from the Lab and are they supportive? Consider reaching out to and including partners that will be needed to implement and scale. Seek letters of support and confirmation for the Lab that includes a commitment to support the implementation and scaling of the solutions.

Please list all partners, including the applicant, and explain the nature of each partner's role in, and contribution to, the project (including but not limited to human resources, collaborations with other organizations, outsourced work, consultants, subject matter experts, professional services, etc.). Please indicate why these partners are involved, what value they bring to the project; how might they be involved in further deployment of the solution and its roadmap/blueprint to implement and scale. Partner contributions, including the estimated value of in-kind contributions and funding amounts will be asked for in section 4.2. Applicants should request letters of support from partners and include these letters of support as attachments to their application submission. As part of its due diligence process, CMHC may contact these other potential partners and collaborators.

This section will be evaluated on the "risk" of partnerships not proceeding. There is no requirement to have partners; however, if you do have partners, proof of commitment will help improve your score.

A proposal with letters of support and commitment will be scored higher than proposals that identify potential partners with no strong support or commitment described or included in a letter (i.e. financial, inkind, implementing and scaling.)

Application Form—Section 3.2 Solutions Lab Team Members

The applicant must clearly identify all proposed team members including the Solutions Lab consultant. Member expertise and experience must be included to ensure necessary capacity to advance the Solutions Lab to completion. Please describe how the team members will contribute in the lab. What will their role be?

Application Form—Section 3.3 Solutions Lab Consultant

The objective of the Solutions Labs is to provide funding and expertise to housing stakeholders to tackle complex housing problems for which normal approaches have not yielded solutions, using innovation methods and tools. The program requires applicants to include experts in the design and implementation of innovation labs on their team. **Note: it is the applicant's responsibility to seek out and acquire a Solutions Lab consultant.** Solutions Lab consultants may be chosen from the CMHC list of consultants provided to applicants or applicants may elect to work with other Solutions Lab consultants not on the CMHC list. Solutions Lab consultants are experienced in the design and delivery of innovation labs and can provide invaluable guidance and support to project design to achieve results and to solve the applicants' housing problem. Suggested roles regarding the relationship between the applicant and the Solutions Lab consultant are outlined in the "Overview" section of the guide.

The applicant must identify the Solutions Lab consultant who will be part of the applicant's Solutions Lab team in section 3.3. **Please note Solutions Lab consultants on the CMHC vetted list¹⁰ have previously been evaluated for their expertise and ability to undertake Solutions Lab activities.** Other consultants identified by applicants who are not on the CMHC vetted list will be evaluated as part of the application intake process based on their responses in section 3.4. CMHC strongly encourages applicants to begin selecting a Solutions Lab consultant prior to beginning an application. Applicants can also provide to CMHC the necessary information required in section 3.4 at any time before the closing date for submissions so that CMHC can confirm the consultant will meet the minimum requirements. Information on the criteria used to assess Solutions Lab consultants' experience and expertise can be found in appendix 3 of the Guide.

Application Form—Section 4—Project Funding

Specific information regarding the proposed Solutions Lab budget and funding sources are to be provided in an Excel budget template. Applicants are expected to fill out the template and submit it alongside their application form.

Applicants applying for funding or receiving funding from other institutions, organizations, programs, etc., are eligible to apply for Solutions Labs program funding; stacking and leveraging of funds to undertake Solutions Lab projects are permitted.

- Applicants must indicate any additional funding that they have applied for, been approved for, or have received to support the proposed Solutions Lab project. Applicants will also indicate partner and team member funding and include any other funding received or applied for from other NHS programs (for example, Affordable Housing Innovation Fund [AHIF], the National Housing Co-investment Fund, Federal Lands Initiative, Community Housing Transformation Centre and Rental Construction Financing [RCFi]).

During the application evaluation, consideration may be given to the dependency on external (or third-) party funding arrangements or approvals to realize the undertaking and completion of the proposed Solutions Lab project. Letters of confirmation of funding can be included as attachments and uploaded as part of the application.

¹⁰ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/solution-labs/solution-lab-consultant-information>

Excel Budget Template—Section 4.1 Solutions Lab Total Project Costs

In this section, the applicant must provide a summary of Solutions Lab activities and associated costs. Please include total estimated costs of each activity and the requested amount from CMHC that will contribute to that activity. Please provide a brief bullet description of the costs. Please indicate anticipated timing of costs by fiscal quarter over the duration of the project.

Excel Budget Template—Section 4.2 Solutions Lab Proposed Funding Contributions

The applicant must clearly identify confirmed funding contributions to the Solutions Lab including in-kind support. This should include the amount requested from CMHC as well as amounts from other organizations. The Excel budget template will automatically calculate the total project cash contributions and the per cent cash from CMHC.

Application Form—Section 5—Project Viability to Proceed

In this section, the applicant is to provide brief information on the potential risks of the proposed Solutions Lab and the strategies to address them.

Application Form—Section 5.1 Solutions Lab Success Risks

The applicant must identify any potential project dependencies and risks that may impact the success of the Solutions Lab and describe the proposed strategies to mitigate these risks.

The applicant must identify any potential operating risks that may impact the success of the Solutions Lab, including policy and regulatory barriers, unintended consequences due to Solutions Lab activities, impact of potential failure of Solutions Lab, etc. and identify proposed strategies to mitigate these risks.

Application Form—Section 6—Applicant’s Attestations and Checklist

In this section, the applicant provides their confirmation that they meet the attestation requirements and have reviewed the checklist (appendix 5).

PART 4—SELECTION PROCESS

The purpose of section 4 is to give the applicant an overview of the selection process once CMHC has received your application.

Assessment of Eligibility

Applications will be reviewed in the subsequent months after the application deadline with an anticipated notice of decision in spring 2022. CMHC staff will first examine the application to ensure that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements and that it is complete. CMHC will only contact the applicant to let them know if their application is not eligible to move on to the review committee.

Evaluation and Selection of Projects for Funding

An evaluation committee made up of subject matter experts will evaluate all eligible applications using pre-established evaluation criteria and scoring scale. Only those applications that score 80% or higher will be considered for funding depending on budget availability. This translates to approximately 8 to 12 projects receiving funding.

Note: CMHC may consider other factors beyond score and budget availability regarding the prioritization of projects. For example, preference may be given to projects that have not received Solutions Labs funding in previous rounds or that address an underfunded priority area or underrepresented priority population.

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Scale

Applications are assessed by an independent evaluation committee. There are two parts to the evaluation criteria: (1) point value from 0 to 3, and (2) an assigned weight of importance:

Point Values

- **0 - Insufficient**—Does not provide relevant response, poorly described or unclear.
- **1 - Satisfactory**—Partially complete response or insufficient answers, some unclear answers.
- **2 - Good**—Sufficiently answered question, clearly described and understood, demonstrates generally expected responses, thinking and impact.
- **3 - Excellent**—Outstanding and exceptional answers above normal expectations, demonstrating substantial thought and potential impact.

Point Values and Weighted Values

The following describes the maximum points available per section and the maximum weighted values applied to each section.

Application Form Section	Points (0-3)	Weighted % Value
1.3 What is the Housing Problem? —Does the response clearly explain the problem. Does the response clearly describe the complexity (depth, pervasiveness and scope of the problem). Does it provide an explanation on why a Solutions Lab process is needed to solve the problem and why the problem hasn't been resolved using traditional approaches. Explain how the proposed Solutions Lab activities will adequately solve the problem.	0-3	5
1.4 Project Relevance to NHS Priority Area —Does the response provide sufficient information on the relevance of the proposed Solutions Lab to an NHS priority area?	0-3	10
1.5 Project Relevance to NHS Priority Populations —Does the response provide sufficient information on the relevance of the proposed Solutions Lab to an NHS priority population?	0-3	10
1.6 Project Alignment to NHS Expected Outcomes —Does the response provide a sufficient answer regarding benefits of the Lab and which NHS outcomes it hopes to support and what the potential impacts might be? (potential short-, medium- and long-term impacts as well as the scale of that impact [replicable at the local, regional, national level])	0-3	10
2.1 What Are the Solutions Lab Methods and Tools? —Is the process clearly described and does it reflect current expectations regarding innovation labs. Are the methods and tools described and are they reasonable given the problem to be addressed in the Lab? How closely does the proposed methodology align with CMHC's proposed approach; if there are deviations, is rationale provided and reasonable to the project?	0-3	10
2.2 Solution Lab Milestone Activities and Key Activities —Does the response provide a thorough and well-constructed plan that describes the key activities, milestones and outputs that support the Lab description? Are the proposed timelines reasonable?	0-3	10
2.3 Solutions Lab Knowledge Products and Knowledge Sharing —Does the knowledge dissemination plan provide a thorough and well-constructed overview that will effectively raise awareness in the sector that fosters the uptake of the innovation(s) or solutions achieved within the Lab? Are the knowledge products, dissemination channels and target audiences reflective of the stakeholders that will be affected by this Solutions Lab?	0-3	10
2.4 Work plan —Is the Work Plan sufficiently detailed and does it provide a well-constructed overview of the Lab from end to end (logical, clearly written, realistic timelines and results).	0-3	10
3.1 Project Partners —Do the proposed partners represent the knowledge and expertise required to support a solution? Are their roles clear, and is there an adequately diverse representation (including those impacted) to address the issue or problem effectively?	0-3	5
3.2 Solutions Lab Team Members —Does the list of team members provide adequate diverse expertise from various groups to truly address the particular problem/issue at hand? Are roles of the team clearly described? Has a Solutions Lab consultant been confirmed and meets minimum requirements? Is there evidence that the team can work effectively to deliver the Lab?	0-3	10
4.1 and 4.2 Project Costs and Contributions —Is the proposed budget clear and realistic with respect to costs and timing? Are there other cash or in-kind contributions from partners? Are contributions confirmed in a letter?	0-3	5
5.1 Project Viability —Are the potential risks that may impact the success of the Solutions Lab, including policy and regulatory barriers, and unintended consequences, clearly identified and explained and proposed strategies to mitigate these risks presented?	0-3	5
Maximum total score	36	100%

APPENDIX 1—NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITY AREAS

National Housing Targets

The NHS sets ambitious targets to ensure that unprecedented investments and new programming deliver results. This includes:

- cutting chronic homelessness by 50%;
- removing 530,000 families from housing need;
- renovating and modernizing 300,000 homes; and
- building 100,000 new homes.

Ultimately, the strategy will promote diverse communities and create a new generation of housing that is mixed income, mixed use, accessible and sustainable.

NHS Shared Outcomes

Overall, the NHS has 9 shared outcomes:

- Homelessness is reduced year over year.
- Housing is affordable and in good condition.
- Affordable housing promotes social and economic inclusion for individuals and families.
- Housing outcomes in Canada's territories are improved year over year.
- The housing needs of Indigenous groups are identified and improved.
- Affordable housing contributes to environmental sustainability.
- The National Housing Strategy contributes to Canadian economic growth.
- Partnerships are built, strengthened and mobilized to achieve better outcomes.
- Collaboration/alignment across the federal government results in more holistic responses to housing problems.

Through the National Housing Strategy, the federal government is re-engaging in affordable housing and bringing together the public, private and non-profit sectors to ensure more Canadians have a place to call home. The goal of this historic strategy is to make sure Canadians across the country can access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. To achieve this goal, the strategy will first focus on the most vulnerable Canadians.

In order to align the Solutions Lab project proposals within the NHS, CMHC is seeking applications for Solutions Labs to study and seek to develop solutions to issues that fit within the following NHS priority areas:

Priority Areas

Housing for those in greatest need

- Improve housing and supports for the most vulnerable, including those who are homeless and those with distinct needs.
- Improve affordability of housing for low-income households.

Community housing sustainability

- Improve sustainability of social housing and build capacity.

Indigenous housing

- Improve housing conditions among First Nation, Métis and Inuit households.
- Increase Indigenous autonomy and capacity for housing.

Northern housing

- Improve housing conditions in Canada’s northern territories and regions.

Sustainable housing and communities

- Improve building performance, durability and energy efficiency of housing.
- Increase housing options near transportation and transit, work, supports and services, as part of mixed-income, age-friendly, accessible communities.

Balanced supply of housing

- Increase Canada’s supply of rental housing.
- Preserve and renew existing rental housing.
- Meet evolving homeownership needs of Canadians.

Priority Populations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and children fleeing domestic violence • Seniors • Young adults • Indigenous peoples • People with disabilities • People dealing with mental health and addiction issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans • LGBTQ2+ • Racialized groups • Newcomers, including refugees • People experiencing homelessness
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APPENDIX 2—EXAMPLE OF SOLUTIONS LAB METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

1 *Definition*

The following Solutions Lab activities are provided to illustrate a generally accepted innovation method, structure, as well as the types of activities that may be included in a funded Solutions Lab project. Applicants may propose alternative activities or strategies that reflect best practice innovation methods, meets their needs and offer the best chances of success.

Confirm commitment, funding, accountability, and project understanding by project sponsors (CMHC), Lab participants and Lab consultants.

- Confirm scope, expectations, resources, and constraints.
- Confirm nature of the issue/problem—wicked (ill-defined) or tame (well-defined).
- Develop engagement strategy.
- Recruit and confirm Lab participants.
- Develop work plan, privacy impact assessment, project charter partnership agreement and recruiting logistics.

Deliverable: partnership agreement, governance structure, critical path

Outcomes and results: clear understanding and expectation by project sponsors, Lab consultants and Lab participants

2 *Discovery*

- Understand the current state of the issue based on a range of research methodologies. Examples include the following:
 - Desk research and comparative analysis of existing approaches
 - Field research, ethnographic studies, shadowing, user segmentation
 - Research—site visits, interviews, co-design workshops, diary study
 - Metrics research—behavioural analytics and KPIs, surveys
 - Analysis—preparation, research analysis workshop, journey mapping workshop, metrics design workshop, reporting

Deliverables: for example, personas and scenarios, design principles, research findings report, journey maps, service evaluation form, opportunity log, challenge/problem brief.

Outcomes and results: understanding of current situation from a range of stakeholder perspectives, model meaningful metrics—understanding end-user and stakeholder needs to understand what matters.

3 **Development**

- Ideation—explore and co-develop potential solutions (for example, practices, policies, technologies, or processes) to accelerate improvements. Establish strategic direction for future solutions and opportunities for immediate improvement. Examples of activities include the following:
 - Workshops—logistics, supplies, participants
 - Opportunity selection and priority—prioritization tool, prototype to validate
 - Opportunity workshop—research briefing, presentation of current scenario, journey map, storyboard, evidence safari, film ethnography, etc.
 - Initial blueprint workshop—extend journey mapping with organizational layers
 - Blueprint design and development
 - Future business model workshop

Deliverables: for example, expanded opportunity log, feature value matrix, project model canvas—future, journey maps—future, initial service blueprint

Outcomes and results: alternative approach to solutions development generating a range of workshopped opportunities and options for consideration.

4 **Prototype and Test/Delivery**

- Make ideas tangible so they can be understood, tested, refined, and improved.
- Manage risk by creating and testing multiple solutions with end users to increase value from opportunities.
- Prototype across touchpoints, time, and levels of realism.
- Test concepts through a range of activities. Examples include the following:
 - Prototype preparation—select touchpoints and interactions, comparative evaluation, policy check-in, choose prototyping methods/media, business origami, Lego/Playmobil, role play, poster, brochure, etc.
 - Prototype design and development—refine, design and produce prototypes based on workshop, if workshop output requires additional design and production
 - Prototype workshops
 - Recruiting and logistics
 - Prototype testing—design review/critique, concept testing, usability testing, diary study in pilot group

Deliverables: for example, prototypes, evaluation reporting

Outcomes and results: proof of concept, risk mitigation through the exploration and evaluation of multiple potential solutions.

5 Roadmap

- Communicate a clear path to realize opportunities and follow vision.
- Establish shared understanding, priorities and plans through communication and visualization. Examples include the following:
 - Review prototypes
 - Roadmap visualization
 - Blueprint finalization
 - Detailed swim lanes
 - Roadmap workshop
 - Case study submission/debriefing
 - Roadmap recommendation report

Deliverables: for example, final blueprint, roadmap report, roadmap infographic, case study of project

Outcomes and results: clear set of priorities and time frames for action to deliver identified solution elements, clear connection between developed solutions and authorities having jurisdiction to implement change, clearly articulated value and benefits of solutions implementation to all stakeholders.

(Source: This list of general Solutions Lab activities has been derived from the B.C. Government Communications and Public Engagement Service Design Playbook and serves as an example only.)

APPENDIX 3—EXTERNAL SOLUTIONS LAB CONSULTANT

To be eligible for Solutions Lab consulting services under CMHC’s Solutions Labs program, Solutions Lab consultants must meet minimum eligibility requirements and one specialized knowledge area. A Solutions Lab consultant is someone with experience in the methods and tools used in innovation labs.

CMHC has a list of qualified Solutions Lab consultants. The list is available online at <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/solution-labs>.

Note that only Solutions Lab consultants that have not been previously evaluated and included on the CMHC vetted list of Solutions Lab consultants will be evaluated during the application intake process. Solutions Lab consultants on the CMHC list have already been evaluated and assessed as eligible to offer Solutions Lab consulting services to the Solutions Lab project team.

Solutions Lab consultants not included on the CMHC list will be screened by CMHC as a part of the application intake process to confirm they meet the minimum Solutions Lab requirement established by CMHC. Personnel proposed by the Solutions Lab consultant will also be evaluated in the core competencies and specialized knowledge area(s) as well as the projects they have completed in the last 5 years, and their relevance or transferability to housing. Recent project examples from the last 5 years that support the areas of core competency and specialization must be provided to support the evaluation and scoring of submissions by CMHC. As previously mentioned, applicants are encouraged to contact CMHC and submit their consultant requirements prior to the submission deadline.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements of Team Members

Solutions Lab consultants must be able to provide the services of 1 or more qualified resources within the following resource category, in accordance with the mandatory qualification criteria (identified below):

Principal Lab Consultant

- Responsible for and manages the Solutions Lab project and Lab team, ensuring that the project is developed, performed and completed within the agreed upon time, resources (including cost) and performance parameters. Has lead role in overall quality assurance for the project and may serve as primary point of contact with CMHC.

In addition to the required resource category above, Solutions Lab consultants may provide the services of qualified resources within 1 or more of the following optional or supporting resource categories identified below:

Consultant team member expertise	Member activities
Data scientist, Research advisor, Ethnographic researcher	Undertakes background research to support issue definition, capture of key end-user information to inform Solutions Lab discovery phase.
Innovation analyst	Provides strategic analysis to support lab activities and direction.
Systems / Service designer	Provides support for lab solutions through improved service or systems design.
Stakeholder engagement specialist	Ensures key stakeholders representing a diverse range of expertise, experience, and insight to an issue are brought to the lab process.
Facilitation and consultation expert	Provides on the ground facilitation expertise at each engagement session (lab event).
Communications officer	In charge of communications strategy for each phase of the Solutions Lab.
Visual communications designer	In charge of visual communications pieces, for example, website design, lab materials, infographics, video, etc.
Technology specialist	Provides digital expertise and tools utilized as part of the lab process, for example, collaborative technology, audiovisual requirements, etc.
Subject matter expert	Provides specialized knowledge to support background research, issue reframing and solutions generation.
Service stimulation and testing analyst	Optimizes opportunities identified through process mapping, tests new prototypes, models, etc.
Logistical, resources, travel, technology support (administrative function)	Ensures Solutions Labs are effectively organized and supported.
Report writer	Ensures documentation of background research, Lab activities and final reporting to CMHC.

Subject Matter Experts

- Post-secondary education (that is, degree, diploma or certificate) in the field related to their expertise; or
- A minimum of 5 years of experience working in a field related to their expertise. Examples include the following:
 - Social and affordable housing policy (Canadian and international)
 - Social policy (Canadian and international)
 - Social and economic outcomes of housing
 - Housing finance, innovative financing for affordable housing (for example, social finance, social investment funds, etc.)
 - Social return on investment
 - Sustainable housing and communities
 - Social inclusion
 - Housing needs of Canadians (for example, newcomers, people with disabilities, youth)

- Housing and community development
- Housing and wraparound services
- Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) (see definition by Status of Women Canada at <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acis/index-en.html>)
- Intersectional analysis
- Seniors' housing, adaptable and accessible housing, universal design
- Indigenous housing needs, community capacity development; expertise working in Indigenous housing
- Northern, remote and rural housing
- Poverty in relation to housing deprivation
- Other specialty knowledge/experience areas offerors may have and choose to highlight

External Solutions Lab Consultant Criteria (section 3.4 in the Application Form)

The application MUST include information about the Solutions Lab consultant's qualifications as follows:

1 **Detailed Description of the Firm and Service Delivery Specialization**

A detailed and relevant description of the firm and service delivery specialization as it relates to Solutions Lab and the NHS.

2 **Demonstrated Experience of Personnel to meet**

Principal Consultant (senior) Minimum requirement

- Post-secondary education (that is, degree, diploma or certificate) or equivalent experience in social sciences, economics, engineering, architecture, project management, design thinking, facilitation, etc.
- A minimum of 5 years of hands-on experience in Solutions Lab facilitation management, strategic design, etc.
- Experience managing at least 5 significant Solutions Lab projects.

Consultant Team Members

- Post-secondary education (that is, degree, diploma or certificate) or equivalent experience in the field related to their expertise
- Experience working on at least 3 significant projects/assignments related to their expertise in the last 5 years

Subject Matter Experts

- Post-secondary education (that is, degree, diploma or certificate) in a field related to their expertise; or a minimum of 5 years of experience working in a field related to their expertise.

3 ***Descriptions of Relevant Personnel Project Experience***

Evidence of relevant experience for each proposed personnel (section 3.4) including the following:

- Duration of the project (in months or indicated by start and end dates)
- A brief description of the work performed
- The value of the work (contract or funding value)
- An identification of the client for whom the work was performed

4 ***Sample Materials***

Evidence of relevant writing and communication ability through the provision of an example of the following:

- A Solutions Lab summary report addressing the results of either a micro or macro lab as defined herein.
- Sample of tools used within the Lab.
- Graphic or presentation materials developed during or after the Lab.
- Other pertinent materials based on the offeror's speciality.

5 ***Offeror's Qualifications***

The offeror's offer MUST include information about the offeror's qualifications as follows:

1. A detailed description of the firm and service delivery specialization.
2. Detailed resumés for all project personnel who would be assigned to the CMHC account.
3. References: A list of 5 contracts or projects of a similar size and scope which the offeror currently holds or has held over the past 5 years (section 3.4). For each contract, the following information is required: company name and address; contact person name and phone number. CMHC may approach any such contact person for information relating to the quality of services provided by the offeror.

APPENDIX 4—PEOPLE-CENTERED DESIGN: DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND RECONCILIATION

The following information is for applicants to consider in the design of their lab activities. It is intended to help applicants appropriately identify groups that may be involved in the development of, or impacted by the Solutions Lab; be a resource to help describe the ways in which the identified groups will be engaged; and ensure that the Solutions Lab is designed to address the needs of the identified groups.

The following steps can be used to design a meaningful, fair, and impactful Solutions Lab process without unintentionally creating hurdles that would impact specific groups or communities.

A. Consider your Lab design

Identify the context and any intersections relating to diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation:

- a. Which peoples/groups will be involved in, or affected by the proposed Lab? These can include communities, stakeholders, rights-holders, decision-makers, institutions, different levels of government, etc.
- b. What are the intersections with diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation within the context of your proposed Lab?
- c. Are there historical disparities related to the broader issue trying to be addressed (e.g. industry is male-dominated, impacts of Indigenous residential schools, or other events)?
- d. Challenge assumptions: Although the Lab proposal you are working on may appear to affect and engage everyone equally, always challenge your assumptions about whether it has implications relating to diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation. Whose point of view is reflected in defining the vision?

B. Consider your sources

What research or evidence is available to you to support your understanding of the groups that may be involved in the creation of or impacted by the proposed Lab?

Do you have access to information regarding intersecting identity factors prevalent in the groups that may be engaged in or impacted by the proposed Lab such as: gender, Indigenous status, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability?

A common tool used when undertaking these types of consideration is Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+). Additional information on GBA+ is also available at the Status of Women Canada website, which includes an online course.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) "...Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour." Additional information on reconciliation is available at the Department of Justice website which includes Principles of Reconciliation and a video on Reconciliation.

C. Consultation

- When consulting, how will you communicate openly about what you are hoping to achieve with your Solutions Lab and how will you remain open to being challenged on your understandings?
- How will you explain how you intend to use information that is shared with you?
- Consider if compensation for consultation is appropriate.
- Consider opportunities for collaboration and partnership, where appropriate. It takes a wide range of insights, perspectives and expertise to develop and implement new ideas.

D. Consider project milestones and conclusions

How will you share or discuss the outcomes of the consultations with those engaged in throughout the Solutions Lab (e.g. communities, stakeholders, decision-makers, institutions, different levels of government)? Returning to the group to share the way in which their feedback was integrated into the project process may help demonstrate due diligence, ensure accountability, build trust, and identify areas for further action.

APPENDIX 5—APPLICANT CHECKLIST

Have you read the Applicant Guide and Application Form thoroughly prior to beginning your submission?

Have you completely filled in all Application fields?

Have you adequately described your key partners and what benefits or contribution they will bring to the Solution Lab process? Have you included a diverse and adequate representation of partners to address the issue effectively? (Section 3.1)

Have you been able to secure letters from partners describing their commitment to the lab and to implementation and scaling?

If you are using an external Solutions Lab consultant not on CMHC’s list of vetted consultants, have you reached out to CMHC in advance of the application deadline?

Have you saved the Excel budget template and uploaded it along with your application form and letters of support from partners?

Have you reviewed your completed application responses against the “Point Values and Weighted Values” table in Part 4 of the Applicant Guide, in order to assess your response related to the weighted or important areas of emphasis?

Have you saved copies of your submission package for your records?

Do you have or will you be able to acquire the following insurances if you are successfully funded?

1. Commercial Generally Liability Insurance with a limit of no less than \$5 million;
2. Professional (Errors and Omissions) Liability Insurance with a limit not less than \$2 million.

Once you have submitted your application, please ensure that you have received a notice of confirmation by email shortly thereafter. If you have not, please contact [**Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca**](mailto:Innovation-Research@cmhc-schl.gc.ca).

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