

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Secondary Suite Incentive Program

Disclaimer: This is not a legal document and does not outline all applicable regulations. Any contradiction, dispute, or difference between the contents of this document and applicable provincial law or City bylaws, plans, policies, or guidelines will be resolved by reference to the law, bylaws, or other official documents.

Q: What is the Secondary Suite Incentive Program?

A: The Secondary Suite Incentive Program is a program to help property owners register a new or existing unregistered secondary suite in their home.

Q: Why is the City creating a Secondary Suite Incentive Program?

A: The Secondary Suite Incentive Program is part of the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, which is a federal program to support and encourage the construction of more housing.

Q: How does the program make it easier to register a suite?

A: The program includes a streamlined review of life safety requirements, no application fees, and a \$10,000 grant after completion of the suite, paid from the federal Housing Accelerator Fund.

Q: Am I eligible for the Secondary Suite Incentive Program?

A: You may be eligible for the program if:

- » You wish to register a new or existing unregistered secondary suite
- » The suite was not registered with the City on September 16, 2024
- » The suite complies with the City's Zoning Bylaw requirements, including parking requirements
- » No more than 1 suite is located in a house
- » The house where the suite is located received occupancy at least 1 year prior to application
- » You agree not to unregister the suite for at least 5 years
- » Any works required to register the suite are completed within 6 months

Q: How much grant funding is available?

A: Through the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, \$1.5 million is allocated to the City's Secondary Suite Incentive Program. With a grant of \$10,000, this supports 150 applications. Funding is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

PLANNING SERVICES

604-864-5510

planning-info@abbotsford.ca

BUILDING PERMITS & LICENSES

604-864-5525

building-info@abbotsford.ca



Q: How does the program work?

A: There are five steps to the Secondary Suite Incentive Program:

1. Pre-Application

Before submitting your application, visit the Building Department at City Hall. A Building Official will review the existing condition of your home and answer any questions you may have about the program or life safety requirements of the Building Code.

2. Application

Complete and submit your application, including the Secondary Suite Declaration Checklist. You can do this with a Building Official at City Hall as part of Step 1.

3. Pre-Inspection

Prior to commencing any work, a Building Official will visit your home and review the current condition of your suite or the location of the proposed suite. If any work is required, the Building Official will provide you with a list of items to complete. This inspection can be scheduled within 48 hours of you submitting your application.

4. Inspection

Once any required work is completed, you may schedule an inspection where a Building Official will inspect and sign off your secondary suite.

5. Suite Registration

After a Building Official has reviewed your completed suite, you will be provided with a Confirmation of Registration. Your suite will be registered and you will be eligible for a \$10,000 grant from the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, to help cover the cost of completing your suite.

Q: I have an existing secondary suite that is not registered. Am I eligible for the program?

A: Yes. The Secondary Suite Incentive Program will allow you to register your suite, ensure that your suite is safe for occupancy, and help cover any cost of doing so. The City will not penalize property owners who register an existing suite through the Secondary Suite Incentive Program.

Q: Are there any fees?

A: There are no permit or application fees. Applicants will pay a \$260 Registration Fee to register their suite and a \$260 Annual Infrastructure Fee each year the suite is registered.

Q: Is a secondary suite permitted on my property?

A: As per provincial legislation, secondary suites are permitted on most single family or duplex properties in Abbotsford. You can use the City's online [WebMap](#) and [Zoning Bylaw](#) to find your zoning and see if a secondary suite is permitted on your property.

Alternatively, please contact Planning Services at planning-info@abbotsford.ca or 604-864-5510, or visit the 2nd floor counter at City Hall.

Q: What are the parking requirements for a secondary suite?

A: You must provide at least 1 parking space for the secondary suite, located entirely on your property.

Q: Can I have more than 1 secondary suite in my house?

A: No. The BC Building Code requires secondary suites to be located within a building "that contains only one other dwelling unit." For example, a single detached dwelling can have 1 secondary suite and a duplex can have 1 secondary suite in each duplex unit.

While up to 4 housing units are permitted on most single family properties in Abbotsford, as per provincial "small-scale multi-unit housing" (SSMUH) legislation, this does not mean that multiple secondary suites are permitted. If a single detached homeowner wishes to have 3 or 4 units in their home, the home may need to meet the Building Code requirements for a duplex or multiplex, not the requirements for a single detached dwelling and secondary suite.

For specific Building Code questions, please contact building-info@abbotsford.ca or 604-864-5525, or visit the 1st floor counter at City Hall.

Q: When does the Secondary Suite Incentive Program start?

A: The program will start on September 16, 2024.

Q: I am building a new house with a secondary suite. Am I eligible for the Secondary Suite Incentive Program?

A: The Secondary Suite Incentive Program is intended to help property owners register a new or existing suite in their existing home. As such, to be eligible for the program, your home must be at least 1 year old. If you wish to add a suite to a new house, you can do so during the design or construction stage.

Q: Why can't I remove my suite for at least 5 years?

A: The Secondary Suite Incentive Program is meant to encourage additional housing over the long term. The program includes a \$10,000 grant, which is an investment from the federal government in long term housing. As such, to be eligible for the program, you must agree that your suite will not be unregistered for at least 5 years.

Q: How long will the Secondary Suite Incentive Program last?

A: Grant funding will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as funding is available. The \$10,000 grant is provided once your suite is registered.

Q: Can I participate in the provincial Secondary Suite Incentive Program, in addition to this program?

A: The provincial Secondary Suite Incentive Program requires a Building Permit and that you rent your suite at below market rates for at least 5 years. In addition, you must incur a forgivable loan, document all of your costs, and cannot rent your suite to an immediate family member. The City's Secondary Suite Incentive Program does not have these conditions and allows you to register your suite through a streamlined process without a Building Permit. If you wish to participate in the provincial Secondary Suite Incentive Program, you will need a full Building Permit from the City. For more information, see the BC Housing Secondary Suite Incentive Program.

Q: Where can I ask further questions about the Secondary Suite Incentive Program?

A: If you have further questions about the program, you can contact City staff at the following:

32315 South Fraser Way, 1st Floor

building-info@abbotsford.ca

604-864-5525

Helpful Links:

[City of Abbotsford Building Department](#)

[City of Abbotsford Zoning Bylaw](#)

[BC Housing Secondary Suite Incentive Program](#)

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