

Research Assistant Opportunity
Casual Position
Guiding Professional Development in Canadian Housing

Start Date: June 2022

Overview:

Specific activities include, but are not limited to:

The Research Assistant will contribute to the qualitative research portion of a grant looking at professional development in Canadian affordable housing. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews will be conducted with 25 to 35 leaders in the Canadian affordable housing sector. Employing Generative Knowledge Interviewing (GKI), interviews will aim to elicit leaders' perspectives on professional needs in the sector, as well as have them describe their experiences and expertise. The interviews will seek to elicit both explicit and tacit knowledge. Using thematic analysis, team members will identify core national themes across interviews as well as particularities, such as rural or urban needs, population differences, type of housing, and affordability mechanisms such as a portable rent benefit or mixed income developments.

This work will support a SSHRC-funded Partnership Engage Grant. This qualitative, community-engaged research project is a collaborative partnership between the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Canada and Dr. Katie MacDonald. Specifically, we *aim to inform emergent professional development (PD) programming for Canadian affordable housing workers* by documenting housing leaders' insights and determining core sector needs. The Canadian Affordable Housing sector is at a critical juncture, facing many challenges, such as deferred maintenance, expiring operating agreements, and the growing need for affordable housing. Thus, the sector needs bold and innovative leadership and a dynamic and vibrant workforce. However, those seeking education and professional training in this field currently have few resources available which are often disjointed and not nationally recognized. In addition, there is little understanding in housing research about the experiences and needs of those working in the sector. To address these areas, this qualitative research project *will pursue the following three key objectives:*

- **Sharing tacit knowledge from leaders in affordable housing:** Many housing leaders are nearing retirement, and a common concern is that this will lead to a loss in sectoral memory. Experiences, knowledge, and understanding will be summarized and shared publicly.
- **Building understanding of work and labour:** Since affordable housing does not have a standardized workforce, little research exists on the experiences of those who work in the sector. Creating this knowledge will advance current scholarship on affordable housing.
- **Enhancing professional development:** Drawing on the insights generated via the above objectives, CIH Canada will build PD opportunities to address the sector's current needs. This will contribute to a nationally recognized and standardized curriculum, to complement existing local offerings.



The RA will be expected to:

- Collaborate on research ethics proposal
- Preliminary thematic analysis of interviews
- Drafting and revising report
- Develop infographic

Qualifications:

- Experience or interest in qualitative research methods including a qualitative methods course
- Excellent organizational skills and high attention to detail
- Strong written communication skills
- Ability to take lead on research
- Self-starter with ability to work independently with minimal supervision
- Knowledge of housing system is an asset

How to apply:

Qualified individuals are encouraged to submit their application by email to Dr. Katie MacDonald at macdonaldk@athabascau.ca. Applications should include (as a single PDF file) a brief cover letter that summarizes your skills, interests, and experience; a current resume or curriculum vitae; and the contact information for 1-2 references. There are two positions available this this grant – please specify which position you are interested in.

Evaluation of applications will begin immediately and will continue until a suitable candidate is found. All applicants are thanked for their interest in this position; however, only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

Athabasca University and the researchers are committed and seek to support equity in employment and research opportunities. We strongly encourage applications from Indigenous people, people of colour, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ people, women, and other historically marginalized groups. Applicants are welcome, but not required, to self-identify in their letter of application.