

Tech Services Team Travels the Province to Deliver Zero Cost Engineering Advice

Those who claim nothing in life is free have clearly never met the SHSC Technical Services Team.

Need a roof replacement, energy audit or new elevator and aren't sure where to start? Stymied by which contractor to choose from in a stack of returned RFPs? Looking for insurance coverage or a trustworthy consultant? How about an analysis of your building to identify its strengths and weaknesses? These are all jobs the Technical Services team can take care of at no cost, on-site.

This five-person team of engineering experts was formed as a result of federal and provincial stimulus funds for the housing industry. They've been criss-crossing Ontario since September 2009, offering zero cost technical advice to building managers charged with maintaining, improving or upgrading non-profit or cooperative facilities.

"The whole industry has been geared for years towards delivering the product and housing people. Now the buildings are aging and presenting significant challenges. Property managers or cooperative coordinators no longer have to just look at the housing delivery aspect, but the asset as well," said Director of Technical Services Gerry Lichty.

"These are people who do an excellent job of maintaining the programs and helping the people but who may have limited experience with building maintenance. So we come in and work with them to help them solve problems and improve their knowledge."

Gaining an objective opinion from professionals with inside knowledge of the social housing industry has proved to be invaluable to the building managers who are looking for technical guidance.

"If and when timelines are tight, we're able to work with a provider and show them how to find short cuts to cut the time or cost. In one case, we worked with a service manager to roll up a number of projects requiring certain assessments and we likely saved them 30 percent of a \$150,000 project because we were able to implement a bulk buy process."

When Homeland Non-Profit in Windsor had an ongoing plumbing and technical infrastructure problem, they needed a solution that would provide maximum value with limited resources.

"The SHSC Technical Services representative gathered all of the relevant information and was able to come up with solutions we had not even thought about... he provided out-of-box alternatives that were specific and doable and offered optimum solutions that will provide us with the maximum bang for the

limited dollars we have to solve the lingering and most complicated problem. In due time the work will be fully executed as envisioned by the SHSC expert,” said General Manager of Homeland Non-Profit Bob Davidovich.

The Technical Services Team is in place until at least the summer of 2011. Lichty says that may be extended and his team’s work may even be expanded.

To schedule a consultation with the Technical Services Team, contact the SHSC Customer Care Line at 1-877-733-7472. With two project managers always on the move in the Toronto area and two near Sudbury, there’s a good chance you’ll receive service within a week.