OTTAWA KITCHEN RENOS

Planning & Sequencing

Putting a kitchen job in order: design, permits, ESA, rough-ins, inspections, cabinets and counters, and testing older homes for asbestos

4 Expert Answers from Kitchen Reno IQ

ottawakitchenrenos.ca/construction-brain

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Q1

Grants for renovating a kitchen in the City of Ottawa: any available?

For an ordinary kitchen renovation in Ottawa, we found no City of Ottawa, Ontario or federal grant or credit that applies.

Two federal programs are closed: the Canada Greener Homes Grant and the Canada Greener Homes Loan. Neither is taking applications, so do not plan a kitchen budget around either of them.

The federal Multigenerational Home Renovation Tax Credit applies only to renovation expenses to create a self-contained secondary unit for a senior or an adult eligible for the disability tax credit, so it does not apply to a main kitchen. Secondary-suite kitchens are not this site's topic.

If the goal is lowering counters or changing a kitchen for accessibility, that is a different scope, and ottawaaccessiblerenovations.ca covers the programs in that area.

If a contractor or a website tells you a grant exists for your kitchen, ask them to name the program, the body that runs it and where to apply, and check it with that body before you sign anything.

What does apply to an ordinary kitchen job is the law on contracts and payments. A contract negotiated at your home over $50 must be in writing and delivered to you under the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, and you can cancel it without any reason within 10 days of receiving your written copy. If the agreement includes an estimate, the supplier "shall not charge the consumer an amount that exceeds the estimate by more than 10 per cent".

For budgeting without a grant, published 2025–2026 Ottawa guides put a kitchen refresh with the layout unchanged at about $15,000 to $25,000, and a mid-range kitchen at about $35,000 to $60,000.

Before work starts, have a written contract that sets out the full scope, the price by component and the dates.

Q2

Who coordinates the permit, ESA and gas trades on an Ottawa kitchen?

We found no rule that says who coordinates the trades on a kitchen job, so that is something to agree in the contract. What the rules do set is who is responsible for each part.

The building permit: the City of Ottawa says "It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that a Building Permit is obtained when required", and both the owner and the builder or contractor are equally liable under the Ontario Building Code Act. Where the job needs a permit, it is issued before construction starts.

The electrical work: it is an Electrical Safety Authority notification, filed before the work starts. If you hire someone for it, ESA says by law it must be a Licensed Electrical Contractor, and where a general contractor runs the job, ESA says to make sure they hire one and that a notification is filed for the job.

The gas work: Ontario's gas regulation says no one installs or alters a gas appliance "unless the person is the holder of a certificate for that purpose", and "No person shall act as a contractor unless the person is registered for the purpose." TSSA adds that if a contractor subcontracts the work, "both contractors would have to fulfill the appropriate registration and certification requirements." TSSA keeps a public registry.

So the contract for a kitchen with all three should say:

- who applies for the City building permit, and whose name is on it
- which Licensed Electrical Contractor files the ESA notification
- which TSSA-registered contractor connects the gas
- how each permit, notification and certificate is handed to you at the end

Ask the contractor to name the electrical and gas contractors in the contract itself.

Q3

Can kitchen demolition start before the building permit is issued in Ottawa?

The Building Code Act is direct on this point: "No person shall construct or demolish a building or cause a building to be constructed or demolished unless a permit has been issued." Where a job needs a permit, the permit comes first, and the Act names demolition as well as construction.

That said, not every kitchen task triggers a permit. The City of Ottawa lists certain work as exempt, including replacing cabinets where plumbing fixtures stay in place, new flooring, painting and decorating, and replacing doors or windows in the same opening. If every part of your kitchen job sits on that exempt list, nothing on the City's permit list is involved. But if the scope includes anything on the permit side, such as adding or removing walls to create different room sizes or uses, or alterations to a plumbing system beyond replacing existing fixtures, the permit must be in hand before that work begins. The City's FAQ puts it plainly: "It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that a Building Permit is obtained when required," and both the owner and the contractor are equally liable under the Building Code Act.

One practical point on sequencing: Health Canada says that in an older home, a professional should test for asbestos before any demolition begins, and if asbestos is found, to hire a qualified asbestos removal specialist to remove it safely. If the home was built before 1960, Health Canada also notes it probably contains lead-based

paint, and sanding or heat guns should not be used to remove it. Asbestos testing and removal questions belong to ottawaabatement.com.

For any part of the job that is not clearly on the City's exempt list, including work whose permit status is uncertain, the City's Building Code Services is the right place to ask before anything comes down. The City's submission requirements for renovation permits include floor plans showing plumbing fixture locations.

A few things worth confirming in writing before the job starts:

- which parts of the scope the contractor considers permit-required and which exempt
- who applies for the building permit and who is named on it
- whether asbestos or lead testing is part of the pre-demolition plan

If you want to hear from Ottawa kitchen renovation contractors about your project, the request form on this page sends your details to contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

Q4

What comes first in an Ottawa kitchen renovation: permit, ESA or demolition?

The order the rules set out

The building permit comes before construction. The Building Code Act says "no person shall construct … unless a permit has been issued." That means if your job includes anything on the City's permit list, such as moving a wall, relocating the sink or extending the plumbing system, the permit is in hand before any demolition starts.

The ESA notification for electrical work is filed before the electrical work starts. The Electrical Safety Authority is clear on that timing: the person doing the electrical work, whether a homeowner or a Licensed Electrical Contractor, files the notification first, then does the work, then gets it reviewed as soon as it is complete.

If your kitchen has a gas range and the line needs to be moved or capped, a TSSA-certified gas technician working for a TSSA-registered contractor does that work. We found no rule that orders gas work against the building permit, and a gas line is not named on either City list, so ask the City before the work starts.

For an older home, Health Canada says to test for asbestos before any demolition or remodelling. If a professional finds asbestos, Health Canada says to hire a qualified asbestos removal specialist to remove it safely. Testing and removal are covered on ottawaabatement.com.

Putting it plainly:

- asbestos test (older homes, before demolition)
- building permit issued (where the job needs one, before construction)
- ESA notification filed (before electrical work starts)
- gas work by a TSSA certificate holder (ask the City about permit timing)

One thing worth knowing: not every kitchen job needs a permit. Replacing cabinets and countertops while the sink stays in place is on the City's exempt list. A like-for-like faucet or fixture swap is outside the plumbing permit line. If you are unsure whether your specific scope triggers a permit, ask the City's Building Code Services before the work starts.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Kitchen Renos. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa) before starting any kitchen renovation. Some of this work needs a City building permit, electrical work is filed with the Electrical Safety Authority, and gas work is regulated by TSSA. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawakitchenrenos.ca** for the latest answers.