



PRESS RELEASE



Canadian Mortgage News - National Archive 2001

University of Winnipeg Opens Second Phase of Student Housing

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, November 2, 2001 — University of Winnipeg students now have more safe, affordable housing choices with today's opening of four newly renovated residences for 32 students in the Spence neighbourhood. The project was made possible with up to \$432,000 in funding assistance from the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

Participating in the opening ceremony were: Tim Sale, Manitoba Family Services and Housing Minister; Anita Neville, Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South-Centre, on behalf of Ron J. Duhamel, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Francophonie), and Alfonso Gagliano, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, and minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC); and Glen Murray, Mayor of the City of Winnipeg.

"Having a residence close to the university with easy access to campus and community resources will attract many students to the area," said Neville. "As residents, the students will make a positive contribution to the social and economic growth of the downtown area through their involvement in local activities. The Government of Canada, through the WHHI, is pleased to partner with the University of Winnipeg in providing these additional safe, quality accommodations for students at a price they can afford."

"This project will be a boost to the efforts of community groups to build stronger, healthier communities, which in turn, benefit Manitobans and their families" said Minister Sale. "The province of Manitoba, through the WHHI, is pleased to be able to support university students who need better access to adequate housing as they work to further their education. The students will play a positive role in the overall quality of life of this neighbourhood."

"The University of Winnipeg has shown tremendous leadership by not only meeting the housing needs of their students, but also by committing energy and resources to the overall health of this neighbourhood," said Mayor Murray. "Building safe, affordable communities happens one house at a time, one block at a time, and the University of Winnipeg continues to be a critical partner in that revitalization."

The total estimated cost for this second phase of the University's multi-year initiative \$754,000. The WHHI is providing up to \$432,000 to the University of Winnipeg Educational Housing Corporation to purchase and convert four rundown rooming houses into student housing. The WHHI funding is being made available under the provincial Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) program, the federal-provincial Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and the City of Winnipeg's Housing Policy initiative.

The four renovated homes are located on Spence Street, north of Ellice Avenue. Each property was converted into a large multi-bedroom house with common cooking and eating areas, bathrooms and showers, study/computer space and high-speed Internet connections. Each house has a Resident Assistant who is charged with the care and control of the premises, providing a safe and secure living/learning environment. These Resident Assistants are University of Winnipeg students trained in conflict resolution, first aid and role modelling.

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"The University of Winnipeg's Student Housing Initiative has two critical aims: the creation of an appealing, affordable living/learning environment for students, and, a sensitive, ongoing contribution to urban revitalization in the immediate vicinity of the University," said Constance Rooke, President of the University of Winnipeg. "We are profoundly grateful for the ongoing and generous support of all levels of government through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative."

This project increases the number of students housed by the University of Winnipeg Educational Housing Corporation to 64. Last October, the WHHI provided \$372,000 to the University to purchase and renovate five properties on Balmoral Street in the West Broadway neighbourhood and renovate them so they could be converted into housing for 32 students.

The Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) is a three-year, multi-million dollar tripartite partnership established by the governments of Canada, Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address declining housing stock, homelessness and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods. To date, the WHHI has committed over \$9.8 million to help community groups rehabilitate houses and provide assistance to homeless individuals and families, or those at risk of being homeless.

Located at 233 Portage Avenue in the Curry Building, the WHHI Single Window office serves as a one-stop shop for community organizations to access information on government-funded housing and homelessness programs. The single window concept also helps to foster improved cooperation and information-sharing between the various levels of government and the community groups. For more information on the programs available, call the WHHI at (204) 940-3070.

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Backgrounder

Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) Funding

Government of Canada

Under the *National Homelessness Initiative (NHI)*, communities in Manitoba will receive approximately \$25 million over three years:

- \$12.7 million through the *Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)*, which includes \$10.8 million for homelessness projects in Winnipeg, and \$1.9 million for projects outside the city;

The SCPI is based on a community plan developed by the various partners to design and implement local solutions to their particular homelessness issues. The SCPI funds up to 50 per cent of the costs of implementing the community plan. The other 50 per cent is comprised of direct or in-kind contributions from a variety of partners, including other levels of government, community organizations, and the private and voluntary sectors.

Additional federal funding assistance is provided through the following programs:

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- \$1.9 million for youth projects under *Youth-at-Risk-Homelessness (Youth Employment Strategy)*; and
- \$9.9 million for Aboriginal-specific projects under *Urban Aboriginal Strategy-Homelessness*.
- *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)*, to help low-income households and landlords make necessary repairs to bring their properties up to acceptable health and safety standards. RRAP is cost-shared 75/25 per cent respectively by the federal government through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and by the provincial government through Manitoba Family Services and Housing. Manitoba is administering the program while the City of Winnipeg acts as the delivery agent.

Government of Manitoba

- \$8 million over four years for housing in Winnipeg neighbourhoods through the *Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA)* program under the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative. Neighbourhoods Alive! is a long-term development strategy aimed at providing community groups with the support they need for programs in the areas of housing and physical improvements, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention.
- The NHA will contribute to the revitalization of housing in declining neighbourhoods by supporting homeownership and renovation initiatives of community-based groups in designated neighbourhoods. Eligible community organizations and individuals may receive up to \$10,000 per residential dwelling unit for the purchase or renovation.

City of Winnipeg

\$7 million over five years under the *Winnipeg Housing Policy* to fund housing initiatives in targeted inner-city neighbourhoods. Funding is available through several programs:

- Winnipeg Municipal Cost Offsets Program provides financial assistance up to \$5,000 per housing unit through reimbursement of City fees and other eligible costs.
- Winnipeg Housing Revitalization Program provides financial assistance up to \$5,000 per housing unit for housing project pre-development costs.
- Winnipeg Neighbourhood Housing Plans and Advocacy Program provides financial assistance and other support to neighbourhood stakeholders to develop a Neighbourhood Housing Plan.
- Winnipeg Housing Demonstration Program provides financial assistance to proponents to encourage unique and innovative approaches to addressing inner city housing issues that result in quality, affordable housing.
- Winnipeg Minimum Home Repair Program provides financial assistance to owner-occupants to undertake minor necessary repairs required for continued healthy and safe occupancy of homes.