



PRESS RELEASE



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Government of Canada contributes close to \$360,000 to address homelessness in Nelson

NELSON, British Columbia, February 16, 2005 — The Honourable David L. Emerson, Minister of Industry and Co-Senior Minister Responsible for British Columbia, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, today announced Government of Canada funding of \$359,880 for four projects that will address homelessness and housing in Nelson. The funding for these projects is being provided under the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative (NHI).

Some of the new services are being delivered through Nelson's Ward Street Place, which has also received funding of \$334,000 through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, \$258,000 through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and \$50,000 from BC Housing. Other generous contributors to Ward Place included: the Columbia Basin Trust, the Real Estate Foundation of BC, and the Interior Health Authority (Nelson Mental Health).

"It is important to spread awareness and find solutions to issues related to homelessness and housing," said Minister Emerson. "By working together with our community partners, the Government of Canada is committed to assisting the homeless and those people at risk of homelessness."

The contribution announced today will support the Kootenay Christian Fellowship, Nelson Community Services Centre Society, and Nelson District Community Resources Society in providing food services and shelter for homeless people living in Nelson. The announcement coincides with the Nelson Committee on Homelessness' public awareness campaign that promotes Homelessness Awareness Week in Nelson.

The Government of Canada launched the NHI in December 1999 to support communities' efforts to help Canadians out of homelessness. From 1999 to 2006, over \$1 billion is being spent towards the federal government's commitment to addressing homelessness in Canada. Since the launch, the federal government has supported more than 386 projects with a total of more than \$75.5 million to alleviate homelessness in BC and the Yukon. Funding for these projects was provided for in the 2004 federal Budget.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, through its Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, helps to bring housing, occupied by low-income persons, to a minimum standard of health and safety, and offers repair assistance to owners of rooming houses with rents affordable to low-income individuals.

The provincial government, through BC Housing, funded Ward Street Place through the Community Partnership Initiative which provides one-time funding to community groups in order to increase housing options for British Columbians in the greatest need. BC Housing has created another 794 affordable housing units through the Community Partnership Initiative. The provincial government also, through the Ministry of Human Resources, is committing \$300,000 a year to support 13 year-round emergency shelter beds at Ward Street Place

For more information on the projects being funded, see the attached backgrounder.

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For more information on the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, visit www.homelessness.gc.ca.

For more information on BC Housing, visit www.bchousing.org.

For more information contact:

Jane Hopkins
Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada
(604) 666-3141

Christina Wensley
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
(604) 737-4032

Stephanie Leblanc
Office of the Minister on Industry
(613) 995-9001

Jim Fenning
The Nelson Committee on Homelessness
(250) 354-9241

Backgrounder

National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) Projects in Nelson, British Columbia

Under the NHI, the following projects have been approved for funding through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI).

1) Kootenay Christian Fellowship — Our Daily Bread

\$98,000

This project will provide a nutritional hot lunch five days a week for up to 100 individuals requiring a food service support. The project involves the hiring of two staff members to coordinate and supervise a hot meal program and the training of volunteers.

2) Nelson District Community Resources Society — The Nelson Food Centre Project

\$98,000

Funding will be provided to maintain and expand a lasting food distribution centre and system for Nelson residents that is based on need and community capacity. A Project Coordinator will be hired to oversee this effort as well as to organize fundraising and food donation drives, coordinate the work of volunteers, coordinate workshops, and create public awareness around poverty and the homelessness issue in Nelson.

3) Nelson District Community Resources Society — Stepping Stones Project

\$90,000

Funding will be provided to hire a Capacity and Social Development Facilitator to assist in reducing homelessness in Nelson through this eighteen month capacity and social development project. This project will address both the short-term shelter and support service gaps of 100 homeless individuals (old and new clients), including families identified in the Nelson Community Plan.

4) Nelson District Community Services Centre Society — Youth Housing Response Program

\$73,880

Funding will be provided to assist homeless or at-risk homeless youth in Nelson to successfully secure and maintain appropriate, safe housing. Staff will be hired to respond to the immediate housing needs of youth (ages 15 – 29) by developing a voucher system to offer emergency housing, developing a registry/database of youth friendly landlords, and providing survival kits and other emergency supplies.

Total Funding: \$359,880