



**PRESS RELEASE**



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## **National Renovation and Homelessness Programs Extended**

**OTTAWA, Ontario, November 22, 2005** — The Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, announced \$262.9 million today for the one-year extension of two important federal programs, the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP).

“Since these programs began, we have had incredible results by working in full partnership with communities to improve responses to homelessness and housing; we recognize that this good work must continue,” said Minister Fontana. “Our government is committed to renewing these key two programs when they expire. The one-year extension of NHI and RRAP will ensure that these programs keep running while we introduce longer-term funding solutions as part of the Canadian Housing Framework.”

Since 1999, the NHI has been working in partnership with community organizations, the private and voluntary sectors, and other levels of government to develop local solutions to the challenges faced by homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. The first phase of the Initiative (1999 – 2003) focused on immediate needs, building up and strengthening short-term services such as emergency shelters, drop-in centres and soup kitchens. The next phase (2003 – 2006) focused on medium- and long-term assistance, such as transitional and supportive housing services.

Today's announcement of \$134.8 million for the National Homelessness Initiative will ensure essential community supports will continue to be made available to the most vulnerable in society. The NHI is working with communities to ensure a seamless transition in funding commitments.

CMHC's renovation programs help low-income households, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal people bring their homes up to minimum health and safety standards, repair shelters for victims of family violence, and support home adaptations for low-income seniors so that they can live independently for as long as possible.

The one-year extension of \$128.1 million in funding for RRAP continues a 30 year plus legacy of providing funding to preserve Canada's affordable housing stock. RRAP has also engaged in effective, flexible partnerships with provincial and territorial governments enabling cost sharing and delivery at the local level. Since its inception, over 700,000 households have benefited from RRAP.

Beginning in 2005, the NHI and CMHC began nation-wide consultations to develop a new, long-term Canadian Housing Framework. This Framework is intended to cover all aspects of the continuum of housing, from emergency shelter all the way to assistance for homeowners. Once approved, it will serve as the Government of Canada's guide for future housing and homelessness investments, and will build on the successes achieved through current programs like the RRAP and the NHI.

**For more information, please contact:**

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For more information about the Government of Canada's NHI, visit [www.homelessness.gc.ca](http://www.homelessness.gc.ca)

## **Backgrounder**

### **National Homelessness Initiative (NHI)**

Launched as a \$753 million, three-year initiative, the NHI was renewed for a second phase in 2003 with a further investment of \$405 million. Currently, the NHI is comprised of six components:

#### **1) Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)**

SCPI is the cornerstone of the NHI with 61 partnering communities across the country. Communities are allocated a maximum funding level which must be matched from other sources (i.e.: fundraising, local sponsors, etc.) and must explain how their activities will continue once SCPI funding ends. Projects funded support priority areas identified through a community planning process. SCPI funding has been fully incremental, adding to, rather than displacing, municipal and provincial investments in homelessness.

#### **2) Regional Homelessness Fund (RHF)**

The primary objective of the RHF is to support small and rural communities dealing with homelessness. Proposals must include evidence of support from a broad range of community-based partners, although a formal community plan is not required.

#### **3) Urban Aboriginal Homelessness (UAH)**

The UAH component is designed to provide culturally sensitive services to meet the needs of homeless Aboriginal people in Canadian cities. Often coordinating with Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) activities in twelve designated cities — Vancouver, Prince George, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Winnipeg, Thompson, Thunder Bay and Toronto — the UAH tests new ideas on how to better respond, through partnership, to the local needs of urban Aboriginal people.

#### **4) Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative (SFRPHI)**

SFRPHI is a horizontal initiative designed to facilitate the transfer of surplus federal real property for projects serving homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. SFRPHI compensates federal departments and agencies at market value for surplus properties and transfers them at a nominal cost to communities. By March 31, 2006, SFRPHI will have successfully transferred 67 surplus federal properties to community organizations, resulting in the creation of 285 housing units with a total of 975 beds.

#### **5) National Research Program (NRP)**

Understanding the characteristics of homelessness is important to help develop effective responses to reducing and preventing homelessness. The NRP works to fill information gaps including the transition into and out of homelessness, the impact of providing education, employment and income to homeless people, and the urgent challenge of homelessness in the North. The program has also developed partnerships between researcher and community-based agencies to help produce relevant and meaningful research; assess 'best practices'; and test the effectiveness of program delivery models.

#### **6) Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)**

The HIFIS initiative responds to the technological and information needs of service providers by offering a system that serves daily shelter operations. To date, 385 of 852 known sheltering service providers (SSPs), or 45% of SSPs, are participating in the HIFIS initiative representing 58% of shelter beds in Canada. Twenty per cent of known sheltering service providers have signed data-sharing protocols agreeing to share shelter statistics and basic demographics of shelter clientele with the Government of Canada. Negotiations are currently underway to develop large-scale data sharing protocols with national sheltering service provider organizations. This will ensure that the Government of Canada has access to baseline shelter information.

### **Backgrounder**

#### **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)**

##### **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) for Homeowners**

This program provides financial assistance to low-income homeowners, who own and occupy housing, to enable them to repair their dwellings to meet a minimum level of health and safety. The maximum assistance available varies from \$16,000 to \$24,000 per household depending on geographic location.

##### **Rental/Rooming House RRAP**

This program provides assistance to landlords of affordable housing to pay for mandatory repairs to units and beds occupied by low-income tenants. The maximum assistance available varies from \$24,000 to \$36,000 per unit or \$16,000 to \$24,000 per bed depending on geographic location.

##### **Shelter Enhancement Program**

The program assists in repairing, rehabilitating and improving existing shelters for victims of family violence; and in acquiring or building new shelters and second-stage housing where needed.

##### **Conversion RRAP**

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This program provides financial assistance for the conversion of non-residential property into units or beds to create affordable housing for low-income households. The maximum assistance available varies from \$24,000 to \$36,000 per unit or \$16,000 to \$24,000 per bed depending on geographic location.

### **Emergency Repair Program**

This program provides assistance to low-income homeowners or occupants in rural areas to undertake emergency repairs required for the continued safe occupancy of their homes. The maximum assistance available varies from \$6,000 to \$11,000 depending on geographic location.

### **RRAP for Persons with Disabilities**

This program offers financial assistance to homeowners and landlords to undertake accessibility work to modify dwellings occupied or intended for occupancy by low-income persons with disabilities. The maximum assistance available depends on geographical location. For rental properties assistance varies from \$24,000 to \$36,000 per unit, and for homeowners and rooming-houses, assistance varies from \$16,000 to \$24,000.

### **RRAP and Secondary Suites**

Recent enhancements to CMHC's RRAP promote the creation of secondary suites in existing properties and the development of garden suites, both affordable rental housing options for seniors and disabled adults.

A forgivable loan of between \$24,000 and \$36,000, depending on where you live in Canada, is available for modifying existing housing.

### **Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence Initiative**

This program offers one-time forgivable loans of up to \$3,500 to low-income seniors who have difficulties with daily living activities in the home by providing financial assistance to carry out minor home adaptations.

### **RRAP and Energy Efficiency**

In 2004, the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) was enhanced to allow funding for energy-saving renovations and retrofits that will improve the energy performance of housing units where appropriate in the context of undertaking required health and safety repairs.