



PRESS RELEASE



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Canada's New Government Commits \$526 Million to Combat Homelessness and Extend Funding for Renovation Programs

OTTAWA, Ontario, December 19, 2006 — Today, the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, announced \$526 million for the new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), a strategy aimed at combating homelessness in communities across Canada and extending CMHC's renovation programs.

The new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) will be funded at \$270 million over two years.

The new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) includes:

- Consulting with stakeholders from the private and non-profit sectors and listening to their concerns;
- Partnering with the provinces and territories in the new year to determine how funding will be effectively allocated across Canada, thereby addressing the unique needs of many Canadian communities similar to the Canada-Quebec Agreement model;
- Providing greater access to support networks appropriate to individual needs of homeless people (such as skills training, health and substance abuse treatment) to help them attain self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society;
- Requiring that funding be specifically targeted at the development of transitional and supportive housing; and
- Tracking progress in the prevention and reduction of homelessness.

"This announcement will help The Salvation Army give hope today and everyday by investing in the future of marginalized and overlooked people in communities across Canada," said Commissioner of The Salvation Army, Christine MacMillan. "We are extremely grateful for the generous support of the federal government and we value this partnership and their commitment to supporting vulnerable Canadians."

"Canada's New Government is delivering on its commitment to help those who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless," said Minister Finley. "We consulted with stakeholders - those on the front lines giving assistance everyday to families in need - and listened to their concerns. In the New Year, we will bring the provinces and territories to the table to better address the needs of particular regions and communities. But most importantly, this Homelessness Partnering Strategy gives hope to the homeless with sustainable solutions to become active members of Canadian society."

"Today's announcement is good news for Quebec," said Minister Cannon. "Our new Homelessness Partnering Strategy will help ensure that funding is provided for the next two years to help those who need it most, and will build on the existing Canada-Quebec Agreement."

"This new Homelessness Partnering Strategy will allow for important partnerships to develop solutions to reducing homelessness," said John Dickie, President of the Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations.

As a part of this \$526 million investment, Minister Finley announced \$256 million for the two-year extension of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) renovation programs for low-income households. These home modifications help seniors and persons with disabilities remain independent in their homes, and preserve the housing for people who are at risk of homelessness. These programs will help improve the living conditions for some 38,000 low-income people including seniors, persons with disabilities, victims of family violence and Aboriginal peoples.

To help ensure Canadians have safe, adequate and affordable housing, Canada's New Government also announced an investment of \$1.4 billion in Budget 2006. This investment is being made through the establishment of three housing trusts for the provinces and territories to invest in affordable housing.

Human Resources and Social Development Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy will take effect April 1, 2007.

Please see backgrounder for further details. This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

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Media Backgrounder — CMHC Renovation Programs

The following CMHC renovation programs provide financial assistance to ensure that housing occupied by low-income households meets basic health and safety standards. These programs assist with home modifications and adaptations to enable seniors and persons with disabilities live independently in their own home, near family and friends. They also help with funding to improve or create shelters for victims of family violence and preserve housing for people who are at risk of homelessness.

CMHC renovation programs are delivered in partnership with provincial and territorial governments and are available in all regions of Canada, including First Nations communities. Since 1973, more than 750,000 households have benefited from RRAP.

RRAP Homeowner

This program provides financial assistance to low-income homeowners living in substandard dwellings and who cannot afford the repairs necessary to make their homes safe and healthy. Homeowners may receive up to \$16,000.

RRAP Persons with Disabilities

Financial assistance is available to make a home, or rental unit, accessible for low-income persons with disabilities. Landlords may receive up to \$24,000 for each self-contained rental unit or \$16,000 for each rooming house bed unit. Homeowners may receive up to \$16,000.

RRAP Rental and Rooming House

Owners of rental or rooming houses with substandard units may be eligible for financial assistance to rehabilitate the property to a minimum level of health and safety. Landlords may receive up to \$24,000 for each self-contained rental unit or \$16,000 for each rooming house bed unit.

Rental RRAP also offers financial assistance for the creation of secondary suites and garden suites for low-income seniors and disabled adults.

RRAP Conversion

Financial assistance is available to convert non-residential properties into affordable self-contained rental housing units and/or bed units. Landlords may receive up to \$24,000 for each self-contained rental unit created or \$16,000 for each rooming house bed unit.

Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence (HASI)

Financial assistance is available through HASI to homeowners and landlords for home adaptations to extend the time that low-income seniors can live in their own home independently. Homeowners and landlords may receive up to \$3,500 to cover the cost of minor home adaptations.

Emergency Repair Program (ERP)

The Emergency Repair Program (ERP) helps low-income homeowners or occupants in rural areas to undertake emergency repairs required for the continued safe occupancy of their houses. Up to \$6,000 per unit is available.

Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP)

The Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) provides financial assistance for the repair, rehabilitation and improvement of existing shelters for victims of family violence. SEP funding is also available for new shelters and second-stage housing. For newly developed projects, CMHC may contribute up to 100 per cent of a project's capital cost. Up to \$24,000 per unit or bed unit is available to improve existing shelters.

Higher assistance levels may be available for properties located in more northern and remote areas.

Call 1 800 668-2642 for contact information in your area.

Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a new federal program to combat homelessness in Canada by putting into place the structures and supports needed to move an individual towards self-sufficiency and participation in Canadian society. This initiative provides \$270 million over two years. The program will encourage partnerships among all stakeholders, enhance long-term sustainability for the homeless and achieve concrete, meaningful and lasting results for Canadians in need.

The HPS improves upon the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) and its cornerstone program, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), as follows:

- The strategy invites partnerships with provincial and territorial governments (similar to the Canada-Quebec Agreement model). New partnerships with private and non-profit sectors will also be encouraged. By working with all stakeholders, the funding can be allocated effectively to ensure it addresses the unique needs of the communities in their respective regions.
- The strategy also focuses on a 'housing first' approach, which reinforces that having shelter is a pre-condition to self-sufficiency and full participation in society. As such, the Government of Canada's funding will be specifically targeted at the development of transitional and supportive housing. These capital investments in facilities will bolster community efforts and complement the health, training and social investments made by provinces and territories.
- It encourages federal departments to work together in areas linked to homelessness — such as corrections, crime prevention, mental health, family violence, skills development and immigration.
- It ensures that all federal capital investments are strategically coordinated with other federal, provincial and territorial investments in health, training and social services, which will maximize the opportunity for homeless

persons to become self-sufficient.

- It improves the tracking of progress in the prevention and reduction of homelessness.
- It promotes improved access to supports that respond to the individual needs of homeless people, such as skills training, health services, and substance abuse treatment, so that they can become self-sufficient and move out of emergency shelters and into transitional or permanent housing.

The HPS is comprised of three initiatives:

1. The **Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI)** is the cornerstone of the HPS. Its housing-first approach recognizes that the first step is to house individuals. Afterwards, other supports can be instituted as required to improve health, parenting, education, and employment.

The HPI identifies four target areas for funding:

- **Designated communities:** These are communities identified as having a significant problem with homelessness. As with SCPI, these communities would be able to access multi-year funding which must be matched from other sources.
- **Rural and outlying areas:** These areas, which include the North, will be eligible for funding to support one-time projects to fill specific gaps in rural infrastructure addressing homelessness.
- **Partnerships with Aboriginal groups:** These partnerships will ensure that services meet the acute and unique needs of the homeless Aboriginal people, whether in cities or rural areas.
- **Federal horizontal pilot projects:** Human Resources and Social Development Canada will mobilize federal departments such as Health, Justice, Citizenship and Immigration, and Indian Affairs and Northern Development to work collaboratively on issues which may lead to homelessness such as corrections, mental health, family violence, and immigration.

2. The **Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative (SFRPHI)** makes surplus federal property available to community organizations, the non-profit sector, and other levels of government for projects to alleviate and prevent homelessness. Under the new HPS, SFRPHI is more flexible to allow land exchanges. Community groups can exchange, under certain conditions, a federal property received under the SFRPHI for another similar, and more suitable, property.

3. The **Homelessness Accountability Network (HAN)** streamlines reporting, strengthens program accountability, develops knowledge and encourages organizations to reinforce their networks and share best practices. This network builds upon the Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and National Research Program (NRP) components of the NHI by facilitating access to, and dissemination of, housing support information and tools.