

Background Information re Homelessness

NCWC's Common Program this year is Homelessness and Housing for the Homeless. At the AGM, it was decided that Councils may choose whatever they wish to do in this area. As Councils work on the Common Program, they might wish to examine the programs currently in effect in their areas, gather information on initiatives that have been successful, examine how programs are being delivered and if they are reaching the target group. To that end, I have put together some background material including sources for further information.

NCWC Policy:

To begin, if you wish to check NCWC's Housing Policies, they are on our website as follows:

1982 (82.13)

1988 (88.1)

1992 (92.1, 92.20 PU)

1999 (99.4)

2002 (02.2 PU)

Federal Government Initiatives

Check out website: <http://www21.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/initiative>

The following is quoted from that site:

“ In 1999 the Government of Canada announced the National Homelessness Initiative, a three-year initiative designed to help ensure community access to programs, services and support for alleviating homelessness in communities located in all provinces and territories.

“The Government of Canada has renewed the National Homelessness Initiative for an additional three years with an investment of \$405 million.”

The following is from website: <http://www21.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/partners/communitypartners>:

“The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) amounts to \$305 million over three years and is helping 61 communities across Canada address homelessness at the local level.

“Each of these 61 communities has developed a Community Plan on Homelessness that identifies current community resources and gaps in service and establishes priorities supported by all stakeholders. The Plan also includes strategies for sustaining longer-term projects, communicating with all concerned community groups, and evaluating success.

“Eighty per cent of SCPI funding is targeted to 10 major Canadian cities with serious homelessness problems. These communities are Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax. The remaining twenty per cent is allocated to 51 smaller communities with demonstrated homelessness problems.”

NOTE: This website also provides more on the SCPI (pronounced “skippy” communities across Canada and their projects.

The following quote is from: [http://www21.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/partners/community report](http://www21.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/partners/community_report).

“The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) is a key component of the Government of Canada’s National Homelessness Initiative that focuses on community efforts to address homelessness. It has been implemented in communities across the country and relies on private and public partnerships at the local level. As the SCPI enters its third year, 61 communities have come together to examine the problem of homelessness and have developed comprehensive plans to mobilize their efforts to assist the most vulnerable citizens in their neighbourhoods.

“In recognition that these communities have now all completed their planning process, the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Coordinator on Homelessness sought their input for this report. Ten communities were asked for an open and frank review of both the challenges and successes they experienced during the planning phase of the Initiative. They were asked to share their views and experiences. (A summary of their comments are included in the following pages of this report.)

“The ten communities who have participated in this report were chosen because their progress under the SCPI was far enough along to be able to provide examples of best practices as well as other information that could inform others about lessons learned along the way. The communities are Greater Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Sudbury, Hamilton, Ottawa, Halifax and St. John’s.”

References for Further Reading/Research:

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Websites/Organizations

Affordable New Home Development Foundation – the result of an initiative to address the affordable housing issue in **Saskatoon**. It is a registered, non-profit organization created to provide education and support to families and individuals that want to buy their first home, but for various reasons, cannot access the traditional marketplace. An element in the operation of this Foundation is the *Building for Home Ownership* program which is designed for families and individuals that are ready to make a commitment to work toward home ownership.

Sasknative Rentals Inc. – the first Metis administered, subsidized housing program in **Saskatoon**.

Crisis Nursery – a residence that provides a second home for children during a family crisis or emergency. If there is no alternate care available, parents may leave their children while the problem is being resolved. The Crisis Nursery in **Saskatoon** is sponsored by a non-governmental agency, the Saskatoon Society

for the Protection of Children, Inc. and is managed by volunteer board members and interested citizens.

Saskatoon Housing Coalition Inc. – exists to meet the needs of those with mental illness through supportive housing.

Raising the Roof – <http://www.raisingtheroof.org/>

Canada's only national charity dedicated to long-term solutions to homelessness.

Calgary Homeless Foundation – <http://www.homeless.com>

Founded by local businessman Art Smith and supported by Premier Ralph Klein, Mayor Al Duerr, as well as the Calgary Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Calgary & Areas Foundation Sponsors.

Housing Again – <http://www.housingagain.web.net/>

Websites of sponsoring organizations for this website are also of interest. From this site you can find *Finding Room: Housing Solutions for the Future Report of the National Liberal Caucus Task Force on Housing* by Paul Martin, MP, and Joe Fontana, MP.

Greater Vancouver Regional District “Homelessness” –

<http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness/index/html>

Provides info on regional homelessness plan, research data and maps, and some links to relevant local and governmental agencies.

City of Calgary – <http://www.calgary.ca>

University of British Columbia Homelessness Virtual Library –

www.hvl.ihpr.ubc.ca

The Native Council of Nova Scotia – <http://ncns.ednet.ns.ca>

Has a brief description of a housing project by the Rural and Native Housing Group that helps to improve the housing standards of low/fixed income homeowners. Over the past twenty years, Rural and Native Housing Group has administered a range of well known social housing programs, e.g., Residential Assistance Program (RRAP) and the Emergency Repair Program (ERP).

In Summary

Marilyn Boechler, VP, has sent me much information on work that has been done in Saskatchewan, and I thank her for the following information, as well as some sources previously mentioned. The Saskatoon Council of Women made housing an issue to be studied and promoted in various programs from 1996 to 1998. They invited guest speakers from City Council and the Saskatoon Housing Authority and also organized five public information sessions in an area of the city where good quality social housing was desperately needed. Marilyn also noted these important facts that emerged from their work:

1. Crisis shelters/housing is essential.
2. Second-stage housing is the vital next step. Here people can be helped to gradually take charge of their lives and begin to make good decisions.
3. Good quality affordable housing is also needed not just for families, but for anyone living on a low or modest income – singles, mentally or physically challenged, immigrants, seniors, etc.
4. Housing co-ops seem to work well for families.

Homelessness is a very broad topic, encompasses so much, and affects so many people. There seems to be a plethora of information available, and many strides have been made toward finding solutions, but we haven't found all the answers yet. We still have poverty, and hence we still have people who do not have a place of their own that they can call home. I hope the information contained herein is of some assistance as the NCWC Councils find their own approach to homelessness.

Protocol

Councils are asked to report on what have done or will be doing re our Common Program no later than March 31st, 2004. We want to be able to share findings, results, and ideas. These should be sent to Karen Dempsey, VP, in care of our National Office.

Karen Dempsey, VP (Economics)

July 30, 2003