

National Homelessness Initiative

Initiative nationale pour les sans-abri



National Homelessness Initiative
1999 – 2003 **Progress Report**

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Table of Contents

Minister's message	4
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NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE REPORT ON PROGRESS: 1999 – 2003

The Need for a Federal Response	7
Designing the Federal Response	7
The National Homelessness Initiative	7
Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative Model – How it Works	10
Progress to Date – Investments Under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative	12
Emergency shelters	13
Transitional and supportive housing	15
Support facilities and support services	17
Capacity building	19
Public awareness	19
Progress to Date – Research	21
Homeless Individuals and Families Information System	22
Progress to Date – Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative	23
Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative Projects	24
The Need for a Continued Federal Response	26

Minister of Labour



Ministre du travail

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J2



Minister's Message

Canada is a rich nation, both in the quality of life its citizens enjoy and in the compassion it has towards the more vulnerable of society. Yet homelessness is still an issue in many of our cities.

We know that the people and the factors that led them to becoming homeless are varied and diverse. We realize that for most homeless people and those with low incomes, getting out of their situation is a step-by-step process that requires them to overcome a number of hurdles. We are also aware that to effectively address homelessness we cannot rely on just one level of government or one sector of society. It is a battle fought on many fronts, requiring a response and dedication by everyone.

The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, the cornerstone of the National Homelessness Initiative, is designed to encourage partnerships and unite the efforts of people and organizations from across the country and pool both resources and expertise to ensure that help is available where it is needed the most.

Addressing homelessness is more than just putting a roof over a person's head. Efforts have to address the wide range of challenges homeless individuals face at any given time. A top-down, one-size fits-all approach is not effective. Communities and those on the front lines are the best placed to identify solutions to address their local circumstances.



Since becoming the Federal Coordinator on Homelessness in 1999, I have been so proud of the accomplishments and commitment of Canadians to making our country stronger by improving the lives of its citizens. I am heartened by the progress we have made in the last three years. Emergency measures have been put in place to help address the urgent needs of homeless people. Sixty-one communities across the country have brought community organizations, service providers, the private sector and all levels of government together, developing comprehensive plans and supporting projects that addressed local needs. Many new partnerships have been formed, more than 1,800 projects have been funded and homeless people are now receiving enhanced supports.

I am honoured to be a part of these efforts, to work with such dedicated people and to experience just how resourceful and productive our country can be when we join together behind such an important endeavor. This report is a reflection of all the hard work underway to address homelessness in communities across Canada.

There is still more work to be done but our progress to date gives us confidence and optimism for the future. We will build on our successes and continue to use a community-based approach to assist individuals in achieving self-sufficiency.



The Need for a Federal Response

Homelessness is a visible social and economic issue in Canada, particularly in large urban centres. The rise in homelessness stands in stark contrast to Canada's reputation as a prosperous and caring society. This discrepancy is of rising concern to Canadians, generating numerous provincial and municipal reports, most notably by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which, in its 1999 *National Housing Policy Options Paper*, declared homelessness to be a national disaster. Numerous mayors across the country, seeing an increase in homelessness and poverty in their cities called on the Government of Canada to take action. The Prime Minister of Canada responded by appointing the Minister of Labour, Claudette Bradshaw, as the Federal Coordinator on Homelessness in March 1999.

Designing the Federal Response

Following her appointment, the Minister toured the country, consulting broadly with governments, community organizations, service providers, the Canadian public and homeless individuals, while seeing the effects of homelessness first-hand. These discussions highlighted the fact that homelessness varies in its specifics from community to community. As a result, the Government of Canada recognized that no one level of government, sector or group could respond to this issue on its own. It would take partnerships with all levels of government and community stakeholders to achieve the necessary results. A flexible approach would be required to develop new responses to homelessness that reflect local priorities and conditions.

The National Homelessness Initiative

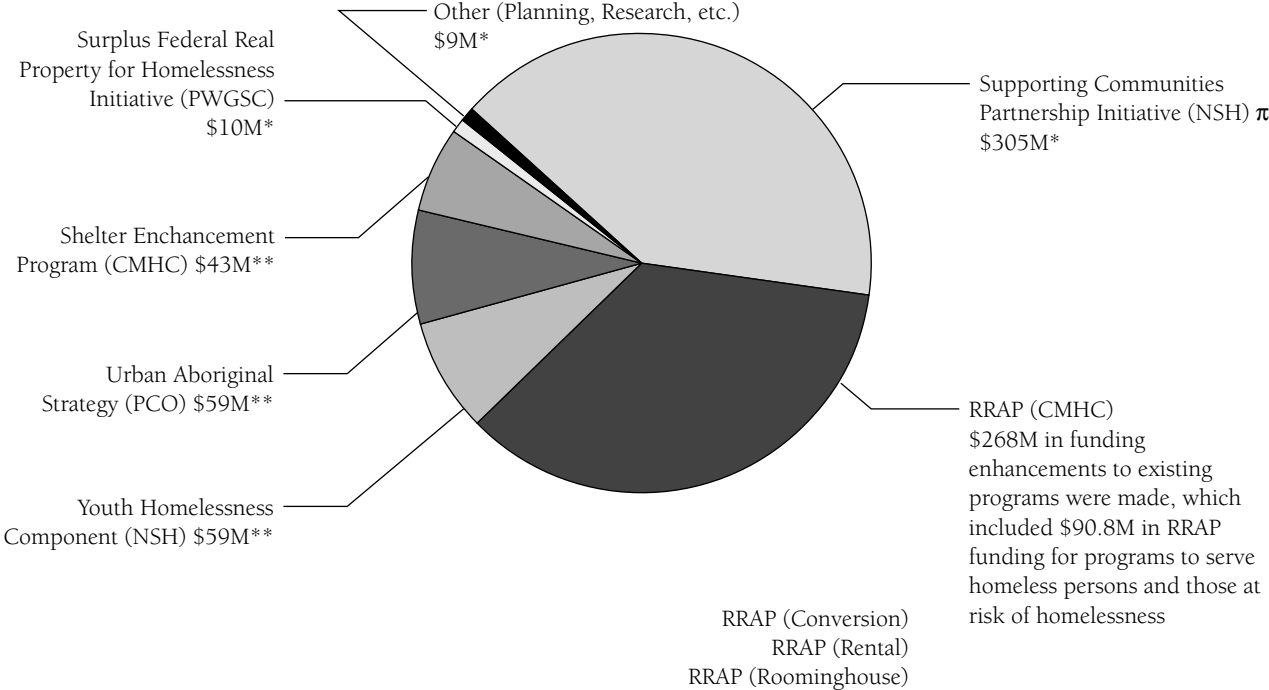
These considerations formed the foundation of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), a community-led initiative designed to alleviate and prevent homelessness, and launched in December 1999 by the Government of Canada. This \$753 million, three-year Initiative engaged governments, community and private sector partners in collaborative work to strengthen existing service capacity and to develop new community-based responses to homelessness that reflect local circumstances.¹

¹ In March 2003, the Government of Canada has renewed the National Homelessness Initiative for an additional three years (2003-2006). In this time, communities will be assisted in further implementing measures that assist homeless individuals and families in achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency.



Figure 1, below, shows the distribution of the \$753 million among the seven components of the NHI.

National Homelessness Initiative - \$753M



* New programs

** Enhancements to existing programs (except for CMHC's RRAP-Conversion)

π Ten major cities, 80% of funding; 51 smaller communities, 20%



The cornerstone of the NHI was the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), a \$305 million program designed to support local, community-based efforts to identify priorities, to plan and develop appropriate actions and to make decisions on how funds should be allocated to support identified actions.

SCPI funds were provided to 61 communities across Canada with demonstrated homelessness issues. Ten of the 61 cities had significant populations of absolute homeless and were allocated 80% of the funding under the Initiative. These communities were: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax. The remaining 20% of resources was targeted to 51 other Canadian cities and towns who were also experiencing challenges with homelessness. There was at least one community receiving SCPI funding in every province and territory.

To further support the community partnership approach, additional funding for homelessness was provided as follows:

- \$311 million to provide funding targeted to low-income households, including homeless persons and those at risk of becoming homeless through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)'s \$268 million Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and the \$43 million Shelter Enhancement Program, both of which work to preserve and create low-cost housing by providing funding to renovate and/or modify existing housing units;
- \$59 million for Aboriginal homelessness-related projects under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), an approach that brings federal departments together to ensure that their programs more effectively serve Aboriginal people living in urban centres;
- \$59 million to address youth homelessness aimed at the increasing numbers of youth living on the street;
- \$10 million for the Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative (SFRPHI), which makes surplus federal real property available, at a nominal cost, to community-based organizations addressing homelessness issues;
- \$6 million to support federal research aimed at broadening the understanding and awareness of homelessness in Canada, and supporting future policy development and government responses; and
- \$3 million to assist communities to develop comprehensive Community Plans to address homelessness.



SCPI Model – How it Works

A key feature of the SCPI is the mobilization of the broader community to address homelessness. Central to this mobilization process has been the SCPI requirement that communities develop a comprehensive homelessness plan that identifies their assets and gaps, priorities for filling these gaps and the linkages needed between existing programs and services to create an integrated approach to respond to the diverse needs of homeless people living in their communities.

“On a broader level, SCPI has been a positive experience in our community. The Steering Committee has brought together all levels of government and key community groups. It has worked extremely well together and improved our networking and our capacity to work as a real community partnership.”

Jocelyn Greene, Executive Director, Stella Burry Community Services,
St. John's, NFLD.
Letter to Minister Bradshaw, November 1, 2002.

The success of the local approach is confirmed by program evaluation findings, discussions with community representatives, experts and national stakeholders, as well as by reports from communities to the Federal Coordinator on Homelessness. The SCPI model, through its provisions for planning, flexibility and local decision-making, contributed to benefits reaching far beyond a more efficient use of scarce resources. It effectively served as a catalyst for community mobilization, stakeholder collaboration, as well as new, enhanced and invigorated partnerships.

An important finding of the evaluation process is that program funding built upon, rather than substituted for levels of municipal and provincial investments in homelessness existing immediately prior to the Initiative. Moreover, community data indicated that considerable additional investment, over and above pre-SCPI levels has occurred on the part of the provinces and municipalities during the first three-year period of the Initiative.

The SCPI is an award-winning approach that has been recognized by the United Nations as a “best practice”, in their search for initiatives that have made outstanding contributions to improving the quality of life in cities and communities around the world. The SCPI model will be shared with other countries as a means to improving living conditions on a sustainable basis.



In some communities, where planning activities were already underway, SCPI funds accelerated the process by providing a basis to finalize action plans and develop investment strategies. For other communities, the SCPI provided the impetus for community groups to come together in a concerted way. Many of these groups came together from different backgrounds, including youth, Aboriginal people, faith-based organizations, government service providers and not-for-profit groups. The planning process permitted many to forge new partnerships, to understand one another's point of view and to develop a plan of action for all.

The SCPI model enabled governments and community service providers to better coordinate their efforts and, as a result, to secure additional financial and human resources for homelessness. Working together in this fashion also served to increase the awareness of available homelessness resources, expertise and services, which, in turn, contributed to a more broad-based knowledge and understanding — across communities and between service providers — on the nature and complexity of their clientele and on homelessness issues generally.

“It is important to note that SCPI levered provincial, municipal and community funding for homeless services, as well as resulting in generally increased awareness of homeless issues in the community.”

Liz Jansen, Chair, City of Toronto Homeless Health Reference Group.
Letter to Minister Bradshaw, April 30, 2002.

“Our community has achieved considerable success utilizing funds from Phase I of the Homelessness Initiative. Many of the initiatives are self-sustaining. More than \$2 million has been leveraged from community sources including private investors, local funders and the municipality. Significant partnerships have been achieved which will have far-reaching influence in the ongoing affordable housing developments.”

Steve Cross, Chair, Red Deer Housing Committee.
Letter to Minister Bradshaw, October 7, 2002.



Through their efforts, and together with the support of governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, communities have built strong foundations. They have developed local networks and local vehicles for decision-making that have been instrumental in strengthening the ability of communities to address the needs of their homeless populations. Having the capacity and opportunity to share best practices, as well as lessons learned, is vital to making effective use of resources and sustaining community efforts over the long term.

Progress to Date – Investments Under the SCPI

“The community organizations in Ottawa receiving funding under this program have demonstrated great responsibility and accountability in the utilization of government funding and have demonstrated exceptional willingness to partner, share best practices and collaborate in joint efforts to end homelessness in our nation’s capital.”

J. Koornstra, Executive Director, Bruce House, Ottawa, ON.
Letter to Minister Manley, June 14, 2002.

In the past three years we have seen 61 communities from across Canada working together to develop a collaborative approach to homelessness that is best suited to their specific local needs. Each of these communities has demonstrated observable benefits in terms of new and improved facilities and services for homeless people, and in enhanced community capacity to address the issue in a coordinated and collaborative fashion. Federal resources under the NHI have contributed significantly to this progress, building upon pre-existing community efforts and investments in homelessness and helping to establish a funding base for leveraging additional investments from a range of new and existing partners.

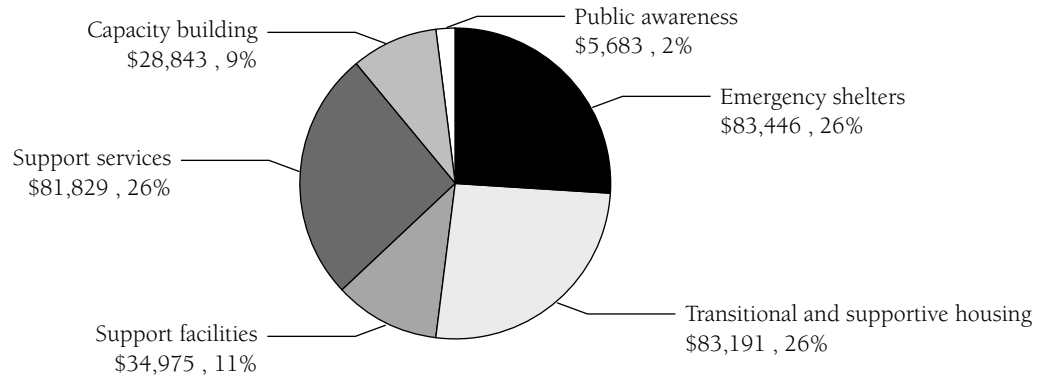
Individual communities subsequently made funding decisions based on specific priorities identified in their Community Plan. Though individual Community Plans and priorities were unique and reflected local circumstances, a trend analysis of corresponding investment decisions found funding to fall primarily within six targeted areas. These were:

- emergency shelters;
- transitional and supportive housing;
- support facilities;
- support services;
- capacity building;
- public awareness.



Figure 2, below, shows the distribution of project funding under three components of the NHI:

**Approved Project Funding - National Figures
SCPI/Youth/UAS as of September 30, 2003**



Emergency shelters

Approximately \$83,446,081 is being invested in communities by the Government of Canada for the creation and improvement of emergency shelter spaces for individuals requiring short-term housing facilities from a few days to as much as six months. As of September 30, 2003, 602 sheltering facilities projects have been established under the SCPI, Youth and UAS and will result in the creation or improvement of 327 emergency shelters.

The following are examples of some of the emergency shelter projects funded under the NHI:

Herstreet of Montreal — Montreal, Quebec

Funds were provided to Herstreet of Montreal to build a 20-room emergency shelter and a drop-in centre also to provide access to a laundry, a second-hand clothing shop and a community kitchen. These investments support Herstreet's mission of providing intervention and psychosocial follow-up to homeless and at-risk women, and in raising awareness of violence against women.



Quint Development Corporation — Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Funding provided to the Quint Development Corporation contributed to the establishment of a 15-bed hostel offering supportive and safe emergency shelter for Aboriginal homeless youth, in addition to counselling and referral services.

Quint Development is a non-profit community economic development corporation established to serve the five core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon. Its mandate is to create training and employment opportunities in these neighbourhoods and to create social and economic stability.

Out of the Rain! Night Shelter — Victoria, British Columbia

SCPI funding contributed to Out of the Rain! Night Shelter to provide young people with a warm, safe, dry and supportive environment seven nights a week from November to April – the wet weather season in Victoria. This service has strengthened community connections for homeless youth by offering them education and other services.

Operated by a coalition of agencies, including the YMCA/YWCA, Christ Church Cathedral, First Metropolitan United Church, Grace Lutheran Church, St. John the Divine, the Red Cross, and the Boys and Girls Club, this project reflects the extensive partnerships that have been developed under the NHI.

Phoenix Youth Programs — Halifax, Nova Scotia

The combined efforts of the Government of Canada, the Province of Nova Scotia, and two committed non-profit service providers has enabled Phoenix Youth Programs to open a 20-bed emergency shelter with supportive services for youth. Money received from the NHI, supported start-up and operational costs. St. Paul Home, a local non-profit organization, donated the building, and the funding for renovations was provided for by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

Circle of Eagles Lodge Society — Vancouver, British Columbia

With the support of the NHI a barrier-free emergency shelter for Aboriginal women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside is able to provide a temporary safe space for Aboriginal women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



Transitional and supportive housing

The NHI recognized that an immediate need existed to invest in emergency shelters and supports across the country. Emergency responses, while an essential first step, are temporary. People using shelters are still homeless. Without further assistance, homeless people often face a never-ending cycle of entering emergency shelters and returning to the street. To help break this cycle, the NHI is investing \$83,190,895 to support the creation and improvement of transitional accommodations where people can have a place to live, while stabilizing their lives and taking steps to get the supports they need to achieve self-reliance and self-sufficiency. This investment will also go towards supportive housing for those unable to live independently. NHI funding contributed to the creation or improvement of:

- 247 transitional houses
- 79 supportive houses

The following are examples of transitional and supportive houses funded under the NHI:

Trellis Housing Initiatives — Toronto, Ontario

Trellis Gardens is Toronto's first apartment complex to be built for people who currently call City hostels and shelters home. This three-story, 24-unit residence provides transitional housing for approximately 55 women and children, creating an environment where they can achieve their potential and contribute to their community.

Stella Burry Corporation, Carew Lodge — St. John's, Newfoundland

Monies from the NHI assisted the Stella Burry Corporation in renovating and refurbishing Carew Lodge, a 19-unit transitional and supportive housing complex serving women with complex mental health needs. Funding permitted the purchase of a van for the use of Carew Lodge residents.

Amisk Housing Association – Edmonton, Alberta

Amisk Housing Association received funding from the NHI to increase the number of transitional and supportive housing units. The Association can now assist 20 homeless Aboriginal individuals and families, including pregnant teens, women fleeing violent situations, seniors and families.



Behavioural Health Foundation Inc. — Winnipeg, Manitoba

A partnership between the Government of Canada and the Behavioural Health Foundation provided for the purchase and renovation of five off-site transitional housing units for homeless or at-risk clients undergoing substance abuse treatment programming at the Foundation's main building.

Behavioural Health is a not-for-profit residential addictions treatment agency, which for the last 30 years has provided men, women, dependent children and youth with a range of services aimed at achieving personal and family wellness. Services include addiction treatment, child care services, skills training and education opportunities.

Urban Native Youth Association – Vancouver, British Columbia

With help from the Government of Canada, the Urban Native Youth Association has established a permanent Recovery House for Aboriginal women in Vancouver. The house offers a period of supported transition housing and services as follow-up for young Aboriginal women discharged from other treatment programs.

Native Addictions Services Society – Calgary, Alberta

The combined efforts of the governments of Canada and Alberta, the Calgary Homeless Foundation, Petro-Canada and Pan-Canada Energy provided facility upgrades for the Native Addictions Services Society (NAS), an organization providing addiction treatment, healing, counselling, rehabilitation and shelter for thousands in the Calgary area. Government of Canada funding enabled the NAS to increase its treatment beds from 20 to 36 and to better accommodate persons with disabilities.

Covenant House – Toronto, Ontario

Funding from the Youth component of the SCPI has enabled the creation of transitional housing for 28 homeless youth in Toronto. Covenant House provides comfortable and safe living conditions for youth to assist in their transition into successful independent living.

Lookout Emergency Aid Society – Vancouver, British Columbia

A partnership between the governments of Canada, British Columbia and the City of Vancouver resulted in funding for the design and construction of the Lookout Emergency Aid Society's 37-bed emergency and transitional shelter for men and women coping with a range of challenges. The Society operates several facilities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The West 5th & Yukon shelter provides three one-bedroom suites, two fully accessible suites and 32 studio apartments for second stage/transitional housing. It also contains 37 short-stay beds and provides referral services to address the needs of homeless people. A cold/wet weather room provides shelter and showers to a further 15 to 20 people.



YWCA of Kitchener-Waterloo – Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario

Funding through the NHI allowed the YWCA to renovate a building into four bachelor apartments and one family room to provide supportive housing for homeless women and families who have mental, physical or development challenges. Residents are provided with a full range of supportive services in the form of in-home assistance, counselling, service coordination, and crisis intervention.

*Fraserside Community Services Society –
New Westminster, British Columbia*

The Government of Canada is assisting the Fraserside Community Services Society to provide supportive housing for up to eight adults with mental health issues through the purchase and renovation of a five-unit apartment building, with four two-bedroom apartments and one one-bedroom apartment.

Support facilities and support services

A total of \$116,803,319 has been approved for the development of support facilities and corresponding services for homeless and at-risk individuals and families. As of September 30, 2003, 330 support facilities projects have been established under the SCPI, Youth and UAS and will result in the creation or improvement of:

- 192 drop-in centres;
- 51 food banks;
- 17 clothing/furniture banks;
- 49 soup kitchens;
- 90 other facilities;
- 846 support service projects assisted.



Activities included a variety of interventions, ranging from social supports to employment resources, as demonstrated by the following project examples:

Side Door Ministries — Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Funding under the Youth component of the SCPI contributed to the addition and renovation of Side Door Ministries, a safe and supervised drop-in centre that provides programs, resources and counselling for youth in the Yellowknife area. Previously located in the basement of the Anglican church, the new facility provides a larger and more up-to-date space for the centre to conduct these services.

Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures — Halifax, Nova Scotia

Financial support under SCPI enabled the Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures, a community-based, non-profit organization that promotes the well-being of Canadians, immigrants and refugees from diverse cultures in Nova Scotia, to acquire and administer a community voice-mail system. Intended for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, the voice-mail system permits users to conduct their daily lives with dignity by enabling them to provide a telephone number at which they may be reached, and to retrieve messages from prospective employers, services, businesses and individuals without revealing their personal situation.

Community Mobile Soup Kitchen Inc. — Moncton, New Brunswick

NHI funds contributed to the set-up and operation of a mobile kitchen providing homeless people with easy access to a hot meal seven days a week.

Operated by staff and volunteers from existing food banks, churches and the Knights of Columbus Clubs in the Moncton area, the addition of the mobile unit responds to an identified need for additional soup kitchen services on weekends and in specific areas of the city.

Through Government of Canada funding, shelters and transitional and support facilities gained:

- 7,900 new, permanent beds
- 700 seasonal beds



Capacity building

A key objective of the NHI was to help build the sustained capacity of organizations and communities to manage, plan, coordinate and invest in solutions to address the homelessness issue. A sum of \$28,843,583 has been approved under the NHI to achieve this objective. Some of the projects that have helped reach this objective are as follows:

Burnside Gorge Community Association — Victoria, British Columbia

The Burnside Gorge Community Association received funding from the SCPI to help bring community service providers together to develop plans that address common needs. The Association facilitated the development of collaboration and broad-based partnerships among all stakeholders to share knowledge, expertise and data about homelessness.

St. Michael's Hospital — Toronto, Ontario

A partnership between the NHI and St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto helped increase the capacity of front-line social services and health workers by conducting a two-day FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) training workshop.

The United Way of Greater Victoria — Victoria, British Columbia

The SCPI assisted The United Way of Greater Victoria to hold the conference, “Board Boot Camp” to provide non-profit homelessness organizations, their volunteers and staff with the tools, skills and knowledge required to enhance their existing governance, management structure, human resources and overall capacity.

Public awareness

Broader awareness and understanding of the factors surrounding the issue of homelessness and measures to address them are necessary for communities to foster long-term, integrated support systems. Partnerships created under the community approach have contributed to the achievement of this objective, resulting in an increased awareness of community resources available and the avoidance of service duplication.



Federal investments in homelessness have made a positive difference in the lives of homeless or at risk of homelessness individuals and families. They have access to more and better facilities, and through improvements in programs, have more help to find greater stability in life. Some examples of projects aimed at communicating these results are as follows:

Kamloops Métis Family Services – Kamloops, British Columbia

The Government of Canada and Kamloops Métis Family Services came together to raise awareness about Aboriginal homelessness, given limited published statistical information about the issue. The partnership also involved an increase in services for Aboriginal people and the development of a Métis Cultural Centre.

Canadian Safe School Network – Toronto, Ontario

With the assistance of the SCPI, the Canadian Safe School Network contributed to the prevention and understanding of homelessness through the production and dissemination of educational material, including a TV documentary, video and interactive CD-ROM.

Tsimshian Tribal Council – Prince Rupert, British Columbia

To help raise community awareness of homelessness in Prince Rupert, the Government of Canada and the Tsimshian Tribal Council worked together to develop a sustainable program for public education. The program aims to increase understanding of the issues surrounding homelessness and Aboriginal homelessness.

“We are a beneficiary of this initiative. The conditional assurance of federal funds allowed us to leverage substantial private donations from the community. The result was two-fold: first, the straightforward and very important fact that we were able to purchase our building, thus saving \$50,000 a year in rent that can be redirected to programs and nutrition; second, participation in our Community Plan and in partnerships with sponsors and agencies.”

Harvey Dahl, Facilitator, Saskatoon Food Bank Inc.
Letter to Minister Bradshaw, July 9, 2002.



Progress to Date – Research

The agenda implemented in the first three years of the homelessness initiative aimed to move beyond existing anecdotal evidence, to create a better understanding of the root causes of homelessness, to support future policy development and to serve as a source for accounting and reporting related to the Initiative. To this end a range of knowledge and research projects and activities at the national and regional levels was developed and funded around three questions that framed the agenda:

- what are the structural/systemic issues in Canada that contribute to homelessness and what changes could lead to the reduction and prevention of homelessness in the long term?
- who are the homeless people, what are their numbers and what is needed by particular homeless populations, such as families, youth and Aboriginal people, to get them out of homelessness and prevent them from falling into homelessness in the long term?
- how can approaches to governance as well as particular programs, services and initiatives, strategically contribute to the enduring growth of capacity within communities to prevent and reduce homelessness in the long term?

Little was known about homeless populations at the outset of the Initiative, so it made sense to create an agenda for undertaking a range of knowledge and research projects/activities under these broad themes at the national and regional levels. These investments contributed to a preliminary understanding of some homelessness issues, including the diversity of the homeless population, their needs and appropriate responses/solutions. Through the results and lessons learned from research undertaken over the first three years, a number of areas for further investigation have emerged that will be guiding future research efforts.



Research collaborations and partnerships have been established with research organizations such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and other federal departments, as well as with academic experts involved in research on homelessness. To date, 34 knowledge and research activities have been funded at the national and regional levels. These address a broad range of themes including participation and governance; the economic and social costs of homelessness; housing initiatives; Aboriginal homelessness; homeless youth; data development and methodological issues in counting homeless people; and, best practices in addressing and preventing homelessness. The majority of the research to date has been national in scope. Twenty-seven projects have been completed and executive summaries can be found, in both official languages on the National Homelessness Initiative's Web site at www.homelessness.gc.ca, under Planning & Research.

The purpose of the research Web site is to offer a "research highlights" series as well as user-friendly links with other researchers dealing with the homelessness issue.

Homeless Individuals & Families Information System

An important part of the research agenda is the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Initiative. With an understanding of the characteristics and trends in the needs of those who are using the shelter system, both governments and community networks and service providers are able to better plan and implement long-term strategies to address their unique local needs. The HIFIS Initiative has established an electronic data management system that is being introduced to communities across the country.



Progress to Date – Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative

As part of the National Homelessness Initiative, the Government of Canada established an initiative to make up to \$10 million worth of appropriate surplus federal real property available to support communities' efforts in addressing the needs of people who are homeless as well as those at risk of homelessness. The \$10 million Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative (SFRPHI) compensates custodian federal departments and agencies for revenues they would normally receive from sales of surplus properties.

Any community in Canada that can demonstrate a need related to homelessness can be eligible for an available property. The possibility of gaining ownership of suitable property for token cost has been a catalyst for stimulating community groups to take action on needs they would otherwise be unable to address. The SFRPHI has demonstrated how innovation, collaboration and effective use of existing resources can leverage other contributions to address community needs in a beneficial way.

A diverse range of properties including vacant land, individual houses with land, RCMP detachments and an office building, are being contributed to national non-profit organizations, community groups, and provincial agencies and municipalities.

In total, the provision of 50 real properties worth \$9.2 million has been approved by the Treasury Board to support local efforts to address homelessness.

The beneficiaries of these projects include individuals with disabilities, women with children escaping abusive family situations, people with developmental disabilities, young ex-offenders reintegrating into communities, low-income families and seniors.

As of June 2003, a total of 214 transitional and affordable housing units are being created through SFRPHI. The beneficiaries of these units are 186 families and 90 individuals with transitional or ongoing support needs, including people with disabilities, seniors, and people with substance abuse challenges. There is also the non-residential Red Cross facility in Toronto which will serve as a base for street outreach services for homeless people.



SFRPHI Projects

The Stella Burry Corporation

The Stella Burry Corporation was established in 1995 to provide residential transitional and long-term housing and support to individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Through the SFRPHI the Government of Canada transferred six houses in St. John's, Newfoundland to the Stella Burry Corporation.

Of these six houses, the Stella Burry Corporation developed four for families with members who have serious medical issues and who are at risk of homelessness. The other two houses are providing affordable shared accommodation to eight individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In addition to providing these individuals and families with safe and secure living environments, practical support and counseling are being offered to support clients and enhance their ability to live in the community.

The Canadian Red Cross

Through the Toronto Region Office, the Canadian Red Cross provides street outreach, meals, and other programs to assist homeless people in Toronto.

A SFRPHI property in Toronto that has been transferred to the Canadian Red Cross to be used as a multi-service homelessness centre is anticipated to serve 10,000 homeless people per year. The facility will be the central point for the Red Cross non-residential street relief and for outreach services provided at neighbourhood locations, such as church halls with drop-in centres. This street relief work will help homeless people access shelter and other supports such as hot lunches, foot care, and special needs diets. The property will also serve as a training centre to expand the pool of volunteers serving homeless people, and a warehouse to store supplies that street outreach workers distribute, including blankets, hygiene kits, bottled water, diapers, etc.



Partnerships, Leveraged Funding and Sustainability

Fundamental to the NHI's objectives and design is the importance of partnerships across and between all levels of government, as well as among community and not-for-profit and private sector interests. Evaluation findings indicate that the SCPI, Youth Homelessness and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy/Homelessness (UAS/H) have been very successful in building on existing homelessness investments from municipal and provincial/territorial levels of government. Collaboration has also been fostered with other federal departments, largely on a project-by-project basis with departments such as Justice Canada, Health Canada and Correctional Service Canada. Public Works and Government Services Canada, the National Secretariat on Homelessness and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation play major roles in managing and coordinating the SFRPHI. Government of Canada funding for the RRAP suite of programs is leveraged in partnership with eight provinces and territories cost-sharing the renovation programs and seven delivering the programs on behalf of the federal government.

In total, \$630 million has been leveraged under the SCPI, Youth Homelessness and Urban Aboriginal components. All provinces and territories have participated and invested (financial and in-kind contributions), in total, upwards of \$240 million. These funds, in addition to the \$390 million (financial and in-kind) that has been raised from municipal governments and the voluntary sector, have helped communities achieve or surpass their 50% matching contribution requirement. Municipal involvement has been especially pivotal to the success of the SCPI. In most, if not all, SCPI-designated communities, municipal governments are closely involved in the planning, development, and implementation of homelessness activities. Provincial/territorial representatives have also been actively involved in the planning and implementation of the SCPI.

Engagement with the private sector has also leveraged approximately \$41 million. Examples of private sector participation include the Homebuilders Associations in Ottawa and Fredericton which have contributed financial support, expertise, in-kind materials and labour to build and renovate two shelter facilities. Halifax's local youth-serving agency annually raises a significant share of its operating budget from non-governmental sources, including donations from the business community, service clubs, and foundations. In Calgary, the business sector donated millions of dollars to homelessness projects and services. Despite these gains, communities have indicated that more extensive and longer-term partnerships with the private sector would contribute significantly to sustaining community efforts.



The Need for a Continued Federal Response

Findings from the *Evaluation of NHI and the Lessons Learned from the Experience of the NHI* confirm that there has been substantial progress made in most areas, with “the combination of program funding and the planned, community-driven approach to allocating that funding resulting in a considerable enhancement of community capacity to address homelessness in the great majority of communities examined.”

However, despite these achievements, more work needs to be done. *Evaluation and Lessons Learned* findings both point to the need to enhance Aboriginal capacity to address homelessness, to develop solid research on the nature and extent of the homelessness issue and to begin to address the continuing demand for more transitional and supportive housing. Efforts to improve coordination and collaboration between federal departments and agencies are also necessary to establish a more cohesive federal approach to address homelessness, and to further develop and strengthen partnerships with the private sector, provincial/territorial and municipal governments.



The success of the NHI has been recognized during consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. These stakeholders also identified a continuing need for federal participation in addressing the needs of homeless people.

Homeless persons have benefited from efforts to date, but have further needs that have not yet been addressed. They are too often caught in a never-ending cycle of entering emergency shelters then returning to the street.

A three-year, \$405 million extension of the National Homelessness Initiative was announced in the February 2003 Budget and will continue the momentum that communities have been building and will capitalize on their innovations, through the use of flexible community-based approaches to address homelessness. The SCPI, the cornerstone of the National Homelessness Initiative, will continue to address priority needs identified by communities, to broaden partnerships and to invest in transitional and supportive services to help homeless people become more self-sufficient.

Stakeholders and all levels of government agree that partnerships will be critical to our success. Over the next three years, the Government of Canada will continue to strengthen relationships with the voluntary and private sectors, service providers and other levels of government to enhance our collective capacity to meet the needs of Canada's homeless people.

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

