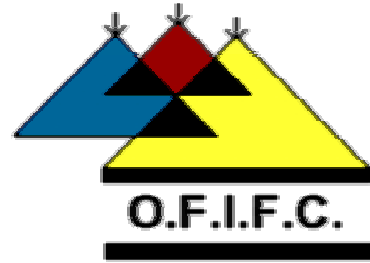


Canada



news release

April 30, 2001
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Government of Canada, O.F.I.F.C. partner to address Aboriginal homelessness in Ontario

OTTAWA, ONTARIO — The Government of Canada and the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (O.F.I.F.C.) today approved an agreement that will provide \$1 million in federal funds to address urban Aboriginal homelessness in small urban centres in Ontario. The agreement was announced today by the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness, and Sylvia Maracle, Executive Director of the O.F.I.F.C.

“The Government of Canada continues to work with our partners to develop and implement successful ways of combating homelessness in Canada,” said Minister Bradshaw. “This agreement with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres will help develop effective, efficient strategies to meet the needs of Ontario’s Aboriginal people.”

“The funding announced today will be used to improve shelters, treatment programs and health services to better assist Aboriginal communities in need,” said Ralph Goodale, Minister of Natural Resources and Federal Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians.

Funding is made available through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy component of the Government of Canada’s \$753-million Homelessness Initiative.

“It is important that we have opportunities to address homelessness in the urban Aboriginal community,” said Sylvia Maracle, Executive Director of the O.F.I.F.C. “The support from the Government of Canada will allow us to begin to address homelessness in a number of communities.”

The O.F.I.F.C. has developed a community plan that broadly identifies Aboriginal homelessness priorities across 12 communities. These communities include Barrie, Kapuskasing, Kenora, Kingston, London, North Bay, Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, St. Catherines, Thunder Bay, Timmins, and Windsor.

The plan is based on a series of community forums held in each area with a total of 79 Aboriginal and some non-Aboriginal agencies, and individuals (including Aboriginal homeless individuals) participating in the forums. Under today's agreement, the O.F.I.F.C. will continue to work with each community to develop local plans with specific priorities and projects.

Under a separate agreement announced on April 19, 2001, the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC) has received \$1.5 million in federal funds for the 2000-2001 fiscal year to deliver homelessness programs for urban Aboriginal people in Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa. That agreement provides \$664,500 for Toronto, \$300,000 for Hamilton and \$535,500 for Ottawa.

Funding for the Homelessness Initiative was provided for in the February 2000 budget and is therefore built into the existing financial framework.

For more information on the Government of Canada's Homelessness Initiative, visit our web site at www.hrdc.gc.ca/homelessness

Backgrounder attached.

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BACKGROUNDER

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRES (O.F.I.F.C.) URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY ON HOMELESSNESS ONTARIO

BACKGROUND

The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (O.F.I.F.C.) is a provincial Aboriginal organization representing the collective interests of twenty-seven member Friendship Centres located in towns and cities throughout the province. The O.F.I.F.C. administers a number of programs which are delivered by local Friendship Centres in areas such as health, justice, family support, and employment and training. Friendship Centres also design and deliver local initiatives in areas such as education, economic development, children's and youth initiatives, and cultural awareness.

The O.F.I.F.C. has received approval for a \$1 million agreement with the Government of Canada under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy on Homelessness to address the issue of homelessness among First Nations people in 12 small urban centres in Ontario. These communities include: Barrie, Kingston, London, North Bay, St. Catharines, Thunder Bay, Windsor, Kapuskasing, Kenora, Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, and Timmins.

O.F.I.F.C. proposes to work with each community to develop local plans with specific priorities and projects.

In total, the Government of Canada has committed \$8.7 million in homelessness funding over three years in Ontario Region for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. This year \$1.5 million has been allocated to the larger centres of Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa, and another \$1 million for 12 other communities in Ontario.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the O.F.I.F.C. are to implement the Aboriginal community plan and to fund Aboriginal agencies who provide services to Aboriginal homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

PRIORITIES

Funding priorities this year include shelters, soup kitchens, employment opportunities, cultural services, advocacy, transitional housing, treatment centres, meal programs and health services. Each community has identified assets and gaps and will determine how they will apply the funding.