
news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Calgary's homeless to benefit from improved facilities

CALGARY, ALBERTA—In its continuing efforts to help alleviate the hardship of homelessness, the Mustard Seed Street Ministry Society will be expanding its services to those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Calgary. Senator Joyce Fairbairn today announced funding of \$600,000 under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), of the National Homelessness Initiative, on behalf of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness, to help the organization improve its facilities.

“We are pleased to support such a worthwhile project, which will help serve the needs of those who may find themselves homeless in Calgary,” said Senator Fairbairn. “This is an example of the Government of Canada’s commitment to working with our partners to combat homelessness in Canada.”

The project will allow the Mustard Seed Street Ministry Society to increase the usable space in its Creative Centre where they offer support services and training programs for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The renovation of the centre will add space for a workshop, computer lab and a learning resource centre. It is expected the renovations to the Creative Centre will allow the Mustard Seed Society to increasingly meet the needs of their clients, by assisting over 500 individuals per year in improving their quality of life.

Recognizing that local housing challenges are best resolved through community based solutions, the Government of Alberta, in partnership with the Calgary Homeless Foundation, has also contributed \$300,000 towards the renovation of the Creative Centre. “I strongly believe the key to resolving homelessness is to work together, all levels of government, community organizations and business, to bridge our collective visions with reality,” said Stan Woloshyn, Minister of Seniors and responsible for housing. “Today’s announcement demonstrates that through our partnerships, we have begun to make our vision a reality.”

Provincial funding for the Creative Centre is provided through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative. Funding was based upon approved community plans that outlined initiatives to address local homelessness concerns.

“We are very happy to receive this funding to make much needed improvements to our facilities,” said Pat Nixon, Executive Director of the Mustard Seed Street Ministry Society. “This will allow the Seed to greatly enhance our services and help homeless people get off the streets.”

The SCPI brings together various partners to develop local solutions to homelessness challenges faced by communities across Canada. These local solutions help develop a more seamless web of supports for homeless individuals and families. The \$305-million SCPI is a key component of the Government of Canada’s \$753-million National Homelessness Initiative.

The Initiative also includes the expansion of existing programs for youth and Aboriginal people, enhancement of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s renovations and shelter programs, and making surplus federal properties available for homelessness-related activities. Through the SCPI, communities in Alberta will receive over \$54 million to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

Since the launch of the National Homelessness Initiative in December 1999, the Government of Canada has already approved more than \$33 million for youth, Aboriginal and SCPI projects in Alberta. Over \$10 million has already been invested in Calgary for capital projects and services to help those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The National Homelessness Initiative is making a difference in addressing this issue by using a community-based approach to help develop solutions that work.

Funding for these projects was provided for in the February 2000 Budget and is therefore built into the existing financial framework.

PROJECT SUMMARY

- Government of Canada contribution:	\$600,000
- Province of Alberta/Calgary Homeless Foundation contribution:	\$300,000
- Other contributions:	\$89,985
- Sponsor contribution:	\$875,000
- Total project cost:	\$1,864,985
- Objective/outcomes expected: the renovations to the Creative Centre will allow Mustard Seed to increasingly meet the needs of their clients	

For more information on the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, visit our Web site at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nsh-snsa

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BACKGROUND

Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative

Canada is known for its very high standard of living, yet homelessness is an urgent problem in far too many of our communities. In a commitment to improve the quality of life for all Canadians, the Government of Canada is investing \$305 million in the new **Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)** for communities across the country with the most significant homelessness problems.

Eighty per cent of this funding is going to communities with the most acute signs of homelessness: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax. The remaining 20 per cent is being directed to other communities across Canada that have demonstrated a significant homelessness problem.

The goal of the SCPI is to provide flexible funding for communities to plan and implement comprehensive local strategies to help reduce the number of homeless people and to improve conditions to prevent others from becoming homeless.

The SCPI encourages the local collaboration and partnership needed to successfully address homelessness. Participating communities receive funding to support their efforts to involve public, private and voluntary sector partners in the fight against homelessness.

This initiative provides communities with the resources needed to identify service gaps, as well as plan for and implement supports that will enable homeless people to move from the streets and emergency shelters to more secure lives.

Through the SCPI, the Government of Canada funds up to 50 per cent of the cost of implementing community plans. Contributions from other partners, such as provincial and municipal governments and the private and voluntary sectors, will make up the other 50 per cent, through either direct resources or in-kind contributions.