
news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saskatoon homelessness plan approved

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN—Final approval of the Saskatoon Community Plan on Homelessness and Housing as well as \$1.2 million from the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) were announced today by Ralph Goodale, Minister of Natural Resources, on behalf of Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness, and Saskatoon Mayor James Maddin.

The federal commitment, which will be matched by funds or in-kind services from other stakeholders, will be used to establish and improve resources directed towards helping homeless individuals in Saskatoon, with priority in four areas: youth, singles, Aboriginals and care system supports.

The \$305-million SCPI, the cornerstone of the Government of Canada's \$753-million Homelessness Initiative, sponsors broad partnerships to support actions identified by committees to alleviate and prevent homelessness. Under the SCPI, communities in Saskatchewan will receive more than \$3.5 million over three years to address homelessness.

The Saskatoon Plan on Homelessness and Housing looks at housing and related supports, from a state of homelessness through to permanent housing with or without support and creates options for partnerships involving non-profit, public, and private sectors of the community.

As part of the community plan, Minister Goodale announced a federal contribution of \$344,000 in urgent need funding to the Saskatoon YWCA Crisis Shelter that will help the facility maintain around-the-clock service for women and children. The YWCA is using the SCPI money to hire a children's counsellor, a youth counsellor, two counsellors with general duties and an administrative assistant.

“Our support for the YWCA Crisis Centre to provide emergency shelter for women and children, and the development of the Community Plan are excellent examples of the Government of

Canada's commitment to helping the people of Saskatoon," said Minister Goodale. "By working with the city and with community organizations on the implementation of this Community Plan, we can better address the needs of local people. This will enable us to provide essential services to people in need."

Mayor Maddin noted that today's announcement comes on the heels of the City of Saskatoon's signing of the Declaration of the Right to Adequate Housing.

"Affordable housing and shelter for the homeless are essential to the well-being of Saskatoon children and their families," Maddin said. "We are proud that our unique private, public and Aboriginal partnership has been able to not only generate a comprehensive plan for action but has levered funds to enact much needed programming."

Work on the community plan was funded through the Homelessness Initiative with in-kind contributions from the City of Saskatoon. The Saskatoon Community Partnerships Committee (SCPC) brought together the federal government, the Province of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Metis Nation - Saskatchewan, as well as dozens of social and private-sector agencies. Sixty-three stakeholders representing 46 organizations attended a public consultation on February 15, 2001.

In addition to the YWCA project, the community plan calls for extending services at existing shelters; establishing a Housing Help Centre to co-ordinate service information; securing a permanent location and improving fresh-food access for the local food bank; and establishing and maintaining a transitional home for male youths.

The federal contribution will be dispersed through March 31, 2003. SCPI funding of \$600,000 for the City of Prince Albert was announced on June 12, 2001; announcement of the City of Regina's community plan is imminent. Altogether, the Government of Canada will contribute \$3.5 million to Saskatchewan communities through the SCPI.

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Backgrounder
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Saskatoon Community Plan for Homelessness and Housing Highlights

Funding: \$1.2 million from the Government of Canada through the National Secretariat of Homelessness' (NSH) Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI); money to be matched by funding or in-kind contributions from other stakeholders (government, social or private sector agencies).

Duration: Three fiscal years (2000-01 through 2002-03) at \$400,000 per year; first fiscal year's contribution made retroactively, mostly for YWCA women's shelter (\$344,000).

Sustainability: Community Plan to establish continuation of services after federal SCPI assistance expires on March 31, 2003.

YWCA Crisis Shelter 510 25th Street East Saskatoon

Purpose: The 40-room residence—originally a low-cost hostel—has in recent years become an emergency shelter for women and children in crisis. Users of the facility:

- mothers and their children on an emergency basis for up to 30 days but usually for 2-5 days;
- single women in need of emergency accommodation;
- girls under 18; girls 15 and under usually stay up to three nights while girls aged 16 and 17 can stay up to 3-4 months.

Clients served over last decade

1990: 487
1993: 789
1995: 821
1997: 968
1999: 1,075
2000: 1,431

Use of \$344,000 in SCPI funding: Hiring of additional staff (children's counsellor, youth counsellor, counsellors with general duties and administrative assistant) and renovations that will allow the YWCA to have qualified staff on site around the clock. As of May 1, 2001, this has been accomplished and the facility is now the YWCA 24-Hour Crisis Shelter.