
news release

**June 28, 2001
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Regina receives \$1.2 million for homelessness relief

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN—Final approval of the Regina Community Plan on homelessness 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 the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness.

Regina is the third Saskatchewan city to have its community homelessness plan approved. The plans for Prince Albert and Saskatoon were announced on June 12 and June 26, respectively.

Minister Goodale and Regina Mayor Pat Fiacco made the announcement of federal funding from the SCPI at a news conference today. The federal commitment, which will be matched by funds or in-kind services from other stakeholders, will be used to establish and improve resources for the homeless in Regina.

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 community plan was drawn up by a steering committee including representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as six representatives of local social agencies. Further input was received from 40 representatives of community organizations at two public forums held February 28, 2001.

“Our support for the development of this Community Plan is an excellent example of the Government of Canada's commitment to helping the people of Regina,” 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 Fiacco said, “We are pleased with today’s announcement. We have been working to identify a number of possible solutions to the complex issue of homelessness in our city. Although Regina does not have the obvious homelessness that you find in larger centres, we are concerned about access to safe, affordable housing. Our main concern is alleviating overcrowding and providing quality housing for all.

“Over a ten-week period, our Steering Committee put together a comprehensive community plan based on input from stakeholders that identifies assets and gaps, service provision and top priority needs for the homeless. Through this plan, it is our goal to improve the social, health and economic well-being of people in this situation.”

The City of Regina Housing Advisory Committee will establish a subcommittee with widespread representation to implement the plan. A call for proposals, inviting interested groups to submit projects that will serve the community plan, is to be issued in July.

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with six decision-making principles established in the community plan:

- build on the work of the Mayor’s Advisory Committee and other recent housing initiatives;
- link with the Urban Aboriginal Strategy and Youth Homelessness of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and other existing community initiatives;
- maximize dollars and services by joint ventures, collaborative processes and partnerships;
- ensure long-term self-sufficiency and a “continuum of supports” approach;
- complete projects within a two-year timeframe with evidence of self-sustainability; and
- fit projects within the plan’s priorities and criteria.

The Steering Committee stated that consideration for SCPI funding should be given to those projects—Stabilization Shelter, Youth at Risk, Small Cap Projects, Outreach Services and Preventive Services—that are designed to help those most at risk of becoming homeless.

Federal contributions will be dispersed through March 31, 2003. Prince Albert will receive SCPI funding of \$600,000 while Saskatoon will receive \$1.2 million. Altogether, the Government of Canada will contribute \$3.5 million to Saskatchewan communities through the SCPI. The remaining \$500,000 is not yet designated.

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Backgrounder
Regina Community Plan for Homelessness
Steering Committee Members

Connie Dieter, Consultant

Deanna Elias-Henry, Executive Director, YWCA

Ray Hamilton, General Manager, Gabriel Housing Corporation

Vic Huard, CEO, United Way

Keith Karasin, Executive Director, Open Door Society

Jeremy Parnes, Chair of the Inner City/Social Housing Sub-Committee of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing

Carole Alfonso, City Facilitator, Human Resources Development Canada

Rose Hill, Service Delivery Manager, Human Resources Development Canada

Ken Alexce, Executive Coordinator, Western Economic Diversification Canada

Wendy Raths, Program Policy Coordinator, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (an agency of Municipal Affairs and Housing)

David Hedlund, Director Regina Region, Saskatchewan Social Services

Peggy Clark, Director Community Services, City of Regina

Elizabeth Sinclair, Aboriginal Policy Analyst, City of Regina

Consultant to the Steering Committee

Richard P. Fontanie, President, Fontanie Associates Consulting Services Inc.

Steering Committee Highlights

Established August 10, 2000 when federal, provincial and municipal officials agreed to the City's offer to take a leading role in the process of developing a community plan to alleviate homelessness in Regina. The homelessness initiative would build on the work of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing, whose report, *The Future of Housing in Regina*, was released in August 2000.

Committee's vision: "To have a visible and responsive process in place that encourages an integrated and seamless approach to meeting the needs of those that require safe and secure housing."

Objectives:

- to promote a “continuum of supports” approach to reducing homelessness;
- to strengthen Regina’s capacity to provide people with safe and secure housing;
- to develop collaborative processes and broad-based partnerships among public, private and non-profit organizations to create solutions for the homeless;
- to increase public awareness about homelessness;
- to enhance the development of effective preventive measures for those at risk of becoming homeless; and
- to develop a base of knowledge, expertise and data about homelessness and share it among all concerned parties and the general public.

Gaps identified in community plan:

- a low market housing vacancy rate;
- 3,300 dwellings in need of major repair;
- affordable housing units diminishing;
- waiting lists for social housing;
- many people paying more than 30 per cent of their income for suitable housing; and
- a supportive housing situation that is difficult to assess.

Priorities identified through the consultation process:

- more affordable and accessible housing;
- support and learning opportunities for people with lifelong barriers;
- crisis management homes, especially for women;
- outreach services, especially for those in crisis;
- improved interagency coordination;
- coordinating efforts of business, government and non-profit agencies;
- advocacy for increased income security rates for housing;
- increased awareness and education regarding landlord social responsibility; and
- supportive housing for people with long-term behavioural, emotional and health difficulties.