



City of Victoria Fact Sheet on Homelessness

FACT SHEET

The City of Victoria has undertaken the following initiatives, categorized by the four areas below, in addressing homelessness:

Financial Supports

- City of Victoria's Housing Trust Fund has dispersed \$450,000 from 2005 to the present to support development of 60 units of housing in Victoria for families, youth and single individuals; \$100,000 in 2005 (Pacifica Housing Advisory Association and Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group) \$50,000 in 2006 (Our Place Society) and \$300,000 in 2007 (Victoria Native Friendship Centre);
- City of Victoria has contributed \$722,029 to the Capital Regional District's Housing Trust Fund since it was created in 2005 (\$240,028 in 2005; \$240,036 in 2006; \$241,965 in 2007);
- Provided additional City funding and staff support, including Police Department, for emergency shelter needs: St. John the Divine (\$7,500 + \$28,600 in-kind for 40 spaces) and Out of the Rain Youth Shelter (\$40,000 for 30 spaces);
- Provided annual funding (\$85,000) for adult and youth outreach workers;
- Provided annual property tax exemptions for homelessness-related non-profit organizations. For example, the total exemptions granted for the past three years are: \$211,962 (2004), \$262,863 (2005) and \$302,447 (2006). See Attached Schedule for List of Organizations;
- Provided grants of \$40,925 to 24 community organizations that deal with homelessness for program delivery and capacity-building (2000 -2006);
- Supported Victoria Cool Aid Society's 2005 and 2007 Homelessness Count and Survey through Special Project Grants.

Policy and Regulatory Tools

- Developed Harm Reduction Policy framework (2004) acknowledging the interrelationship between prevention, housing, treatment and enforcement and subsequent Harm Reduction Response (2005), in collaboration with Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and Health Canada. Policy includes recommendations for expanded harm reduction response and future services and research gaps;

- Initiated and activated RESPOND staff team (2006) to deal with acute and unresolved operational issues that affect downtown including shopping carts, safety and security, syringe management and public urination;
- Facilitated Public Toilets Discussion Paper and subsequent roundtable with downtown stakeholders;
- Influenced development of the Capital Regional District's Regional Housing Affordability Strategy's actions and targets on homelessness;
- Created the Community Resources Inventory and City and Neighbourhood Profiles that identify key city resources and socio-demographic information;
- Wrote the Good Neighbour Agreements for Our Place, St. John the Divine Shelter and AIDS Vancouver Island (under development) in partnership with Police and community;
- Maintain active membership in the Downtown Service Providers network, since its inception in 2003, working on integrating and collaboration of services; and
- Adopted Adaptable Housing Zoning Regulations (2004).

Programs

- Initiated and coordinated the Extreme Weather Protocol for emergency shelter beds in 2004, in collaboration with community organizations, in response to a cold snap (2005 - present). Increased the winter emergency shelter beds to 165 in 2006-07;
- Initiated and led the Mayor's Downtown Health Initiative Action Plan (2003), in partnership with the Health Authority and the Police, to respond to emerging social issues in the downtown core resulting in several projects including development of Sobering and Assessment Centre and Archie Courtnall Centre (psychiatric emergency service centre) and establishment of four mental health workers for the downtown;
- Wrote the Good Neighbour Agreements for Our Place, St. John the Divine Shelter and AIDS Vancouver Island (under development) in partnership with Police and community;
- Developed on-going partnerships with other levels of government, VIHA, Police and other external agencies, which has led to collaborative work on projects and the exchange of information. For example: preparation of two studies expanding Victoria's Harm Reduction Policy (Fitting the Piece Together Report: Towards an Integrated Harm Reduction Response to Illicit Intravenous Drug Use in Victoria

and a Report on Victoria Harm Reduction Information Sessions) plus research on supervised drug consumption options for Victoria (underway by Centre for Addictions Research BC) with the VIHA; and

- Implemented opening of 24 hour washrooms with security in Centennial Square in 2006 (annual cost of approximately \$190,000 for cleaning and security).

Advocacy and Influence Strategies

- Secured \$10 million in capital funding for Our Place through the Premier's Task Force; and
- Influenced the allocation of \$3,139,000 in funds from the Supporting Community Partnership initiative, the centrepiece of the Federal National Homelessness Initiative, since 2000 through the Victoria Steering Committee on Homelessness. The funds have resulted in:
 - 56 adult (St. John the Divine and Salvation Army) and 30 youth (Out of the Rain) emergency shelter beds; and
 - 111 adult (Our Place, Salvation Army Lifeskills, Native Friendship Centre, Burnside Gorge) and 14 youth (Native Friendship Centre and Kiwanis) transitional and long-term supportive housing beds.

2006 PERMISSIVE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR PROPERTIES HELD BY ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN SERVING HOMELESS POPULATIONS

Total Number of Organizations: 16

		<i>Exemption from Property Taxes</i>
<i>Emergency Housing, Supportive Housing and Halfway Housing</i>		
Anawim Companions Society, The	Supportive Housing	\$2,577
Canadian Housing Research Foundation	Supportive Housing	\$7,749
Casa Maria Emergency Housing Society	Emergency Housing	\$2,033
Cridge Centre for the Family	Social Housing	\$24,360
Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society	Affordable Housing	\$4,971
John Howard Society	Halfway Housing	\$2,176
Kiwanis Club of Victoria	Emergency Housing	\$4,291
Victoria Cool Aid Society	Emergency & Supportive Housing	\$43,213
Victoria Native Friendship Centre	Supportive Housing	\$2,752
Victoria Women's Transition House Society	Emergency Housing & Social Services	\$9,160
Sub-total		\$103,282
		<i>Exemption from Property Taxes</i>
<i>Social Services</i>		
Capital Mental Health Association	Social Services	\$21,578
Salvation Army	Social Services	\$39,736
The Upper Room Society	Social Services	\$8,417
United Way	Social Services	\$12,595
Victoria Youth Empowerment Society	Social Services	\$12,261
YM/YWCA	Social Services	\$104,578
Sub-total		\$199,165
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Total		
		\$302,447