

Media Release



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Streets to Homes Finds—and Retains—Homes for Greater Victoria’s Vulnerable People

Victoria, BC—A year-and-a-half after its launch, the Streets to Homes pilot program has currently housed 84 people who were living in homelessness: 69 participants in private market housing, 10 participants in supported housing and 5 in transitional housing. Significantly, the retention rate for those housed in private market units for six months or more is 95%.

Central to private market affordability is the rent subsidy component of the program. The Province and BC Housing funded 70 participants with a maximum \$300 per month rent subsidy which in most cases is paid directly to the landlord. The [Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness](#) (Coalition) Leadership Council, co-chaired by Mayor Dean Fortin and Eric Jordan, recently approved initial funding to November 2012 for an additional 50 rent subsidies. This will help to meet the program target of housing 120 people.

The target population is people with barriers to stable housing including cyclical homelessness, mental health and/or substance use challenges.

“Without Streets to Homes, I wouldn’t be here. I’m accountable and on track with what I’m doing. I never had respect for authority in the past, but now I feel this is the key to keep me on track and I don’t want to get off,” says Mike, a Streets to Homes participant.

“I like being able to go out and have somewhere to come back to. I like not having to be on time for the 4pm food lineup and worry about being late and missing dinner” he adds. “And I really like that I have a set of keys: house, locker, work. I never thought I’d be so happy to have a set of keys.”

In a survey completed on September 15, 2011:

- The majority of participants stated that having access to housing and to a support worker made an important difference in their lives
- 75% reported being able to access new support services
- 19 local landlords provided private market units and remain satisfied with the program
- 21% of participants self-identify as Aboriginal
- 38% participants have pursued or found employment, volunteer jobs, job training or educational activities.

Streets to Homes aims to move 120 people who have experienced homelessness directly to private market housing obtained through a comprehensive landlord support system. Streets to Homes provides a rent subsidy, case planning and the assistance of a Follow-up Support Worker to help each participant remain housed and progress towards self-sufficiency.

“When we hear from participants that Streets to Homes has saved their lives or enabled them to focus on their education or sobriety, and match that with outcomes such as housing retention, we know we are making a very significant contribution towards long-term change,” says Karyn French, Executive Director of [Pacifica Housing](#). Pacifica is one of the Coalition partners that deliver Streets to Homes.

Other strategic partners are: [Ministry of Social Development](#), [BC Housing](#), [Our Place Society](#), [Salvation Army ARC](#), [Vancouver Island Health Authority](#), [Victoria Cool Aid Society](#) and [Victoria Native Friendship Centre](#).

In a second program stream, Streets to Homes partnered with [Rental Owners and Managers Society of BC](#) (ROMS BC) to facilitate people moving out of supported housing and into private market units. Tenants were provided support and rent subsidies to ensure a successful transition. Vacated supported housing units became available for people requiring access to 24-hour onsite support.

Streets to Homes is funded by the [United Way of Greater Victoria](#), [Victoria Foundation](#) and the Province of British Columbia.

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness is a partnership of local service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, and the business, post-secondary and faith communities. The Coalition’s vision is to end homelessness in the Capital Region by 2018.

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