



greater victoria  
coalition to end  
homelessness

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**hope has found a home**



Together we CAN  
end homelessness.



# **messaging toolkit**

2015 edition

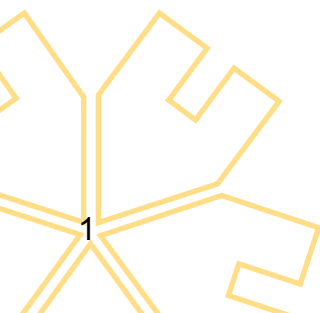
# “ Homelessness CAN be solved.”

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## **messaging toolkit**

To ensure we are consistently using key messages across the community, this toolkit provides messages and key numbers all stakeholders and staff can refer to when delivering communications to the public, media or volunteers. The Messaging Toolkit is updated annually and can be found on [www.victoriahomelessness.ca](http://www.victoriahomelessness.ca).



# the coalition

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness Society (Coalition) is a partnership of all levels of government, service providers, business members, the faith community, post-secondary institutions and private citizens dedicated to ending homelessness in Greater Victoria.

## mission

To end homelessness in Greater Victoria by 2018.

## vision

By 2018, all people facing homelessness in our community will have access to safe, affordable, appropriate, permanent housing, with support if they require it. This will be provided in a coordinated, accessible and effective manner.

## role

As stewards of the ten year plan to end homelessness the Coalition's role is to:

- Identify the objectives that need to be met in order to end homelessness.
- Identify the projects and initiatives required to meet those objectives.
- Conduct the research needed to support those objectives and initiatives.
- Increase public awareness with regards to homelessness and homelessness issues.
- Encourage collaboration amongst the agencies and organizations working to end homelessness in Greater Victoria.

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## canadian definition of homelessness<sup>1</sup>

Homelessness describes a range of physical living situations, organized into four categories. Homelessness and housing exclusion include:

**Unsheltered**, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation.

**Emergency Sheltered**, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as Violence Against Women Shelters.

**Provisionally Accommodated**, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary and who do not have their own home or security of tenure.

**Insecurely Housed**, referring to people who are 'at-risk' of homelessness, and whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Homelessness Research Network (2012). Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Available online at [www.homelesshub.ca](http://www.homelesshub.ca).



# housing



People continue to experience homelessness in our community. Progress has been made, but more is needed to END homelessness.



## key messages

- A Housing First strategy is a key to ending homelessness in our community.
  - Housing First provides clients a home, supports for treatment and counselling without requirements based on their sobriety.
- More supportive and affordable housing is required across Greater Victoria.

## streets to homes

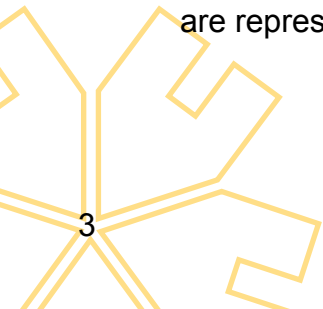
- Using a Housing First approach, the Streets to Homes program works to secure private market housing for those experiencing homelessness. Participants receive a rental subsidy as well as case planning and support.
- Originally spear-headed by the Coalition, the program is now run by Pacifica Housing.
- 120 rental supplements are available to the Streets to Homes program thanks to funding by the United Way of Greater Victoria, the Government of British Columbia, the City of Victoria and Victoria Foundation.

## centralized access to supported housing

- Centralized Access to Supported Housing (CASH) is a one-stop resource for supported housing in Greater Victoria.
- Prior to CASH individuals requiring supported housing were required to apply to multiple service providers and buildings to find housing
- The program is intended to find housing best suited to the needs of the client.
- Important to note that CASH has not created housing and does not directly supply housing.

## priority housing project list

- Six initiatives are currently on the Coalition's Priority Housing Project List (PHPL).
- These are projects that the Coalition has identified as priorities in our community to end homelessness.
- Approximately 159 units of supportive housing, 108 affordable units and 90 rental supplements are represented on the list.



# facts

- To end chronic homelessness in Greater Victoria the Coalition is calling for **367 supportive housing units** (185 units built, 182 from existing rental stock), a **\$24.5M investment in capital funding** over 4 years, **\$617,400/year for rental supplements** and **\$7.1M/year for support services**.<sup>2</sup>
- The Coalition estimates **1,500 affordable housing units are required** in the region.<sup>3</sup>
- The average cost for a bachelor apartment in Greater Victoria is \$695/month.<sup>4</sup>
- 1,477 Greater Victoria households are on the BC Housing Registry.<sup>5</sup>
- 1,659 unique individuals used an emergency shelter at least one time in 2012/13.<sup>6</sup>
- Emergency shelters in Greater Victoria have an occupancy rate of 112%.<sup>7</sup>
- On one night (February 6, 2014) there were 1,167 individuals staying in temporary accommodation in Greater Victoria.<sup>8</sup> This includes those staying in emergency shelters and are provisionally accommodated.

## successes since 2008

### Supportive Housing, 272 units

- Swift House, 23 units
- Clover Place, 18 units
- Siem Lelum Phase I, 24 units
- Camas Gardens, 44 units
- The 834, 12 units
- Olympic Vista, 36 units
- Mary Cridge Manor, 20 units
- Queens Manor, 36 units
- Rock Bay Landing, 23 units
- Abbeyfield Housing, 11 units
- Hope Centre, 25 units

#### Supportive Housing on the PHPL:

- Siem Lelum Phase II, 15 units
- Rosalie's Village, 41 units
- Cedar Grove, 60 units
- Cottage Grove, 45 units

### Affordable Housing, 350 units

- 35 Gorge Rd., 68 units
- Vergo, 18 units
- Queens Court, 28 units
- Wing Building, 51 units
- Pembroke Mews, 25 units
- Magdelaine Court, 20 units
- Loreen Place, 52 units
- Waterway Apartments, 51 units
- Brackett Springs, 18 units
- Forest Heights, 19 units

#### Affordable Housing on the PHPL:

- Wilson's Walk, 108 units



**SINCE 2008  
622 UNITS  
HAVE BEEN  
BUILT**

<sup>2</sup> For more information see Creating Homes, Enhancing Communities on [www.victoriahomelessness.ca](http://www.victoriahomelessness.ca).

<sup>3</sup> For more information see Housing and Homelessness in Greater Victoria on [www.victoriahomelessness.ca](http://www.victoriahomelessness.ca).

<sup>4</sup> For more information: 2012/13 Report on Housing and Supports on [www.victoriahomelessness.ca](http://www.victoriahomelessness.ca).

<sup>5</sup> As of March 31, 2013. For more information: 2012/13 Report on Housing and Supports.

<sup>6</sup> For more information: 2012/13 Report on Housing and Supports

<sup>7</sup> For more information: 2012/13 Report on Housing and Supports

<sup>8</sup> For more information: One Night Only Facility Count 2014

# prevention



We need to solve the issues that create homelessness.



## key messages

- We need to solve the issues that create homelessness.
- The Coalition is working to develop initiatives to address:
  - Youth (including those aging out of care).
  - Discharge from institutions to the street.

## homelessness partnering strategy

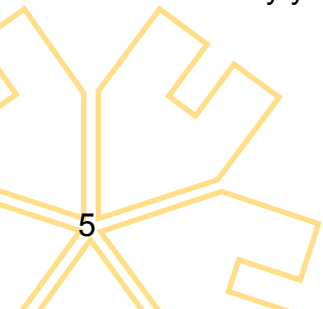
- Introduced in 2007 by the Government of Canada the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is aimed at the prevention and reduction of individuals experiencing homelessness.
- The Coalition is responsible for recommending projects in the Greater Victoria region for HPS funding.
- In 2012/13 Hope Centre received a \$1.875 million dollar grant from the Government of Canada as a result of the Coalition's recommendation.

## homelessness prevention fund

- The Coalition and ten partner organizations created the Homelessness Prevention Fund (HPF).
- HPF provides emergency assistance grants to individuals and families who are in threat of losing their homes.
- In 2013/14 almost \$40,000 in grants were provided to those who exhausted all other means of help. In that time 70 individuals and 22 families received grants (\$500 maximum) for emergency rent top-ups, help with damage deposits or utilities.
- Since 2011 HPF has issued more than \$133,000 in grants, preventing 323 households from falling into homelessness.

## youth homelessness

- In 2014 the Coalition create the Youth Homelessness Checklist, a reference card and companion document created to assist teachers, counsellors and other youth services workers identify youth who are experiencing homelessness in the region.



# stigma



Homelessness is not a choice.  
It can happen to anyone.



## key messages

- Homelessness can happen to anyone – it's not a choice.
- It could be someone you know... Your neighbour could be one paycheque away from experiencing homelessness themselves.
- People experiencing homelessness are not just those you see on the streets of downtown. There are youth, seniors and families 'hidden', sleeping in cars, couch surfing (temporarily staying with others) or living in sub-standard housing.

## facts

- 41% of Greater Victorians surveyed know someone who has experienced homelessness.<sup>9</sup>
- 4% of Greater Victorians surveyed have experienced homelessness themselves.<sup>10</sup>

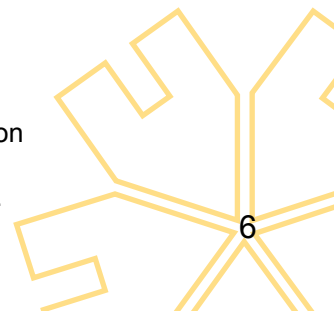
## speakers bureau

- The Coalition has assembled and professionally trained a Speakers Bureau made up of people who have or are experiencing homelessness.
- These individuals are available to speak to groups and organizations about homelessness to help the public understand the personal stories and the many routes in and out of homelessness.

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<sup>9</sup> For more information: Homelessness in Greater Victoria according to Greater Victorians infographic on [www.victoriahomelessness.ca](http://www.victoriahomelessness.ca).

<sup>10</sup> For more information: Homelessness in Greater Victoria according to Greater Victorians infographic.



# aboriginal homelessness



Aboriginal people are over-represented within the street population – this needs to be addressed.



## key message

- We need to overcome the barriers to house this vulnerable population.

## facts

- In 2012/13 Aboriginal people represent approximately 19% of emergency shelter clients in Greater Victoria. This figure is likely an undercount as 25% of clients responded ‘don’t know’ when asked if they self-identify as Aboriginal.<sup>11</sup>
  - Comparatively approximately 3% of Greater Victoria’s population is Aboriginal.<sup>12</sup>

## successes

- In 2014 Hope Centre opened in Sooke. The project includes 25 units of supportive housing for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. Estimated opening: October 2014.
- In 2013 Phase I of Siem Lelum opened, creating 26 multi-generational Aboriginal units. Phase II with 15 units (and a supportive, holistic ‘Urban Village’) is planned for 2015/16.
- In Spring 2015, the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness was formed. Working collaboratively with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, the ACEH works to create a culturally-specific approach to Aboriginal homelessness.



Artist: Evan James

*Custom logo created for the Coalition by local artist Evan James. The work represents protection (the house/dwelling), welcome (welcoming figure at top), and family (the Whale and Wolf).*

<sup>11</sup> For more information: 2012/13 Report on Housing & Supports on [www.victoriahomelessness.ca](http://www.victoriahomelessness.ca).

<sup>12</sup> According to BC Stats (2010).



# collaboration

“ Together we CAN end homelessness. ”

## key message

- Together we can end homelessness.

## facts

- Through events like Project Connect, the Coalition and our partners are working together to assist those in our community facing homelessness and extreme poverty.
- The Hope Centre project is an excellent recent example of collaboration. The Coalition brought together two agencies with similar goals and they combined assets (with funding from the Province of British Columbia, the Capital Regional District and the Government of Canada).
- CASH, Streets to Homes, Homelessness Prevention Fund... all these programs wouldn't have been possible without collaboration.

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## show your support

Become a fan, share and like our posts, retweet us and visit the Coalition's website and blog for more information.



[facebook.com/homeforhope](https://facebook.com/homeforhope)



[twitter.com/homeforhope](https://twitter.com/homeforhope)



[homeforhope.ca](https://homeforhope.ca) (Coalition's blog)



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Go to [victoriahomelessness.ca/get-involved](https://victoriahomelessness.ca/get-involved) for the HTML code for the badge above.

[www.victoriahomelessness.ca](https://www.victoriahomelessness.ca)

