

MEDIA RELEASE

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Coalition Welcomes Announcement of \$40 Billion for Housing and Homelessness through the National Housing Strategy: Urges government to stay focused on outcomes and act swiftly to end chronic homelessness.

VICTORIA, BC (November 22, 2017) – The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness welcomes the return of the Federal Government to a leadership role on housing and homelessness through the release of the long-awaited National Housing Strategy.

“This is a much-welcome and ambitious strategy!,” said Mayor Lisa Helps, Co-Chair of the Coalition. “I truly hope that we are able to put this funding to work right away. Too many households in the region are in-need and this is the time for all levels of government, including federal, provincial, regional, municipal and First Nations, to come together, share resources, build capacity, collaborate with community, and act urgently with a focus on those in the greatest need.”

Key aspects of the National Housing Strategy Include:

- A plan to embed the Right to Housing in legislation.
- A commitment to build 100,000 units of new affordable housing.
- A commitment to repair 300,000 units of existing social housing.
- A commitment to protect 385,000 households across Canada living in existing social housing and facing loss of subsidy.
- An 11 year, \$2.3 billion renewal of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.
- A commitment to a distinct Indigenous housing strategy with additional funding.

“We are especially pleased to see a specific target for reducing chronic homelessness,” said Ian Batey, Co-Chair of the Coalition. “To achieve this goal, we have to be clear that it will take a range of ministries at both the federal and provincial level coming together around community-based needs and local opportunities. We are hopeful that as more details emerge, we will see a strong focus on the outcomes of people seeking an exit from homelessness as that is where our collective efforts must be placed.”

The Coalition looks forward to continuing to work with all levels of government, a broad range of stakeholder organizations and people with a lived experience of homelessness to continue our collective efforts around:

- Ensuring funding effectiveness.
- Supporting system effectiveness.
- Being inclusive.

- Using an evidence-base in moving forward.
- Building community capacity.

ABOUT THE COALITION

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (the Coalition) was formed in 2008 with a mission to end homelessness in the capital region. The Coalition consists of local housing, health and social service providers; non-profit organizations; all levels of government; business; the faith community; people with a lived experience of homelessness (past or present); and members of the general public.

As a “backbone” organization, the Coalition facilitates information sharing, relationship building, and strategic planning to ensure the collective efforts of stakeholders are making the greatest possible difference.

People with lived experience (PWLE) of homelessness play a vital role throughout the Coalition. PWLE identify priorities, share their experiences to help Stakeholders better understand barriers to housing and gaps within the housing and clinical/social support system. They also support engagement activities. As an example, the Street Survival Guide is produced annually by the Coalition’s Social Inclusion Advisory Committee, a dedicated group of people with lived experience of homelessness.

QUICK FACTS

- Point in Time Count identified at least 1,387 individuals were experiencing homelessness on February 10, 2016.
- The Coalition has estimated that housing options and appropriate support services will need to be offered to at least 351 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness by 2021.
- In 2016/17 Coalition stakeholders reported a total of 111 individuals housed who met the definition of experiencing chronic homelessness.
- A partnership between the Capital Regional District, BC Housing and Island Health has approved capital funding for a total of \$9.5 million through the Regional Housing First Program for 113 net new units with 50 of those units for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

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