
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2019SDPR0046-001223
June 11, 2019

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

People facing homelessness to get local support from grants

Updated June 11, 2019, for clarification

VANCOUVER – People facing homelessness will receive help through grants that support strong, sustainable planning for local groups and organizations working on the front lines in British Columbia communities.

The Province is granting \$6 million to the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC) for a Homelessness Community Action Grant to help groups address homelessness in their towns and cities. The grants will also support organizations with a provincewide focus to explore better ways of meeting the needs of particular groups of people that have a higher risk of experiencing homelessness.

“Preventing homelessness is a critical part of TogetherBC: BC’s Poverty Reduction Strategy,” said Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. “Through these grants, we will build partnerships with local organizations and help people facing homelessness to prevent it from happening in the first place.”

SPARC BC will distribute the Homelessness Community Action Grants to groups and organizations over the next three years as a one-time grant to successful applicants. The chosen projects will build on local resources and knowledge about homelessness and its causes, increase public awareness and support, and respond to gaps in services for people experiencing homelessness.

“Local organizations and non-profits are at the front lines of the homelessness crisis, and they have been doing great work creating partnerships to address homelessness at a local level,” said Lorraine Copas, executive director, SPARC BC. “This grant will support the sustainability of the work as they continue to make positive change.”

Through the Building BC: Rapid Response to Homelessness program, the Province is investing \$291 million to build 2,000 homes throughout B.C. and providing annual operating funding to provide 24/7 staffing and support services. Nearly 1,400 of the homes are complete. As part of Budget 2018, another 2,500 additional homes with 24/7 support are completed, underway or in development.

“Homelessness touches virtually every corner of our province and affects at least 8,000 individuals on any given night of the year,” said Jill Atkey, CEO, BC Non-Profit Housing Association. “Combined with the historic investments in affordable housing now rolling out and a rapid response to homelessness through new supportive housing, this additional \$6-million investment has the potential to help communities co-ordinate their supports for people experiencing homelessness.”

TogetherBC, the province's first poverty reduction strategy, was released in early 2019 and included a newly created Homelessness Coordination Office that will work with partners across government and in the community to deliver a co-ordinated and proactive response to homelessness.

"Homelessness is a complex issue that requires many solutions. The issues people face are different across communities and demographics," said Mable Elmore, Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Reduction. "We can only prevent homelessness by working together. This grant supports communities and organizations on the ground who are dedicated to finding local solutions to preventing poverty."

Addressing poverty is a shared priority between government and the BC Green Party caucus, and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Quick Facts:

- The Homelessness Action Grant application form will soon be available on the SPARC BC website.
- TogetherBC, the Province's first poverty reduction strategy, was released in March 2019 as a roadmap to reduce overall poverty by 25% and cut child poverty in half over five years.
- Through the Building BC program, the Province works in partnership to build homes for people individuals and families, seniors, students, women and children leaving violence, Indigenous peoples and people experiencing homelessness.
- More than 20,000 new homes are completed, under construction or in the approvals process in communities throughout B.C. as part of a \$7-billion investment over 10 years in housing affordability.

Learn More:

Find out more about SPARC BC: <https://www.sparc.bc.ca/>

TogetherBC, B.C.'s first poverty reduction strategy:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/initiatives-plans-strategies/poverty-reduction-strategy/togetherbc.pdf>

Homes for B.C., a 30-point Plan for Housing Affordability in British Columbia:

https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/homesbc/2018_homes_for_bc.pdf

Building BC: Rapid Response to Homelessness program:

<https://www.bchousing.org/partner-services/Building-BC/rapid-response-homelessness>

A map showing the location of all announced provincially funded housing projects in B.C. is available online:

<https://www.bchousing.org/homes-for-BC>

Contact:

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty
Reduction
Communications
778 677-0870

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect