



News Release Communiqué

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHHI FUNDING WILL INCREASE COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO HELP HOMELESS PEOPLE

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA – Six local community groups will receive over \$1.1 million from the Government of Canada through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI), to build a new Aboriginal transition centre, develop comprehensive proposals and expand existing programs to continue responding to the needs of Winnipeg's homeless people, or those at risk of becoming homeless.

The funding is being provided to the Circle of Life Thunderbird House, Neeginan Development Corporation, Main Street Project, Winnipeg Harvest, Red River Christian Fellowship and Holy Trinity Anglican Church, under the Government of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) and Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), which are components of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI).

A sod-turning ceremony was held today to mark the construction of the new Aboriginal transition centre. Participating were: Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South Centre Anita Neville, on behalf of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour, and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness; the Honourable Eric Robinson, Manitoba Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, on behalf of the Honourable Tim Sale, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing; and Winnipeg Mayor Glen Murray.

"By helping to fund these projects, the Government of Canada, through the WHHI, is strengthening the community's capacity to respond effectively to their own needs," said Ms. Neville. "These six organizations through their dedication and tireless efforts are providing the necessary services and programming to help prevent and alleviate homelessness in Winnipeg, which in turn benefits the community as a whole."

"We are very pleased to be able to partner on community-based initiatives that address homelessness in our province," said Minister Robinson. "All of these organizations are taking a leadership role in alleviating homelessness in Winnipeg's inner city neighbourhoods. Along with the provincial government's Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative, these projects support families and strengthen inner city communities."

"These projects will help community agencies to better meet the needs of citizens most at risk" said Mayor Murray. "The transition center in particular will offer basic services that most people take for granted, that is, a clean safe place to shower, change, and rest."

The funding through the WHHI will help expand services and enhance the community's capacity to respond to those who need it most. Government of Canada funding for these projects has been provided through the following components of the National Homelessness Initiative:

Urban Aboriginal Strategy

- \$443,819 for Circle of Life Thunderbird House and \$123,048 for Neeginan Development Corporation.

Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative

- \$278,485 for Main Street Project; \$111,373 for Winnipeg Harvest, \$86,915 for the Red River Christian Fellowship and \$71,616 for the Holy Trinity Anglican Church.

(See attached backgrounder for project descriptions.)

The WHHI is a three-year, multi-million dollar tripartite partnership established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address homelessness, declining housing stock and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods. With this announcement, the WHHI has committed over \$25 million to support the repair, rehabilitation and construction of over 800 units of housing and 100 rooms or beds, as well as provide assistance to homeless individuals and families, or those at risk of becoming homeless.

Located at 233 Portage Avenue, in the Curry Building, the WHHI serves as a Single-Window office for community organizations to access information on government funded housing and homelessness programs. This also helps improve co-operation and information sharing between the three levels of government and community groups. Community groups wanting more information on programs can call the WHHI at (204) 940-3070.

Funding for the National Homelessness Initiative was provided for in the December 2001 budget and is built into the existing financial framework.

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Project Backgrounder

The National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) funding, through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI), will help expand services and enhance the community's capacity to respond to the needs of homeless individuals or those at risk of being homeless.

Funding for the following projects was provided under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS):

- **Circle of Life Thunderbird House - \$443,819**

This funding will help build a new Aboriginal centre composed of a sweat lodge and three teepees at the corner of Main Street and Higgins Avenue. The Centre will serve as a drop-in area where homeless people wanting to escape substance abuse, gangs and prostitution will have access to bathroom facilities, showers and clean clothing. Through its Wholesome Regeneration Program, the Circle of Life Thunderbird House will expand its current services to include counselling and cultural programming using traditional healers and teachers. The project will also include a community outreach program that will work directly with the participants. The centre will serve as a major resource for homeless individuals and those at risk of being homeless in the downtown area.

- **Neeginan Development Corporation - \$123,048**

An estimated 10 Aboriginal organizations will be assisted in the development of comprehensive project proposals that address some of the needs and gaps identified in the Winnipeg Community Plan on Homelessness. The proposals will focus on addressing the needs of individuals in a holistic way and by providing adequate support systems.

Funding for the following projects was provided under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI):

- **Main Street Project - \$278,485**

This funding will enhance the organization's capacity to help homeless clients to move from dependence on crisis and emergency services to relative independence through its Transition Care Team outreach services.

- **Winnipeg Harvest - \$111,373**

Winnipeg Harvest House will improve current operations and provide efficient, courteous client service. This will be accomplished through extensive renovations to the client referral and adjoining areas, creating more office space, upgrading the telephone system and installing wheelchair access to accommodate homeless persons with disabilities.

- **Red River Christian Fellowship - \$86,915**

Red River Christian Fellowship will expand their hours of operation and provide additional services to a greater number of individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Services will include the provision of food and clothing, addiction counselling, job search skills, life skills, computer literacy training, and homework assistance for children.

- **Holy Trinity Anglican Church - \$71,616**

Direct services for Winnipeg's downtown residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will be expanded, including the provision of nutritional lunches, emergency food hampers, hygiene hampers, clothing, and furniture and referrals to other agencies, counselling, advocacy, and training on budgeting/nutrition.

Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) Funding

Government of Canada

Under the *National Homelessness Initiative (NHI)*, communities in Manitoba will receive approximately \$24 million:

- \$12.8 million through the *Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)*, which includes \$10.9 million for homelessness projects in Winnipeg, and \$1.9 million for projects outside the city.

The SCPI is based on a community plan developed by the various partners to design and implement local solutions to their particular homelessness issues. The SCPI funds up to 50 per cent of the costs of implementing the community plan. The other 50 per cent is comprised of direct or in-kind contributions from a variety of partners, including other levels of government, community organizations, and the private and voluntary sectors.

Additional federal funding assistance is provided through the following programs:

- \$1.7 million for youth projects under *Youth-at-Risk-Homelessness (Youth Employment Strategy)*; and
- \$9.9 million for Aboriginal-specific projects under the *Urban Aboriginal Strategy-Homelessness*.
- *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)*, to help low-income households and landlords make necessary repairs to bring their properties up to acceptable health and safety standards. RRAP is cost-shared 75/25 per cent respectively by the federal government through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and by the provincial government through Manitoba Family Services and Housing. Manitoba is administering the program while the City of Winnipeg acts as the delivery agent.

For more information on the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, visit the NHI Web site at: www.hrdc.gc.ca/homelessness

Government of Manitoba

Neighbourhoods Alive! is a long-term development strategy aimed at providing community groups in designated areas of Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson with the support they need for programs in the areas of housing and physical improvements, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention. The Manitoba government has committed \$3.7 million to Neighbourhoods Alive! in the 2002 budget to develop local capacity, innovative training and provide a fund through which local neighbourhoods can implement their revitalization plans.

WHHI BACKGROUNDER

In addition, under Neighbourhoods Alive! and through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI), the Government of Manitoba has committed:

- \$8 million over four years for housing in Winnipeg neighbourhoods through the *Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA)* program, plus an additional \$1 million each year for housing in Brandon and Thompson.

The NHA will contribute to the revitalization of housing in designated neighbourhoods by providing assistance of up to \$10,000 per dwelling unit to neighbourhood based development/renewal corporations and non-profit and co-operative housing corporations for locally planned and developed housing initiatives. Funding can also be provided directly to homeowners or owners of rental housing projects where there is demonstrated community support.

- The Manitoba government has also committed close to \$2 million annually to its share of federal renovation programs, including the *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)* and the *Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP)*.

For more information on Manitoba Family Services and Housing, visit: www.gov.mb.ca/fs

City of Winnipeg

The City of Winnipeg has allocated \$7 million over five years under the Winnipeg Housing Policy to fund housing initiatives in targeted inner-city neighbourhoods. Funding is available through several programs:

- Winnipeg Municipal Cost Offsets Program provides financial assistance up to \$5,000 per housing unit through reimbursement of City fees and other eligible costs.
- Winnipeg Housing Revitalization Program provides financial assistance up to \$5,000 per housing unit for housing project pre-development costs.
- Winnipeg Neighbourhood Housing Plans and Advocacy Program provides financial assistance and other support to neighbourhood stakeholders to develop a Neighbourhood Housing Plan.
- Winnipeg Housing Demonstration Program provides financial assistance to proponents to encourage unique and innovative approaches to addressing inner-city housing issues that result in quality, affordable housing.
- Winnipeg Minimum Home Repair Program provides financial assistance to owner-occupants to undertake minor necessary repairs required for continued healthy and safe occupancy of homes.

For more information on the City of Winnipeg, visit: www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca