



Monthly Newsletter



Working locally (Calgary, Alberta) to stop the cycle of poverty for the children

April 2009, Edition 36

Think Globally, Act Locally AND Act Globally. Your dollars can make a larger impact Globally without making an impact on your wellbeing.¹

Volunteer Opportunity with children without poverty

children without poverty is looking for caring community minded individuals interested in becoming a mentor for at risk or homeless families moving towards their vision of a sustainable lifestyle.

Alberta plans to end homelessness in 10 years

March 21, 2009 - 10:11am

With increasing homelessness due to a lack of affordable housing and the downturn in the economy, the Government of Alberta has endorsed a ten year plan to end homelessness. According to the provincial government the plan is based on a "Housing First" model which provides immediate housing and then offers support as required. Using this approach, the plan focuses on three key areas.

- Rapid re-housing of homeless Albertans into permanent housing. The role of shelters becomes one of facilitating a rapid exit from homelessness into permanent housing.
- Providing client-centred supports to re-housed clients to give them the assistance they need to restore stability in their lives and maintain their housing.
- Preventing homelessness through emergency assistance and providing adequate and accessible government programs and services to Albertans.

According to the Wellesley Institute the news has surprised more than a few housing advocates who do not expect the Alberta government to be blazing the lead on critical social policy issues such as affordable housing.

¹ Concepts taken from Peter Unger's Living High & Letting Die Our Illusion of Innocence, talks about our moral obligation to help those in need, particularly when it does not impact our own wellbeing.

Alberta aims to end homelessness for \$3.3B

Last Updated: Monday, March 16, 2009 | 4:47 PM MT

[CBC News](#)

Members of the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness pose with Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Yvonne Fritz on Monday. (CBC)

The Alberta government has approved an ambitious plan with a \$3.3-billion price tag to eradicate homelessness by 2019.

The plan announced Monday focuses on moving homeless people into permanent housing and giving them support programs to help keep that accommodation, rather than creating more temporary spaces in shelters. "I can tell you that emergency shelters will no longer be a housing option where people go into an emergency shelter and stay for a long period of time," Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Yvonne Fritz said in Calgary.

"This plan to end homelessness is about changing homelessness ... and it's where people may stay in a shelter for 7 to 21 days, you know on a short-term emergency basis as they're rapidly rehoused and that is a significant difference."

A key part of solving homelessness is to co-ordinate programs such as income support, employment help, and addiction and mental-health treatment.

"The underlying factors that originally contributed to their homelessness must also be addressed" said the report by the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness. "Too often, an Albertan who is in need of assistance faces a maze of qualifying thresholds and requirements which can be incompatible, result in claw-backs, or create gaps into which the person falls."

In addition to aligned programs, four other priorities were highlighted in the action plan, titled "A Plan for Alberta."

- Gathering better information.
- Providing aggressive assistance.
- Building more housing options.
- Instituting more effective policies.

The approach is based on plans adopted by a number of American cities to eliminate homelessness, said Steve Snyder, chairman of the secretariat.

"What we do see — and whether it's in Portland or New York or Denver — other cities where they have developed longer term plans ... are getting great success and they are tracking towards actually ending it," he said Monday.

"That gives us confidence, if we can head in that direction, we should get the same results and hopefully, we will get there first."

Investment would pay off in the long term

The provincial plan is in line with 10-year plans created in Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer in the last year.

Moving 11,000 individuals and families out of homelessness will require an investment of \$3.3 billion; however, the cost of simply managing them would cost \$6.65 billion over 10 years, the provincial report pointed out.

The report estimated that it currently costs \$114,850 a year to manage help for a chronic homeless person in Alberta, but that the plan, if implemented, would cut that to \$34,000 per year to provide housing and services.

Building the necessary 8,000 new housing units will cost \$1.25 billion, while operating costs for support programs will run about \$2.1 billion estimated the action plan.

The plan's authors acknowledge if changes are not made, the province will be handling more than 21,000 homeless Albertans by 2019 at a cost of \$13.6 billion over 10 years.

The province has not committed funding to the plan yet; more information is expected in the upcoming Alberta budget.

Cost to currently manage homelessness in Alberta

Groups of homeless	Number per group	Average annual cost per person or family	Total cost over 10 years
Chronic	3,000	\$114,850	\$3.45 billion
Transient	5,500	\$ 39,680	\$2.182 billion
Employable	1,500	\$ 21,600	\$ 324 million
Families	1,000	\$ 69,600	\$ 696 million
Subtotal	11,000		\$6.65 billion

Cost to end homelessness in Alberta

Groups of homeless	Number per group	Average cost to provide housing, services per person	Total cost of support programs	Cost to build new housing units
Chronic	3,000	\$34,000	\$1.02 billion	\$500 million
Transient	5,500	\$14,000	\$770 million	\$528 million
Employable	1,500	\$ 6,000	\$ 90 million	\$ 30 million
Families	1,000	\$17,800	\$178 million	\$200 million
Subtotal	11,000		\$2.058 billion	\$1.258 billion

Source: A Plan for Alberta

Hands in your pocket

I log into the www.bridgemycommunity.org site regularly to see what Calgarians are in need of. What I find most common is items for babies, infants or toddlers. If you have a child growing out of clothing, car seats, toys, cribs or have leftover diapers, log into www.bridgemycommunity.org to see what you can donate to someone in need in Calgary.

To have people added/removed from the distribution list or to provide comments, please respond to:

Richelle@childrenwithoutpoverty.com.

