



NEWS RELEASE

NEW FUNDING BOOSTS NORTH SHORE HOMELESSNESS EFFORTS

NORTH VANCOUVER, BC – AUG. 24, 2022 - More than \$860,000 in additional federal and provincial Safe Restart funding awarded this summer will help enhance the new people-centred regional programs and services that have been offering support to people experiencing homelessness across the North Shore since last year.

Administered by the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the Strengthening Communities' Services grant will fund Indigenous outreach, hygiene facilities, temporary shelters, staffing, training and various other services delivered through the cross-jurisdictional North Shore Partnership to improve the health and safety of people on the North Shore who are without shelter.

The partnership includes Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation, səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation, North Vancouver City Library, Lookout Housing and Health Society, North Shore Neighbourhood House, the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver.

The partnership began providing services in fall 2021 with \$1.97-million in Safe Restart funding from the provincial and federal governments, and a delivery model that focuses on meeting people where they are, building relationships, and providing culturally-appropriate programs and services.

The funding top-up will support the continuation of initiatives in place such as:

- An **Urban Indigenous Outreach Team** delivered through a partnership between Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Lookout Housing and Health Society, with dedicated outreach and cultural support workers.
- An **Outreach and Services Team** delivered by Lookout Housing and Health Society, which includes staff who are equipped with basic hygiene and health supports and who provide access to services on a flexible basis, meeting people where they are at.
- **Fixed-location services** including access to temporary shelter for individuals and families, the Open Door Community Hub at the North Vancouver City Library, enhanced shower programs at the John Braithwaite and West Vancouver Community Centres, and an extreme weather response program provided at North Shore Neighbourhood House.
- **Improved coordination, community engagement and training**, including temporary staffing to oversee initiatives and training in culturally safe and trauma-informed responses for front-line staff.

Background

COVID-19 had substantial negative impacts on people experiencing homelessness across the North Shore, as many of the services they relied on were not available. Although many facilities have re-opened, there has been a high demand for the new temporary supports implemented

through the 2021 grant. Further, while many individuals experiencing homelessness are men, the number of women, seniors and families with children living unsheltered has been growing.

Most of the new funding will be dedicated to ensuring the partner organizations can continue to deliver the programs and outreach with positive outcomes. A smaller portion of the funds will fund municipal activities to support the transition of programs as facilities re-open.

The work is part of a larger coordinated focus on homelessness by the North Shore's three municipalities and two First Nations to work closely together on priority actions intended to prevent homelessness, better serve those experiencing homelessness, and create pathways out of homelessness.

The five jurisdictions recently endorsed the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative report as a commitment of their intention to increase coordination and jointly pursue initiatives and funding to address this critical issue. For more information or to read the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative report, visit cnv.org/NSHAI.

QUOTES

Mayor Linda Buchanan, City of North Vancouver

"We've all become more aware of the gaps in our social safety net. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic more people than ever before on the North Shore are in need of shelter and supportive services. But local governments cannot take action on our own, and that's why we are so pleased to receive this top-up funding from the Strengthening Communities' Services grant program. With this money in hand we can continue to coordinate services and outreach so that no one is left behind."

Mayor Mike Little, District of North Vancouver

"Over the first phase of this grant, we gained valuable insight into the complexities of what it takes to support the health and well being of our community. This additional grant funding enables us to continue the crucial work alongside our fellow North Shore municipalities, First Nations, and community partners to provide expanded outreach services. We're pleased that the majority of these funds are going into what matters most, which is direct service and outreach for those who are unsheltered or experiencing homelessness. We look forward to continuing to support our group partners and integrating key learnings from this first phase into our planning moving forward."

Mayor Mary-Ann Booth, District of West Vancouver

"Everyone deserves access to services and supports that meet their basic needs with dignity, and this additional funding enables the District of West Vancouver to formalize and enhance initiatives like our shower program at the West Vancouver Community Centre. While homelessness is not always visible in West Vancouver and on the North Shore, we know we have residents living in our woods, parks, and their vehicles. The Strengthening Communities grant will provide streamlined access and navigation of programs to connect those without homes or at risk of homelessness with services specific to their individual needs. Every level of government has a part to play in ensuring everyone has a safe and suitable home."

Wilson Williams, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation

"Our vulnerable populations have been disproportionately impacted by the skyrocketing cost of living, especially through the pandemic. With this funding, we will be able to working in partnership with local governments to implement new culturally-appropriate services for Indigenous people and better address health and safety concerns in our community. Our continued goal is to house all our members within a generation so they can live in harmony in their own community."

Chief Jen Thomas, səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation

"Thank you to all the partners who made this possible. We've overcome many obstacles related to the pandemic and this additional funding will help people in need in our community."

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Media Contacts:

City of North Vancouver	District of North Vancouver	District of West Vancouver	Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation	səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation
Pardeep Purewal media@cnv.org	Carolyn Grafton graftonc@dnv.org	Donna Powers dpowers@westvancouver.ca	Connor Tremblay Connor_Trembley@squamish.net	Lindsay Marsh communications@twnation.ca
604-982-8338	604-990-2416	604-925-4736	236-858-4617	604-404-9070