

MANITOBA'S HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY: PREVIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

PILLAR 1: MODERNIZING THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Develop a training program for shelter support workers (announced June 2022)

Emergency shelters require trained staff to operate effectively. The departments of Economic Development, Investment and Trade and Families are developing a training program with Red River College Polytechnic that will equip current and prospective shelter support workers with critical skills in mental health and addictions, de-escalation techniques and trauma-informed care. The training will allow employees to better support people in crisis and more effectively connect them with supports to find and retain housing. (Investment: \$450,000)

Expand the Homeless Outreach Mentor program (announced October 2022)

Mentors provide crucial services to help people who are experiencing homelessness, or are precariously housed, find and retain housing. The demand for mentors is far greater than the program's current capacity. As part of the homelessness strategy, the Manitoba government will expand the number of mentors working in the system as well as increase the funding to increase mentor salaries. Expanding the number of mentors will help meet the needs of current users of shelters and support shelters move to a housing focus. Increasing salaries will help attract and retain mentors. The additional funding will allow the program to expand from eight to 21 mentors and align salaries with other support workers in shelters and transitional housing. (Included in \$8.95 million)

Increase funding to reflect the actual costs of operating overnight shelters (announced October 2022)

Provincial funding for emergency shelters had not changed since 2009 and was the lowest rate paid in Canada. The rate was not based on actual costs of operations and had not been adjusted for inflation. As a result, providers were unable to offer competitive salaries, were understaffed and struggling to meet the basic needs of clients. Increased annual funding beginning Oct. 1, 2022, allows shelters to continue to operate and provide services in a more dignified and comprehensive manner.

Provide annual funding for N'Dinawemak (announced August 2022)

N'Dinawemak, which opened in December 2021, plays a vital role in Manitoba's emergency response to homelessness. It is the only Indigenous-led and 24-7 shelter funded by the Manitoba government. N'Dinawemak is an important step toward advancing reconciliation and addressing overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the province's homeless population. The Department of Families will continue to fund N'Dinawemak as an emergency shelter based on the new funding model. Looking ahead, the Manitoba government will work closely with N'Dinawemak to develop a vision for transitional housing, a 24-7 safe space and a service hub. (Investment: \$3.57 million)

Enhance support for the Downtown Community Safety Partnership (announced November 2022)

The Downtown Community Safety Partnership (DCSP) is intended to enhance well-being and safety in downtown Winnipeg by providing a high visibility, welcoming presence, assistance and outreach to the community and community-based resources. By providing appropriate supports and services to people prior to situations escalating, the DCSP aims to avoid crises that require police response. Funding to the DCSP is being enhanced to help maintain and expand its services including the recent addition of the Clean Slate Program. This program provides training, skill development and employment for marginalized individuals. (Investment: \$3.6 million)

Provide funding for the St. Boniface Street Links OASIS Mobile Outreach Project (announced November 2022)

People experiencing homelessness and/or struggling with addictions issues face multiple barriers to accessing services. Outreach and Supportive Intervention for People Who Use Substances (OASIS) Project multi-disciplinary teams provide outreach and individualized care, as well as facilitate access to wraparound supports to help such individuals stabilize and find and maintain housing. Teams also support clients to access crisis stabilization, substance use treatment and other recovery-oriented services. Providing funding to the pilot project will help ensure more individuals are able to access services. (Investment: \$215,000)

PILLAR 2: PROVIDING HOUSING WITH SUPPORTS

Restart the Proposal Development Fund to support housing project development (announced August 2022)

The Proposal Development Fund will provide up to \$75,000 to non-profits that want to partner with Manitoba Housing to develop new social housing for people who are precariously housed or experiencing homelessness. A call for expressions of interest will identify organizations interested in developing housing and funding will be awarded to successful candidates to further develop proposals. (Investment: \$1 million)

Increase funding to transitional housing programs (announced in October 2022)

Provincial funding to transitional housing programs has not changed since 2009. As a result, service providers are understaffed and unable to provide the level of support needed to help clients stabilize and move into independent housing. This leads to people staying in transitional housing for prolonged periods and contributing to the lack of supply. Based on the funding model developed through the Department of Families program review, an increase in annual funding will ensure transitional housing services are sustainable and can help clients develop the skills needed to move onto the next step of their housing journey. The funding increase will include Resource Assistance for Youth's (RaY) Emergency Shelter and Transition (REST) program, which stabilizes youth experiencing homelessness to prepare them for long-term tenancies. (Included in \$8.95 million)

Provide funds for transitional and supportive housing projects in development

Demand for transitional and supportive housing in Manitoba exceeds the current supply. Funding for the construction and operation of new housing projects will help meet this demand and ensure more Manitobans have access to the supports needed to move forward in their housing journeys including people struggling with mental health and addictions issues. The projects include:

- West Central Women's Resource Centre, will provide 16 apartments of one- to three-bedroom units for women and children who have experienced gender-based violence. (Investment: \$856,000)
- Veterans Village, a project of the Homes for Heroes Foundation, will provide 20 units of housing, as well as resources, services and training, for veterans experiencing homelessness. (Investment: \$500,000)

PILLAR 3: PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Increase the basic needs benefit for people in receipt of EIA (announced August 2022)

Participants in EIA receive a basic needs benefit intended to cover the costs of food, clothing and other personal items. The amount of this benefit depends on a household's eligibility category, the number of children and adults in the household, and their living situation. The amounts of the basic needs benefits have not increased since 2004 despite a significant rise in the cost of living. High rates of inflation are especially difficult for low-income households, particularly for adults without children, because they do not have access to additional supports such as the Canada Child Benefit. By increasing the basic needs benefit of adults without children, these individuals will be better positioned to keep pace with the rising cost of living. The Department of Families increased the basic needs benefit effective Oct. 1, 2022, by \$25 a month for single adults in the disability category, \$50 for single adults and \$100 for couples without children in the general assistance category. (Investment: \$13.98 million)

Increase the Rent Assist rate for EIA clients (announced October 2022)

EIA Rent Assist is a shelter benefit for people who receive EIA benefits and pay rent in the private market. It is provided as part of regular monthly benefits and is indexed to 75 per cent of the median market rent. This rate increased to 77 per cent of median market rent in January 2023. The increase to Rent Assist will result in maximum monthly benefits rising between \$34 and \$70, depending on the size of the household, improving their ability to afford the cost of housing. (Investment: \$20 million)

Expand supports to help people involved with the criminal justice system successfully transition into the community (announced October 2022)

Providing holistic supports for people leaving incarceration or who are involved with probation services helps reduce the risk of homelessness and potential for recidivism. (Investment: \$20 million)

PILLAR 4: DEVELOPING PERSON-CENTRED SERVICES

Extend funding to End Homelessness Winnipeg for five years (announced August 2022)

End Homelessness Winnipeg plays a vital role in co-ordinating the delivery of services in Winnipeg's homeless-serving sector and is the co-creator of a new co-ordinated access system for Winnipeg. This system will assist people who are at-risk of, or experiencing homelessness, by assessing their needs and finding appropriate housing and support services. A five-year funding commitment will support End Homelessness Winnipeg's critical work in co-ordinating service delivery. (Investment: \$1.25 million)

Align co-ordinated access and Manitoba Housing applications in Winnipeg

End Homelessness Winnipeg implemented a co-ordinated access system in April 2022 for people experiencing homelessness. Through the system, people are assessed and connected to Housing First teams who assist with finding housing and providing support services to maintain tenancies. Approximately 60 per cent of Manitoba Housing applicants identify as homeless. Aligning co-ordinated access and Manitoba Housing application processes will help people receive social housing and supports for successful tenancies.

PILLAR 5: BUILDING CAPACITY IN RURAL AND NORTHERN MANITOBA

Establish a homeless outreach mentor at Oscar's Place and add mentors in Brandon and Thompson (announced October 2022)

Oscar's Place provides emergency shelter services for people experiencing homelessness in The Pas and the surrounding area. The shelter currently lacks the capacity to provide programming and services to help clients transition out of homelessness. Establishing a homeless outreach mentor at Oscar's Place will allow the shelter to make progress on ending, rather than managing, homelessness. Additional homeless outreach mentors in Brandon and Thompson will increase capacity to assist people experiencing homelessness. (Investment: Included in \$8.95 million)

Support the creation of a Youth Community Healing Lodge in Thompson (announced March 2022)

In March 2022, \$2 million in funding was provided to Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) to lead the implementation and operation of a youth community-healing lodge in Thompson. The positive treatment environment will promote physical, mental, spiritual and emotional healing for participants, helping to address intergenerational impacts of colonization and the loss of awareness of Indigenous culture, customs and traditions. The lodge will provide more justice resources in the north to reduce youth recidivism rates and decrease the use of RCMP cells for non-violent youth detained under the Intoxicated Person's Detention Act. (Investment: \$2 million)

Establish sobering centres in Brandon and Thompson (announced in 2020 and 2021)

Sobering centres provide a 24-7 safe and secure environment for non-violent, publicly intoxicated individuals to stay while the effects of drugs and/or alcohol wear off. These centres offer an effective alternative to police and hospital-based responses to public intoxication. Funding has been provided to help establish and operate sobering centres in Brandon and Thompson, and the need for centres in other communities is being explored. (Investment: \$4.8 million)