



## JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### News Release

For Immediate Release

MP Ed Fast Announces Federal Government Investment in Combatting Homelessness in Abbotsford

May 30, 2015

Abbotsford, British Columbia Employment and Social Development Canada

The Honourable Ed Fast, Member of Parliament for Abbotsford, on behalf of the Honourable Candice Bergen, Minister of State for Social Development, alongside Henry Braun, Mayor for the City of Abbotsford, today announced at The Reach Gallery Museum that the City of Abbotsford is receiving \$400,989 in funding from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The funds are to support a Coordinated Intake and Referral System for those who find themselves homeless.

The project will create a coordinated intake and referral system using best practices from other cities. By working with social support agencies in Abbotsford, the city will improve its ability to better serve the needs of the homeless. Overall, the results of the project will provide a sustainable foundation on which Abbotsford can launch a Housing First approach and provide a useful template for other similar-sized cities to do the same.

The City of Abbotsford is receiving this new federal funding over three years under the Innovative Solutions to Homelessness (ISH) funding stream in order to help implement its recently completed Homelessness Action Plan. The Action Plan links improved collaboration between service providers with the overarching aim to establish a Housing First approach.

### Quick Facts

- The Government of Canada has committed nearly \$600 million in total funding over five years, until March 2019, to renew the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), using a Housing First approach.
- The Innovative Solutions to Homelessness (ISH) funding stream under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy supports the development of the best innovative approaches to reducing homelessness.
- Since the launch of the HPS in April 2007, nearly 35,000 Canadians who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless have benefitted from education and training opportunities; over 34,000 have received help to find work; and more than 6,000 new shelter beds have been created.

### Quotes

*“Our Government is proud to support the City of Abbotsford in its efforts to combat homelessness here in our community. The project will provide a sustainable foundation on which Abbotsford can establish a Housing First approach.”*

–The Honourable Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade and Member of Parliament for Abbotsford

*“We are grateful for this partnership opportunity with the Government of Canada to make a real difference here in the City of Abbotsford. City Council is dedicated to helping address the needs of those most vulnerable to homelessness in our community and through partnerships like this one we will continue to make a difference for people in Abbotsford.”*

–Henry Braun, Mayor for the City of Abbotsford



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## Associated Links

[Homelessness Partnering Strategy](#)

[Housing First](#)

[Helping Families Prosper](#)

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## Contacts

Media Relations Office  
Employment and Social Development Canada  
819-994-5559

[media@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:media@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

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# Backgrounder

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## Homelessness Partnering Strategy

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a unique community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to 61 designated communities in all provinces and territories, as well as to Aboriginal, rural and remote communities across Canada, to help them address homelessness.

Economic Action Plan 2013 renewed the HPS with nearly \$600 million in total funding over five years, ending in March 2019, using a Housing First approach.

Until recently, the most common way to deal with homelessness has been a “crisis-based” model—not just in Canada, but in many developed countries. This model involves relying heavily on shelters and other emergency interventions. Typically, individuals must first participate in a series of treatments and demonstrate sobriety before they are offered housing. This approach has been costly and not effective for the long term.

Without stable housing, it is much more difficult to participate in treatment programs and manage mental and physical health issues. This leads to high costs for emergency housing, hospitalization, shelters, prisons and a host of other crisis services.

Housing First, on the other hand, involves ensuring individuals have immediate housing before providing the necessary supports to help them stabilize their lives. Experiences in other countries have demonstrated that this approach shows great promise.

In 2008, under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Government invested \$110 million in the Mental Health Commission of Canada to undertake our own landmark study. The results demonstrated that:

- Housing First rapidly ends homelessness and leads to other positive outcomes for quality of life;
- it is a sound financial investment that can lead to significant cost savings. Every \$10 invested led to an average savings to government of \$21.72 for participants who used emergency and social services the most; and
- it works in the long term, over the course of the study, participants in the Housing First group spent an average of 73 percent of their time in stable housing, compared to 32 percent for the group receiving usual care.

Overall, participants in the study were less likely to get in trouble with the law, and those who received both housing and supportive services showed more signs of recovery than those who did not.

### **Innovative Solutions to Homelessness**

The Innovative Solutions to Homelessness funding stream is delivered nationally and supports the development of the best innovative approaches to reducing homelessness. Funding can be used to support innovative projects that support activities in three key areas: supporting community-based innovative projects to reduce homelessness and/or the cost of homelessness; building strategic partnerships with key stakeholders; and testing and/or sharing tools, social metrics, and research findings geared towards homelessness.

Broadly speaking, social innovation refers to approaches that address pressing unmet or inadequately met social needs by applying new learning and strategies or testing existing solutions from other sectors. The economic and social cost of homelessness increases the interest in and the importance of generating effective solutions to this issue. Recognizing that there are key change agents in social change, this funding stream will support the development and application of approaches designed for the greatest impact.