



September 29, 2021

Province of BC - Budget Consultation

Via: Online submission

The Campbell River & District Coalition to End Homelessness works as a collective to plan, coordinate, and recommend community responses to homelessness across the Strathcona Region.

We believe the following budget recommendations fall within the Province of BC's stated foundational principles and build on the historical and proposed actions and programs of your government. We believe homelessness and housing-need are public policy choices. Housing is a human right and a determinant of health and wellness. Cost analyses of sheltering and supporting people experiencing homelessness ignore the social and human costs. Regardless, these analyses do show that housing people is significantly more financially sustainable than choosing not to house people.¹

Housing Supply

Current supply of housing is not meeting the demand. As such, we recommend that the Province of BC:

- Increase capital investment and operating funding for a variety of permanent non-market housing options including affordable (for below median household incomes), supportive (geared towards people experiencing or at risk of homelessness), and complex care (those requiring complex substance use and mental health supports);
- Include funding the development of a system of Complex-Care Housing;
- Lobby the federal government to reinvest in Co-op housing;
- Protect existing non-market housing by increasing investment in existing affordable housing stock to ensure it stays in good repair and is refurbished from time to time.

Shelter Rates

Current Income Assistance and Disability flat-rates, do not consider the increasing costs of renting a home. Rental rates have significantly increased over the last five years and “shelter rates” have not been increased in 13 years.² As such, we recommend that the Province of BC:

- Significantly increase Income Assistance and Disability Rates, looking particularly at the “shelter rate” and the current cost of renting in BC.

Youth Homelessness

Point-In-Time Count data from Campbell River (2021) shows that 45% of the surveyed people experiencing homelessness responded that they had been in foster care, a youth group home, or under a youth agreement.³ As such, we recommend that the Province of BC:

¹ <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/cost-analysis-homelessness> and <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/one-homeless-person-costs-171-000-a-year-1.365403>

²

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/archived/archived-rate-tables>

³ <https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/housing-data/homeless-counts>



- Fund a full evaluation of systems currently in place for children and youth in care, seeing early intervention as a key tool to preventing youth homelessness;
- Increase funding for supports for children and youth in care and those transitioning out of care;
- Ensure funding and evaluation of systems includes meaningful Indigenous consultation, understanding that deliberate action must be taken to address the ways that intersecting systems compound experiences of homelessness.

Indigenous Homelessness

Point-in-Time Homeless Count data from Campbell River shows that 62% of those surveyed responded as identifying as Indigenous, compared to 12% of the general population.⁴ [3] As such, we recommend that the Province of BC:

- Work collaboratively with the federal government to plan, fund, and implement an Indigenous Housing Strategy.⁵

Municipal-Provincial Intersection

We recognize that all levels of government have a role to play in ending and preventing homelessness. As such, we recommend that the Province of BC:⁶

- Increase infrastructure investments conditional on OCPs, zoning bylaws, and other local policies that allow for increased density and encourage a greater mix of housing types;
- Continue to fund and support costs associated with Housing Needs Assessments and Housing Strategies contingent on evaluation and monitoring criteria that show strong implementation of housing solutions;
 - Make other provincial funding contingent on measured action on housing targets.

We look forward to seeing your budget responses to the current housing and homelessness crisis. We recognize that many of these budget recommendations will be best complemented by policy updates and encourage the Province to invest in researching and updating correlative policies.

Sincerely,

Campbell River and District Coalition to End Homelessness

⁴ <https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/housing-data/homeless-counts>

⁵ <https://www.votehousing.ca/platform#accordion8>

⁶ https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/588/2021/06/Opening-Doors_BC-Expert-Panel_Final-Report_Jun16.pdf