

September 28, 2022

Mayor Lyn Hall
City of Prince George
1100 Patricia Boulevard
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

Dear Mayor Hall:

Re: Provincial Response to 2021 Resolutions

UBCM has received the Province's response to your Council resolution(s) from 2021. Please find the enclosed resolution(s) and their provincial response(s).

All responses from the Province have been posted to the UBCM web site under Convention & Resolutions.

Please feel free to contact Jamee Justason, Resolutions and Policy Analyst, if you have any questions about this process. Tel: 604.270.8226 ext. 100 Email: jjustason@ubcm.ca

Sincerely,



Jen Ford
UBCM President

Enclosure

Whereas BC Housing works in partnership with private and non-profit sectors, provincial health authorities and ministries, other levels of government and community groups to implement the BC Housing Action Plan to develop a range of housing options for individuals and families;

And whereas the 2019/20 to 2021/22 Action Plan identifies reasons for loss of housing being illness or medical conditions, addiction or substance use, lack of affordability or job loss and intimate partner conflict or abuse;

And whereas operational rules with low and high-barrier options may prevent the receipt of shelter and support services for some homeless and/or hard-to-house individuals due to prohibitions and restrictions on drug or alcohol use on the premises;

And whereas the current BC Housing Action Plan does not identify no-barrier housing which would provide shelter and support services with as few barriers as possible to allow more people to safely access housing services:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM petition the provincial government and BC Housing to ensure the provision of a range of housing options for homeless individuals including no barrier housing options and services.

Convention Decision: Not Considered - Automatic Referral to Executive

Executive Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing

The Province takes a Housing First approach to homelessness, which means that providing people with access to safe shelter and housing is a priority so they can then better access health, social and income supports to become stably housed. This approach includes providing access to low or minimal barrier shelters and housing, which follow a harm reduction policy. People are not expected to abstain from using substances or engaging in street activities so long as they do so in private and in a manner deemed safe and respectful of other tenants and staff. BC Housing's operating agreements for shelter providers require that all shelters need to meet the minimal shelter standards, including the provision of harm reduction supports and providing shelter services to clients experiencing substance use.

BC Housing is the crown agency under the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing responsible for a spectrum of shelter and housing services, which provide emergency, interim and long term accommodation as well as the provision of nutritious food; office and meeting spaces to enable case planning and programming for clients; where possible, space for primary health provision; and provision of accommodation with as few barriers as possible to allow more people access to services. BC Housing also provides design considerations to make shelters more inclusive and accessible for distinct needs groups, such as women-only spaces, specified areas where women and children are accommodated, accessibility for people with physical disabilities and impairments, inclusive signage and spaces for LGBTQIA2S+ and welcoming spaces for Indigenous people.

In 2022/23, the Province, through BC Housing, will provide a total of approximately \$764.9 million to respond to homelessness, including through:

- 2,200 shelter spaces to serve individuals experiencing homelessness;*
- 15,000 individuals in supportive housing;*
- Rent supplements and supports to 3,800 individuals experiencing homelessness.*

Specifically, BC Housing addresses homelessness through a variety of programs and services across the continuum of need, including:

- Year-round homeless shelter spaces (see below for more detail);*
- Additional seasonal shelter spaces through the Winter Response Shelters, Temporary Shelters and Extreme Weather Response Shelters;*
- Homeless Outreach Program;*
- Supportive housing (see below for more detail);*
- Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels; and*
- Rent supplements.*

Shelter Spaces:

Shelters are temporary but immediate places to stay for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. Emergency shelter includes a bed with linens, hot meals, showers, laundry, and support services. It may range from one night to longer depending on an individual's need.

People who stay at emergency shelters can be diverse, with a range of needs and abilities. Staff require appropriate behaviour, but each shelter's requirements can be different. All shelters reduce barriers to ensure the most vulnerable people are brought inside and connected to support services.

Supportive Housing:

Supportive housing provides a range of on-site, non-clinical supports such as: life skills training, connections to health care, mental health, or substance-use services. Staff are on-site 24/7 to provide support.

Homelessness Strategy:

In 2020, the Minister of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing was given the mandate to lead the development and implementation of a Provincial Homelessness Strategy. Through Budget 2022, the Province is investing \$633 million into priority actions of the Provincial homelessness strategy. This new province-wide strategy will help government address the root causes that lead to homelessness and provide additional supports for people who are currently experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Early priority actions of the Provincial homelessness strategy include investments in complex care housing, permanent housing with supports for people in temporary spaces, and supported rent supplements.

Complex Care Housing:

Complex care housing is a new approach to addressing the needs of people who have significant mental health and substance use challenges, often with other complex challenges such as developmental disability or brain injury who aren't adequately served in supportive housing. Complex care housing seeks to provide robust health, housing, social and cultural services that are integrated into the larger health system to ensure seamless care and support over the long term.

Budget 2022 included \$164 million over three years to expand the complex care housing model to at least 20 projects, with plans to support approximately 500 people across BC by the end of 2022/23, through the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.

Permanent Housing Plan:

Through Budget 2022, the Province has committed \$264 million to establish a permanent housing plan. This plan will ensure that people living in 3,000 temporary shelter spaces established during the pandemic do not return to homelessness.

Supported Rent Supplements:

Budget 2022 also included the introduction of a supported rent supplement program. This program will provide more than 3,000 people over the next three years with integrated wraparound health and social supports as well as up to \$600-a-month rent supplements.