

NEWS RELEASE

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City of Nanaimo recognizes Homelessness Action Week

Summary

The first Homelessness Action Week began in 2006 in British Columbia as a way to raise awareness about the causes of homelessness and engage the public, governments and institutions around finding solutions. The 2020 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Homeless count found that a minimum of 433 people are living unhoused in Nanaimo, and it is estimated the number is far greater.

Homelessness is a serious concern; even a short period without housing has a substantial impact on mental and physical health. Nanaimo City Council has been working on a number of fronts over the past year to address the long-term housing and the daily needs of unhoused and vulnerable residents, including:

- Delivering 190 units of permanent supportive housing through a partnership with BC Housing, with the first building at 702 Nicol Street scheduled to be open next month. Samaritan Place at 702 Nicol Street will have space for 66 people (52 studio suites and 14 bridge to housing beds for women);
- Working with our partners from the Health and Housing Task Force to lay the groundwork for a new Systems Planning Organization that will better coordinate service provisions and funding;
- Ongoing advocacy with the Federal and Provincial governments to leverage additional resources and partnerships to both prevent and address the root causes of homelessness in our community;
- Applying for and receiving grants in partnership with other levels of government to build capacity to address homelessness;
- Providing over \$90,000 in financial support to the Nanaimo Regional Rent Bank and \$35,000 in Housing First subsidies, operated by the Nanaimo Regional John Howard Society;
- Providing a free weekday shower program at Caledonia Park, in partnership with the Unitarian Shelter;
- Sponsoring a temporary weekday breakfast meal program at the Salvation Army New Hope Centre;
- Partnering to provide support for both an extreme heat cooling centre and an emergency warming centre; and,
- Providing \$85,000 of social planning grants to local non-profits, many of whom serve unhoused residents.

Over 20 BC municipalities take part in Homelessness Action Week, which is held around the time of World Homelessness Day on October 10th.

Strategic Link: Acknowledging Homelessness Action Week supports the Council Strategic Priority of Livability.

Key Points

- October 10-17 is Homelessness Action Week, when many municipalities across BC raise awareness about the root causes and impacts of homelessness as well as highlighting solutions.
- The City of Nanaimo is working with our partners to address both the housing and the basic needs of our most vulnerable residents through a variety of grants, programs and services.

Quotes

"This year Homelessness Action Week overlapped with Thanksgiving, and I am grateful for the service providers and volunteers in our community dedicating their time and resources towards this important issue. I am also proud that the City has been actively working with our provincial partners to create new opportunities for housing and hope for our most vulnerable residents."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

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