
SUBJECT**REACHING HOME: CANADA'S HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

ISSUE

How has the federal government moved forward with their plan to invest in reaching home: Canada's homelessness strategy, to support communities across the country?

RESPONSE

- **Everyone in Canada deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. One of the most important roles of our government during this pandemic is to support vulnerable Canadians, including those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.**
- **In 2019, as part of the National Housing Strategy, the government announced an investment of \$2.2 billion over 10 years to prevent and reduce homelessness, and launched Reaching Home: Canada's homelessness strategy.**
- **Since March 2020, our government has announced a total of \$1.3 billion in additional funding for reaching home to support communities in addressing the needs of people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **As part of this additional funding, in April 2021, the Budget announced \$567 million over two years for reaching home to support communities in their efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness and shift to longer-term housing approaches and solutions that prevent and reduce chronic homelessness.**
- **Homelessness is a complex problem and our government is committed to continuing to work with partners and communities to move towards the goal of eliminating chronic homelessness in Canada.**

BACKGROUND

Reaching Home is a community-based program that provides funding directly to specific communities through the Designated Communities, Indigenous Homelessness, Rural and Remote Homelessness and Territorial Homelessness streams. Financial support is provided to 64 Designated Communities (urban centres), the three territorial capitals, 30 Indigenous communities and rural and remote communities across Canada to support their efforts in preventing and reducing homelessness. It also makes funding available to Indigenous partners to support distinctions-based approaches to homelessness services. The Community Capacity and Innovation stream supports communities with the implementation of Coordinated Access and supports innovation in the sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of housing for many Canadians, particularly those who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Access to safe and affordable housing, as well as support services, are prerequisites to participating fully in economic and social life, and to ensuring protection against disease transmission. Using the Reaching Home delivery network, the Government of Canada acted quickly to provide support to communities as the outbreak began. With the help of emergency funding for the homelessness sector, communities have taken urgent action to try to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among those experiencing homelessness, including efforts to reduce overcrowding in shelters, establish isolation spaces and place individuals in hotels/motels.

As announced in Budget 2021, a total of \$555,038,900 in additional investments will be allocated to grants and contributions funding under Reaching Home between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. All communities will see enhanced levels of funding. The majority of funding will be targeted to larger cities. Increases in funding for rural, remote and northern communities will also be provided recognizing the continued unique challenges faced by smaller communities in addressing and preventing homelessness and to help stem inflows into larger urban centres. Funding will also support communities in implementing and operating coordinated access and associated local data systems (e.g. unique identifier lists) through providing funds to communities and enhancing the availability of training and technical assistance.