



# Temporary Housing Program

## FACT SHEET

### BACKGROUND

- Seniors as a group are poorly served by the existing homeless shelter system. Many homeless seniors find the shelter system more stressful than sleeping rough or in their cars. There is an unmet need for low-barrier and hospitable shelter space for homeless seniors.
- In 2003 a report titled Out of Sight Out of Mind, contracted by Seniors Services Society and conducted by Hightower and Associates was produced to address the needs of homeless seniors. One of the recommendations from that report spoke of the need for seniors emergency accommodation. The report identified temporary housing as one solution.
- A count of homeless persons of all ages in Greater Vancouver was conducted in March 2005. At that time 2,174 homeless persons were identified. Preliminary count numbers in 2008 identified 2,592 homeless people throughout the region.
- The number of homeless seniors (those 55 years of age or older) increased substantially, from 51 in 2002 to 171 older homeless persons in 2005 (GVRD, 2005). This represented an increase of 235% in just three years and it was an undercount of the real numbers. Seniors represented 15% of the street homeless in the Lower Mainland in 2005.
- Seniors take longer to find a sense of stability in their surroundings and yet, traditional shelters limit stays to just 30 days.
- Each month, the Seniors Services Society opens 150-200 new files for seniors needing help in accessing the resources they need and 16 new files are opened monthly for homeless seniors.
- In response to the need for shelters for seniors, United Way of the Lower Mainland provided Seniors Services with funds to develop The Temporary Housing Pilot Project.
- This project included a pilot phase where Seniors Services Society would rent one or two apartments for use by homeless seniors requiring temporary housing. Staff supports these individuals to move from homelessness to stable living and beyond.

### TEMPORARY HOUSING PROGRAM 2008

With generous funding from United Way of the Lower Mainland, the pilot project is now a Temporary Housing Program. This multi-year program will see the temporary units grow from the current two to 10 by the end of 2008. In 2009 the plan is to expand to 20 units scattered throughout Metro Vancouver, excluding the Downtown Eastside.



## **UNITED WAY MOBILIZES REAL ESTATE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY**

- United Way of the Lower Mainland convened leaders from the real estate and development community to raise \$1 million over the next three years to support the Temporary Housing Program.
- This significant investment from the Lower Mainland real estate and development community would make temporary housing available to as many as 110 seniors annually.
- The goal is to support these seniors before they reach a state of crisis, to provide a simple furnished apartment for a short, fixed term, to assist in finding affordable housing and to aid them in managing their finances and accessing the financial support that they are entitled to.
- United Way is committed to ensuring the financial sustainability of this initiative beyond the three-year commitment from the development community.

## **THE PROGRAM**

- Will operate as temporary housing for one homeless senior at a time for up to a three month stay. Extensions will be negotiated as required
- The unit is rented from the housing provider by the Seniors Services Society. Individuals will be required to pay 30% of their income for rent. Any unpaid amount will be covered by the Seniors Services Society.
- Those staying in the temporary housing will pay rent geared to income.

## **THE SUITES**

- One bedroom apartments fully equipped and furnished through donations including linens, land line telephone, vacuum and other small appliances, television and cable.
- The Seniors Service Society rents these suites from Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation and the Fairhaven United Church Homes.

## **HOW TO REFER**

- To refer clients calls 604-520-6621.
- Client Outreach staff will assess client eligibility.
- Outreach staff will work with clients to find them stable long-term housing and other resources.

## **ABOUT SENIORS SERVICES SOCIETY**

- Encourages, informs and supports the independence and wellness of the older adult
- Provides its services for free or at a nominal charge on a cost-recovery basis.