

Homelessness
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Homelessness is a serious issue facing many people in Saskatchewan. Some are a pay cheque away from losing their home. Others struggling with homelessness end up in our Province's Emergency Shelters, Detox Centres, Emergency Rooms and Prisons. When those places refuse to take them due to lack of funding or complex needs, sleeping rough is their only option. We are posing the following questions to all Provincial Leadership Candidates in order to gauge your response to homelessness in our Province, and to give you an opportunity to share your thoughts on this important issue.

The organizations putting forward this request are as follows:

Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership
Provincial Métis Housing Corporation
River Bank Development Corporation
YMCA of Regina

Our organizations help to deliver the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding across the Province, and have a vested interest in working towards an end to homelessness in Saskatchewan.

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy is a community-based Government of Canada program designed to address homelessness across the country, relying on communities to determine their own needs and to develop projects accordingly. Nationally, the HPS aims to prevent and reduce homelessness across Canada through the mobilization of partnerships at federal, provincial/territorial, and community levels. These partnerships contribute to sustainable and comprehensive development of services and facilities to help those who are chronically or episodically homeless, or at risk of homelessness, or are part of the hidden homeless population, move towards well-being and self-sufficiency. The HPS supports community initiatives that use a housing-first approach and it emphasizes transitional and supportive housing to help individuals and families move to greater autonomy and self-sufficiency.

We'd love to answer any of your questions or offer suggestions if help is needed. If you are not knowledgeable on a specific question, we are happy to help in any way we can. As Community Entities of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy in Saskatchewan, we see homelessness as a pressing issue that desperately needs the Provincial Government's leadership and support. For this reason, we are posing these questions to all leadership candidates in hopes of understanding what possible plans there are in the future to find solutions to homelessness. Homelessness is not something that must exist in our Province. With the right leadership and resources, an end to homelessness in Saskatchewan is possible!

Leadership Questionnaire

1. If you become Premier, would you support the creation of a comprehensive and coordinated Provincial strategy to end homelessness in Saskatchewan?

Secure housing is fundamental to recovery and maintenance of one's health. A provincial strategy that recognizes individual needs and community inclusion is essential.

2. If you become Premier, what steps would you take towards preventing and ending homelessness in Saskatchewan?

The steps I would take include the following:

- a. ***quantify the number of homeless and under-housed individuals.***
- b. ***identify, geographically, where the need is and how to address the diversity of need.***
- c. ***work closely with groups such as the Northern Disability Coalition, Saskatchewan Approved Private Homes Inc and Housing First to develop a comprehensive, sustainable plan to address the full array of accommodation and supported accommodation needs.***

3. Projects in many Canadian Cities, including Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina, have proven that Housing First can have a major impact on improving quality of life outcomes for participants, and potentially divert costs from other government services, such as the health care and justice systems. If you become Premier, will your government invest in measures such as Housing First and Permanent Supportive Housing in Saskatchewan?

The research bears out the above statements. Housing First is based on a Federally funded pilot project originally known as Chez Nous. I think it would be fair to involve all levels of government to address this issue.

4. There is a gross over representation of Aboriginal People in Saskatchewan's homeless population. If you become Premier, what steps would you take to address Aboriginal homelessness?

There needs to be comprehensive research on the contributing factors of homelessness in this population. Provincial government alone cannot address all relevant issues. It will take working with all levels of government, as well as all stake holders, to mitigate the causation.

5. Homelessness and housing insecurity are present in many Saskatchewan communities. If you become Premier, what will you do to address homelessness outside of Saskatchewan's major urban centres?

Homelessness in rural communities has distinct characteristics as compared to larger centres in Saskatchewan. Therefore, a distinct strategy is needed. Individual communities have the greatest knowledge of need in any region of our province and of the stake holder groups. Therefore, I would invite local participation to weigh in on information and make suggestions. Any change in the delivery of services should be done through wide consultation with the individuals in the communities.