



Homelessness Partnering Strategy Myth vs. Reality

Myth:

The federal government is cutting funding for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS).

Fact:

False. There is no cut in funding given to communities under HPS. The federal government has renewed the HPS over the next 5 years, until March 2019, providing long-term predictable funding.

Funding for HPS will be \$119 million per year, compared to the previous \$135 million per year; however, this is the result of administrative savings absorbed by ESDC. Communities will continue to receive the same amount of funding for programs to prevent and reduce homelessness as they did previously.

Myth:

The federal government is “terminating” the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Fact:

False. The Homelessness Partnership Strategy is continuing. In fact, the federal government has renewed the HPS over the next 5 years, until March 2019, providing long-term predictable funding.

The previous Homelessness Partnering Strategy focused on the short-term needs of the homeless, but did not adequately address the needs of the chronically homeless. While the chronically homeless make up a small portion of total homeless, they use up a disproportionately large amount of resources.

Housing First moves homeless people from the streets and short-term shelters into immediate and permanent housing, while offering support for addictions and mental illnesses.

A federally funded research demonstration project, along with results from communities in Canada who have already moved to Housing First, have clearly demonstrated that Housing First is the most effective way to reduce homelessness.

For example, one month after the research demonstration project was implemented in Montreal in 2011; nearly all 280 people who took part had been housed. Two years later, almost 80% of those individuals remained housed. These are very compelling results that cannot be ignored, and stronger results than we’ve seen under previous approaches that attempt to reduce homelessness.

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Canada is moving in the same direction as several other countries, including France, the U.S. and Finland, who have moved toward the Housing First approach to reduce homelessness.

Furthermore, the Housing First Approach is supported by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, among others.

Myth:

The Housing First Approach is moving away from allowing local communities to determine their needs and priorities. It treats every community the same and does not take into account differences.

Fact:

False. Eliminating homelessness is a common goal shared across Canada. While part of HPS funding will be used toward the Housing First approach, it is not being implemented to the detriment of the current HPS.

A number of key features of the HPS are being maintained, including the community-based approach and allocations to the different community funding streams. In other words, communities may continue to dedicate a portion of HPS funding to non-Housing First projects and populations, as they did before.

The HPS remains a community-based program. The federal government will continue to support designated communities, Aboriginal communities, and rural and remote communities in developing local solutions to prevent and reduce homelessness. The important role that Community Advisory Boards and local delivery partners play in this process will also be maintained.

In Quebec, HPS is delivered through a Canada-Quebec agreement, whereby the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux (ASSS) are responsible for the co-ordination of activities for their region. This includes the identification of priorities, launching calls for proposals, and selecting projects for recommendation and approval of HPS funding.

By using part of the resources toward Housing First, we are adding to the options available to address the needs of homeless Canadians, so that programming will also focus on a more effective, results-oriented, long term solution to reduce homelessness.

Myth:

The federal government is not providing adequate information and support to communities and organizations to help them move toward a Housing First approach.

Fact:

False. Federal officials are in close and regular contact with communities and organizations. In fact, national workshops are taking place this fall and necessary supports will be in place to assist communities in the transition to use part of HPS funding for the Housing First model.

For more information, contact:

Alexandra Fortier
Office of the Minister of Employment and Social Development
819-994-2482

Media Relations Office
Employment and Social Development Canada
819-994-5559
media@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca