



HOUSING MATTERS BC

Regional Overview: Vancouver Island

Last fiscal year, more than \$65 million in provincial funding was provided to support subsidized housing and rent supplements for more than 16,000 low-income individuals, seniors and families on Vancouver Island.

Rent Supplements

The Rental Assistance Program helps low-income working families with the cost of private market rental housing. Introduced in 2006, the program was expanded in 2008 to help even more families by: increasing the income ceiling; raising the amount of assistance; and improving access for families with older children living at home in post-secondary school and families who care for adult children with disabilities. Working families earning up to \$35,000 a year can receive direct rent subsidies ranging from \$50 up to \$765 per month. The average monthly payment is approximately \$405. **Over 1,730 low-income working families in the region receive assistance through this program.**

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) was expanded in 2006 to better meet the housing needs of low-income seniors by: increasing benefit levels and eligibility, including seniors who pay pad rentals for manufactured homes, increasing heat allowance to offset rising utility costs, and the removal of the 10-year Canadian residency requirement. The average monthly payment is approximately \$158. **More than 3,000 seniors' households in the region receive SAFER benefits.**

Supportive Housing

The province has a partnership with the three local governments to build new supportive units for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the region. This includes:

- Victoria, up to 170 new units in three recently opened developments – Rock Bay, Camas Gardens and Swift House.
- Campbell River, up to 50 new units being built on two sites.
- Nanaimo, approximately 160 new units will be created. One development, Salish Lelum, is open; another is under construction; three are in development.

Emergency Shelters and Homeless Outreach

- There are over 1,370 year-round emergency shelter spaces, subsidized units and rent supplements available throughout the region for those who are homeless that receive more than \$30 million in annual funding.
- Last year, more than 780 homeless individuals were provided with stable housing through the Homeless Outreach Program and Aboriginal Homeless Outreach Program that operates in Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay, Langford, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Duncan, Campbell River and Courtenay.

Support for Seniors & People with Disabilities

The province provides a range of housing options for seniors and people with disabilities in B.C.:

- **Seniors Rental Housing** provides apartments for those who are able to live independently with an affordable option for staying in the communities they love. Since 2009, 55 units have been completed on Vancouver Island. Another 50 units are under development.
- **Assisted Living** gives seniors the help they need to continue living independently in their home communities near family and friends – more than 840 units have been completed on Vancouver Island.
- **Seniors Supportive Housing** provides specially modified rental housing to seniors and people with disabilities. There are around 765 existing seniors' units being converted under the program across the Province – approximately 160 are in the region.

Aboriginal Housing

- The province supports 920 units of Aboriginal Housing in the region.
- In July 2011, the Province and the Aboriginal Housing Management Association began to transfer ownership and management of more than 70 Rural Native Housing properties for Aboriginal families on Vancouver Island to an Aboriginal non-profit housing provider. This was the first phase of an eventual transfer of all Rural Native Housing properties to Aboriginal non-profit housing providers.

Women's Transition Housing and Supports

On Vancouver Island, there are 111 transition housing beds, 31 second stage housing units and four safe home programs to support women (with or without dependent children) who have experienced domestic violence or are at risk of experiencing violence.

New Affordable Housing Developments on Vancouver Island since 2006

- **Swift House** (Victoria, 2012) Supportive housing for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Palmer Place** (Campbell River, 2012) Supportive housing for adults with developmental disabilities.
- **Hustwick Place** (Nanaimo, 2012) a 33-unit seniors development officially opens.
- **Camas Gardens** (Victoria, 2011), 44-units of supportive housing for people who are homeless.
- **Salish Lelum** (Nanaimo, 2011) - 18 supportive apartments for Aboriginal youth and elders.
- **Olympic Vista** (Saanich, 2011) – 36 supportive apartments for people who are homeless.
- **Rock Bay Landing** (Victoria, 2010) – opened with 84 shelter spaces, 23 transitional housing units and two emergency family shelter units.
- **Warmland House** (Duncan, 2009) - Emergency shelter beds and transitional housing for adults at risk of homelessness with mental health issues.
- **Our Place** (Victoria, 2008) - Supportive housing for individuals who are homeless or at risk.
- **Murakami Gardens** (Salt Spring Island, 2008) – Housing for individuals and families at risk of homelessness.
- **Rogers St. Apartments** (Port Alberni, 2008) - Supportive housing for adults at risk of homelessness and those with mental health issues
- **Marrion Village** (Oak Bay, 2007) opened to provide 38 subsidized assisted living units, along with market housing units, for seniors.
- **The Gardens at Qualicum Beach** (2007) opened to provide 30 publicly funded assisted living apartments for seniors.
- **New Hope Centre** (Nanaimo, 2007) - Transitional housing development for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness.
- **Georgian Apartments** (Victoria, 2006) - Affordable housing for homeless family and single parents whose children have left home, and who find themselves homeless.