

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Housing Campaign

In concert with the launch of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's Canada-wide multi-year National Action Plan on housing we will produce a series of *Changing Times* newsletters to help you and your Conference address the housing needs in your community.

We hope and pray the content of the *Changing Times* will inform and inspire us to serve in new and holistic ways!

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Changing Times!



**Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing
is a Human Right!**

LISTEN!

Our **National Action Plan** begins by encouraging all of us to listen to our neighbours to discover what their true housing needs are and what solutions they feel will work best for them.

Reach out to those you already serve and ask them:

1. What are your current housing concerns?
2. What are the challenges you face?
3. What do you think could be done to make things better?
4. What is your family's total income, sources, as well as housing costs?
5. At what point are your housing costs too high?
6. How do you and your family sacrifice to pay your shelter costs?
7. What shelter and outreach supports do you know about?

Turn to page 2 for more information!

“You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis; you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty with the aim of long-term improvement.”

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”
Stephen Covey

LISTEN!

As we embark on our journey together across Canada to find solutions to housing, we cannot assume to have answers until we uncover the true needs of those underhoused, precariously housed or homeless.

If someone is spending more than 30% of their monthly gross household income on rent, they are likely struggling to pay other bills and put food on their table. Sadly **20% of Canadian households spend more than 50% of their monthly income on rent.** The prevalence of food banks and meal programs is a sign of a much greater societal problem.

It may seem like a steep hill to climb, but we must start by learning from those we serve and then by reaching out to others we have yet to serve! Let's make sure we are climbing the right hill!

Start the conversation!

While COVID-19 protocols restrict our home visits in most of the country, this can be a great opportunity to reach out to our neighbours by phone to check on their wellbeing and introduce our new National Housing Action Plan. Within your conference and/or council, gather a team of Vincentians to reach out to neighbours you serve throughout the year. Engage these families and individuals in conversation to uncover their true housing needs. Within your team select an individual who is willing to become a local Housing Champion for your group.

TIPS:

1. Make your questions “open-ended”, encouraging a detailed response rather than one- or two-word answer.
2. Refrain from interrupting and be patient while the respondent gathers their thoughts before sharing them with you.
3. Record their responses and repeat their answers to ensure you have accurately captured their perspective.
4. While you cannot promise immediate solutions to their housing challenges, you can commit to sharing their story (anonymously) with others in an effort to find solutions.

While you may not have answers today, you can share what you have learnt with your conference/council team to determine what steps to take collectively to find solutions for your neighbours! Among other roles, your Housing Champion can be your conduit for information between the local and national levels.

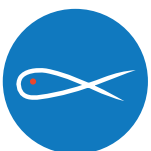
For the greater good:

As we gather this important information, it will be helpful for all of us to have an online portal for sharing the challenges and solutions we discover with all Vincentians coast to coast. Please forward your experiences to: sj-nac@ssvp.ca.

With your input, we will work hard to include all good news stories, within the monthly newsletter. We will add further resources and stories at www.ssvp.ca/housing.

Inspire and attract new Vincentians:

36% of Canadians have been homeless themselves or know someone who has been homeless. Our focus on affordable housing may compel several parishioners to become members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Ask them to join us today!



O God, as we recall the life and virtues of Blessed Frédéric and Blessed Rosalie, grant that we may continue their work of bringing good news to the poor. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

