



CITY OF VICTORIA ENCAMPMENT OUTREACH WITH A HOUSING FOCUS

PROPOSAL

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SUBMITTED BY:

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1988, Pacifica Housing Advisory Association (Pacifica Housing) has successfully developed and/or operated dozens of projects along the housing continuum, with the key purpose of providing equitable housing and support services for people at multiple entry points in Greater Victoria and Nanaimo. We develop community-based projects that meet people where they are at, helping those who are marginalized exit the cycle of homelessness. Our support services include our Streets to Homes (S2H) program, a Community Services team that supports upwards of 500+ individuals in the private market with rent supplements, non-clinical supports and connections to individualized services, and Indigenous Outreach services that provide culturally appropriate client services and supports to our urban Indigenous community. Through our Victoria Downtown Outreach and Housing Resource Services (DOHRS) program, which provides drop-in advocacy, housing and financial navigation services for those who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness, those in need of housing stability have a place to go for assistance.

Our housing and support services are accessible to all people, regardless of ethno-cultural background, religious beliefs, disability, mental health status, gender identity or sexual orientation. Pacifica Housing has extensive experience supporting vulnerable populations, including 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous populations, seniors, those who struggle with substance misuse disorder and those affected by domestic violence and physical and/or mental health challenges.

With programs and services delivered across the Greater Victoria region and Nanaimo, and numerous partners, such as BC Housing, Island Health, Reaching Home via the Government of Canada, the Capital Regional District (CRD), City of Victoria and Community Living BC, Pacifica Housing is ideally suited to provide encampment outreach in the City of Victoria with a housing focus.

While there are many different types of outreach services, encampment outreach with a housing focus is a systematic approach whereby assessments and referrals are primarily related to finding suitable housing for vulnerable individuals, while connecting them to the supports and resources needed to maintain long-term stability. Individuals living in encampments need a variety of basic resources to subsist, and those resources are available through other organizations. In the proposed approach, Pacifica Housing will focus on housing.

Pacifica Housing will be the City of Victoria's eyes and ears on the ground and a partner in understanding who the unhoused individuals are and what their needs are. We will also be a collaborative partner as we seek to work alongside City of Victoria, the Province and community partners in accelerating the closure of encampments in favor of adequate shelter and housing.

2 PROPONENT EXPERIENCE

2.1 ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW AND MANDATE

Pacifica Housing initially grew out of the Innovative Housing Society (IHS), a housing resource group, formed in the early 1980s with funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Registered as a non-profit charitable organization (CRN: 122654999 RR0001) since then, Pacifica Housing has grown to become a multi-faceted not-for-profit provider of affordable housing and support services for low-income families, seniors, persons with a disability and adults who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the Greater Victoria area and Nanaimo Regional District. Those who participate in our programs often face complex issues like substance misuse, chronic homelessness, criminal justice system involvement and compromised physical and/or mental health.

Our Vision: Equitable housing in pursuit of thriving communities.

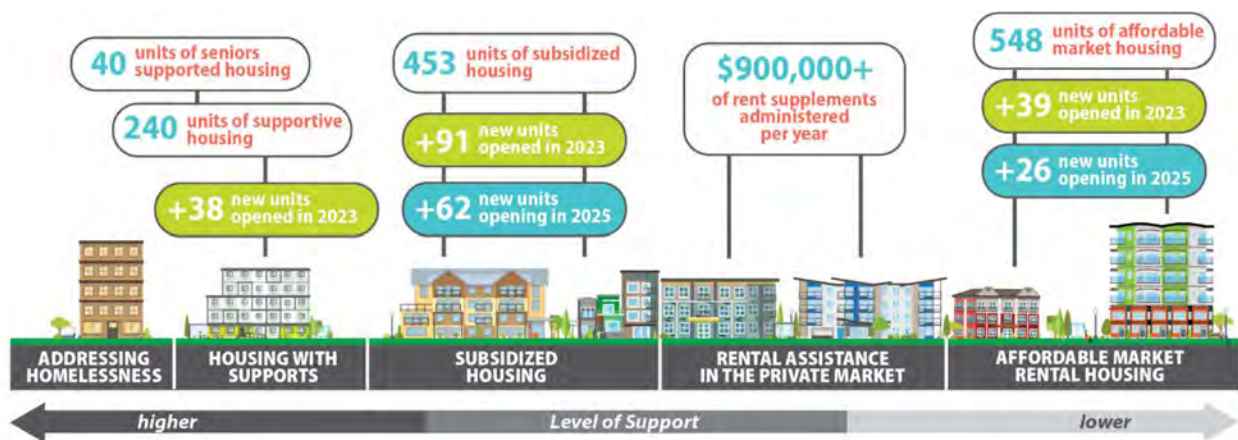
Our Mission: To advance independence of individuals and families through equitable housing and supportive services.

Our Values:

- **Authenticity** – Finding congruence inside and outside Pacifica through open and honest speech and action.
- **Leadership** – Courageously creating opportunities through collaboration where there were none before
- **Respect** – Showing that everyone has value by treating people with dignity, compassion, and unconditional kindness.
- **Social Justice** – Challenging an unjust status quo so that everyone can enjoy fair and equitable access to their economic, political and social rights.

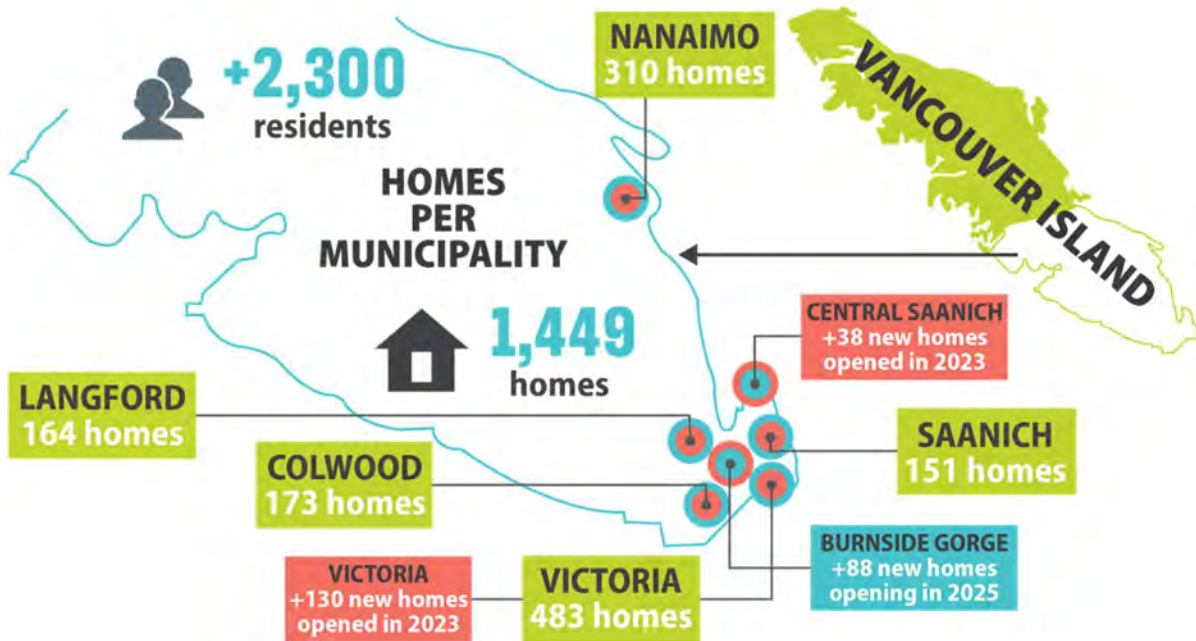
Governed by a Board of Directors, Pacifica Housing is a dynamic and growing organization with about 160 employees situated in the Greater Victoria and Nanaimo regions. Our growing portfolio of 41 buildings (which includes housing the organization either owns or operates) provides affordable homes for over 2,300 people and our support services provide assistance to a growing number of those struggling to find and keep safe, stable and appropriate housing in the region. This includes 1,449 homes across Greater Victoria and Nanaimo, comprised of 32 independent living buildings, seven supportive housing buildings, one supported seniors lodge and one community services building. We currently have one development project in the construction phase, which will add 88 units of affordable housing to our portfolio by the end of 2025.

Pacifica Housing on the Housing Continuum

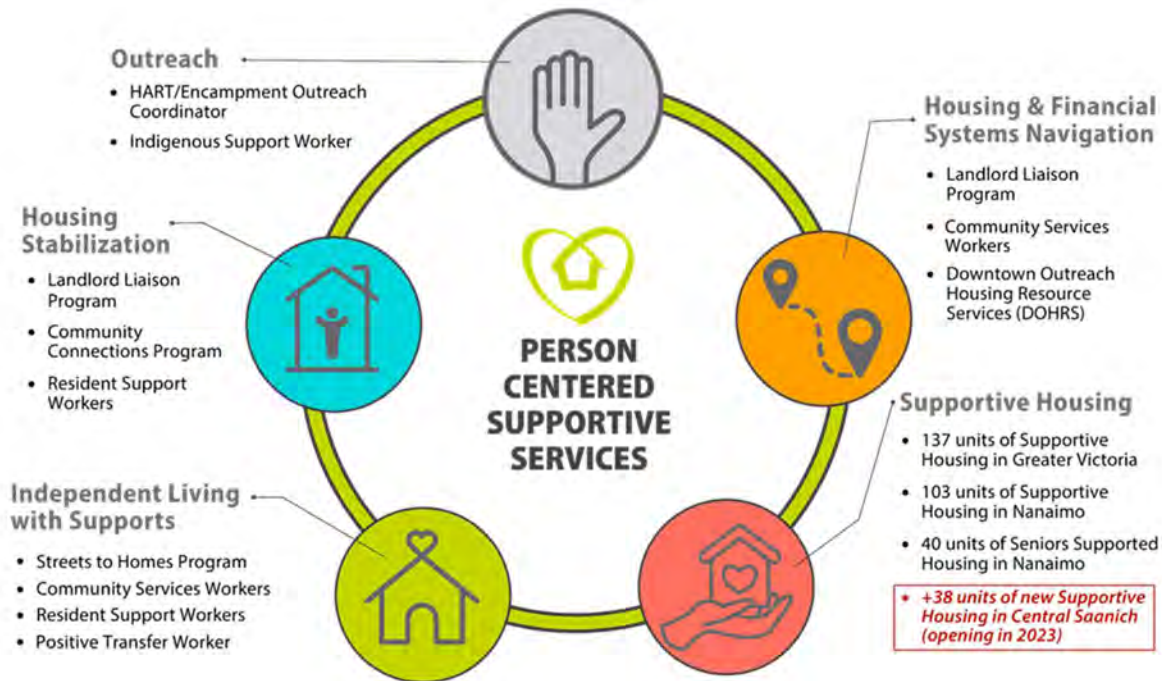


As one of the largest affordable housing operators on Vancouver Island, Pacifica Housing provides almost 1,450 units of safe and affordable quality rentals across the housing continuum to meet the needs of the entire community, including supportive housing serving individuals with a history of homelessness, townhouse complexes for low-income families and single parents and seniors supported housing. These properties provide a mix of deep subsidy, rent-geared-to-income, and low-end market housing to make them accessible to those of all income levels.

Pacifica Housing's Portfolio of Homes



2.2 SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL



Our service delivery model incorporates client-centered care and harm reduction philosophies with integrated support services that empower individuals to be at the center of their own care. At our core, we believe in the Housing First philosophy; our organization knows that when people have access to safe and affordable homes, they are more successful in addressing health, family and other issues so that they can increase their individual capability and reach their highest potential. Pacifica Housing's support services and housing options are accessible to all people, regardless of ethno-cultural background, religious beliefs, disability, mental health status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

2.3 RELATED WORK IN COMMUNITY

ENCAMPMENT OUTREACH – HOUSING ACTION RESPONSE TEAM (HART) (GREATER VICTORIA, 2018 – PRESENT)

The HART program brings together government, non-profit outreach workers, police, bylaw and health in one team to provide assessments, information and support for individuals experiencing public homelessness. Pacifica Housing became a member of the team in 2018, as part of a coordinated effort to support chronically homeless people living at an encampment in Regina Park.

As part of the HART team, Pacifica Housing:

- Engages those who are experiencing homelessness and living in public spaces;
- Works with the individual to complete a client needs assessment,
- Refers clients to income assistance, using the Homeless Application Protocol;
- Provides linkages to community supports; and,
- Develops a case plan for clients willing to participate.

POSITIVE TRANSFER PROGRAM (GREATER VICTORIA, 2021 – PRESENT)

Pacifica Housing's Positive Transfer worker provides landlord liaison and housing navigation services in collaboration with other local agencies, on behalf of their clients and case workers, to support those transitioning to independent-living situations from supportive housing or shelters. Through the local Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) initiative, this program identifies individuals ready to take the next step to available independent housing units in the region, most often available affordable units in Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) units.

HOUSING & FINANCIAL SYSTEMS NAVIGATION – DOHRS (GREATER VICTORIA, 2009 – PRESENT)

DOHRS is a drop-in center operated by Pacifica Housing in downtown Victoria that provides advocacy, housing and financial navigation services to families and individuals over the age of 19 who are currently homeless, or at risk of homelessness by directly engaging with clients. The support services offered through DOHRS include: completing needs assessments, assisting clients with housing applications and paperwork, assistance with accessing rent subsidies, referring clients to appropriate housing options and developing interim support plans as needed.

INDEPENDENT LIVING WITH SUPPORTS – STREETS TO HOMES (S2H) (GREATER VICTORIA, 2010 – PRESENT)

S2H is a Housing First systems-approach program that moves adults with a history of chronic and/or episodic homelessness directly into private market housing, while providing customized supports in the Greater Victoria region. Using this approach, S2H provides assistance in securing rent subsidies and private-market housing and offers intensive case management and supports through direct service delivery, as well as referrals to community resources. Clients are moved from homelessness into healthy state of housing security, with no preconditions.

3 SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 PHASE I

Pacifica Housing proposes to move systematically through specific parks in the city of Victoria where encampments are located, and conduct in depth assessments of unhoused individuals. These comprehensive assessments will be done using the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) at Topaz, Regatta Landing, Stadacona and Hollywood parks. Through these assessments, Pacifica Housing outreach staff will be able to better understand the context around each individual's history of chronic homelessness, what health and other resources they may need assistance connecting to, and what kind of housing is most appropriate for these individuals, in order to attain better long term outcomes.

This information will help inform what kind of potential housing or shelter is currently available in the city and what the gaps in housing and services are for these individuals. This information and themes will be shared with the City of Victoria to assist in mid to long-term decision-making, while respecting individual's privacy. The work will be done with the understanding that the City is working towards disallowing camping in all parks.

3.2 PHASE II

The information collected will be used to support referring individuals to a variety of resources they may require in order to access housing, including but not limited to ministry services, housing application assistance, and transportation to viewings. Where an individual is considered to have the potential to move into independent-living housing, they will be attached to available rent supplements (Pacifica Housing manages a number on behalf of the Province) and a search for rental housing will begin.

Where individuals are in need of supportive housing, Pacifica Housing will work through the Coordinated Access and Assessment system in order to assist in finding appropriate placement. As many individuals are likely already registered in the system, it may be difficult to place them if they are not part of a priority group or face other barriers. We are committed to working with other community-based organizations including our peer non-profit housing providers, BC Housing and Island Health to identify and advocate for solutions.

3.3 PHASE III

Where housing has been identified, Pacifica Housing outreach staff will support clients to move to the sites and set up their new home. This includes coordinating viewings, liaising with landlords on behalf of clients and case workers, completing application forms, accessing household items such as beds and kitchenware, and assisting with the move.

In addition, our outreach workers will follow individuals for 3 months to support stabilization. The team will work with the landlord and the client to problem-solve and resolve disputes/disagreements and following up with landlords on a regular basis to mitigate potential housing retention issues before they escalate.

Specific actions will include:

- Assisting with intake, community outreach to specialized populations, referrals and paperwork for basic needs and services, and referrals to community resources;
- Providing advocacy, support, and guidance, including crisis intervention;
- Housing referral services such as contacting and meeting landlords, assisting with housing

- applications for market rent, subsidized and supportive housing;
- Interim non-medical case management services during the period of assessment and placement into housing; and,
- Ongoing support services in areas such as financial, personal, and home care.

Pacifica Housing Outreach staff will:

1. Directly engage clients where they are situated;
2. Complete intake, consent form and assessment of each client;
3. Offering a support plan for each client;
4. Referring clients to appropriate housing options;
5. Referring clients to income assistance and support services as identified by their individualized support plan;
6. Clients are provided with a rental supplement where appropriate;
7. Tenancy support and skills training are provided to support housing stability and independence; and,
8. Follow up and ongoing support to resident is provided as appropriate for a period of 3 months once housed.

4 TIMELINE AND REPORTING

Pacifica Housing would conduct the above-noted activities in a concurrent manner for a period of 6 months for up to 25 clients. This will allow for sufficient time to assess individuals, identify housing as well as gaps in availability, while the Province identifies additional sites and completes sites currently under construction. Pacifica Housing will provide monthly updates on activities, progress and barriers.

We unfortunately, cannot commit to finding housing for every single person, as there are many factors we cannot control. However, we commit to being strong advocates, that the needs of the clients are understood, and that gaps in resources are clearly identified so that we may collaboratively advocate for them to be delivered. We also commit to working with community and Provincial partners in order to seek effective solutions.

5 INVESTMENT

\$50,000.

The proposed investment amount includes assigning 2 staff to conduct VATs and support each other in a way that ensures safety while in the community. It includes undertaking all activities noted in the scope including household set up, as well as administrative costs related to accessing Pacifica's infrastructure in order to do the work for the period of 6 months for up to 25 clients.