

May 11, 2021

To: Mayor and Council, City of Victoria

Re: Critical Need for Housing Outreach Support Worker

Dear Mayor Helps and Councillors,

Quadra Village Community Centre and other Centres and Community Associations have encountered an overwhelming rise in the number of single people and couples that are losing their housing. In our experience, there is an intense need to rally resources and one to one support to attempt to find short and long term housing options, before folks end up living outside, in vehicles etc. While trying to support folks in whatever way we can, our organizations have been overwhelmed by this issue and feel like we are fighting a losing battle. The extremely difficult housing market is particularly difficult for individuals competing for the most affordable rentals in the city when they are contending with challenges like low literacy, limited support, social isolation and moderate anxiety and depression.

We believe that a Housing Outreach worker, employed through Quadra Village Community Centre and connected to the other Community Centres/Neighbourhood Associations will help increase the skillsets of staff and volunteers in those organizations. As well, it will offer the opportunity to provide tailored one to support to folks who don't meet current emergency housing definitions but are in peril of losing access to shelter. While, not keeping up, we have developed a great deal of experience in assisting single adults and couples in these situations. We believe that Quadra Village Community Centre is well situated to provide this critical service at this critical moment and the annual cost of service at \$60,000 is a worthwhile investment.

Thanks for your consideration and please see the key components below.



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Housing Outreach Worker Overview

The Issues:

- Single adults and couples losing their housing with limited time, opportunity (affordable housing stock), resources.
- Limited affordable market housing stock, long waits for affordable housing and narrow definition of eligibility for emergency housing.
- People on the precipice of homelessness who lack the knowhow to navigate such a competitive housing market.
- Busy staff in Community Centres who have great relationships with folks in the community, but are busy with other mandates central to their roles.

The Solution:

- A QVCC practicum student gathers resources to help this new Housing Outreach Worker can hit the ground running.
- A housing outreach (worker, 1FTE) support pilot facilitated by QVCC with referrals from the other Community Centres and Neighbourhood Associations. It is basically trying to assist adults (single and couples) who are at risk of homelessness, couch surfing, newly homeless etc.
- Building and bridging the skills and confidence to get the process of finding housing started (and keep it going).
- Helping people navigate the housing system including locating low rent options and seeking long term solutions through waitlists.
- Raising awareness among Community Centre and Neighbourhood Association staff/volunteers in order to ensure that folks have easy access to information to provide housing access support at the neighbourhood level.