



TOWN OF GIBSONS

PO Box 340
474 South Fletcher Road
Gibsons BC | VON 1V0

T 604-886-2274

F 604-886-9735

info@gibsons.ca

www.gibsons.ca

Town of Gibsons Awarded \$190,000 for “Everybody Needs A Home” Initiative

August 17, 2021 – The Town of Gibsons has been approved for a grant of \$190,000 under the “Strengthening Communities’ Services Program”, which aims to provide local governments with the extra resources required to deliver critical social services that were strained due to the pandemic.

The Town of Gibsons’ funding application, which was supported financially by the [Sunshine Coast Foundation](#), is entitled “Everybody Needs a Home Gibsons” and is comprised of three parts:

- 1) Contract a temporary community-homelessness coordinator to organize and confirm multi-year commitments on location, funding and operator for a Gibsons cold weather shelter long before the onset of next winter; facilitate interagency and community connections to strengthen public safety and neighbourhood communications; and implement “Emergency Housing” recommendations for the Town of Gibsons from the [Sunshine Coast Housing Needs Report 2020](#) as it pertains to making immediate, tangible improvements to the shelter program. (\$70,000)
- 2) Launch a community de-stigmatization and resilience program that is desperately needed following the introduction of supportive housing to the community for the first time this spring. This strategy will include contributions from residents with lived experience, protective services, Vancouver Coastal Health and neighbouring Indigenous communities. (\$70,000)
- 3) Fund a temporary outreach support worker to assess how the unsheltered homeless population and its needs have changed because of the pandemic, and ensure that at a time when people have been more socially isolated than ever, the community’s most vulnerable, unsheltered residents are connected to health and social supports. (\$50,000)

“This grant will enable us to move ahead with several key initiatives to aid our most vulnerable community members,” said Mayor Bill Beamish. *“It leverages the expertise of many local organizations and, while the related project activities must be completed no later than July 31, 2022, we believe they will deliver a full range of social benefits that will continue well beyond the funding period.”*

During the grant preparation process, the [Sunshine Coast Salvation Army](#) agreed to work with the Town and Sunshine Coast Homelessness Advisory Committee to host the shelter and the outreach position. Much of the funding will go towards “immediate, tangible” capital improvements to the Salvation Army kitchen (which serves both the winter shelter and year-round food bank) and the winter shelter facility itself.

Sunshine Coast non-profit [Deer Crossing the Art Farm](#) has agreed to lead the de-stigmatization and resilience program, which will be modelled after its award-winning, internationally recognized “Raise the Curtain” program for people living with dementia. The focus will be building cross-community connections by engaging and supporting community members who have struggled with homelessness to share their important stories and experiences.

Work to implement the various initiatives will begin immediately, in close consultation with the District of Sechelt and the Sunshine Coast Regional District.

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For more information, please contact:
Mark Brown, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Town of Gibsons
Email: mbrown@gibsons.ca

About the Strengthening Communities’ Services Program

The Strengthening Communities’ Services Program is a \$100-million grant program that gives local governments and modern Treaty Nations additional capacity to address the effects of homelessness and keep their communities safe and healthy as they recover from the pandemic. The program is part of the Safe Restart Agreement, which is funded equally by the Province of BC and the Government of Canada. The Strengthening Communities’ Services Program funding lasts for one year, so no permanent positions or permanent program changes were eligible.