

Housing Supports Initiative Profile

The Housing Supports Initiative, a \$2.56m program funded by the Government of Manitoba and administered by the Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association, is currently funding 19 unique projects that expand the capacity of organizations supporting people who are exiting or at risk of homelessness. The Initiative will run for two years, and is projected to improve the housing circumstances of around 450 individuals, and provide eviction prevention support to around 900 individuals.

Chalet Malouin Housing Support Worker Project



Chalet Malouin, located in St. Malo, provides housing to seniors who are at risk of homelessness in a rural area with a lack of affordable housing options. The Housing Supports Initiative funding they received has been used to create a full time Housing Support Worker position that has already had a positive impact on those living at Chalet Malouin and on prospective tenants.

The support worker reaches out to seniors facing homelessness and helps them access Chalet Malouin's housing programs, and existing programs within the community. The organization's director, Martha Petrusovich, says there is a shortage of rural housing, and that it has been incredibly helpful "to have an additional person to reach out to community, let them know that we do offer low income housing, the lowest in the surrounding towns". Petrusovich goes on to explain that "some of our folks come from really bad situations, and in order for them to get housing [at Chalet Malouin] they would need to go through getting rid of bugs etc., and we have a very small staff so there was no one to help them get connected to programs and services offered by the municipality. This way we can connect folks to the right resources at a faster pace and get people moved in sooner."

In addition to helping prospective tenants, Petrusovich says the support worker connects those already living at Chalet Malouin with services "such as handi-transit, a foot care nurse, medical appointments, free wheelchairs, hair salon, pharmacy, and groceries" among other essential services. Chalet Malouin is also the only organization in the surrounding community that offers an affordable meal program that serves three meals per day, seven days a week for people on fixed incomes. Seniors from the community that are living on their own are encouraged to use the meal program.

Petrusovich says "before this grant I did not have the staff to do it all, now the full-time staff Housing Support Worker posts vacancies, contacts the waitlist, helps tenants identify emergency contacts, and connects them to community. Some people come to us with nothing and have no one, so we find clothing and mattresses by reaching out to community and local thrift stores".