

# 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.

## Central Station Community Action Training Project



**CENTRAL STATION**  
COMMUNITY CENTRE

Central Station Community Centre is a nonprofit organization in the heart of Winkler that serves the City of Winkler and the rural communities in the RM of Stanley. The organization was established in 2014 and manages housing units, operates a drop-in space, offers a variety of programs, and functions as a hub that can help connect community members that may be marginalized, underprivileged, or low income to the resources they need.

Central Station is using the HSI funding to run the Community Action Training program, which focuses on education, engagement, building on individual skills, and supporting personal empowerment. The objective of the program is to create lasting change by empowering individuals that may face inequality and inequity to learn about and develop the tools needed to advocate for themselves. Participants of the program will learn from local experts about issues such as food insecurity, accessing government benefits, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, housing rights and the Residential Tenancy Branch, and more.

Central Station Housing Coordinator, Lori Penner, says the program was developed in house, with each aspect of the curriculum “being led by people with lived experience with things from income assistance to immigration to child and family services”. There are a dozen people registered for the next round of training, which consists of 12 different sessions that address life skills and employability while also preparing participants to work in advocacy.

Penner explains that the program is geared to “people who want to access services and those who want to help provide services”, bridging a gap between clients and workers, and ensuring that more people are aware of the variety of community services available in Winkler and the surrounding area. Upon completion of the program, graduates will have the opportunity to work in the advocacy office. After working in the advocacy office for a year they will have developed basic office skills and references will be provided for future employment opportunities.

Central Station’s goal is to run the Community Action Training program twice a year, providing the opportunity for 40-50 participants to complete the training and become active advocates in their neighbourhoods.