

Questions and Responses to Questions Posed by the Yellowknife Homeless Coalition

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Date: September 23, 2011

Q1. If elected, how would you respond to the challenges identified above?

A1. The Northwest Territories needs to ensure homeless shelters are funded appropriately so that they are able to provide programming, including counselling and life skills training, so that individuals are given the tools to succeed and can progress from the shelters, to transitional housing, and then, finally, to market housing. Staff need to be available to support this process and intervene if problems arise. This support network is necessary so that these individuals are not left to fall back to the bottom of the housing chain.

Q2. The Capital City of Yellowknife is the Hub of the territory to which many individuals and families from the communities are drawn for employment and training opportunities, as well as medical and other services that are not provided to them in their home communities. Often when these same opportunities fail to meet their expectations and their needs, they may face homelessness or other social challenges in Yellowknife. Yellowknife has the necessary services for these individuals; however, the capital is often seen as “getting all of the program funding”. As an elected official either serving constituents in Yellowknife or the communities, how would do you address this perceived inequity between communities?

A2. We need to find a balance so that program funding isn't the point of contention between communities in the Northwest Territories. All communities affected by homelessness need the proper resources to get people off the streets. The level of funding should be determined by need based on real metrics and measurable factors. Work needs to be done to address any perceived inequities between different communities and their funding levels. We are all trying to accomplish the same goals and not leave anyone living on the street. No matter what community someone lives in we are all residents of the Northwest Territories and they need access to a support network. All communities, big and small, should have the tools available to work with those in need.

The circumstances that cause people to become homeless in Yellowknife are complex. People end up in Yellowknife for a variety of reasons including, that they are not able to secure flexible transportation home; while others move to Yellowknife for services or employment; others may come for family reasons. We need to make sure there is an equality of services in all communities so that no one is forced to come to Yellowknife for support. The needs of individuals has to play an important role in addressing the perceived inequity in the system. Programs need to be measured, cost effective and have the most impact possible to help our residents.

Q3. Please feel free to provide any additional feedback on homelessness related issues.

A3. I am excited to see the impact that the new transition home will have on keeping people off the streets. Program funding at all levels needs to be examined to make sure that as much as possible is supporting people and not getting lost in excessive red tape and overhead.