



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Partnership to tackle Nanaimo homelessness begins implementation action**

**Nanaimo, B.C** - The City of Nanaimo's Council led Health and Housing Task Force, which was established by Nanaimo City Council this year, in partnership with the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, and United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island have joined forces with Turner Strategies and HelpSeeker to support system change initiatives to address current community challenges relating to homelessness.

The consulting team will be led by Dr. Alina Turner and a national team who has successfully supported over 100 communities in similar efforts across Canada, including Calgary, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, and Abbotsford.

"We have brought together the right decision-makers and frontline service agencies to tackle homelessness leveraging our combined resources and will," notes Signy Madden, Executive Director, United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island and member of the City's Health and Housing Task Force. "This project is an important step to making a difference for our community and helping those who need it most."

Over the next six months, our community will see a series of implementation planning actions relating to social challenges. "We know there are committed caring agencies already delivering services and we know that the number of people experiencing homelessness has more than doubled," says Task Force co-Chair and City of Nanaimo Councillor Don Bonner. "Through planning and coordinating efforts we are making the most of our resources and developing and implementing a system to streamline efforts and dramatically shift the way these services are accessed."

A partnership of local organizations have come together to leverage existing funding and coordinate services to make a visible change for the Nanaimo community. This will involve a series of implementation steps including the beginning of coordinated approaches to streamline frontline rehousing and health support efforts focusing on community members with complex needs.

The HelpSeeker platform is also being rolled out, connecting Nanaimo citizens with local resources for mental health, addictions, housing, recreation, early childhood, and more; plus over 100,000 Canada-wide social service resources. The platform will give the partners critical real-time data to make better decisions and funding allocations.

The initiative is funded by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Strategy, the United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island, and the City of Nanaimo.

## **About the Partners**

### City of Nanaimo

Nanaimo is a vibrant and growing regional centre on the east coast of Vancouver Island with a population of nearly 100,000 residents.

With its large protected harbour, Nanaimo is referred to as the Harbour City, making it one of the two major gateways to Vancouver Island and positioning Nanaimo as a key service and transportation hub for a regional population of 360,000 people throughout Central and Northern Vancouver Island.

### Health & Housing Task Force

The Council-led Health and Housing Task Force was established in July 2019 to strengthen collaboration across organizations with different mandates and a shared concern for community wellbeing. The Task Force includes representatives from different government and non-governmental agencies that want to work together to prevent homelessness while reducing its impacts on health and public safety.

### Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition

The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition drives solutions to end homelessness by uniting the organizations, citizens and governments which support at-risk residents, while also working to diminish the harm caused by homelessness on individuals and community.

### United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island

Over the past 60 years, United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island has become a catalyst for social change – conducting research, convening coalitions, and influencing public policy to make a difference in local communities while funding 116 programs and helping 52,177 people from the Malahat to Port Hardy.

### HelpSeeker/ Turner Strategies

HelpSeeker and Turner Strategies support leaders in large-scale social change through community engagement, data analysis and visualization, best practice research and evaluation. We provide change-makers with technical and strategic support to meaningfully and measurably accelerate social impact initiatives.



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