



## 36 Units of Short-Term Housing to Open at Queen's Manor

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Beginning next week, 36 units of new short term housing will open at Queens Manor, located at 710 Queens Street, the former Traveller's Inn property purchased by the City of Victoria in July.

Queens Manor will provide safe and stable supported housing as an interim measure pending future renovations to convert the building into more permanent studio suites. The building is considered "low-barrier", for example allowing couples and pets which may not always be accommodated in overnight shelters.

"Heading into the winter months, this initiative will help support homeless individuals until the new permanent housing is available at the site later this year," said Rich Coleman, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and Minister Responsible for Housing. "Since we announced our provincial investment toward the purchase, we've moved quickly to make sure it opens as soon as possible and to help ensure that the right services and supports are in place."

"This is another example of the innovative results we're seeing through community partnerships to address homelessness," noted Mayor Dean Fortin. "It's the shared commitment of all agencies that is creating short and long term solutions to connect individuals with housing and the necessary supports."

The Province is providing \$108,237 to cover the operating costs at Queen's Manor for the next three months. Victoria Cool Aid Society (Cool Aid) will operate Queen's Manor during this time, and will have two full time staff on-site at all times. In addition to an array of ongoing supports and services provided through Cool Aid, other outreach supports such as mental health and addictions services will be provided on a case-by-case basis by the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

"Everyone needs and deserves a home," said Kathy Stinson, Victoria Cool Aid Society Executive Director. "Even temporary housing can be the starting point to transition people who are homeless into permanent housing. Knowing that you have a safe, warm environment to return to, along with support and encouragement to move forward, provides hope and a foundation from which to build a better life."

Victoria Cool Aid Society will manage Queen's Manor for the next three months using temporary operating funds provided by BC Housing. There will be two full-time housing staff on-site 24/7 helping residents with their life plans, plus additional services, such as mental health and addictions professionals provided by Cool Aid, the Vancouver Island Health Authority and other organizations.

The Queens Manor project builds on continuing improvements in coordination among government, police, and community agencies to house and support those who are homeless or at risk in the region.

All agencies involved are partners in the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, a collaboration of local service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, business and the faith community in Greater Victoria. The Coalition aims to create 1,233 new housing units for the region's homeless and at-risk by the year 2018 by coordinating community response to homelessness through projects such as Queens Manor.

In 2010-11, BC's budget for social housing is approximately \$562 million, more than four times as much as in 2001.

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