House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** Homes for Women

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Poor, poverty and income inequality

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

• Ensure Housing First funding addresses women's homelessness
Budget 2013 proposed "$119 million per year over 5 years, nearly $600 million in total, to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, using a 'Housing First' approach" based on the outcomes of the At Home/Chez Soi demonstration projects. None of these had women as a focus. Women's homelessness is often a result of violence and many women hide their homelessness, rather than risk life on the street. We recommend that the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat take steps to ensure this funding reduces women's homelessness.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

≤$499,999

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

As noted above, Budget 2013 proposed $119 million per year over 5 years for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy to reduce homelessness using a Housing First approach. Our recommendation is with regard to how that funding will be used and does not involve additional funding. The government should ensure that the Housing First approach used under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy takes into account the forms of women's homelessness, and creates links to shelters for abused women, programs serving homeless and low-income women and develops an approach to homeless girls - teenage and younger.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

This recommendation benefits homeless women and girls, perhaps the most vulnerable population in Canada. In major urban centres, 25-30% of people on the streets or in shelters are women; 30-50% of homeless youth are teenage girls. Forty-two percent of homeless girls in Vancouver are First Nation, Métis or Inuit, a rate 10 times their representation in the general population. Single parent families, mostly led by women, make up the majority of homeless families. Many women living on the streets of Canadian cities are abuse and trauma survivors struggling with resulting mental health issues.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Without a roof over their heads and a door to lock safely behind them, women are at great risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm. Women living on the streets of Canadian cities are re-traumatized by their difficult everyday lives and dependent on expensive emergency services. At a cost of $25-31 a day, supportive housing is both the best social and the least expensive response to women's homelessness, using significantly less public resources than a shelter bed at $69/day, prison at $143/day or a psychiatric inpatient bed at $665/day.

Topic: Please select from the pull-down menu

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

Please select from the drop down menu

Please select from the drop down menu

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Topic: Please select from the pull-down menu

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

Please select from the drop down menu

Please select from the drop down menu

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

Homes for Women strongly encourages the federal government to ensure that the Housing First funding addresses women's homelessness as this would increase fiscal sustainability and support Canadians who are vulnerable to violence and poverty.

Homes for Women recommends that the Homeless Partnering Secretariat develop an advisory committee with expertise on women's homelessness to shape a Housing First approach to reducing women's homelessness within the $119 million spending envelope. We would be pleased to support the process of developing the committee and share the wealth of expertise among our partners:

- All Our Sisters National Network
- Canada Without Poverty Advocacy Network
- Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies
- Calgary Legal Guidance
- Central Toronto Community Health Centres
- Cities Centre, University of Toronto
- Justice For Girls
- YWCA Canada

(Given the focus of the Homes for Women Campaign it would have been very helpful to have "women" identified somewhere on the drop down menu.)

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided