



Impact Story: Multifaith Housing Initiative

The Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC) is an extension of what federal public servants do: improve the lives of Canadians. In 2018, federal public servants and retirees gave close to \$30 million to charities across Canada as part of the GCWCC.

Launched in 2016, ProjectBe is an initiative of the GCWCC Youth Council. ProjectBe aims to connect public servants and retirees to a cause in their local community by raising awareness, encouraging volunteerism, and fundraising. In the past two years, ProjectBe has focused support towards youth mental health and refugee integration efforts in Canada. In 2018, ProjectBe announced a third pillar for the campaign: addressing homelessness.

In the last 10 years, between 136,000 and 156,000 Canadians have used emergency shelters annually.

The Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI) is working to provide solutions to ending homelessness in Ottawa.

About MHI

Established in 2002, the MHI is a charitable organization in Ottawa that aims to provide and promote safe, affordable, and well-maintained housing in inclusive communities, and to mobilize resources for these purposes. MHI has grown into a coalition of over 80 faith communities from across the Ottawa. These members are dedicated to achieving MHI's goal to create more affordable housing in Ottawa while promoting tolerance and respect among residents of all faiths.

What is MHI doing to reduce homelessness in Ottawa

In Ottawa, thousands of individuals and families are without permanent homes or adequate temporary living facilities. MHI is looking beyond city shelters, and into the future. There are approximately 10,000 households on the centralized waiting list for social housing in Ottawa, and wait times can be up to five years or more.

In 2017, Homeless Hub estimated that 7,530 individuals and families were homeless in Ottawa, 67% of which were using homeless emergency shelters and 16% using transitional housing (2017). Further, an April 2015 End Homelessness Canada Survey estimated that 8.5% of the homeless persons surveyed in Ottawa reported having prior Canadian military service.

Currently, MHI owns a total of 139 units, housing between 300 and 400 people, at four different property sites across Ottawa: Blake House, the Haven, Kent House, and Somerset Gardens. MHI currently offers \$400,000 in housing subsidies within their property sites each year. MHI applicants are selected from the Social Housing Registry of Ottawa's (Registry) waiting list for subsidized housing and below-market rent housing – except for the Veterans' House project,

which will have its own special intake process. The Registry works with affordable housing providers like MHI by maintaining a comprehensive list of all applicants in the City of Ottawa who have applied for rent-geared-to-income housing. MHI also offers some housing at average market rental prices to help contribute to building maintenance costs. MHI's below-market rent subsidies are funded through donor contributions.

Veterans' House

The Veterans' House is MHI latest project, specifically targeting the needs of the rising number of homeless veterans in Ottawa. It will be built by MHI on the former Rockcliffe Airbase and be a 40-unit home for veterans who are currently homeless. The Veterans' House will include wrap around supports to improve their overall quality of life, as well as the lives of their families who are unable to provide them with the support that they need. Project partners and stakeholders for the Veterans' House include:

- Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services;
- Helmets To Hardhats;
- Ottawa Salus;
- Soldiers Helping Soldiers;
- Support Our Troops;
- The Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command and District G;
- True Patriot Love; and,
- Veterans Affairs Canada.



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Why your donations matter

MHI is a five staff organization with over 80 volunteers. MHI currently has an annual operation budget of \$1 million. The total cost of building the Veterans' House is \$11.5 million. To meet this goal, the federal government has provided MHI with \$6.5 million and MHI has committed to raising the remaining \$5 million. In just over a year, MHI has raised \$2.5 million through their Capital Campaign. All funds raised under the Capital Campaign goes to the bricks and mortar of the Veterans' House, and 100% of donations raised through other fundraising campaigns, such as the GCWCC, support the housing subsidies for current and future tenants. The current annual subsidies budget is \$400,000; however, once the Veterans' House is in operation, that budget will increase to \$640,000.

To learn more about MHI, please visit <http://www.multifaithhousing.ca>.