

Greetings Mayor Masters and The City Council

Our weather becomes increasingly unpredictable as a result of global warming. During the summer, this includes Regina, more unpredictable storms are supposed to come to the prairies (according to CBC and the Weather Network.) Since most homeless shelters have a capacity of 50 to 25 beds, or even less, only a small number of people will be able to find shelter. Our winters (including the wind chill) are between -20 and -40 °C, and this is throughout the day.

My name is Abigail Whelan. I am here to talk regarding Regina's present homelessness problem, as well as the factors that surround it, and how we can address these issues if we can solve homelessness and give these individuals a better quality of life. Regina's local government and residents will benefit from this. Regina's homelessness crisis began in 2007, when the oil and gas boom prompted rents to skyrocket.

The biggest cause of homelessness in Regina is the economy. the inability to locate affordable accommodation. Regina currently has a 7.5 percent rental vacancy rate. To put it another way, there are a lot of rental units available. However, rent remains high: a one-bedroom apartment costs \$949 on average. The number of homeless people in Regina has increased dramatically as a result of the provincial government's new income assistance program, Saskatchewan Income Support, or SIS. On SIS, a single person receives \$860 per month to cover all of their expenses, including accommodation, utilities, nourishment, clothing, and transportation. As a result, the number of homeless people in Regina and across the province is increasing. Let us break down the cost of these expenses to see if they would cover this (rent is between 500 and 1000 dollars, (700) an average person pays 341 dollars (170), 50 dollars for food per person (30), 25 dollars for clothing (20), 88 dollars per month for a bus card (30)) the SIS person would still pay 955 dollars per month on living expenses, leaving them homeless. Not to mention that the money goes straight to the person rather than the property owner, causing the tenants to be evicted due to a lack of financial management.

My solution is the housing first program: Housing first is made for recovery and approach reducing homelessness that focuses on immediately placing homeless person into independent and permanent housing, followed by additional support and services as needed. Housing first primary presence is that people are better and able to go forward in their life if they are housed first. This is true for people who are homeless, as well as those who have mental health and addiction concerns. Housing is offered first, followed by physical and mental health care, education, employment, substance addiction treatment, and communities connections. This connects poverty and inequality because people are too worried about themselves to worry about the homeless. They think they're too good and to turn a blind eye.