

Lasby, Mary

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Alexa Van Volkenburgh - Extreme Cold Weather Emergency Response Plan - CK 270-9

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>

Sent: Monday, December 5, 2022 10:27 AM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

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--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, December 5, 2022 - 10:26

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Date: Monday, December 05, 2022

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Alexa

Last Name: Van Volkenburg

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Address: 123 20 Street West

City: Saskatoon

Province: Saskatchewan

Postal Code: S7M0W7

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): Community Legal Assistance Services for Inner City Inc (CLASSIC)

Subject: Saskatoon's Extreme Cold Weather Emergency Response Plan

Comments:

There has been a lot of problems since the changeover from SAP to SIS. There was an increase in evictions since SAP was switched over to SIS a few years ago. Now with inflation rates, we have observed the increase in evictions skyrocketing. We are experiencing record high numbers of community members who are unhoused.

We have witnessed a lot of folks struggling as they have not been receiving enough benefits to actually be able to rent a place, people are constantly having to choose between paying their rent or buying groceries. On top of this,

due to the increase in rent recently, there are limited to no options for people to rent in general. There is usually a handful of room rentals and maybe 2 one bedrooms available. The few one-bedroom options available are also only affordable if you are receiving the added Stabilization benefit (an extra \$150/ month) through SIS or have someone to live with and split the rent. Otherwise, people still can't afford them, so their only options are room rentals. Room rentals are usually geared toward a very specific type of tenant, which many of the folks who are experiencing being unhoused, do not qualify. People are expected to find housing despite them not actually receiving enough benefits to afford the majority of the units that are on the market.

It appears, people are expected to find other people to live with, which can create more barriers as now people are relying on others to hold up their end. When one person falls through, they all fall through and are evicted. People shouldn't be forced to have a roommate to qualify for housing.

We would also like to highlight that there is a difference between housing and safe housing. People deserve safe housing, free of bugs, mold, violence, etc. This has been an ongoing issue even before the rental increases. Many units that are deemed affordable are often infested with bugs, mold, lack proper security like locked entrance doors, or many other issues that create their living space to become unsafe.

The majority of the ORT hearings through CLASSIC this fall are around evictions or pest problems.

There is also a significant difference of information from the Ministry to people on the front lines. The Ministry is constantly stating that there are places for rent that are affordable, however, that is not the case. We are constantly working with people who cannot afford any of the units available or are continually being denied housing due to stigma of them receiving income assistance. The only option they have is low-income housing but due to the tremendous need, there are lengthy waitlists. We are working with folks who are so defeated because they are continuously being told one thing but experiencing a very different situation.

Another ongoing issue we are noticing, is shelter space; shelters are beyond capacity even with the added beds there is not enough space for folks. We understand the need for shelters, but it seems we have started to rely solely on shelters to house people. Shelters are meant to be temporary fixes but appear to have become the long-term solution. Safe housing is a human right.

If you wish to further discuss these issues, please reach out to CLASSIC @ 306 657 6100.

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No