



Community Day Center
for Community Members Experiencing Homelessness or Poverty

“Bridging the Gap”
Project Proposal

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Executive Summary

Because of our location, history, partnerships, and mandate, Town House – Citizens Service League is perfectly situated to provide an urgent and necessary resource to families and seniors experiencing financial hardships and people who are experiencing poverty and homelessness.

By creating a community day centre and offering resources, services, and hope, we will help those community members who are struggling with housing and finances.

The benefit to those accessing our services will be substantial, as outlined below, and could help someone transition into housing or employment, or simply feel valued as a member of our community.

There has been a tremendous amount of interest and support from our community partners such as the Glace Bay Food Bank, the Ally Centre of Cape Breton, and other service providers who support families who are experiencing challenges within CBRM. We've also had a great deal of interest and support from the community at large, with many offers to volunteer in the planning of our project as well as volunteer at the centre once it has been opened.

Glace Bay needs a safe space for our vulnerable community members to spend their time between dawn and dusk, where they can access services, find resources and employment, access hygiene amenities, and access to nutritious meals.

Most importantly, they need a judgement free space where they can feel welcome.

Town House can provide all of that, and help build up the members of our community who are experiencing challenges and hardship.

Introduction and Background

Established in 1967, Glace Bay Citizens Service League is a volunteer based non-profit, charitable organization which offers programs that improve the quality of life of the community of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia and surrounding areas, in response to needs identified by residents.

Town House has been supporting the most vulnerable members of our community for decades, and we recognize a substantial need for additional and new supports for those experiencing poverty and homelessness in Glace Bay and surrounding areas.

Although there are many service providers, government officials, and agencies working to solve the housing crisis, Town House has determined while our role may not be to influence policy, the most important work we can do right now is to support those individuals who are falling through the cracks of the system.

We want to provide a resource and location that will help bridge the gap to help prevent people from losing their housing, provide assistance to those who are already experiencing homelessness, and encourage community building within our programs.

Statement of Need

We're seeing the increasing effects of poverty and housing insecurity in Glace Bay and surrounding areas. There are low housing vacancy rates and rental rates are continuously increasing, which is creating a situation where many people are becoming unhoused, or at substantial risk of losing their home. People are making difficult choices between food, home oil or gas for their car, or rent.

Those families who are housed and living at or near the poverty threshold may not have access to laundry facilities in their building, and adding the cost of getting to and from a laundry mat and paying to use the washers and dryers may no longer be viable in their budget due to increasing costs of living.

The members of our community who are experiencing homelessness face many barriers, one of the major ones being no safe place to go during the daylight hours. Many people who are couch surfing, staying at a shelter, sleeping in makeshift shelters, abandoned buildings or otherwise have no safe, warm, welcoming place to go during the day in Glace Bay. This contributes to isolation, health concerns, and stigma.

Another major barrier that people with no fixed address face is a lack of access to necessary services, not having an address impedes their ability to complete employment forms, banking forms, or even identification forms.

In addition to that, some people who are experiencing poverty and/ or homelessness don't have regular access to a telephone, which makes it challenging, if not impossible to schedule medical appointments and access other necessary resources.

The need for access to nutritious meals and community networks has never been higher than it is right now. Families are struggling to make ends meet, and cooking classes or pot-lucks could ensure that children or seniors are receiving adequate sustenance that day.

All of these economic challenges, combined with the increasingly extreme weather events we've begun experiencing due to climate change, such as extreme heat in the summer of 2022, and Hurricane Fiona in September of 2022, which had a devastating effect on Glace Bay, make a community space like this, that can be used as an emergency shelter all the more urgent.

While there is much work being done by service groups and government officials to address the housing crisis and the root causes of housing insecurity and poverty, there is an immediate need for a program to 'bridge the gap' for those members of our community who are experiencing episodic, transitional or chronic homelessness, as well as those who are dangerously close to losing their permanent housing due to financial insecurity.

Town House is in an excellent position to provide some comfort and support to those affected by poverty and homelessness during the interim, until longer term solutions can be found for our community members who are experiencing hardship.

Project Goals and Objectives

This day center will provide showers, washers & dryers, internet access and charging stations for cell phones, and a mailbox system that will be incredibly important for people to access services and supports as well as access to a land line where our staff help book appointments and take messages on their behalf.

The industrial kitchen will allow us to increase the number of Meals on Wheels we can provide to seniors and people with disabilities, the cooking classes and pot-lucks will ensure that families learn how to prepare inexpensive meals that will meet nutrition requirements, as well as bring together our growing international student community with isolated seniors, and younger families for a truly inclusive community experience.

We will also provide clothing from our social enterprise thrift store, and referrals to supports and services.

Our immediate goal is to meet some basic, urgent needs by providing support, access to essential hygiene facilities, access to resources, and restoring hope and dignity to those who are experiencing hardship.

During phase two of the project, we plan to offer workshops and counselling services and phase three would involve purchase of a vehicle to help participants attend appointments, etc.

Objectives

Our objectives are as follows:

- Build strong, lasting partnerships with other organizations serving this population including The Ally Centre of Cape Breton, Glace Bay Food Bank, and Department of Community Services to provide a coordinated approach to support and wrap around services.
- Ensure that each person who accesses our services feels welcomed and safe.
- Provide a mailbox to every client who requests one.
- Provide a Town House Prestige Card for 849 Thrift Boutique to each person who accesses our services.
- Provide access to resources and supports to make health appointments and other important connections.
- Provide hygienic facilities and resources to those requiring them, including showers and laundry facilities as well as free haircuts and a foot health clinic.
- Provide nutritious meals and community building opportunities in the form of family cooking classes, pot-luck dinners, and more meals to meet the growing demand of Meals on Wheels.
- Serve as an emergency heating or cooling centre during extreme weather events.

Outcomes

We will measure our success in the following ways:

- Tracking the number of people using our services or classes, as well as the frequency of usage.
- The type of service or program being utilized, as well as the frequency of services provided. This will be tracked by sign in sheet as well as informal daily reports by our staff. No personalized identifying information regarding services will be tracked other than individuals' names at sign in, and that information will only be used internally.
- Number of people who successfully receive support (jobs, housing, etc.)
- Survey of clients when they begin using our services, at the 6-month mark, and 12-month mark to determine sense of belonging in community.

Benefits

The benefits to Town House opening up a community day centre and industrial kitchen for families and individuals experiencing poverty are plentiful, our location, previous experience and program offerings, and desire to work with other agencies and supports to provide coordinated access will ensure this program is a success.

Town House, located at 150 Commercial Street is centrally located in the heart of downtown Glace bay. Our facility is on a bus route, and within walking distance to a great deal of other resources such as Glace Bay Food Bank, Glace Bay Library, Family Services of Glace Bay, Union Street Clinic where clients can access mental health supports and a methadone clinic, multiple pharmacies, Glace Bay Hospital, and our own thrift store, 849 Thrift Boutique where clients of the day program will have access to free items as part of our Town House Prestige Card program.

Town House already has a great deal of experience and expertise providing necessary services to our community such as pre-employment coaching, computer literacy program, foot care clinics, free haircuts, social inclusion events, a family cooking class held at the Superstore community room, and a Meals on Wheels program in partnership with Collette's Restaurant, where we are currently at capacity with 200 meals a week. All of which can be accessed by anyone using our day program.

Additional services we intend to provide will be access to showers, free laundry facilities, computers, clean clothing, a permanent mailing address, and a landline to help book appointments, and pot-luck community dinners. And most importantly, we will provide a "home base" where people without a fixed address can relax, escape the elements, and feel welcome and safe.

We will have a full time, dedicated staff member and volunteers, who will prioritize building relationships with the people who access our services, provide resources and a judgement free space where people can access basic needs.

Budget

Construction (Bathrooms, office, kitchen, accessible wheelchair lift to second floor)	\$ 520,000.00
Mail boxes Large wall mounted bank of lockboxes	\$ 4,000.00
Staff 2 full time staff	\$ 100,000.00
Security Alarm system upgrade, cameras, emergency call button	\$ 5,000.00
Generator To enable us to be used as an emergency location during weather events	\$ 20,000.00
Furniture Couches, chairs, table, and tv for clients, office furniture for staff	\$ 10,000.00
AED Emergency response, to also be a community location	\$ 1,600.00
Phone Line Dedicated phone line for day centre	\$ 50.00
Utilities (increased power/ water) Regular use of laundry facilities will substantially increase usage	\$ 2,000.00
Equipment & Supplies Office equipment, cleaning supplies, sharps containers, toiletries, coffee and other comfort supplies, kitchen appliances, washer/dryers	\$ 200,000.00
Total	\$ 862,650.00

Action Plan and Next Steps

Create Steering Committee comprised of community partners and field experts. Including Alan Shaw – Cape Breton Regional Police Service A representative from the Ally Centre of Cape Breton A mental health representative Robert Sheppard & Mary MacDonald Town House Board Members	May 2022
Creation of bid package	June 2022
Three contractor bids	June - Sept 2022

Secure Funding	Sept – March 2023
Construction	May – August 2023
Hiring of day center manager	June/ July - 2022
Program development and securing partnerships	March – August 2023
Open day centre	Autumn 2023
Phase two – Counselling services & life skills/ employment workshops	Spring 2024
Phase three – Purchase vehicle for transporting clients & hire transportation staff	Autumn 2025

Conclusion

Town House is in a position to provide urgent and necessary assistance to many of the citizens of Glace Bay and surrounding areas who are near or below the poverty threshold or experiencing homelessness. With support from the community, private funders, and government agencies we can build connections with people who are feeling disenfranchised and provide support that will help see them through a difficult time in their lives.

By providing access to free laundry facilities, we may help a family keep a roof over their head or buy much needed groceries, by providing access to showers and personal care items, we may help someone who is homeless get and keep a job, access to a mailbox and phone could help someone make a necessary medical appointment, or apply for government supports. Cooking classes may help a family learn how to ‘stretch a meal’, and pot-lucks may help build important community relationships for international students new to the area or seniors who are feeling isolated.

Our free haircuts and free clothing program could give someone back their confidence and dignity.

And most importantly, by creating relationships and letting people who may be struggling know that they are seen, that someone cares, we may help save a life.