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**Provincial 'Housing First' Forum kicks off March 1 in St. John's:
Communities and governments come together to shape plans to end homelessness**

End Homelessness St. John's, in partnership with the Newfoundland & Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network, will host the first-ever Provincial 'Housing First' Forum at St. John's City Hall, March 1-3. Delegates from communities across the province will participate alongside representatives from all levels of government.

Media are invited to attend the **Forum kick-off on Tuesday, March 1, from 8:30-9:30am at St. John's City Hall, Foran Room**, when End Homelessness St. John's Chair Shawn Skinner will open the Forum, joined by Newfoundland & Labrador Homelessness Network Board Member from Labrador West, Noreen Careen. Newfoundland & Labrador Housing Chair & CEO John Ottenheimer will bring greetings, and the Forum will be facilitated by Dr. Alina Turner of Calgary, who is a leading international expert in developing and implementing effective plans to prevent and end homelessness.

"The Forum is an important step on our collective journey to end homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador," said End Homelessness St. John's Chair Shawn Skinner. "These discussions will help us address key priorities in our St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness, as well as priorities that may arise through the development of a provincial plan based on Housing First principles."

"'Housing First' principles are about creating responsive systems and services that provide immediate access to housing and supports for homeless and at-risk persons," said NL Housing & Homelessness Network Provincial Coordinator Cyril Tobin. "They're based on consumer choice and the belief that everyone deserves housing - and that adequate housing is a precondition for recovery and stability."

End Homelessness St. John's is a multi-stakeholder, community-led 'collective impact' board that brings together all sectors to implement a community plan to end homelessness in St. John's by 2019, making it the first Atlantic Canada community to do so.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network (NLHNN) is a group of community-based service providers, municipal, provincial and federal departments and agencies, and representatives of persons at risk of homelessness, who are committed to working collaboratively on issues related to homelessness and housing.

The Forum hosts thank the following partners for their contributions: the City of St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador Housing, Newfoundland & Labrador's Office of Public Engagement, Newfoundland & Labrador's Department of Seniors, Wellness & Social Development, Service Canada and Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

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Media contacts: Bruce Pearce, Community Development, End Homelessness St. John's
709-689-9615 bpearce@nl.rogers.com

Cyril Tobin, Provincial Coordinator, NL Housing & Homelessness Network
709-690-2853 cyril@nlhhn.org

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