



Community Social Planning Council

Greater Victoria Coordinated Identification Services

New personal identification service will help people move out of homelessness and poverty

For Release Date: March 9

(Greater Victoria): The Community Social Planning Council has launched the Greater Victoria Coordinated Identification Service (GVCIS) in partnership with numerous local agencies. The service will improve access to personal identification for Greater Victoria's most vulnerable.

Lack of proper identification is a common barrier for marginalized and vulnerable individuals to access housing, health care, employment, education, income security, and other services. However, getting identification also carries barriers for those who have no fixed address, no existing acceptable ID, and who lack the funds to pay fees for ID. Having identification also enhances belonging for people who are low income, experiencing homelessness, or provisionally sheltered.

The services include pro-active and respectful assistance in obtaining government ID, payment of fees for ID applications, and safer storage for people who are low income, homeless, and/or precariously housed. Working beyond the downtown core, the GVCIS will – as public health orders allow – operate rotating drop-in clinics to ensure services are accessible throughout the region. Clinics begin on Thursday, March 10 at the Salvation Army ARC, 525 Johnson Street from 12:30 – 1:30 pm and will run on the second and fourth Thursday of the month.

The GVCIS supports regional partners by managing a referral system and linking other regional ID services to the GVCIS. Organizations participating in the design of the GVCIS include the Salvation Army, Together Against Poverty Society, St Vincent de Paul, the Ministry for Social Development, and the office of Grace Lore, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill.

Because identification is so valuable, clients will be offered a Safe Storage Site for their ID to prevent loss or theft. This service will initially be offered at the Salvation Army, with additional locations to be added.

Jeffrey Baergen, Executive Director of the Salvation Army ARC, says of the service, “The need for acceptable identification as a part of life is not anecdotal. Unfortunately, the lack of ID is one of the most common barriers for those living in poverty or altogether homeless to access essential services. This is why The Salvation Army Addiction & Rehabilitation Centre is proud to partner with the Greater Victoria Community Social Planning Council to provide in-person



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ID clinics to help navigate the complex processes of ID acquisition, and to provide ID storage for our unsheltered community most vulnerable to loss and theft.”

ID clinics have been irregularly held in the region in the past but were placed on hold during the pandemic. Additionally, support for ID provided to Greater Victoria’s most vulnerable has been delivered by front-line workers who have many other responsibilities and may not have the resources to assist clients through the burdensome processes involved. GVCIS will alleviate the burden placed on front-line workers while improving the efficiency of ID services in the Greater Victoria area.

The Community Social Planning Council is a non-profit community organization that has been leading housing and homelessness, antipoverty and broader community development initiatives across the region for over 80 years. Regional programs include Point in Time Homeless Count, Greater Victoria Rent Bank, and the Low-Income Transit Assistance Program. For more information visit communitycouncil.ca.

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Contact Information:

Diana Gibson, Executive Director
Community Social Planning Council
diana@communitycouncil.ca or 250-383-6166