

**COMMUNITY LIVING RESTRUCTURING FUND
P.O. Box 60473 Fraser RPO
Vancouver, B.C. V5W 4B5**

January 20, 2005

**Honourable Stan Hagen
Minister of Children and Family Development
Room 133, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4**

Dear Minister Hagen:

Re: Community Living Restructuring Fund

As you are aware, the Community Living Restructuring Fund has been operational for nearly two years, and has achieved remarkable results for individuals and families requiring Community Living supports and services.

We are requesting continuation of funding together with strategic investment in a permanent endowment to enable this critical fund to be self-sustaining. In this connection, a proposal containing background information together with success stories is enclosed.

Should you require further information or clarification, the Co-chairs of this committee would be pleased to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

Lorraine Ward, Co-Chair

John Groom, Co-Chair

**cc: Honourable Members of Treasury Board
cc: Alison MacPhail, Deputy Minister, Minister of Children and Families
cc: Lois Hollstedt, Chair, Community Living British Columbia
cc: Laney Bryenton, Executive Director, B.C. Association for Community Living
cc: Sandra Richardson, Executive Director, Victoria Foundation
cc: Linda Perry/Jane Short, Co-Chairs, Community Living Coalition**

PROPOSAL FOR CONTINUATION OF FUNDING COMMUNITY LIVING RESTRUCTURING FUND

BACKGROUND:

On March 31, 2003, the Ministry of Children and Family Development approved and provided a \$20 Million Restructuring fund, held in trust by the Victoria Foundation.

The purpose of this fund is to provide grants during the transition of Community Living Services in British Columbia to:

- ❖ adults with developmental disabilities
- ❖ families of children with special needs who are eligible for Community Living Services, and
- ❖ service providers

A nine member Advisory Committee, representing the Community Living movement throughout British Columbia, has been appointed by the Interim Authority for Community Living B.C., the B.C. Association for Community Living and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Together, this Committee has the responsibility to oversee, monitor, disburse, evaluate and provide direction on the allocation of the Restructuring Fund grants; and to ensure fair and equitable access to all qualifying applicants.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS:

As of December 1st, 2004 the Committee has approved grants totalling approximately \$12 million. We have been extremely encouraged and inspired by the results of these grants for enhancing quality of life while dramatically reducing the costs of serving individuals requiring Community Living supports and services.

These grants are proving to be economically viable:

(a) Grants to Service Providers:

Our first \$5 million dollars granted produced **annual savings of approximately \$3 million** from agencies. The Advisory Committee's - MCFD representative ensures that commitments to savings are followed through with Community Living Managers and contracts are adjusted accordingly.

These annual savings represent a **return on investment in less than two years**, which is highly unusual in any business environment.

(b) Grants to Individuals and Families:

As government is well aware, the cost of keeping a child or adult with a developmental disability at home is considerably less than the cost of placing that person in a third party residential setting.

Of the 415 grants approved to individuals and families to date, the vast majority of applicants have stated that the grants will now enable the family to care for their child/adult child far into the future. We can only attempt to extrapolate those savings, as follows:

(i) Estimated savings resulting from reduced placements in family model homes:

Residential placement in a family model home costs government approximately \$25,000 to \$35,000 per year. If we assume that even 25% of the 415 individuals and families in receipt of grants have avoided residential placement we can extrapolate ***minimum annual savings of \$2.6 million.***

(ii) Estimated savings resulting from reduced placements in group homes:

Residential placement in a group home can cost anywhere from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year or more. If we assume that 15% of the 415 individuals and families in receipt of grants have avoided group home placement we can extrapolate ***minimum annual savings of \$6.2 million.***

(c) Organizational Efficiencies and Accountability:

The Advisory Committee has the ability to operate extremely efficiently:

- (i) Decision making is accomplished in a single layer by nine Committee members meeting monthly
- (ii) Grant recipients are advised of Committee decisions and receive their first grant installment within three to four months of applying to the fund
- (iii) By placing funds in trust with the Victoria Foundation, an organization with a long standing track record of professionalism, government is assured that funds are properly managed, investment income is earned, and the required safeguards are in place to ensure full accountability of grants issued

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Individuals and families who have received grants have written us with passionate thanks and described how these grants have changed their lives as described in the attached testimonials. Examples of these grants include:

- wheelchair accessible bathrooms and vehicles
- ramps to safely access front and back yards and driveways
- hallways widened to accommodate wheelchairs
- suites for respite caregivers or for youth transitioning into adulthood

These grants have ensured that many families will now be able to continue providing accommodation for their loved one and avoid cost of care. The testimonials emphasize how **this fund has truly been a lifeline** for desperate families and an important vehicle for agencies to enable restructuring Community Living services.

ONGOING NEED:

We have a backlog of approximately 200 applications at any one time. We believe strongly that there will always be a need for a fund such as the Community Living Restructuring Fund. Indeed, we firmly believe that providing this type of funding on an ongoing basis is the right thing to do, both from a policy and from an economic point of view.

When we run out of current funding, by approximately late summer 2005, it is going to be heart wrenching to advise agencies and families that funds are no longer available. In addition, there will be no vehicle for agencies and families to utilize to restructure and improve quality of life for individuals requiring Community Living supports and services. Thus costs of care will once again escalate. Without these grants government will undoubtedly experience a larger number of residential and group home placements together with the costs extrapolated above, and increased demand for health and safety funding.

OUR REQUESTS:

Our requests to Treasury Board are to:

- (1.) Commit to ongoing "flow through" funding of \$10 million per year, commencing prior to the end of this fiscal year, to ensure continuity of grants to those requiring Community Living supports. This fund would be utilized in the same manner as the existing Community Living Restructuring Fund and would be granted annually until a self-sustaining permanent endowment fund is established as set out below.
- (2.) Establish a permanent endowment fund with a commitment to invest \$5 million per year, commencing prior to the end of this fiscal year and continuing until the fund becomes self-sustaining. With the skilled investment expertise from the Victoria Foundation and with reduced future demand as we address the long outstanding needs of the community, this endowment should be self-sustaining in a timely manner.

By addressing these two requests government will ensure that many of the short and long term needs of individuals requiring Community Living supports will be permanently safeguarded.

Attached are copies of our September and December 2004 newsletters and our Year One in Review. Further information can also be found at our website: www.clrestructuringfund.ca

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal.

Committee members:

John Groom, Abbotsford - Co-Chair
Lorraine Ward, West Vancouver -Co-Chair

TESTIMONIALS FROM GRANT RECIPIENTS

COMMUNITY LIVING RESTRUCTURING FUND

- ❖ ""The renovations ... allows our child to **continue to live in her family home as long as she wishes**, even if she uses a wheelchair 100% of the time."
- ❖ "We encourage people to think about the possibilities for their family members and how **small changes can enhance and provide opportunities for our children** that the rest of us take for granted. **Hearing Liisa laughing and singing has made it all worth it.**
- ❖ "The grant has **allowed me to keep my daughter at home with us and made our life so much easier** . . . I can look after my daughter in my own home forever, for that **I will always be eternally grateful as life without my daughter is not a life I wish to experience.**"
- ❖ "The closure of Willow Clinic marks a **final step in the deinstitutionalization process** for adults with mental disabilities in our province. **This final step could not have been made without this project.**"
- ❖ "This project (renovation of three group homes and service delivery enhancements) was very successful for the individuals we support, their families, our staff group and our agency. PRACL **reduced costs while improving service quality.**"
- ❖ "This project (a home renovation adding space for a bedroom and bathroom) was a good example of the work that a community living agency can accomplish on behalf of a child and their family, in **meeting a community need without having a government funding contract to do so.**"
- ❖ "The purchase of **the van will allow me to keep my son at home and safely transport him** to and from school as well as allowing him to participate in activities in the community. "
- ❖ "It is very important to us to be able to look after our own children, in our house, as long as we can. **We want to continue to live in our community, sharing our children with family, friends and neighbours.**"
- ❖ "**The project provides hope to families that previously didn't exist. We can keep our children with us and save money for all with a little common sense and support from the Victoria Foundation.**"

Note: above testimonials and others can be found in their entirety at www.clrestructuringfund.ca