



# City Mayors' Caucus

November 25, 2022

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Saskatchewan City Mayors Calling for Full Review of Saskatchewan Housing and Income Support Programs**

Saskatchewan's city mayors continue to be concerned by the challenges faced by their most vulnerable residents and are calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to review both the Saskatchewan Income Support program and the Social Housing Program.

"These programs are supposed to help our residents in need. But we continue to see individuals struggle to either pay their rent or gain access to affordable social housing. This is unacceptable," Mayor Gerald Aalbers, Chair of SUMA's City Mayors' Caucus, said. "Homelessness creates significant public safety concerns for both those experiencing it and our communities as a whole."

Concerns were raised last year about the Saskatchewan Income Support program as rental payments were provided to program recipients instead of being paid directly to landlords. Following calls for change, the province reinstated direct payments for some clients, but inconsistency with the program continues to be a barrier for those in need.

"The cost-of-living is rising, and the Saskatchewan Income Support program is not meeting the essential needs of those who rely on it," said Mayor Aalbers, who also serves as SUMA's Vice-President of Cities. "Rent within the province has increased 10 to 15 per cent and both Crown utility corporations have raised their rates, while a single adult in Regina or Saskatoon only receives \$600 per month for shelter and utilities."

The mayors also continue to be concerned by the more than 3,000 affordable housing units that sit vacant throughout the province, some chronically so. Saskatchewan's Social Housing Program, administered by local housing authorities on behalf of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, is designed to provide safe and adequate housing to families and seniors with low incomes and people with disabilities.

"Affordable housing units should not be sitting vacant when we know there is a need for affordable and stable accommodations," Mayor Aalbers said. "The Social Housing Program, specifically housing criteria and maintenance, needs to be reviewed to ensure that these housing units are being utilized."

The City Mayors' Caucus discussed concerns with both programs during their caucus meeting on November 24 in Regina.

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For more information visit [www.suma.org](http://www.suma.org), or to arrange an interview please contact:

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