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Media Services/  
Media Relations

Legislative Building  
Regina, Canada  
S4S 0B3  
(306) 787-6281  
www.gov.sk.ca

# News Release

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Social Services 11-204

## **BUDGET CONTINUES FOCUS ON HOUSING, INCOME ASSISTANCE AND DISABILITY SERVICES**

Through its 2011-12 Budget, the government will continue to support Saskatchewan people in need with significant investments in affordable housing, income assistance and disability services.

"Supporting the needs of our growing population, especially our most vulnerable citizens, is a responsibility that our government takes very seriously," Social Services Minister and Minister responsible for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation June Draude said. "The investments we are announcing today build on our commitment to improve the quality of life and sense of community that are hallmarks of the new Saskatchewan."

### **Investing in Housing:**

To support those in housing need, the province will invest \$1.7 million in two new housing initiatives. Program details will be announced in the coming days.

The Saskatchewan Rental Incentive Program will assist municipalities in their efforts to increase the supply of affordable rental housing in the province. In 2011-12, \$1.5 million will be provided to develop up to 300 rental housing units.

To help municipalities stimulate homeownership opportunities, the province is providing \$200,000 for the new Saskatchewan Municipal Affordable Homeownership Program. This initiative will reimburse participating municipalities for the education portion of property tax that municipalities provide to homeowners as a grant.

Also in the coming days, government will announce details of the Headstart on a Home program, which is expected to stimulate the construction of at least 1,000 new entry-level homes in Saskatchewan over the next five years.

Additional revenue at the end of 2010-11 allowed the investment of \$33.9 million, which will go toward renovation of existing government-assisted housing and support for development of new housing.

### **Investing in Disability Supports and Income Assistance:**

The 2011-12 Budget includes \$2.3 million for the continued development of the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program, an income support program for people with significant and enduring disabilities which is separate and distinct from social assistance. SAID clients in residential care settings will see a \$50 per month benefit increase in January 2012. Government will be making future investments to increase benefits for all SAID clients as development of the program continues.

Government is committing an additional \$14 million to further support people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities. This funding will continue the progress on the multi-year initiative that provides specialized, residential and day program services for people with intellectual disabilities. By the end of 2011-12, residential and day program services will be in place or in development for 373 people, or 85 per cent, from the waitlist of 440 individuals. This new investment will also expand services for those beyond the original waitlist.

To support people who rely on income assistance, Social Services' 2011-12 budget includes an additional \$27 million for income assistance programs. This funding will address caseload and cost per case increases in the Saskatchewan Assistance Program, Transitional Employment Allowance, Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement and Child Care Subsidy.

"These investments, combined with the cross-government investment in the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda, will work toward the goal of ensuring that our province's most vulnerable people receive the supports they need," Draude said.

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For more information, contact:

Trish Alcorn Social Services Regina Phone: 306-787-0916 Email: trish.alcorn@gov.sk.ca Cell: 306-536-1479	
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