



Aboriginal Housing Management Association

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For Immediate Release

Report from PBO reiterates AHMA's 4-year call for an Urban Indigenous National Housing Strategy

Traditional Territories of the Squamish Nation/West Vancouver - The release of the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing report from the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) re-affirms the severe need for a National Urban Indigenous Housing Strategy. AHMA and the Indigenous housing sector across Canada have been calling to create an Urban Indigenous Strategy since the release of the Canadian National Housing Strategy in 2017. The Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Minister Ahmed Hussen was mandated to create an Indigenous Housing Strategy in 2019; two years after this mandate, AHMA is deeply alarmed to see that there is no progress to report.

The PBO report confirms well known detrimental statistics on Indigenous Housing from across the country. Inequities outlined in the report have been exacerbated further as the data is from the 2016 census and recent studies have shown that Indigenous housing conditions have steadily deteriorated since then. The global pandemic has only worsened the disparities and inequities of housing for Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Evidence from the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing report from the Parliamentary Budget Office that solidify the need for a national Urban Indigenous Housing Strategy:

- 18 % of Indigenous people are in core housing need as opposed to 12% for Non-Indigenous. (30% of all Inuit peoples are in core housing need).
- On average, there is an annual \$5,000 gap between what Indigenous households in housing need can afford to pay for shelter under the definition of housing need and what they would have to pay for suitable and adequate housing.
- Vancouver is the metropolitan area with the second-highest Indigenous households in housing need. (an estimated 8,000 households).
- Nationally, the affordability gap of all Indigenous households in housing need is an estimated \$636 million.
- 31% of shelter users identified as Indigenous. In comparison, around 5% of the total Canadian population identifies as Indigenous, highlighting the over-representation of Indigenous people within the homeless population.
- Of the \$30.6 billion CMHC plans to spend over the span of the National Housing Strategy, \$257 million (0.8%) is allocated to Indigenous housing programs.

Colonial frameworks and solutions will not serve our Indigenous communities appropriately. The PBO by report identified that the structural inequities in Canada are lead causes of homelessness



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struggles - sexism, racism, housing, and poverty. Adequately allocating funding is crucial to avoid fundamentally flawed solutions from an already under-resourced system.

AHMA formally requests that the Government of Canada allocate funding to a for Indigenous-by-Indigenous National Urban Housing Strategy to support Minister Hussen's mandate. In addition to a national strategy, we urge the government to prioritize urban Indigenous housing conditions and homelessness and to consider the following points.

- Introduce a second round of the CMHC Rapid Housing Initiative with a need-based carve-out for Urban Indigenous Projects.
- Increase funding for an Urban Indigenous capital expansion to:
 - i) acquire additional capital assets to increase housing units to combat rising homelessness and add to the affordable housing stock.
 - ii) Reduce and eliminate waitlists for housing support and increase larger families housing.
- Work with the Provinces to increase in funding for the Indigenous Housing Providers operating costs:
 - i) To cover additional maintenance expenses as the housing stock gets older.
 - ii) To close the wage gap between social housing support staff and the market wage.
 - iii) To increase internal capacities to serve Indigenous community needs better.
 - iv) To offset the significant increase in insurance premiums.
 - v) To allocate a budget to provide a financial literacy program for all tenants to reduce financial stress and gain independence through money management.

AHMA views further delays to implementing an Urban Indigenous National Housing Strategy and our calls to action a significant threat to all Indigenous communities. The postponement of an adequate strategy causes hundreds of thousands of Indigenous peoples to continue living in unacceptable and deplorable conditions. Canada must ensure that Indigenous peoples have accessibility and the power to exercise their rights to adequate housing. Only through meaningful engagement with AHMA and Indigenous housing and service partners across Canada can the social, economic, and Indigenous rights of urban, rural, and northern Indigenous peoples in Canada be claimed and protected.

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Media Contact

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AHMA is an umbrella organization composed of 41 Members that are each Indigenous Housing and Service providers. Our members represent over 8000 Indigenous families living in urban, rural and northern regions of British Columbia. Created for Indigenous by Indigenous, AHMA is the first Indigenous Housing Authority in Canada.