



ABORIGINAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

CEO Report | February 2010

AHMA is committed to communicating with stakeholders. This monthly e-bulletin from our CEO will update you on AHMA's latest activities.



Andrew Leach, MBA

WELCOMING A NEW MEMBER

I'm delighted to welcome our new member, the **Prince George Native Friendship Centre!**

We are excited about working with you and will provide any support we can to help you meet housing needs in your community. And we're looking forward to having our new member contribute fresh ideas on how AHMA can help make off-reserve Aboriginal housing the best it can be.

DEVOLUTION UPDATE

Latest accomplishments

AHMA is fulfilling our primary goal to become the provincial authority for off-reserve Aboriginal social housing, with the file transfer from BC Housing in full swing:

- Devolution is going so well that we anticipate the bulk of our remaining membership files will be transferred this spring. I'll be in touch with these members soon to discuss the process with you.
- Our work with ISO certification is helping us develop our own guidelines and standards for complying with the operating agreements (OA). This is a work in progress. But we will definitely process some significant issues differently than BC Housing.
- In the next six months, AHMA aims to complete all of our outstanding operational reviews. This work is a top priority, because the reviews familiarize us with member operations and identify where assistance is needed.

Membership concerns

BC Housing has been conducting operational reviews on the remaining files before devolving them to AHMA, and has notified some societies that funds need to be returned. Members have raised concerns in response that:

- BC Housing did not consult with societies, and expects the funds returned promptly or subsidies will be reduced
- AHMA should act as their advocate with BC Housing

Taking action to respond

BC Housing still has responsibility for conducting these operational reviews and requesting the return of funds, but we agree there must be a better approach. When AHMA takes over these files, we will be consultative and communicate one-on-one with members about any questions or issues associated with meeting the terms of the OA.

At the same time, devolution gives AHMA responsibility for enforcing operating agreements. Although we will engage with societies differently than BC Housing has, we still have to fulfill this part of the job, and achieve a balance between advocacy and enforcement. Here's how we're going to do it:

- In January, our Board decided that AHMA needs to create an internal, arms-length agency to advocate for our membership.
- Board members Rosie McGregor, Ray Jones and Rudy Small now sit on a new Advocacy Development Committee, which will design this role for AHMA.
- We organized a teleconference with our members' Executive Directors, and agreed to develop grievance and conflict resolution processes, so we have protocols in place if a society has a grievance with AHMA's support in future. We are researching the Friendship Centre model and will adapt this approach for AHMA.
- AHMA will negotiate with BC Housing to obtain extensions so members have more time to make the return payments, since BC Housing generally gives societies more time to return outstanding funds.

AHMA will create an internal, arms-length agency to advocate for our membership

STRATEGIC PLANNING NEWS

In January, our Board decided to develop a strategic planning process that will:

- Produce **annual benchmarks and expected outputs**,
- Guide the CEO's activities and performance evaluations

AHMA directors Mike Mearns, Margaret Pfoh and Sandy Wong sit on a new committee that will design this process.

UP NEXT: OPERATING AGREEMENTS TO EXPIRE

Housing providers across the country face the expiry of their operating agreements. Some of our members face this complex issue too. Although societies will own their developments when the OA ends, governments have not made provision for ongoing subsidies.

The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association has been lobbying government to renew operational funding commitments (AHMA is a member of CHRA). In addition, AHMA is trying to develop longer term solutions to support our members, by:

- Working with BC Housing to facilitate as smooth a transition as possible, a challenging task in these tough economic times.
- Organizing a planning/training session for members on this issue.

We'll keep you posted as more details are available.