



ABORIGINAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

CEO Report | November 2009



AHMA is committed to communicating with stakeholders. This monthly e-bulletin from our CEO will keep you updated on AHMA activities.

Andrew Leach, MBA

AHMA TAKES ON 565 NEW UNITS

This October, AHMA achieved a milestone. We took over responsibility for 565 more off-reserve Aboriginal social housing units, adding to the 189 units devolved in 2004:

- **Increase subsidies by 400%** – The value of the subsidy payments AHMA now transfers to Aboriginal housing societies has increased a whopping 400%.
- **Administer units across BC** – The transfer includes units managed by M'akola Group of Societies (Vancouver Island), Mamele'awt Qweesome Housing Society/To'ō Housing Society (Mission), Conayt Friendship Society (Merritt), and United Aboriginal Housing Society (Quesnel). These societies will provide feedback on this round of devolution so we can learn from their experiences.
- **Oversee a variety of operating agreements** – AHMA now oversees a range of complex operating agreements. We will work with our societies to streamline some of these agreements to make audits and reviews easier for everyone.
- **Create a model for government-Aboriginal partnerships** – Our partnership with BC Housing is a model for how to devolve Aboriginal services in Canada. We have done this by working collaboratively with BCH, while ensuring our unique needs as Aboriginal agencies are respected.
- **Finalize devolution** – AHMA will continue to work with BC Housing to devolve our members' remaining off-reserve Aboriginal units by fall 2010.

AHMA ADOPTS INTERNATIONAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

As many of you know, AHMA is working to attain certification from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)—which sets internationally accredited standards for quality management and decision making—by spring 2010. We're already seeing some of the benefits:

- **Learning from the process** – Our ISO advisors told us we would learn a lot about our business as we worked towards certification. This has proven to be true. Our frontline workers have reviewed every procedure involved in our property management responsibilities, and learned a great deal about the details of their jobs along the way.
 - **Identifying gaps** – The ISO certification process has also enabled us to identify and address gaps in our systems and procedures. We are currently adjusting internal procedures that need to be updated.
 - **Streamlining procedures** – In addition, we are beginning to identify ways to improve the systems handed over to us by BC Housing. AHMA's smaller size makes us a more nimble organization. For example, we aim to streamline the annual budget review process, while staying within operating agreement requirements.
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OPEN SPACE DIALOGUE IDENTIFIES MEMBER PRIORITIES

AHMA invited members and other interested stakeholders to an open space dialogue session, right before our Annual General Meeting on October 1, 2009. Two key ideas emerged from our discussions:

- **Enhance communications** – AHMA needs to keep people informed; that’s one of the reasons we developed this e-bulletin. We also want to issue an open call for greater dialogue with societies, members and non-members alike. We will attend any functions or Board meetings that you invite us to, and would like to see more two-way communication between our Board members and yours.
- **Support membership** – Member societies would like AHMA to provide additional membership support. We agree. For example, we are aware that some societies are concerned about the recent operational reviews being conducted by BC Housing and want AHMA to offer support. As a result, we are organizing a conference call to discuss this review process with our members.

Other informal suggestions at the open space session included support for:

- Capital project development
- Internal management and human resources
- Financial operations advice

AHMA has already offered some of this support to our members on an ad hoc basis. In the coming year, we will consult societies to clarify your support needs and develop some concrete programming to deliver support.

We are sending our first e-bulletin to everyone involved in Aboriginal social housing in BC. Please contact us if you do not wish to receive future e-bulletins, and we will remove you from our e-list.