



**Aboriginal Housing Management Association**  
*Over 25 years of Indigenous housing expertise.*

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## **Report Finds Indigenous-Led Housing Essential to Addressing Increased Risk of Homelessness for Indigenous Peoples with Diverse Abilities**

*Indigenous-led housing is essential to reducing the gaps, barriers, and challenges Indigenous Peoples with diverse abilities face. Current systems increase the risk of the most vulnerable falling through the cracks and into a cycle of homelessness.*

**Unceded traditional territories of the x̱m̱əθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations, Vancouver BC** (March 12, 2024) – The Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) is pleased to share that we have published, *Exploring Inclusive Housing for Indigenous Peoples Living with Diverse Abilities Across British Columbia: An Environmental Scan*, a report examining the accessibility of housing supports and services for Indigenous peoples with diverse abilities in BC.

Research was conducted by Dr. Krista Stelkia, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University, using a rigorous three-phase method that included examining literature gaps, a survey of AHMA members, and key informant interviews from Indigenous Peoples with a diverse ability who have lived experience in accessing supports or services funded by Community Living BC (CLBC) and/or their family members.

The report makes 26 recommendations and highlights the critical importance of promoting and funding Indigenous-led housing options as a path to creating more equitable, culturally supportive housing options for Indigenous Peoples with diverse abilities.

Evidence based findings reveal numerous barriers Indigenous people with diverse abilities face in accessing housing, especially for those who also have complex and concurrent mental health and substance use care needs. These are the most vulnerable populations, and a lack of housing support in a complex web of systems and services increases the risk of falling into a cycle of homelessness.

“Vulnerable CLBC folks get lost in the system ... it’s just too much to navigate. This system, it’s got a lack of humanity attached to it... if only they could come down and see who’s living in the encampments and who’s on the streets, they would see that a lot of their pathways started out innocently wanting services and then eventually you’ve got folks who are unable to navigate even seeking out housing and basic needs” (Anonymous Informant).

Fostering collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous housing providers is of paramount importance. This collaboration must prioritize the establishment of culturally safe and inclusive care to ensure that Indigenous individuals can access housing and support services while retaining agency over their housing decisions. This demands the collective efforts of multiple provincial system-level partners, including child welfare, education, health, and housing.

“Progress that prioritizes those most vulnerable to homelessness is central to AHMA’s advocacy efforts. We have researched and offered various For Indigenous, By Indigenous solutions for those experiencing homelessness that are trauma-informed, low barrier, culturally safe, and based on lived experiences. Housing is a determinant of health, both at an individual level and within our society. Collaboration at all levels, to bring health services together with Indigenous-led housing providers is critically important to support those with concurrent vulnerabilities, including Indigenous Peoples with diverse abilities”  
Margaret Pfoh, CEO AHMA.

“We look forward to working in partnership with AHMA and other Indigenous organizations and communities to bring this report to life” Ross Chilton, CEO Community Living BC.

The insights and recommendations in this report aim to inspire meaningful change, both at the policy level and within the organizations that provide vital support to Indigenous Peoples with diverse abilities.

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#### **Background:**

- [Exploring Inclusive Housing for Indigenous Peoples Living with Diverse Abilities Across British Columbia: An Environmental Scan](#)
- **Diverse ability** is recognized as an individual who has been diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental disability which may include Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).
- **AHMA** is a For Indigenous, By Indigenous organization made up of 55 members that represent over 95% of Indigenous housing and service providers in BC. AHMA members support almost 10,000 Indigenous families living in urban, rural, and northern regions of BC. AHMA has almost 30 years of experience and expertise as the first Indigenous housing authority in Canada.
- **Community Living BC (CLBC)** is the provincial crown corporation that funds supports and services to adults with developmental disabilities, as well as individuals who have a diagnosis of ASD or FASD, and also need support with daily tasks.

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