



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

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Release the funds as fast as possible - we can spend it quickly and where it is needed most

Unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, Vancouver, BC (April 16, 2024) - In the wake of the Government of Canada's 2024 budget release, AHMA and their provincial and federal partners are asking to speed up the delivery of funding promised for those most in need. Federal budget 2024 boasts increased spending on housing but Indigenous housing experts want expedited action on implementation.

"Safe places to rest their heads," says Margaret Pfoh, CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA). "That's what we call it, because what really counts is not what the federal government promises in funding but how quickly those commitments are rolled out to the non-market housing sector to become homes for people to feel safe, raise families, and thrive."

"The funding promises mean nothing if they are not quickly dispersed to the organizations dedicated to putting it to good use immediately for the benefit of Indigenous and marginalized people suffering ongoing oppression and poverty," adds Pfoh. "We are still waiting for funds that were promised in previous years that have been held up in administrative processes. In the meantime, the situation for Indigenous housing providers, who can barely keep their existing operations afloat on meagre and stagnant budgets, is worsening daily."

AHMA celebrates the new National Rental Protection Fund, the Co-operative Housing Development Program and the Tenant Protection Fund, along with other commitments to infrastructure and taxes on those with extreme wealth. "We hope to see these implemented with urgency," says Pfoh.

In BC alone, some communities are experiencing up to a 106% increase in homelessness, with Indigenous people being overrepresented (as high as 88%) in many regions. The Federal Housing Plan reiterates the 2023 commitment of \$4.3 billion towards Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing, stating that money will be released in 2024. "This timeline is critical and will save lives," says Pfoh.

"It needs to come to the non-profit Indigenous housing sector as fast as possible – we can spend it quickly and where it is needed most. Urgent implementation is key. While these announcements are welcome, they do not proportionately respond to the extent of the housing crisis and we need to turn these commitments into action that addresses the clear and immediate need in every community."

Considering this, AHMA is calling on the Government of Canada to make a clear commitment to support NICHl and its goals to advance housing for URN Indigenous populations and to quickly release the necessary funding.

"NICHl is primed and ready to make progress with this crucial work. An equity-based approach to housing centers Indigenous rights and Indigenous leadership," says Pfoh. "I am confident that NICHl will bring the holistic, culturally supportive, trauma-informed lens to URN Indigenous housing that has long been needed in Canada."

Federal Budget 2024 falls short on the following:

- The Plan lacked initiatives targeting housing for people in the greatest need. The initiatives are not adequately addressing complex and chronic homelessness.



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- \$250 million to address encampments and unsheltered homelessness is a small contribution given the situation. People who used to be capable of surviving the rental market can no longer afford to keep a roof over their heads.
 - Housing is healthcare – if housing is not at the core of investments in health, where will people rest and recover once their health needs are addressed? Housing impacts women’s safety, mental health, and family stability - it is the foundation of well-being.
 - No action or funding was stated for shelters or transitional housing. The Plan mentioned past initiatives but failed to commit to any current or future action.
- The government is allocating an additional \$1 billion to the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF). The AHF provides low-interest or forgivable loans and contributions for new and repaired affordable and community housing.
 - The big question is: affordable for WHOM? This plan misses the mark for those most vulnerable to housing precarity. Deep affordability needs to be defined.
 - In BC, we are taking an innovative approach with complex care, that connects housing and health services to integrate the supports required and prioritize Indigenous people, who are vastly overrepresented in experiences of housing insecurity.
 - Many of the affordable housing funds are structured around loans. The sector needs grants as well; loans will be paid back with interest and do not adequately support affordable housing or their ongoing operational needs.

In November 2023, CHRA, Housing Partnership Canada, and sector partners released an economic study, [The Impact of Community Housing on Productivity](#). This study, authored by Deloitte, finds a causal connection between the proportion of community housing within the overall housing stock and gains in economic productivity. It’s estimated that approximately 2.6 million Canadians are currently in core housing need. Increasing the share of community housing units from its current level to the OECD average of 7% by 2030 will improve our productivity and boost GDP by \$110 billion in 2030.

In addition, AHMA’s Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy for BC lays out clear plans for how funding can be quickly and efficiently put to direct use creating more home spaces for those who are hardest hit by the housing affordability crisis. Safe, affordable, culturally supported housing is a key component to ending cycles of poverty and improving health outcomes for Indigenous families.

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Media contact: Kelly Moon
604-353-0427
communications@ahma-bc.org

AHMA is a For indigenous, By Indigenous (FIBI) organization made up of 55 members that represent over 95% of Indigenous Housing and Service providers in BC. AHMA members support over 10,000 Indigenous families living in urban, rural, and northern regions of BC. AHMA has over 25 years of experience and expertise as the first Indigenous Housing Authority in Canada. Our strategy is broadly endorsed, seen as a national baseline, and celebrated as an international example of excellence in Indigenous research and approach.