



# Indigenous Inclusion & Autonomy





Photo: courtesy of Vancouver Native Housing Society

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### OUR MISSION

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Lead and advance the housing rights for all Indigenous People living in British Columbia

### OUR VISION

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A globally recognized leader in Indigenous housing solutions across the housing spectrum

### OUR VALUES

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- **Responsive** – Valuing a responsive working culture, which is relationship-centered and collaborative in its approach
- **Capacity building** – Empowering our stakeholders with self-sufficiency and visionary practices
- **Holistic** – Honoring diversity, partnership and growth
- **Innovative** – Striving for innovation through flexibility, entrepreneurship, and creativity (while honoring our experience)
- **Respect** – Respecting our stakeholders through trust, reliability and accountability
- **Advocacy** – Advancing the quality of housing for the collective interests of our communities



“Having subsidized housing as a low income, single mom was amazing, because it gave me the ability to pay my bills, put food on the table, and put a roof over my children’s heads, while also being able to work and spend time with my family. It also **allowed me to go to school and not worry about how to pay the rent.** Now I work for the organization, so housing was definitely a huge stepping stone for me.”

**Rebekah**, former tenant and current Administrative Assistant, Okanagan Metis & Aboriginal Housing Society

“My two years in supportive housing were up in April, and I was starting to panic about where I could afford to live. Staff helped me apply to MQHS and for the first time in a long time, I was hopeful. I have rheumatoid arthritis and need an elevator and accessible door handles to feel safe. Since moving in, I am so grateful. Every day I turn the key in my suite and can’t believe this is mine. I can afford the rent without scrimping and still pay for groceries. Everyone says good morning and it feels like a community. I love MQHS’ philosophy of helping people. **It’s been a 360: I’m content and don’t worry anymore.**”

**Sandra** (Name changed), tenant, Mamele’awt Qweesome Housing Society

“As a single mom of two young children, I had to relocate and deal with the stress of knowing if I failed to find us a new home we could afford as soon as possible, we would be homeless. It was a great relief when you accepted us into your ‘lifesaving’ organization. That was the first night I could sleep stress free. We, I, appreciate being in a safe, clean, affordable home. This house is where we celebrated my son’s first birthday... and began building memories. **Here, our neighbours and friends have witnessed us grow stronger and successful.**”

**Amber**, tenant, AHMA single family home, Enderby

“Getting this apartment was a miracle for me. I have a disability and was living at home with my brother, who’s dealing with mental illness and addiction and is abusive to me and my parents. I really needed to get away and the only long-term solution for someone with a disability is public housing. **It’s given me a sense of personhood, identity and dignity.** Before I was at the whims of others; now I have autonomy.”

**Andrew**, tenant, Mamele’awt Qweesome Housing Society

“I discovered a passion for improvised a capella in 2009 and worked as a travelling musician until 2017, when I was diagnosed with a tumour on my spine. It took out my T4 vertebra, took me off the road, into hospital, and then into physical rehabilitation. When it came time to find a place of my own, I applied to DQCHS. I was gratefully the sixth person to move into Kikihnaw when it opened in January. **This is the best place I’ve ever lived; everything is pristine and beautiful.** I feel safe here and know I have a solid place to create the music of my future.”

**Doug**, Kikihnaw tenant, Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society

“Moving into Kikihnaw has changed my life. I was living in Prince George, and my son died and my marriage ended. I decided to apply for an apartment, as the process can take time, and then was accepted right away. So I took a leap of faith and jumped. I’m originally from Quesnel and my family lives here. I’m helping my elderly parents here, as my mom was just diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. I feel my health improving, I feel more relaxed and safer. I am so grateful to be here. **This place is my sanctuary.**”

**Leanne**, Kikihnaw tenant, Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society

“My niece Nina desperately needed a home, and the empty one next door looked perfectly good. Nina was living in a hovel because there was nothing available in the area for a woman with eight children and two dogs. She got a mortgage on her own, which has been extremely empowering for her, and the kids are thrilled—Mason, Jared, Ashley, Madison, Melody, Levi and Austin—the oldest has graduated and moved out. When I showed my eight-year-old grandniece around the property, she kept saying, ‘Oh my God, this is going to **change my life.**’”

**Nicole**, aunt of new homeowner Nina, in the Kootenays (we helped Nina purchase an empty Rural Native Housing home previously owned by AHMA)

“I have four grandchildren living with me, and we were in a two-bedroom house full of mold and mildew. Two of the kids have asthma and the youngest was sick all the time. My bedroom was the living room, but I couldn’t afford to move. Then my aunt told me about MQHS, and we got a four-bedroom apartment in this gorgeous new building, the Waterstone. **Now we have enough space, the kids love having their own rooms, and we have a playground.** I am so grateful and blessed to have this place.”

**Darlene**, tenant, Mamele’awt Qweesome Housing Society

Indigenous Housing Improves Lives **Tenant Voices**

Tenant Voices

## Message from Our President & Chief Executive Officer



**Gary Wilson**  
President,  
Board of Directors



**Margaret Pfoh**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

This year, we reached a new agreement with BC Housing that provides additional funding for AHMA and our members.

We are also working toward a separate agreement with the provincial government to enshrine Indigenous involvement in every initiative that affects us, because housing is inextricably linked to the social determinants of health and forms the foundation for all areas of life—education, employment, childcare and elder care.

Through strong advocacy and leadership, AHMA empowers our members to deliver wraparound social services, from housing to counselling, medical support, education and more. We support Indigenous housing across the continuum, from temporary modular housing to address homelessness, where our people are overrepresented, to transition housing for women and children seeking shelter from violence, to independent living for youth aging out of care, to affordable housing for families and Elders. We are developing inclusive policies to integrate our support for these complementary social services.

At our September 2018 Annual General Meeting (AGM), AHMA transitioned to a fully independent Board of Directors, the culmination of two years of collaborative efforts by staff and members. Our **Ná̓ca?mat Lelə́m** Good Governance Committee will ensure member concerns remain at the core of our work.

## Transitioning to an Independent Board

“Our new Board of Directors is working well together thanks to the support of the previous directors, members of the **Ná̓ca?mat Lelə́m** Committee, and AHMA staff through the transition,” says Gary Wilson, President of the AHMA Board. “Everyone’s commitment to the process has been outstanding. I especially appreciate former President Rosie McGregor; she has been so supportive.

“We had a strong onboarding process to bring us up to speed on current affairs at AHMA. Staff really stepped up to get us the information we need to understand stakeholders and the regional environment from national and international perspectives, given our involvement was not as intimate as previous directors.”

“Our independent directors broaden AHMA’s perspective on world and business affairs, and support transparency and accountability with funders and stakeholders,” adds Margaret Pfoh, AHMA’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO). “The new Board is comprised of leaders in transformative decision making, who are helping AHMA take the next steps members asked of us.”

“I give a lot of credit to our directors and staff; everyone is prepared and committed to supporting AHMA,” says Gary. “We reach decisions by consensus on the Board, and have confidence in our CEO and her team, which allows us to focus on our job—supporting staff with the necessary resources to achieve AHMA’s strategic priorities.”

## Integrating Member Priorities

“The **Ná̓ca?mat Lelə́m** Committee’s role is to ensure AHMA’s priorities are based in our communities, by bringing members’ voices and priorities forward, and sharing Indigenous housing expertise with the Board,” says Margaret.

“We work collaboratively with the committee to understand members’ needs,” adds Gary. “Members have made it clear: whenever we represent them in government, industry and the community, we need to find out what they want us to convey to leaders and stakeholders. And we need to close the loop with communication back to members on our activities and progress on strategic priorities.”

## Attaining Autonomy and ReconciliACTION

“When I speak, I’m speaking for the cause and purpose of AHMA, the societies and people we serve, not myself,” says Margaret. “So this year, when Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation announced a new national centre for transformative housing resources and consulted the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA), BC Co-operative Housing Federation, and BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), but not AHMA, I pushed back. As the **only** Indigenous housing authority in the country, AHMA should have been included.

“Even the best of people say they honour Truth and Reconciliation and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but UNDRIP is just a piece of paper if Indigenous inclusion is not embedded in all we do. Anything about Indigenous people **must** include Indigenous involvement from the beginning.

“The old systems have to fall—colonial, sexist and racist.



(L-R) Kevin Albers, CEO, M'akola Group of Societies, AHMA CEO Margaret Pfoh, Artist/Educator Eddy Robinson, ReconciliACTION panel

Reconciliation must be demonstrated, we must be included on every level for meaningful reconciliation, for reconciliation to become reconciliACTION.

“We know our regions, geography, politics. Indigenous leaders are experts with the capacity to drive Indigenous housing; it’s why AHMA was founded. I am standing up for what our people have asked for—**For Indigenous, By Indigenous**—true inclusion and respect. Which means we need a separate agreement with the provincial government to ensure AHMA is at every table to honour a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.”

“To really achieve autonomy and be equal to BC Housing, we must have the ear of government,” says Gary. “One of the key priorities in our new strategic plan is a direct protocol agreement between AHMA and the Province. AHMA has a proven track record; government leaders can be confident of AHMA’s ability to operate as an autonomous organization.”



## ISHMA Signing Ceremony

On February 5, 2019, we hosted a special evening to celebrate our new Indigenous Social Housing Management Agreement (ISHMA), signed by Gary Wilson and **Shayne Ramsay**, Chief Executive Officer of BC Housing. ISHMA represents a joint commitment by AHMA and BC Housing to continue our collaboration to improve housing for Indigenous peoples in BC.

**Elder Syexwáliya** (Ann Whonnock) of the Skwxwu7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and founding AHMA member **David Seymour** were witnesses to the event. Indigenous culture has an oral history and, as witnesses, they can share this history with the wider AHMA community not able to attend the signing.

AHMA advocated for additional funding with the renewal of ISHMA. We learned through this process that ISHMA does not speak to Truth and Reconciliation or AHMA's autonomy; rather, ISHMA focuses on our operational ability to deliver subsidies to members.

Consequently, we decided to obtain the best terms possible, comparable to agreements for non-Indigenous providers, and are working toward a separate provincial agreement.

New ISHMA funding has strengthened our capacity at all levels:

- Funding for key new positions in operations, communications, finance, asset strategies and administration
- Boosting members' operational budgets to support growing needs
- Broadening membership
- Strengthening technology capacity
- Increasing transparency and accountability in managing public funding
- Maximizing benefits for AHMA members with surplus funds

With this additional capacity, we can be more proactive and responsive to our members' needs.

## Spring Gathering

We hosted a Spring Gathering for members in Vancouver, in April 2019. Elder Syexwáliya and her nephew, **Aaron Williams**, guided us in an Honouring & Witnessing Ceremony to open the event, honour the past, and empower the future.

AHMA members met privately during the Spring Gathering and presented AHMA with four key underfunded areas to integrate in the new strategic plan:

- 1) Youth aging out of care
- 2) Elders support
- 3) Indigenous parolees released into our communities
- 4) ISHMA funding

"The Board and staff identified some common concerns in a separate session, so we feel aligned with our members," says Gary. "We want to explore ways to engage youth in housing; for example, involving them in housing construction with Habitat for Humanity. We need to find champions and resources in the community, government and industry."

## Aspiring to Greatness

"AHMA has gone through a great deal of change in the past two years—in governance, leadership, membership and staffing," says Margaret. "Despite these disruptions, we have managed to operate with a high level of consensus. Members ratified our new strategic plan in 2018. We will deliver on these priorities in the coming years. We will work in partnership with our members to merge their four directions into the plan and focus on target populations falling through the cracks."

AHMA also aspires to become a leader in energy and sustainability to:

- Optimize building performance in the Indigenous housing sector
- Research best practices, incentive opportunities, and cutting edge solutions

A crucial priority in the coming year is to develop a provincial agreement, so any new initiatives include AHMA as key to their success. Another highlight will be exploring a social enterprise to generate own source revenues, reduce reliance on government funding, and ensure autonomy. And we intend to gather and own our Indigenous housing data to influence funding streams.

We want to walk beside members in being a voice for our communities and a voice of change: For our people, by our people.

### Chet kw'enmantumiyap

(In Squamish, "We are thankful to you all")



**Margaret Pfoh**  
Chief Executive  
Officer



**Gary Wilson**  
President,  
Board of Directors

"Article 1 – Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law.

"Article 5 – Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State."

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (Adopted by Canada in May 2016)

"[Housing and Health] guidelines emphasize the importance of collaboration between the health and other sectors and joint efforts across all government levels to promote healthy housing... Improved housing conditions can save lives, prevent disease, increase quality of life, reduce poverty, and help mitigate climate change. Housing is becoming increasingly important to health in light of urban growth, ageing populations and climate change."

**World Health Organization**, Housing and Health Guidelines (November 2018)



“We are confident we can work with our partners to fulfill this mandate so AHMA will, in the next five years, finally stand equal and welcome a direct relationship with government.”

AHMA CEO Margaret Pfoh

# AHMA Members Ratify New Strategic Plan

Our members helped us develop the new AHMA Strategic Plan, which lays out an exciting future for AHMA. Ratified by the membership at our 2018 Annual General Meeting, the plan contains our new mission, vision, values and strategic priorities in five key areas, which will guide our activities for the next five years.

## Strategic Priorities

1

### GOVERNANCE

- Continue to strive for the ideal governance model
- Promote autonomy and sustainability in all aspects of business
- Ensure continuous linkage and feedback gathering from AHMA's membership

2

### PARTNERSHIP/ STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Continue to build social capital by engaging with members and political capital by expanding organizational participation
- Increase AHMA's visibility and reach
- Establish AHMA as the autonomous Indigenous Housing Authority of BC by 2023, with appropriate funding and resources

3

### ADVOCACY

- Assist AHMA's membership to advocate for their specific needs
- Empower our membership to act as effective voices for housing within their communities
- Continue to be responsive to the general public and political leaders at the municipal, provincial and federal levels

4

### ASSET STRATEGIES

- Develop/implement a people strategy to ensure internal capacity for quality support services
- Develop/implement a service strategy that addresses all best practice gaps for our membership
- Establish financial strategies that support long-term capacity and multiple-source funding for services
- Maintain a project strategy that utilizes industry best practices and quality performance

5

### OPERATIONS

- Build internal capacity to better serve the membership
- Implement changes required to improve service quality for our membership
- Promote cultural awareness in all aspects of business
- Promote innovation and creativeness to deliver a better service to our membership

## Integrating Members' Four Directions

- Youth aging out of care
- Indigenous parolees released from incarceration
- Elders support
- ISHMA funding

AHMA staff also developed a **Communications Strategy** to support the roll out of the new strategic plan.



# Indigenous Housing Highlights

We would like to share AHMA's highlights in partnering with our Indigenous housing providers, funders, and other housing agencies during the past year.

## New Funding for Indigenous Housing

On November 23, 2018, AHMA CEO Margaret Pfoh and Housing Minister Selina Robinson announced the first round of funding through the Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund (IHF). A total of \$231 million is going to Indigenous housing providers to build 30 projects in 26 communities: 1,143 new homes for individuals, families and Elders, in urban, rural and northern regions, on and off reserve:

- \$76 million for 367 units of on-reserve housing
- \$155 million for 776 units of off-reserve housing

"AHMA strongly supports Housing Minister Selina Robinson in recognizing the need for new Indigenous housing, no matter where people live," says Margaret. "We are happy to support First Nations on reserve, as this new housing will enable more people in your communities to succeed, just as we support Indigenous housing providers off reserve."



Honoured guests, including Indigenous leaders and Elders, at the IHF announcement on Katzie Nation territory

### North

9 projects / 288 homes

#### Off reserve

- Aboriginal Housing Society – 50 homes, Prince George
- Lax Kw'alaams WAAP Housing Society – 60 homes, Prince Rupert
- Dakelh and Quesnel Community Housing Society – 27 homes
- M'akola Housing Society – 48 homes, Terrace

#### On reserve

- M'akola Housing Society – 23 homes, Kitamaat Village
- Lax Kw'alaams WAAP Housing Society – 20 homes
- Lhtako Dene Nation – 10 homes, Quesnel
- Skidegate Band Council – 24 homes
- Witsset First Nation – 26 homes



BC Premier John Horgan, first Indigenous Housing Fund announcement, Prince George, made in partnership with AHMA; Sarah Silva, AHMA Manager of Housing Operations (on his right)

### Vancouver Island

4 projects / 194 homes

#### Off reserve

- Vancouver Aboriginal Land Trust – 124 homes, Colwood
- M'akola Housing Society – 40 homes, Langford
- Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'Xw Nations – 24 homes, Port Hardy

#### On reserve

- Kwakiutl First Nation – six homes, Fort Rupert

### Interior

7 projects / 148 homes

#### Off reserve

- Aqanttanam Housing Society – 39 homes, Cranbrook
- Kanaka Bar Indian Band – 20 homes

#### On reserve

- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society – 42 homes, Kelowna
- Upper Nicola Indian Band – 24 homes, Merritt
- Westbank First Nation – 17 homes, two projects
- Akisqnuq First Nation – six homes, Windermere

**BUILDING BC:  
INDIGENOUS  
HOUSING FUND  
\$231 million**

### Vancouver Coastal

5 projects / 269 homes

#### Off reserve

- Vancouver Aboriginal Land Trust – 113 homes
- Aboriginal Mother Centre – 42 homes, Vancouver

#### On reserve

- Heiltsuk Tribal Council – six homes, Bella Bella
- Shishalah First Nation – 34 homes, Sechelt
- Musqueam Indian Band – 74 homes, Vancouver

### Fraser:

5 projects / 244 homes

#### Off reserve

- Mamele'awt Qweesome Housing Society – 45 homes, Hope
- Kekinow Native Housing Society – 108 homes, Surrey
- Tsawwassen First Nation – 36 homes

#### On reserve

- Kwikwetlem First Nation – 16 homes, Coquitlam
- Katzie First Nation Housing Society – 39 homes, Pitt Meadows



## CASE STUDY: New Beginnings

Lu'ma Native Housing Society manages this new 98-unit modular housing project in Vancouver. The building has 24/7 support services to give Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness a place to call home; 12 units are wheelchair accessible. Services include meal programs, life and employment skills training, health and wellness support, and opportunities for volunteer work.

Lu'ma also operates Dave Pranteau Aboriginal Children's Village, with units for Indigenous foster children and their families, Indigenous youth transitioning out of foster care, and families, with space for the Lu'ma Medical Centre and Youth Mentorship Program. Lu'ma's Aboriginal Patients' Lodge provides a culturally safe place for Indigenous patients travelling to Vancouver. And Lu'ma helps Indigenous organizations get federal funding for projects that help urban Indigenous people end homelessness.

*Opening Lu'ma New Beginnings (L-R) Marjorie White, Lu'Ma Vice President, AHMA Director of Asset Strategies David Silva, Mary Uljevic, Lu'Ma Executive Director, AHMA Project Coordinator Connie Mah, Fay Poirier, Lu'Ma Treasurer*



## ISHMA Signing Ceremony

We renewed our Indigenous Social Housing Management Agreement with BC Housing in February 2019.



*(L-R) Witness David Seymour, Elder Syexwáliya (Ann Whonnock), AHMA CEO Margaret Pfoh*



*(L-R) BC Housing CEO Shayne Ramsey, AHMA President Gary Wilson*



*(L-R): AHMA Manager of Housing Operations Sarah Silva, AHMA Chief Financial Officer Lloyd Taghavi, BC Housing CEO Shayne Ramsey, AHMA President Gary Wilson, former BC Housing Vice President of Operations Craig Crawford, AHMA Director of Asset Strategies David Silva, AHMA Director of Public Affairs Nizar Laarif, and AHMA CEO Margaret Pfoh (front)*



## AHMA Gathering

Elder Syexwáliya (Ann Whonnock) of the Skwxwu7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish Nation) welcomed AHMA members, directors and staff to our Spring Gathering in April 2019, and set the tone for a judgement free, respectful atmosphere.

We honoured our past leaders, whose contributions laid the foundation for AHMA's success, draping them in woven blankets:

- **Founding AHMA members** – June Laiter, David Seymour
- **Past leadership** – Andrew Leach, Jim O'Dea (past BC Housing Chair)
- **Previous directors** – Rosanna McGregor, Val Chiba, Luanne Ruotsalainen (plus Tom Gill and Sherry Boudrea, not present)
- **Previous Good Governance Committee members** – Cindy Williams, Marcel Swain, Jody Puff
- **BC Housing** – Shayne Ramsay

Elder Syexwáliya and David Seymour shared witnessing the ISHMA signing with guests and spoke of the need to continue AHMA's important work.

Everyone participated in two days of learning, sharing and networking. Members took advantage of the opportunity to meet on their own, and then shared their issues and priorities with AHMA staff and directors.

Erin Herron from BC Housing spoke with members about the new Indigenous Social Housing Management Agreement, and Dr. Sylvia Olsen presented on the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council's mandate to assume responsibility for federal First Nations housing in BC.

Kudos to our Indigenous Cultural Advisor Sandra Eatmon for coordinating this successful event and the ISHMA signing ceremony!



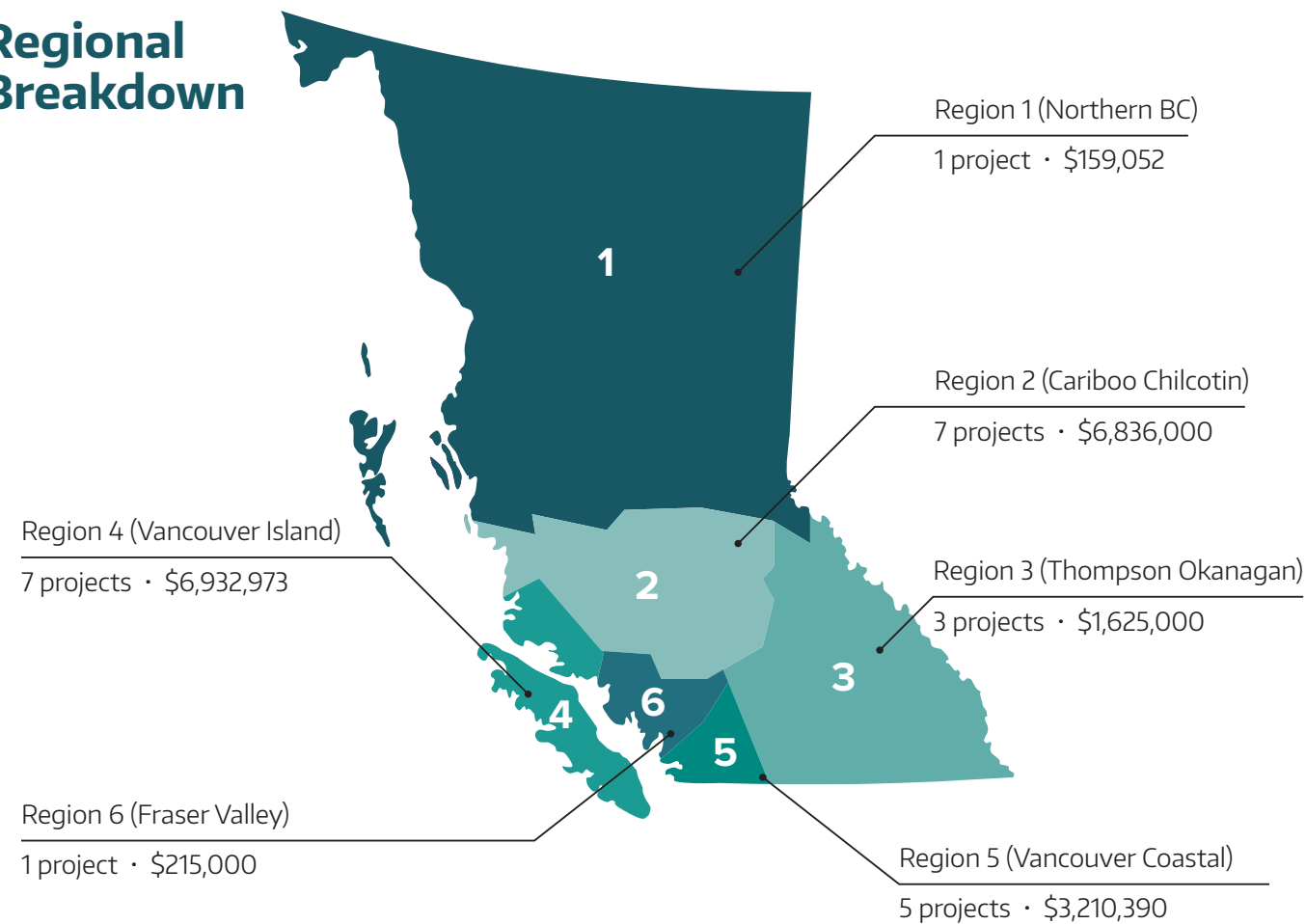
# Sustaining Member Housing

## 2018/19 Capital Renewal Projects

We were successful in obtaining capital funding to renew existing housing:

\$19 million	24 projects	455 units
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### Regional Breakdown



“We hope the communities we serve see that Indigenous housing providers contribute to local economies and have a significant impact on the social determinants of health.”

AHMA President **Gary Wilson**





**CASE STUDY:**  
**Kikékyelc** – A Place of Belonging

Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services is developing this 31-unit project in Kamloops, which will be home to youth who have aged out of care and five Indigenous Elders, when it opens in 2020. Elders will play a mentorship role with the youth to support their transition to independence in a culturally safe environment.

**CASE STUDY:**  
**Braidwood Apartments**

M'akola Housing Society is developing this 35-unit affordable housing complex in Courtenay—in partnership with the municipality and Wachiay Friendship Centre—for low-income singles and those at risk of homelessness, with a focus on Indigenous peoples. Wachiay will deliver support services.

M'akola Development Services (MDS) is also building Station Avenue, an affordable housing project in downtown Langford to support urban Indigenous families, Elders/seniors and singles. The development will contain 60 rental units in studio, one, two, and three-bedroom layouts, plus commercial space for MDS offices and space owned by Hulitan Family and Community Services Society, which provides social and emotional support for Indigenous children, youth and families.

And M'akola has renovated a former Travelodge motel to provide 39 affordable studio units for Elders, seniors and people with disabilities in Campbell River. This is M'akola's first project in the region geared toward singles with lower incomes, an underserved population.

# Home Improvement

*Pinchbeck*



*Before*



*During*



*After*

*Hillcrest kitchen*



*Before*



*After*

*Ritchie exterior*



*Before*



*After*

*Milestone Manor*



*During*



*After*



*After*

Our capital renovation projects transformed older housing with modern upgrades



**CASE STUDY:**  
**Sohkeyah: Robin's Nest**

Kekinow Native Housing Society's redevelopment project will create 176 new affordable rental homes in Surrey. The project will replace existing three-bedroom units with studio, one and two-bedroom units to serve Indigenous youth aging out of care, small families and Elders.



(L-R) Surrey-Fleetwood MLA Jagrup Brar, Surrey Mayor Linda Hepner, Kekinow CEO Shelly Hill, Kekinow President Dr. June Laitar, Kekinow VP Patricia Reid, Surrey-Newton MP Sukh Dhaliwal

**Our Latest Asset Strategies**

**New staffing** – We recruited three members to our team with support from the new ISHMA: **Dave Garcia** as Project Manager, **Trevor Casey** as Portfolio Planning & Development Specialist, and **Deanna Daniel** as Asset Data Analyst (promoted as an internal career development move).

**Asset Strategies Toolbox newsletter** – We share information on regular asset strategy updates, technical advice, and capital renewal/new development funding opportunities with members.

**Portfolio Planning Software** – We're in the final development stage for this software AHMA created, now testing in a controlled environment. Trevor will work with housing providers to implement the software, so members can analyze their portfolios and identify best use options, which will be helpful as operating agreements expire and housing needs change in our communities.

The program analyzes the value of each unit using 25 strategic, economic, financial and social indicators against five potential outcomes, and produces a report on the best use for each one. Potential outcomes include:

- Keeping units for social housing
- Converting to homeownership
- Renting at market or below market rates
- Redeveloping to increase density
- Selling to reinvest the funds elsewhere

**AssetPlanner software** – AHMA now owns and uses building condition data without involving BC Housing. We received new ISHMA funding to partner with Ameresco Canada on AssetPlanner software, which enables autonomous planning that best suits our providers' needs.

We have already taken some steps to enhance data management capabilities for our members with:

- Dedicated internal resource for AssetPlanner services (Deanna Daniel)
- Management training development for portfolio reporting and strategic planning
- Technical training development for maintenance managers and others maintaining building condition data

**Integrating Culture and Indigenuity at AHMA**

"As an Indigenous organization, what sets AHMA apart from BC Housing is bringing a cultural component to our relationship with members," says **Sandra Eatmon**, Indigenous Cultural Advisor at AHMA. "We recognized the importance of having an Elder at the Spring Gathering, which led to our protocol of involving local Elders whenever we hold meetings.

"When we visit members, it's important we respect their cultural protocols. I connect with Elders and others in the community to ensure we acknowledge their territory and have an Elder open the event. Elders speak strong words to us about the good work we are doing in the community and how we should conduct ourselves with wisdom and honour.

"Within AHMA, we have a wide range of Indigenous people who've lived on and off reserve. Some were adopted, some lived in foster care, both became disconnected from their culture. We also have non-Indigenous people, who are thrilled to see these ceremonies and learn about the importance of AHMA and our history. We are building our own cultural awareness internally to make this approach a natural way of thinking.

"To serve our communities, we have to understand the past of residential schools, the 60s scoop, colonization. There is a history to the state of housing for Indigenous people. Reclaiming our cultural traditions, whether we grew up in the culture or not, is part of reconciliation.

"AHMA is on a journey of integrating our cultural perspectives. We want to do so in an honouring, meaningful way."

"Honouring Elders is a very important part of Indigenous culture. Our Elders play a crucial role in preserving and sharing Indigenous knowledge and traditions." AHMA CEO **Margaret Pfoh**



Housing Minister Selena Robinson being blanketed, Indigenous Housing Fund announcement, Katzie First Nation

"Having reliable inventory data is crucial to portfolio planning and ensuring long-term housing sustainability. We can use this data to advocate for more capital renewal funding or plan portfolio changes to meet community needs. Our team is focused on empowering Indigenous housing providers so, together, we can strategically assess and best optimize portfolios."

Director of Asset Strategies **David Silva**

Welcome to  
**AHMA!**

In the next two years, 52 new housing developments with 2,497 units (and possibly more) will transfer to AHMA under various funding streams. And more members will be joining AHMA as projects awarded to new Indigenous housing providers under the IHF proposal call come onboard.





## Engaging with Community Partners

One of our strategic directions is to increase AHMA's visibility and reach via social media and conference participation. CEO Margaret Pfoh took our message to several important events in the past year:

- **Canadian Housing & Renewal Association** – National Congress on Housing and Homelessness, ReconciliACTION Panel, Victoria
- **BC Non-Profit Housing Association** – Annual Housing Central Conference, Vancouver
- **Canadian Rural and Remote Housing and Homelessness Symposium** – AHMA Gold Sponsor, Canmore, Alberta
- **BCNPHA Regional Education, Networking & Tradeshow sessions (RENT)** – Comox, Whitehorse, Richmond, Kamloops, Victoria
- **Assembly of First Nations (AFN)** – National Housing & Infrastructure Forum, Vancouver
- **AFN Think Tank** – Ottawa
- **CHRA** – Housing on the Hill Congress, Ottawa

AHMA staff also attended the:

- 2018 Elders Gathering, a forum for people to share memories and knowledge, renew and create friendships, and gain perspective on ways other First Nations live
- 2018 Union of BC Municipalities Convention
- 2019 Forward Summit, an Indigenous-led conference to advance economic partnerships
- 2018 Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Awards
- 2018 Small Housing BC Summit
- 2018 CMHC National Housing Conference



One of our members, Vancouver Native Housing Society, hosted an Indigenous fashion show at the closing ceremony of the CHRA National Congress in Victoria

## New 2018-2028 Agreement

CMHC and BC Housing signed a new bilateral agreement in April 2018 that paves the way to extend Urban Native funding agreements. The new 2018-2028 agreement has a target to maintain and subsidize 1,766 Urban Native units to March 31, 2028, with funding for repairs if required.

AHMA is drafting an amendment agreement with BC Housing to extend Urban Native agreements in our name. Stay tuned as more details emerge.

## Looking to the Future: Environmental Scan

Our members have given AHMA a clear mandate to become more autonomous and gain recognition as an equal partner with the provincial government. As a result, we have embarked on an environmental scan, with Leq:amel First Nation member Patrick Kelly of First Peoples Group helping us map the journey toward autonomy.

The scan touches on most aspects of our business and will examine how to leverage the equity and value added by all our members. Another group, Urban Matters, is working on our behalf to collect and analyze data to develop an estimate of the collective wealth we bring to the BC economy. We'll present a report on the findings and recommendations to attain autonomy at our 2019 AGM.

“What we do affects people and places. We need to make sure members have what they need to serve our people. We have to deliver on the priorities they identified in the strategic plan.” AHMA President Gary Wilson



Top (L-R): Kevin Albers, CEO, M'akola Group of Societies; Artist/Educator Eddy Robinson; Housing Minister Selena Robinson; AHMA CEO Margaret Pfoh, CHRA Past President Stéphan Corriveau, ReconciliACTION Panel

Bottom: Infographic from Housing Central 2018, BCNPHA Indigenous Caucus, by local artist Tiare Jung



# Empowering Success

We tell the stories of three Indigenous housing providers in this year's report—Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society, Okanagan Métis & Aboriginal Housing Society, and Mamele'awt Qweesome Housing Society. These groups, like all AHMA members, go above and beyond to create safe, affordable housing communities and empower tenants' success.



# DQCHS

## Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society

"Our passion is seeing people succeed, and having a home is the minimum needed to succeed," says **Luanne Ruotsalainen**, Executive Director, Dakelh and Quesnel Community Housing Society (DQCHS). "We give residents an opportunity because everyone deserves a home. When people move in, we treat them as family not tenants, so if someone needs help, they know they can rely on us. We have an open door policy to be there for people; they are like our nieces, nephews, cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles."

### Housing & Support Services

Originally founded in 1986 with 10 houses, DQCHS has become the largest affordable housing provider in Quesnel, with 138 units, including houses, apartments and townhouses. Most of our affordable housing is on the traditional territory of the Lhtako Dene Nation.

**Housing portfolio** – We have a large portfolio of single detached houses for families, many with large yards great for raising children. And we have two multi-unit family developments:

- **Kikihnow** – Our newest building in downtown Quesnel has 38 units—11 are wheelchair accessible—with a large multipurpose/lounge room with kitchen and an adjacent outdoor terrace, secure entrance, and 24-hour monitoring. "We wanted tenants to be able to build a community here," says **Vicky Hartley**, DQCHS Tenant Relations. "And since Kikihnow opened in January, people have organized quite a few gatherings in the common room—Sunday Games Night, Monday Soup4Lunch, Tuesday Movie Night, Wednesday Coffee Klatch, plus a monthly potluck and loom knitting session. One person produces a monthly newsletter that profiles events and people. All these activities are tenant led. We just supply the tea and coffee and print the newsletter."
- **Milestone Manor** – Also in downtown Quesnel, this 31-unit family project has two, three and four-bedroom apartments and three wheelchair accessible units





# OMAHS

## Okanagan Métis & Aboriginal Housing Society

"We provide affordable rental housing in urban Okanagan communities," says **Susan Walker**, Executive Director, Okanagan Métis & Aboriginal Housing Society (OMAHS). "Our long-term president, Larry Nissen, was a tenant before he decided to get involved and advocate for affordable housing in BC. Sadly, Larry passed before his vision to build Nissen Crossing, our newest project, came to fruition, but the development will be his legacy to the community, and he was aware it was underway."

### Housing & Support Services

Incorporated in 1986, OMAHS offers two types of housing:

- **Subsidized units** – For Aboriginal/Métis families with dependents under 19; rents are based on 30% of income or the maximum shelter allowance
- **Affordable units** – For students, single people, seniors, and parents with one child, at or slightly below current market rents

**Housing portfolio** – OMAHS currently has three developments with a total of 148 units:

- **Gerstmar** – Our first project in Kelowna opened in 1989, with 28 two-storey townhomes—three and four-bedrooms with rear patios—built in seven clusters with playgrounds and fencing, and easy access to schools, a bus route and amenities
- **Single family homes** – OMAHS acquired and renovated seven single family homes, which were sold recently to help fund our newest project, the first to a tenant who was able to refer people she knew as buyers, all Aboriginal or Métis
- **Ingram** – Our Westbank development built in 1992 has 42 one and two-storey townhomes in 13 clusters, also three and four-bedrooms with patios and playgrounds, close to parks, shopping and transit
- **Nissen Crossing** – To meet a growing need to house smaller families and seniors, our new building will contain 78 studio, one and two-bedroom units when it opens in fall 2019—right beside our Gerstmar complex—and our office will relocate here

**Job opportunities** – We also like to create job opportunities for tenants; one is our grounds manager at Gerstmar and another will hopefully become janitor at Nissen Crossing.

### Making a Difference

"Our tenants like living in our housing communities," says Susan. "We are counsellors as well and support them in dealing with issues, such as how to get financial help, where to go back to school, or how to access community services. And our complexes have a good reputation in the community.

"When I was little, I remember walking with my mom and seeing people living on the street. I said, 'When I grow up, I'll buy a big enough house for everyone to move into.' And when I made my first call to let a tenant know she had a home, that was the nicest feeling."

"We have a wonderful long-term Board of Directors who volunteer their time to work for Okanagan Métis & Aboriginal Housing Society. We would not be able to provide affordable housing without them."

OMAHS Executive Director **Susan Walker**



"We provide safe, affordable housing for Elders, singles, families, people with disabilities, and students in Quesnel."

DQCHS Executive Director **Luanne Ruotsalainen**

**Tenant counselling, support and advocacy** – Our tenant relations staff supports tenants with challenges that could affect their success and well being:

- Filing annual tax returns and personal budgeting
- Counselling with an Aboriginal Focusing-Oriented Therapy approach
- Advocating for tenants to access community services

**Community store** – With contributions from partners, we run a zero-profit store with groceries and everyday home supplies at a reduced price for our tenants, because we want them to have enough food in the home and for kids in school.

### Making a Difference

"We have taken 20 years to build trust with our Elders, by showing we are not just landlords but people who actually care," says Luanne. "It's so rewarding to see people come in with a smile on their faces, instead of crying or feeling so desperate they don't know what to do. When Elders come by, we hug and take time to catch up before we get to business. Tenants appreciate that. A lot are thriving.

"One family was going down a bad path, so we got involved. Now the father's an apprentice carpenter, and the couple has been clean and sober for a year. We helped him get work building Kikihnow and are so proud of him. Whenever we can, we recommend our contractors hire qualified First Nation tenants."

### Working with AHMA

DQCHS is a founding member of AHMA. "Having Margaret onboard has really made a difference, because she's been in housing for 25 years and knows what we go through. AHMA knows how hard we work and works hard to help us. We wouldn't be where we are today without them."





# Mamele'awt Qweesome Housing Society

"Our approach is designed to ensure tenant safety and empower self-determination," says **Janice Silver**, Chief Executive Officer, Mamele'awt Qweesome Housing Society (MQHS). "We take pride in supporting tenants to be successful.

"We started small more than 30 years ago, with 15 houses in Mission. Now we have 180 units –with another 95 on the way–in Mission, Chilliwack, Abbotsford and Hope. We work with other community organizations to break down silos between various stages of housing and support services."



## Housing & Support Services

**Housing portfolio** – MQHS provides a range of affordable housing and support services in the Fraser Valley:

- **The Waterstone** – We are proud of our beautiful new development in Chilliwack, with 80 affordable units for singles, families and seniors with low to moderate incomes, close to amenities and public transportation
- **St'at'xwaya** – This 37-unit townhouse complex in central Mission is within walking distance of amenities and public transportation
- **To'o** – 23 one and two-bedroom apartments in central Mission, ideal for individuals and small families; the building also offers a community gardening program
- **Miranda Apartment** – This 20-unit apartment building in central Chilliwack provides studio and one-bedroom suites for Elders, couples without children, and singles
- **Single family homes** – We offer a variety of houses throughout Mission, ranging from two to four-bedrooms
- **The Yalestone** – Under construction in Abbotsford, this building will contain 50 affordable units for singles, families and seniors, including a community services program for youth aged 16-18—Abbotsford Autumn House—with nine units, a resource room and community kitchen on the ground level (they're currently scattered in different locations); completion is set for September 2020



- **The Riverstone** – We're also developing a 45-unit apartment/townhouse complex in Hope, with completion expected in February 2021

**First Nations Head Start Program** – 20 years ago, we took charge of this successful preschool program, to support early childhood development of Aboriginal children and instill pride in their heritage. Many tenants' children attend.

We were able to obtain a second Head Start grant for a daycare in the Waterstone, with 25 spaces free to Aboriginal ancestry families, some from the building and others from the community.

**Healthy Living Coordinator** – Our coordinator facilitates a seniors' gardening project, leads diabetes and healthy eating workshops, refers tenants to other services, and helps people get to medical appointments when needed. As we expand, the position will evolve to reach new communities.

## Making a Difference

"We received incredible feedback at our public forums in Hope: people are thrilled about the new housing coming to the community," says Janice. "And Chilliwack keeps asking when we're bringing another project there, which tells us how much this housing is needed.

"Sometimes people react negatively to affordable housing, but the stigma fades when we're able to bring successful projects into a community. Our buildings are all crime free, a benefit of participating in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program."

## Working with AHMA

"AHMA is really supportive in advocating for realistic budgets and setting us up for success. They provide opportunities for us to network with other housing providers and learn from their successes and struggles.

"AHMA advocated on our behalf for over \$7 million in capital improvements for aging properties, as we move toward mortgage expiry. Without AHMA, I don't think this funding would have been possible. And they're helping us put an umbrella agreement in place that will decrease admin time and give us more flexibility in managing project funding."

"I'm proud of our tenant relations staff who go above and beyond in welcoming new people with home visits and referrals to other services. They help people feel part of a community."

MQHS CEO **Janice Silver**



L-R: The Riverstone (artist rendering); front of the Waterstone; Waterstone Amenity Room; Waterstone Entrance Lobby; To'o community garden





# Náca?mat Leləm' Committee

One mind, one heart, one home



Three Corporate AHMA members sit on the committee and are elected annually at the AGM.

**Náca?mat Leləm' Members**  
(from top):

**Rosanna McGregor**  
Committee Chair (Cariboo Friendship Society)



**Luanne Ruotsalainen**  
(Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society)



**Marcel Swain**  
(Lu'Ma Native Housing Society)

"Our role on the Náca?mat Leləm' Committee is to help the Board of Directors define AHMA's priorities, based on our members' voices," says Committee Chair **Rosanna McGregor**.

The scope of the committee's responsibilities also includes assisting the Board to:

- Develop policies or procedures on:
  - Size, leadership and composition of the Board
  - Recommending candidates to nominate as directors
  - Board guidelines like conflict of interest or code of ethics
  - Amending the Náca?mat Leləm' Committee's Terms of References
- Establish desired skills, qualifications and criteria for prospective AHMA directors
- Recruit and interview qualified candidates for nomination to the Board and committees
- Develop and deliver orientation materials/sessions for new directors
- Coordinate new directors' participation in a Governance Essentials Program
- Annually review relationships between directors, members and AHMA and make recommendations to the Board whenever a conflict of interest arises
- Evaluate the effectiveness of directors
- Plan the AGM with the Board, CEO and AHMA staff
- Review and recommend improvements to the Board's structure, governance or electoral processes
- Monitor and make recommendations on human resource issues, including salaries, benefits, employee assistance programs and performance management
- Determine AHMA's six regions to ensure representational balance on the Board
- Appoint a spokesperson and/or advocate for AHMA, in consultation with directors and members
- Provide advice to AHMA's directors and CEO on matters of ethics, transparency, and conflict of interest referred to the committee

"We give preference to candidates of Indigenous ancestry and encourage youth to apply. As part of building future Indigenous leaders, AHMA strives to keep one director position for a youth candidate," says Rosanna. "We also help new directors understand we need them to lobby on our behalf. I want to see a more meaningful relationship with the Province than the ISHMA. A document that says we recognize the experience of AHMA members and directors and will consult with them first on housing issues affecting urban Aboriginal people."

"My Friendship Centre alone has 50 years of service and we've been in housing since 1984. We know what we're talking about, we're successful; there's every reason to seek our input and partner with us. I can tell you about the needs of transition houses, Elders, street entrenched folks. I understand what's going on in our city, as these are the issues we work with daily."

"We ask local Elders to open our meetings. Musqueam Elder Shayne Pointe gave us **Náca?mat Leləm'** at our strategic planning session, which means 'one house'. Then 'one house, one home, one heart' emerged as a theme."

Committee Chair **Rosanna McGregor**

## CASE STUDY: Thunderbird Manor

Vernon Native Housing Society is building this 38-unit affordable rental housing project in Vernon for Indigenous Elders, people with accessibility challenges, and families living off-reserve. The goal is to help address "hidden homelessness," by giving people living with family, friends or couch surfing a home they can actually afford.



## CASE STUDY: Tsawaayus Care Facility

Westcoast Native Health Care Society will soon open a new development in Port Alberni so seniors can continue to live in the community as they age, with 20 independent living units next to the long-term care facility, which is getting 13 new beds (added to 31 already in place). The independent living project will have scooter parking, program space, common areas, and a community kitchen. The care facility and independent living will be connected by a pedestrian pathway.



# Meet Our Team

Our Board of Directors volunteers to strengthen relationships with our members and support Indigenous housing needs as they evolve. AHMA staff members care passionately about meeting the needs of our members and communities. Toyuxsiim, thank you all, for your dedication.

## Board of Directors



**Gary Wilson**  
President



**Brad Mercer**  
Vice President



**Blake Scott**  
Treasurer



**Rudy Small**  
Secretary



**Karen Hewitt**  
Director



**Annette Morgan**  
Director  
(BC Housing Representative)

## AHMA Staff Team

**Margaret Pfoh**, Chief Executive Officer (Gitga'at First Nation)

**Lloyd Taghavi**, Chief Financial Officer

**David Silva**, Director of Asset Strategies

**Nizar Laarif**, Director of Public Affairs

**Cliff Grant**, Manager of Indigenous Strategic Relations (Haisla Nation)

**Sarah Silva**, Manager of Housing Operations (Squamish Nation)

**Sandra Eatmon**, Portfolio Manager & Indigenous Cultural Advisor (Métis Nation)

**Alexandra Christian**, Portfolio Manager

**Mae Flanders\***, Portfolio Manager (Mamallikulla First Nations)

**Debra Webber**, Portfolio Manager (Squamish Nation)

**David Garcia**, Project Manager

**Carol Endrizzi**, Operations Consultant

**Lance Brommeland**, Technical Service Advisor

**Deanna Daniel**, Asset Data Analyst (St'at'imc Nation)

**Trevor Casey\***, Portfolio Planning & Development Specialist (Haida Nation)

**Laurie Brownrigg**, Media and Communications Specialist

**Sue Lee**, Financial Services Specialist

**Connie Mah**, Project Coordinator

**Emma Owen**, Executive Assistant & Office Coordinator (Musqueam Nation)

**Katrina Cote\***, Team Assistant (Gitksan Nation)

*\* New to our team this year*

### NEW STAFF HIRED AFTER APRIL 1, 2019

**Alicia Leask**, Office Administrator (Squamish Nation)

**Cindy Williams**, Client Services, Finance (Squamish Nation)

**Patrick Caraher**, Energy & Sustainability Specialist (Métis Nation)



AHMA Staff

“As one of only two Indigenous housing authorities in the world, AHMA’s approach is visionary, so the opportunity to bring change at a governance level excited me. I see how important the work of members is for our people at a grassroots level.”

AHMA President **Gary Wilson**



Year ended  
March 31, 2019

## Revenues:

BC Housing grants	\$40,133,183
Proceeds from sale of capital assets	\$585,251
Interest	\$242,043
Tenant rents	\$189,623
Transfer from deferred revenue	\$86,340
Real Estate Foundation development grant	\$21,000

**\$41,257,440** TOTAL

## Expenditures:

Subsidy payments	\$38,085,046
Salaries and benefits	\$1,594,658
Professional fees subsidy	\$344,262
Depreciation	\$240,047
Rent	\$209,502
Conferences and gatherings	\$192,236
Public relations	\$162,305
Staff travel	\$144,364
Professional fees	\$139,310
Office	\$87,115
IT Consultants	\$45,300
Property taxes	\$45,020
Professional development	\$44,258
Insurance	\$37,813
Project development	\$30,505
Utilities	\$27,780
Contracted services	\$14,528
Telephone	\$12,214
Exterior maintenance	\$11,867
Advertising	\$3,828
Management fees	\$3,514
Bank charges and interest	\$1,014

**\$41,476,486** TOTAL(Deficiency) of revenues  
over expenditures (\$219,046)Disposition of RNH  
capital assets at cost (\$944,500)**(\$1,163,546)**TOTAL (DEFICIENCY) OF  
REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES

## Revenues 2017/18 to 2018/19

\$37,434,848 to \$41,257,440 = **10% increase**

## Summary of Financial Statements

	2019	2018
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$11,760,073	\$12,846,789
Capital Assets	\$3,285,726	\$4,404,306
Other	\$2,824,370	\$1,590,326
	<b>\$17,870,169</b>	<b>\$18,841,421</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
	\$12,906,834	\$12,714,540
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Operating	\$1,677,609	1,722,575
Capital Assets	\$3,285,726	4,404,306
	<b>\$4,963,335</b>	<b>\$6,126,881</b>
<b>CHANGES IN CASH</b>		
From operating activities	(\$564,252)	(\$2,151,525)
Changes in Non-Cash Working Capital Account	(\$1,041,749)	\$3,979,288
Cash from financing and investing activities	\$519,285	\$2,061,304
<b>Net Increase in cash</b>	<b>(\$1,086,716)</b>	<b>\$3,889,067</b>

AHMA's audited financial statements are available on request.

About  
**AHMA**

AHMA is the first and only Indigenous housing authority in Canada. Located on Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation Territory in West Vancouver, BC, we exist to make a difference for the community-based Indigenous housing providers we serve.

Our team has more than 40 years of Indigenous housing experience. We administer more than 4,200 units of housing with 1,000+ new units in the works. We deliver subsidies and oversee our members' operating agreements, keeping everyone's best interests in mind and building relationships founded on trust.





**ABORIGINAL HOUSING  
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F: 604.921.2463

E: [reception@ahma-bc.org](mailto:reception@ahma-bc.org)

[www.ahma-bc.org](http://www.ahma-bc.org)



“We want AHMA’s services to empower our members, giving them the capacity to empower their residents.”

AHMA CEO **Margaret Pfoh**