



Aboriginal Housing Management Association
Celebrating 25 Years

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Newly created National Indigenous Housing Coalition to address crisis and funding

Vancouver, BC – A recent landmark alliance between nation-wide Indigenous housing providers was reached marking significant advancement toward self-determination. Representatives from various Indigenous-led non-profit organizations across the country met to address a For Indigenous, By Indigenous (FIBI) approach to housing. The result is a coalition of experts dedicated to solving the national Indigenous housing crisis.

The National Urban, Rural, Northern Indigenous Housing Coalition (**NURNIHC**) is formed to provide FIBI housing solutions for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous peoples, to support each other, and to provide leadership and expertise to government for the well-being of all Indigenous people. The coalition prioritizes housing as a human right and is unified by its goal to achieve a National Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy that is fully Indigenous-led. The national strategy will be implemented to meet the housing needs of current and future generations.

“In BC, 80% of Indigenous people live off reserve and away from the supports of their Nation. Some Indigenous people don’t even know which Nation they are originally from due to colonial oppression and the impacts of the residential school system. The Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) already has an expert strategy that was created to provide safe, affordable, culturally supportive housing for Indigenous people living in urban environments. Adaptable in any province or territory, it’s based on the understanding that only Indigenous people can make decisions for themselves. No one else has the right to do so,” says AHMA CEO, Margaret Pfoh, one of the coalition signatories.

The group recently received a letter from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) stating that \$300 million allocated towards urban, remote, and northern (URN) Indigenous communities would be administered by their offices despite numerous reports and requests that the money be turned over to Indigenous-led



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groups to administer the funds. The coalition is demanding an immediate re-orientation of the federal government plans for URN Indigenous Housing strategy and the release of funds.

In an [open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau](#) and his senior officials the coalition states:

“The 2017 National Housing Strategy did not leverage the substantial expertise of urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing providers across Canada. The federal government has not adequately responded to the MMIWG2S+ National Inquiry Report which named housing 299 times, citing it as critical to safety and wellbeing. “Our coalition calls for action,” says Justin Marchand, CEO of Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services.

“Indigenous peoples did not create the housing crisis, colonization has interrupted our way of living and being, but now we have chosen to carry the responsibility of working tirelessly towards solutions because as Indigenous Peoples we are the only ones who know how to set things right,” says Katlia Lafferty, Co-Chair of the National Indigenous Housing Network, and Co-Chair of the Women's National Housing and Homelessness Network. “This work will be most impactful with the crown, ministers and provinces standing behind us as we manage the several billion dollars needed for capital investments and services so that Indigenous Peoples nation to nation have safe and secure dwellings that they can truly call home.”

The parties that have signed have agreed to work together and many other Indigenous parties will undoubtedly join. More agreements need to be completed and the governance structure isn't determined yet, but this is an important first step. In other words, there's still a lot of work ahead and we welcome anyone, as the Declaration says, to join in and help,” says Marchand.

[Read the Declaration here.](#)

National URN Indigenous Housing Coalition Principles

- Only Indigenous people can assert their identities, define their representative organizations, and exercise their aboriginal rights and title



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- The members are autonomous organizations that form a coalition of the willing to achieve the housing purposes of the coalition
- Respect the autonomy of the Crown, of the National Indigenous Organizations, and of the participating member organizations
- Provide coordinated research and communication to support its members to identify, plan and deliver priority housing for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous peoples
- Honour commitments to priority initiatives that the members of the coalition jointly identify, develop, and mutually agree upon
- Provide a national organizational structure to coordinate human, financial and other resources needed to deliver housing for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous peoples
- Collaborate with one another through the national organizational structure to provide housing for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous peoples
- Acknowledge the need for partnerships with governments and other parties to benefit the provision of housing for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous peoples
- Make decisions jointly with partner organizations where it makes sense

KEY FACTS AND BACKGROUND

- In early November 2022 our working group met with CMHC, regarding the initial allocation set out in Budget 2022 to develop an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Strategy allocation. Our group collectively determined and verbally agreed with full understanding that we would be in the position to hold and distribute these funds. During that meeting, the CMHC explained that their office was not in the position to speak on upcoming announcements, which we deem as a lack of transparency in a discussion that requires a fiduciary duty on the part of the federal government. On November 14, 2022, we received a letter indicating that Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) would be administering the said funds without transparency in their decision-making process. It is our understanding that CMHC and ISC's bureaucratic decision may have been swayed by our announcement that we would collectively come together to manage the



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funds. This unilateral decision does not provide room for consultation nor does it align with UNDRIP, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, the Auditor General's report on housing and homelessness which addresses the fact that the federal government does not have the proper mechanisms in place to ensure that their initiatives to address chronic homelessness is working or the MMIWG2S+ Final Report where it is highlighted that housing should no longer be at the helm of a patriarchal government and that as Indigenous Peoples we are to determine our sovereignty without government interference but rather through a cooperative agreement where the government must adhere to our requests in respect of free, prior and informed consent. We are in the position to do this work and your government has not given us adequate reasonable explanation to determine otherwise.

- The Indigenous Caucus is a national advocacy campaign to address the needs of urban, rural and remote northern Indigenous households in Canada. The "For Indigenous, By Indigenous" FIBI campaign is a national advocacy strategy led by the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association's Indigenous Caucus and supported by CHRA. The campaign asks Canadians to put pressure on the federal government to create a distinct national body and strategy that would address the housing needs of Indigenous peoples living in URN communities. The CHRA Indigenous Caucus is fighting for a distinct 4th strategy that would represent over 80% of Indigenous peoples across Canada. When the National Housing Strategy was developed, there was only three policies created for distinctions based Indigenous peoples, but nothing was included for the largest population base of Indigenous peoples. The four asks of the federal government are; develop a FIBI national housing centre; increase the supply of stable, safe, affordable housing by 73,000 units; accelerated action on Indigenous homelessness; wraparound services to support Indigenous tenants' well-being and long term success.

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