



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



Indigenous Advisory House on Homelessness  
**Innovative Examples of Projects and Programs  
Addressing Indigenous Homelessness**

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**PREPARED BY AHMA OPERATIONS  
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# Background

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The Indigenous Advisory House on Homelessness (IAH) members collaborated to create this document at the request of the Ministry of Housing (HOUS) to provide tangible and innovative examples of programs addressing Indigenous homelessness. The IAH is pleased to provide this initial report to HOUS to help inform our collective actions. Our submission is based on what we heard during member engagement in July and August 2024.

Indigenous homelessness is unique and requires Indigenous-led programs and supports. The most effective programs and policies for addressing Indigenous homelessness are developed through Indigenous leadership that considers trauma-informed, historically rooted, culturally specific, and collaborative approaches.<sup>1</sup> This report is based on what Indigenous-led programs the IAH highlighted at a particular point in time and is not intended to be comprehensive. IAH members provided these examples with the frequently cited caveat that many Indigenous programs are struggling with funding and capacity. While Indigenous communities and organizations continually demonstrate resilience despite great barriers, the model of success amidst ongoing scarcity and struggle is not what the IAH wishes to replicate. The IAH would like to work with the Province to ensure designated funding streams and Indigenous-led implementation and evaluation to address Indigenous homelessness in British Columbia (BC). This document should be expanded and adapted as definitions of success shift or are further developed by First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) and Indigenous organizations and communities.

Care was taken to include an intersectional lens in this research project. To address Indigenous homelessness, the distinct needs of Indigenous people and the differences and diversity within Indigenous communities must be considered.<sup>2</sup> Many of the projects presented in this report work with a specific priority population highlighted by the IAH: Youth aging out of care, women fleeing violence, Indigenous people with disabilities or diverse abilities. Regional and local variations in remote, rural or urban contexts are also important to note. Many Indigenous-led models are local, land-based, and in collaboration with local First Nations and urban Indigenous organizations. The examples presented may not be directly transferrable or scalable, however, this report aims to identify promising practices that may be relevant to consider in other contexts.

## About the Indigenous Advisory House on Homelessness

Since 2021, the Indigenous Homelessness Strategy Steering Committee (IHSSC) has come together to discuss the need to integrate the current strategizing processes for addressing experiences of homelessness in BC, and the need to use evidence-based, strategic actions to address the disproportionate overrepresentation of Indigenous people's experiences of homelessness. Part of the IHSSC's work has included overseeing a major data and information collection project throughout BC, which documented stories of Indigenous homelessness. This information was used to develop an Indigenous-led homelessness strategy which was subsequently submitted to the province in October 2022. One of the recommendations was to establish an Indigenous panel that would drive the implementation of the homelessness strategy.

In March 2023, the Province announced that the Indigenous Homelessness Strategy Steering Committee (IHSSC) would be funded to transition into the Indigenous Advisory Committee on Homelessness (IAC), now the Indigenous Advisory House on Homelessness (IAH). The aim of the IAH is to inform and drive Ministry policy and decision-making processes related to the implementation of the provincial homelessness strategy. Membership of the IAH is leveraged from existing IHSSC members and includes diverse Indigenous perspectives. The IAH focuses on rolling out solutions that will help address Indigenous experiences of homelessness. This is done in partnership with other organizations and ministries, including the Ministry of Housing (HOUS), BC Housing (BCH), and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA).

The IAH supported HOUS policy and decision-making regarding homelessness in several areas, including input on the implementation of the Belonging in BC Homelessness Plan, future phases, and additional matters relating to homelessness and impacts on Indigenous people and communities.



# Methodology

This report collected examples from IAH members in July and August 2024. IAH members were asked to identify programs or projects addressing Indigenous homelessness that they deemed innovative or successful. AHMA staff conducted additional research to expand on and categorize these examples.

Each example is formatted to include:

- Initiator/Organization
- Location
- Target Population(s)
- Promising Practices
- Summary of project or program
- Links to more informatio



# I. Eviction Prevention and Housing Stability

Indigenous community members face increased rates of eviction and eviction into homelessness in BC.<sup>3,4</sup> Indigenous organizations in BC are creating innovative and inclusive models of eviction prevention by prioritizing direct support, cultural safety, and community-driven solutions. Unlike conventional models, their approaches emphasize empowerment, cultural relevance, and a focus on long-term housing stability. The IAH has emphasized the need for Indigenous-specific eviction and housing loss prevention funding streams to create and expand programs to keep Indigenous people housed stably, especially those with complex needs that may fall further into homelessness.

## Métis Housing Rent Supplement Program and Ma Nîki Seniors Home Renovation Program

**Initiator/Organization:** Métis Nation BC (MNBC)

**Location:** Province-wide in BC

**Target population(s):** Available to people who identify as Métis in BC

**Promising practices:** Direct cash transfers for rent or renovation; Tenant and homeowner empowerment and housing stability

### **Summary:**

Through its Métis Housing Rent Supplement Program, MNBC offers financial assistance directly to recipients, empowering them to manage their housing expenses. This rent supplement helps tenants avoid eviction during times of economic uncertainty. MNBC provides rent supplements directly to recipients instead of landlords, allowing tenants greater autonomy in managing their housing needs. This method of program delivery emphasizes empowerment, dignity, and independence. The direct cash model is notable because it challenges conventional program models by placing trust in recipients to manage their own needs.<sup>5</sup>

MNBC further addresses housing stability through its Ma Nîki Seniors Home Renovation Program, which funds essential home renovations for low-income Métis elders. This program also gives the funding directly to recipients, building trust and autonomy for the recipients. This program ensures that seniors can age comfortably in their homes, reducing the risk of displacement due to safety or accessibility concerns. By supporting renovations, the program promotes long-term housing security and reflects a commitment to the well-being of elders.

### More information:

[https://www.metishousing.ca/programs/rental-supplement/Ma Niki Seniors Home Renovation Program](https://www.metishousing.ca/programs/rental-supplement/Ma-Niki-Seniors-Home-Renovation-Program) | MNBC

## II. Funding Models

Current funding streams accessed by FNMI communities and Indigenous-led organizations often do not adequately reflect the needs or include the necessary supports. Funding structures and evaluation mechanisms will have to change to better support FNMI communities and urban and away-from-home Indigenous community members. IAH members emphasized the importance of funding models that emphasize flexibility, agency, and trust and allow Indigenous organizations to implement and evaluate programs in less colonial ways.

It is important that funding models and calls for applications consider the specific needs of Indigenous communities and organizations. Many application processes disadvantage Indigenous organizations, particularly smaller organizations, through lengthy and prescriptive applications that do not adequately consider organizational capacity and expertise. Rigid application timeframes often overlap with other important Indigenous funding applications. The call for proposals for the Supported Rent Supplement Program (SRSP) in 2024, for example, was announced during several calls for proposal processes, including federal funding made available through NICHI, and the Indigenous Housing Fund (IHF). Limited outreach contributes to the lack of Indigenous applications. RFP calls are released with little engagement from Indigenous organizations, including AHMA, the IAH, or Reaching Home Indigenous Stream Community Entities across BC to promote the program and inform approaches to implementation. As a result, few Indigenous-led organizations have applied and been successful in receiving the SRSP and the Homelessness and Encampment Response: HEART and HEARTH.

Reaching Home funding is one example of organizations finding more flexibility through guaranteed lump sum funding, which allows for work planning and effective delivery of Indigenous-led programs. Compared with other funding sources, Reaching Home was noted as being more accepting of program delivery, reporting models, and indicators of success as defined by Indigenous communities.

## Reaching Home

**Initiator/Organization:** Community entities throughout BC

**Location:** Province wide

**Target population(s):** Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness

**Promising practices:** Localized funding decisions; Community-focused initiatives; Community engagement and collaboration; Flexible funding; Multiple streams for FNMI and Indigenous orgs

### **Summary:**

Reaching Home is a federal program focused on preventing and reducing chronic homelessness across Canada. It achieves this by providing funding to local organizations that assess and address specific community needs. The program's implementation has successfully fostered tailored, community-driven initiatives, contributing to more effective homelessness prevention strategies.

### **More information:**

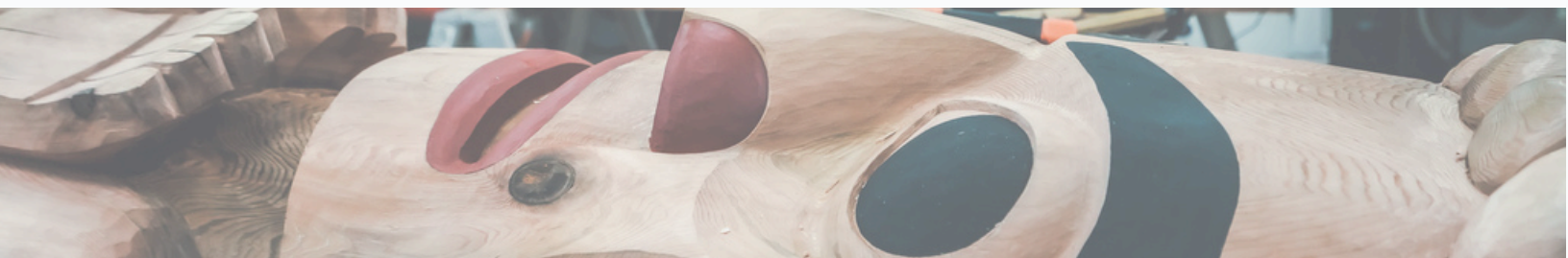
[Overview: Reaching Home - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/reaching-home/)

[Evaluation of Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/reaching-home/evaluation/)



### III. Housing Models

High rates of Indigenous homelessness are attributed to the lack of affordable, safe, and accessible housing in combination with intergenerational trauma resulting from colonization, cultural genocide, and policies that actively sought to dismantle Indigenous culture, families and communities.<sup>6,7,8</sup> Decades of underfunding and failed fiduciary duties have led to a critical housing and infrastructure gap for First Nations communities across BC.<sup>9</sup> The well-documented challenges and limited access to essential infrastructure – including housing, education, healthcare, connectivity, and other essential services – resulted in entrenched intergenerational inequality. While poor housing conditions and shortages have been reported for decades, governments and governing agencies have continued to rely on ineffective, short-term solutions. The following housing models are presented as innovative examples in this context; however, the systemic barriers and funding mechanisms need to change to support long-term, safe, adequate housing for FNMI communities. Current funding mechanisms lead to an inability to create strategic long-term plans and access sustainable operations and maintenance funding, further exacerbating housing issues and vulnerabilities to homelessness.



#### DTES Community Land Trust

**Initiator/Organization:** DTES Community Land Trust; National Housing Strategy Demonstrations Initiative

**Location:** Traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, Vancouver

**Target population:** Single-room occupancy residents on the DTES

**Promising practices:** CLT model for affordability; Community-elected board; Community ownership and stewardship of at-risk housing; Culturally inclusive; Decolonised, non-hierarchical governance model; Indigenous co-leadership; Tenant-centered housing; Programs designed by people with lived-experience; Building by building approach led by tenants; Holistic supports including cultural programming.



## **Summary:**

A community land trust model is one method of ensuring long-term housing affordability, and community involvement in local development. Land trusts are non-profit corporations created to acquire and hold land for a community. The land is perpetually held in trust to provide access for community use, such as affordable housing.

The DTES Community Land Trust (DTES CLT) aims to prevent homelessness by protecting affordable, at-risk housing in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and providing affordable housing and community spaces. This model allows a community-elected board, with a majority of Directors who live or work in the area, to steward local properties with the goal of maximizing neighbourhood prosperity rather than profit.

This effort is culturally inclusive and is co-led by Indigenous and Japanese Canadian organizations in close partnership with the DTES SRO Collaborative Society. The DTES CLT is focused on creating a tenant-centered, non-hierarchical governance model and outlining a holistic housing model that is determined by and for the DTES community.

## **More Information:**

[The Vancouver Downtown Eastside Community Land Trust | CMHC \(cmhc-schl.gc.ca\)](#)  
[DTES Community Land Trust – Protecting + Replacing Privately-Owned SROs in the Downtown Eastside](#)

## Hišukiš ćawak - Indigenous Led Complex Care Housing

**Initiator/Organization:** AHMA

**Location:** Multiple sites province-wide

**Target population(s):** Indigenous people and families with complex needs

**Promising practices:** Holistic, wraparound models of service delivery; Culturally safe approaches; Specialized mental health, addictions and medical services; Indigenous-led monitoring and evaluation to inform wise practice models.

## **Summary:**

AHMA's Complex Care Housing program works to fully support residents with mental health and/or substance use issues to stay housed, fed and access culturally safe medical care, including 24/7 support from a Virtual Physician and Psychiatrist. With a strong network of clinical and non-clinical staff, this program uses a person-centred, culturally safe, and trauma-informed approach to embed health services into housing so that clients can build a sustainable foundation to achieve their goals. Indigenous-specific complex care supports are connected to an individual, not a location, to ensure reach and maintenance of stability. Robust service delivery occurs through Coordinated Access and Assessment, Integrated Coordinated Access Tables, Indigenous Harm Reduction Teams, Intensive Case Management, Assertive Community Treatment Teams, and twenty-four-hour-a-day Fixed Site Teams. AHMA is also funded to develop an Indigenous-led evaluation that supports the needs and priorities of Indigenous clients and project sites.

## **More information:**

[Health in Housing Team – Aboriginal Housing Management Association](#)



## Tiny Home and Transitional Village Models

Current encampment responses lack cultural safety by evicting Indigenous people and forcing them to move away from their community members with no assurance of housing. It is well documented that Indigenous people are experiencing some of the most egregious right to housing violations in encampment settings. In the absence of safe, adequate and affordable housing, encampment responses must respect human rights, autonomy, and dignity, with a focus on providing access to basic necessities – including clean water, accessible sanitation facilities, electricity, cooking facilities, structures that are accessible for multiple people and those with diverse abilities or mobility, and access to heating and cooling. No relocation or displacement should take place without free, prior and informed consent. Alternative responses are available.

Tiny home villages can offer immediate, short-term solutions while people transition to permanent housing from encampments or other precarious housing situations. These models can help bridge the gap between emergency shelters and permanent housing by creating low or no-barrier environments that foster community, healing, and stability. Tiny home villages or other well-resourced transitional community spaces are one way to prioritize human rights and dignity in areas where current housing options fall short of meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness. The success of projects like Walyaqil Village highlights the potential for broader implementation for and by Indigenous organizations and communities.

### AHMA Transitional Village Model

**Initiator/Organization:** AHMA

**Target population:** Communities living in encampments

**Promising practices:** Culturally safe and supported no-barrier housing; Shelter alternative; Community-led supports and resources; Trauma-informed approach

#### **Summary:**

AHMA's encampment framework - a Transitional Village Housing Model (TVH) - was developed and submitted to BC Housing and the Ministry of Housing in December 2022. This framework supports encampment responses that embed comprehensive services and provide culturally

supportive no-barrier housing options with wraparound supports for residents of encampments. No-barrier housing options are diverse and may include tiny homes, modular builds or shelters, domes, and other safely heated structures that stand up to the elements. AHMA's proposed Transitional Village Housing model is based on an Indigenous communal approach that embeds Indigenous principles and values into operational structures and integrates trauma-informed approaches that empower participants to engage with their community. The model focuses on building the strengths of individual community members, who will then establish the greater community direction and guide what interventions are necessary and useful. In the absence of adequate housing, alternative responses to encampments that prioritize human rights and dignity, like the TVH model, must be explored in collaboration with Indigenous housing experts and encampment residents.

**More information:**

[DTESDecampmentStatement-April2023.pdf \(ahma-bc.org\)](#)

## Walyaqil Tiny Home Village in Port Alberni

**Initiator/Organization:** Port Alberni Friendship Center

**Location:** The traditional territory of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, Port Alberni

**Target population(s):** Indigenous individuals

**Promising practices:** Indigenous-led tiny home village model with wraparound supports

**Summary:**

Developed by the Port Alberni Friendship Center, the Walyaqil Tiny Home Village consists of 20 insulated units, each equipped with basic amenities. On-site services include counselling, cultural support, and access to health and educational resources, providing a stable environment for residents to rebuild their lives. Plans for expansion reflect the model's success and the growing need for such solutions across the province. This initiative demonstrates how tiny home villages can serve as transitional spaces, supporting long-term stability and community integration for Indigenous people and others experiencing homelessness.

**More information:**

<https://www.alberniavalleynews.com/local-news/walyaqil-tiny-home-village-opens-in-port-alberni-6830152>

## Programs for Indigenous women, women fleeing violence, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members

The relationship between housing and safety is well documented, especially for Indigenous women and girls fleeing violence. The National Inquiry into Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (The National Inquiry) and the 231 Calls to Justice<sup>10</sup> identified housing insecurity and poverty as disproportionately and severely impacting Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse peoples.<sup>11</sup> Definitions of homelessness and chronic homelessness used in government policy do not reflect the distinct ways Indigenous women, girls, women-led families, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience homelessness. These definitions fail to account for Indigenous ways of understanding and experiencing homelessness, and the unique structural and systemic oppressions that shape homelessness for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples.

IAH members and the Indigenous Gender Based Violence Housing Strategy Subcommittee identified the following as contributing to homelessness for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people: early exposure to homelessness and housing insecurity, past experience with violence, lack of women-only shelters and supports, having children apprehended by the Ministry of Family and Development, addictions and mental health, intergenerational trauma resulting from Residential Schools, the impacts of personal violence, the impact of negative first encounters with systems including the police, social supports, racism experienced in housing and social programs, criminal justice system, the lack of For-Indigenous, By-Indigenous systems response and the lack of transportation. Chiwid Transition House is one example of an innovative and holistic program for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

### Chiwid Transition House

**Initiator/Organization:** Cariboo Friendship Centre

**Location:** Traditional territories of the Secwepemc Nation, Williams Lake

**Target population(s):** Indigenous women, women fleeing violence, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members

**Promising practices:** Culturally safe housing; Trauma-informed care; Person-centered approach; Holistic support services; Strong partnerships with local First Nations

## **Summary:**

Chiwid Transition House addresses homelessness and the risk of violence for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people by employing a range of culturally safe and supported programs. These programs inherently recognize that race, gender, sexual orientation, age, income, family size, and health determinants create compounded barriers and vulnerabilities, and for housing response(s) to be successful, a holistic and person-centered approach is taken.

The Cariboo Friendship Society's Chiwid Transition House (Chiwid) is an example of a culturally safe and supported housing program that supports Indigenous women experiencing homelessness due to violence. The success of Chiwid is due to an innovative and responsive executive leadership and frontline team and established relationships with the Tsilhqot'in, the Secwepemc, Carrier, Nlaka'amux, Nuxalk, Tsimshian, Gitga'at Wuikinuxx Heiltsuk, and St'at'imc Nations.

Chiwid is part of a broad range of services offered by the Friendship Centre. Examples of programs that support Indigenous women from homelessness include Aboriginal Head Start, an Abuse Prevention program, and counselling. The Friendship Centre also has supports for those with addictions and provides mental health outreach, pregnancy outreach, supported child development, infant development, and emergency transitional and permanent housing. Chiwid has enough beds and supports in place so that women have immediate access to housing and care. In addition to Chiwid, the Friendship Centre also has two apartment complexes. Two apartments are reserved for people needing an accessible unit, and one is designated as supportive recovery. There are eleven one-bedroom units, four two-bedroom units, and two bachelor suites. These apartments are available to low-to-moderate-income urban Indigenous individuals and families.

### **More information:**

<https://cariboofriendshipsociety.ca/social-services/>

## Youth and Young Adult Programs

In BC, 67 percent of children and youth in care are Indigenous,<sup>12</sup> as well as nearly half of all young adults transitioning from care each year.<sup>13</sup> The lack of appropriate housing support for Young Indigenous People (YIPs) is recognized as a pathway to homelessness. Shelters are still the most common youth housing model in BC. More Indigenous-led programs, flexible program durations, and access to transitional and longer-term housing options that are mindful of age cutoffs are desperately needed to support young Indigenous people.

### Young Bears Lodge – Youth short-term transitional housing

**Initiator/Organization:** Urban Native Youth Association

**Location:** Traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, Vancouver

**Target population(s):** Indigenous youth of all genders, ages 13 to 18

**Promising practices:** Culturally-based, holistic approach, Individualized support, Elder and peer mentorship, Connection to traditional teachings and community, Flexible program duration.

#### **Summary:**

Young Bears Lodge is a culturally-based, live-in program that promotes healing for Indigenous youth seeking to change their relationship with drugs or alcohol. It offers holistic, individualized support, integrating traditional teachings, cultural practices, and mentorship from Elders and peers. The program emphasizes participants' strengths and connects them to their cultural roots and communities as part of the healing process.

#### **More information:**

<https://unya.bc.ca/programs/young-bears-lodge/>

## Raven's Lodge – Youth Transitional Housing

**Initiator/Organization:** Urban Native Youth Association

**Location:** Traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, Vancouver

**Target population(s):** Female Indigenous youth ages 12 to 18

Promising practices: Culturally welcoming environment; One-on-one support; Connection to Elders and cultural activities; Life skills training; Transition support; Ongoing community connection.

### **Summary:**

Ravens Lodge is a transitional group home for female Indigenous youth in the care of the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS). It provides a safe, culturally welcoming environment that supports youth with life skills, self-care, and cultural connections. The program includes one-on-one support, cultural activities, and transition assistance for those moving into foster care or independent living.

### **More information:**

<https://unya.bc.ca/programs/ravens-lodge/>





## Prince George Native Friendship Centre – Reconnect Youth Village

**Initiator/Organization:** Prince George Native Friendship Center

**Location:** The traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, Prince George

**Target population(s):** Youth 13- 18 years old

**Promising practices:** 24/7 crisis housing; Youth drop-in center with role modeling; Outreach services; Integrated case management; Support for independent living; Elder involvement in programming.

### **Summary:**

Reconnect Youth Village provides crisis, short-term, and supported independent living services for at-risk youth, offering 24/7 shelter, outreach, and drop-in programs. Reconnect Youth Village promotes a youth-centered, culturally holistic environment focusing on empowerment and life transitions. The services include shelter, meals, hygiene support, life skills, and community referrals, with a strong focus on case management and advocacy.

### **More information:**

[Programs and Services \(pgnfc.com\)](http://pgnfc.com)

## Kekuli Centre Apartments

**Initiator/Organization:** North Okanagan Friendship Center Society

**Location:** The traditional territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) First Nation, Vernon

**Target population(s):** Youth 19-29 years old who are homeless or at risk of being homeless

**Promising practices:** Support for at-risk youth with diverse conditions; Focus on improving quality of life; Encouragement toward responsible adulthood

## Summary:

Kekuli Centre, operated through an agreement between the North Okanagan Friendship Center Society and BC Housing, provides safe housing for all youth aged 19 to 29 who are homeless or at risk due to physical, social, or mental challenges. It offers 15 one-bedroom and 4 two-bedroom units, encouraging youth to transition into healthy, responsible adulthood.

## More information:

<https://www.vernonfirstnationsfriendshipcentre.com/youth/kekuli-centre/>

## Intergenerational and Family Housing

Youth aging out of care and seniors are two populations frequently highlighted by the IAH as priority populations. The following examples provide unique models of housing for these populations. Additionally, housing is needed to accommodate intergenerational families and non-traditional family structures. Large Indigenous families are common, with extended relatives and friends often joining households as part of a family. Housing with enough bedrooms to meet National Occupancy Standards (NOS) for large families is usually unaffordable and can be very difficult to find. There is a need for more affordable, large family units in urban areas. Westernized regulations and policies such as NOS are not always appropriate for Indigenous families. These challenges can result in the removal of children and the breaking up of families.

## Salish Lelum Youth and Elders Housing

**Initiator/Organization:** Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre

**Location:** Traditional territories of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, Nanaimo

**Target population(s):** Youth aged 18-24 and Elders aged 55 and above (*Youths must be employed or attending school and Elders must be able to take care of themselves*)

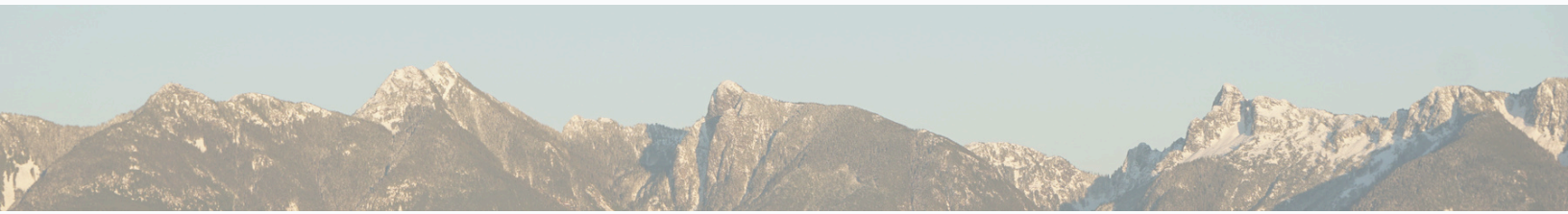
**Promising Practices:** Intergenerational Housing; Community Spaces; Supportive Amenities

**Summary:**

Tillicum Lelum's new housing complex at 479 Tenth Street offers accommodations for elders and youth. The building includes shared amenities such as laundry facilities, a computer lab, outdoor BBQ spaces, patios, and several common areas to foster community connections.

**More information:**

<https://www.tillicumlelum.ca/programs/youth>



**Siem Lelum - Respected House**

**Initiator/Organization:** Victoria Native Friendship Center

**Location:** The traditional territories of the ləkʷəŋən peoples, Songhees and Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, Victoria

**Target population(s):** Indigenous adults, families and children

**Promising practices:** Safe, affordable housing; Community-based environment; Support for diverse family structures; Communal spaces for family gatherings

**Summary:**

Siem Lelum offers 41 safe and affordable housing units for Indigenous adults, families, and grandparents raising grandchildren, particularly those at risk of becoming houseless. The project fosters a supportive, holistic community where residents can learn life skills and make healthy lifestyle choices. The complex includes studio to three-bedroom units and a common area with a kitchen for family gatherings and programming.

**More information:**

<https://vnfc.ca/property-management-housing-solutions/#siem-lelum>

## Kikékyelc: A Place of Belonging

**Initiator/Organization:** Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services

**Location:** Traditional territory of the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc

**Target population(s):** Indigenous youth between the ages of 16 – 27 and Indigenous Elders

Promising practices: Elder and youth co-housing; Shared common rooms; Cultural workers and Elder support; Cultural programming, community inclusion, life skills programming and one-to-one support for people with diverse abilities; long-term housing; housing and support for youth aging out of care.

### **Summary:**

KIKÉKYELC is a culturally safe, fully supported, condo-style development that houses Indigenous youth between the ages of 16 and 27 who are aging out of the child welfare system, along with Indigenous Elders. The project was developed as a response to the over-representation of Indigenous youth who had aged out of foster care and into dire situations including homelessness, addictions, poverty and unemployment. The development by LMO is a two-story building with 31 studio and one-bedroom apartments with shared common rooms on each floor and a common laundry and kitchen. Rents range from \$400 - \$435 per month. The intention behind co-housing Elders with youth is to create a community support network. On-site support services also provide tenants with access to Indigenous Youth Outreach Workers, Social Workers, and Cultural Workers, who offer counselling, programs, and support to residents.

### **More information:**

<https://lmofcs.ca/kik%C3%A9kyelc-a-place-of-belonging/>

## Kackaamin Family Development Centre Recovery Program

**Initiator/Organization:** Kackaamin Family Development Centre

**Location:** The traditional territories of the Tseshaht, Hupacasath First Nations, Port Alberni

**Target population(s):** Indigenous families

**Promising practices:** Holistic approach to healing; Trauma-informed approach; Access to ceremony; Emphasis on life skills, resilience, and reintegration; Family focused with space and support for children and all family members; Community events and potlucks.

**Summary:**

Kackaamin Family Development Centre offers both a supportive recovery program and a whole family approach focused on rebuilding family attachment. The program blends Western and Indigenous healing approaches, provides 12-Step and cultural support, and offers individual counseling. Participants are housed in fully furnished units for a six-week duration, with a focus on life skills, resilience, and reintegration into the community. Kackaamin has independent homes for families, in addition to their recovery program units, as well as an on site school and resources for children.

**More information:**

[Family Housing | Kackaamin Family Development Centre](#)



## IV. Outreach and Engagement

Indigenous communities have repeatedly emphasized the need to feel safe when accessing services.<sup>14</sup> Intergenerational trauma, combined with the legacy of colonization, has resulted in greater system involvement and acuity for some Indigenous people. While accessing or trying to access services, Indigenous people frequently report significant experiences of racism, social profiling and discrimination.<sup>15</sup> Fragmentation between and across systems further exacerbates challenges to getting basic needs met. The negative experiences and harm presented by many services can lead individuals to resist further system involvement, leaving people with few options but remaining homeless or precariously housed without support.

The needs of Indigenous Peoples at risk of and affected by homelessness are best addressed through interdependent healing processes originating within the community. All Nations Outreach is one example of an Indigenous-led outreach approach that highlights how outreach workers can be an essential connection point for Indigenous people who are experiencing housing precarity or homelessness. The IAH has emphasized the need for designated funding streams for Indigenous outreach approaches, with accessible transition opportunities when people are ready, including an emphasis on connections to cultural supports and culturally safe health supports, transitional spaces, and sustainable housing options.

The way Indigenous communities are engaged in research and finding solutions to homelessness is also important to highlight. Supporting and engaging with local Indigenous-led coalitions is one notable pathway. The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Coalition provides an innovative example of coalition building and community-based research and engagement around solving homelessness. Despite the demonstrated success of their efforts in finding community based, tangible solutions to addressing homelessness in Surrey, they have highlighted that it is difficult to find funding for ongoing coalition building.

### All Nations Outreach

**Initiator/Organization:** All Nations Outreach Society

**Location:** Traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, Vancouver

**Target population(s):** Indigenous people in DTES Vancouver

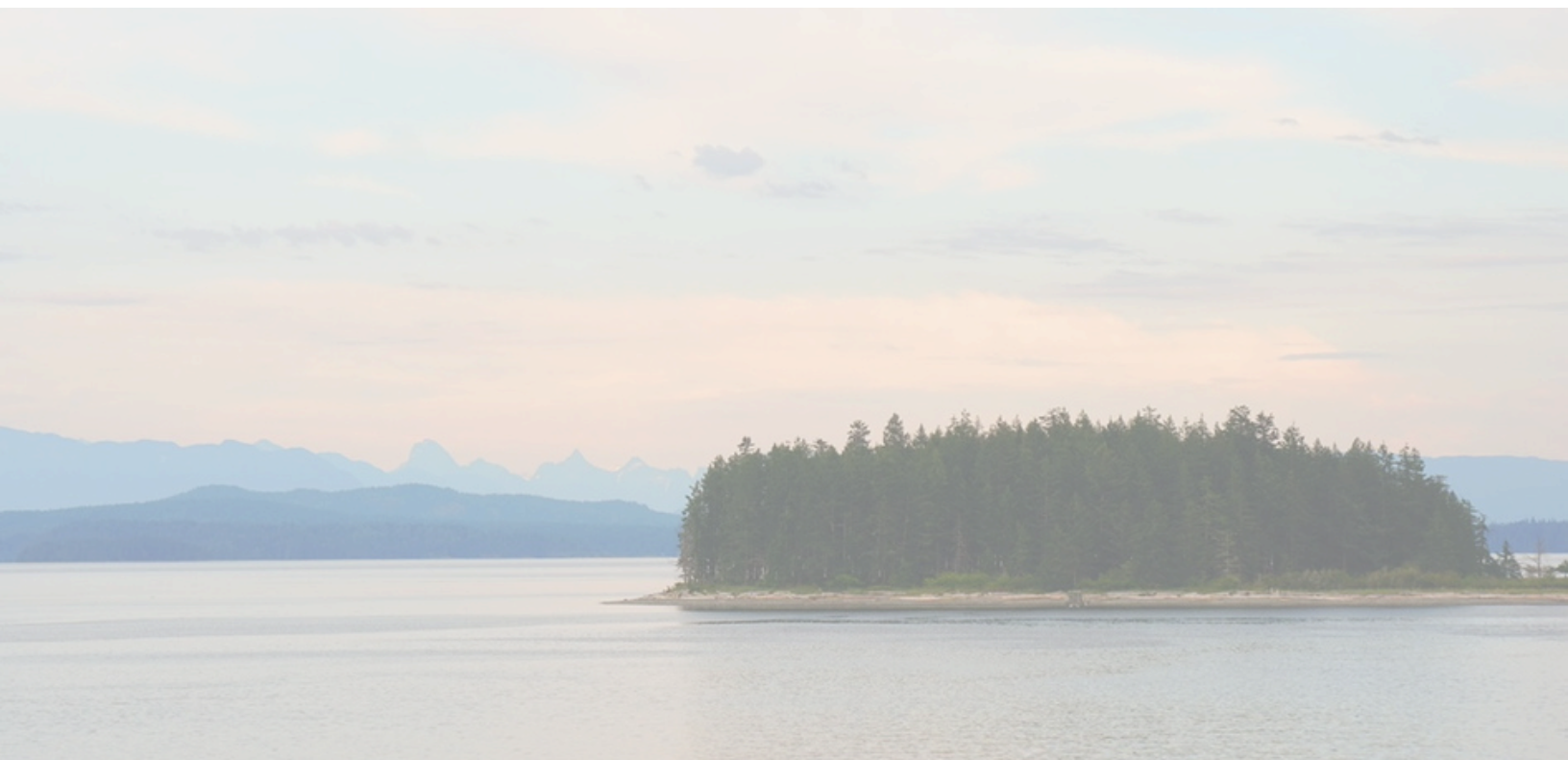
**Promising practices:** Indigenous outreach workers; Partnerships with First Nations and First Nations delegations to DTEs; Culturally relevant and culturally safe support services; Access to ceremony; Connection or reconnection to home communities; Trauma-informed care; Holistic community outreach; Food programs and peer support

**Summary:**

The All Nations Outreach Society (ANOS) provides trauma-informed, culturally relevant support and services to Indigenous individuals in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES), focusing on those experiencing addiction, homelessness, and mental health challenges. Their programs include peer support, food security initiatives, and holistic outreach tailored to the unique needs of Indigenous communities. Another core service of ANOS is connecting and reconnecting Indigenous individuals to their home communities in a safe and supportive manner, along with providing Indigenous people who have experienced homelessness and have been brought into shelters with opportunities to participate in culturally relevant ceremonies and on-the-water healing activities.

**More information:**

[All Nations Outreach Society – People Helping People ~ We All Deserve to Heal](#)



## Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Coalition and Skookum Lab

**Initiator/Organization:** Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Coalition

**Location:** Traditional territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen First Nations, Surrey

**Promising practices:** Coalition-building; Community based research and practice; Engagement with municipalities.

### **Summary:**

Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Coalition (SUILC) focuses on addressing urban Indigenous issues in Surrey through coalition-building, youth engagement, and affordable housing initiatives. SUILC found that despite a growing and significant population of Indigenous households in Surrey, the community does not have the same foundation of service providers for Indigenous individuals and families compared to Vancouver. There are far fewer Indigenous housing organizations in Surrey than Vancouver and those that exist are smaller with less capacity. The coalition also emphasizes the necessity for increased collaboration with municipalities to effectively tackle urban Indigenous issues.

SUILC also convened Skookum Lab, a social innovation lab developed to address Indigenous child and youth poverty in the City of Surrey. Through extensive engagement with the urban Indigenous community in Surrey and subsequent quantitative analysis, the group produced a report to support ongoing work to address Indigenous child and youth poverty in Surrey.

SUILC's extensive engagement work, research, and coalition building are grounded in culture. The coalition's work and advocacy are informed by Skookum Surrey Guide Groups comprised of urban Indigenous people living in the City of Surrey. SUILC developed "Campfires" that bring together the Guide Groups, city staff and other stakeholders to hear urban Indigenous people share their experiences. The campfires honour and are guided by Coast Salish protocols and practices. Grounding the campfires in culture creates a safe container for participants to discuss how to tackle traumatic systemic issues they have experienced. Through their culturally based initiatives, SUILC prioritizes youth and community engagement to address urban Indigenous housing concerns.

More information:

<https://surreyindigenousleadership.ca/>



## V. Conclusion

This report presents an array of programs and projects working to address the crisis of Indigenous homelessness and housing precarity. High rates of Indigenous homelessness stem from a lack of adequate, affordable and safe housing, and are amplified by intergenerational trauma resulting from colonization, cultural genocide, and policies that actively sought to dismantle Indigenous culture, families and communities. Indigenous organizations and communities have firsthand knowledge of the complex factors and ongoing impacts of colonization that Indigenous communities face, and are able to develop more culturally appropriate and effective spaces for healing. While an incomplete sample, the examples in this report demonstrate the critical importance of Indigenous-led, culturally safe and supportive approaches.

Many of the examples in this report are functioning in under resourced scenarios and complex funding environments. Moving forward, the IAH would like to work with the province to support and expand Indigenous-led initiatives. This includes ensuring designated funding streams, promoting Indigenous-led implementation and evaluation, and addressing systemic barriers that contribute to Indigenous homelessness.



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