



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

How Municipalities Can Support Indigenous Housing

AHMA's housing and service provider members oversee 95% of Indigenous housing units across BC, providing homes to almost 10,000 Indigenous individuals and families living in urban, rural, and northern regions of the province. Some of the supports that our members offer include homelessness prevention, wrap-around support services, transitional housing, affordable housing, and, most recently, complex care housing.

In 2022, AHMA released [BC's first Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy](#). We created the strategy with a vision firmly rooted in inclusivity, community, empowerment, and resilience. AHMA's housing strategy reflects the reality that approximately 75% of Indigenous people live in urban environments and not on reserves. AHMA's strategy is now being used across Canada as a baseline.

Municipal leaders are uniquely positioned to raise their collective voices to influence Provincial policies and legislation that end homelessness and housing precarity for society's most vulnerable and marginalized people.

It is widely known that the playing field is not even. Indigenous people have a different socio-economic reality, which requires a more holistic and committed response. Habitability and suitability are also concerns for many households. A human rights-based approach considers these elements: accessibility, location, support systems, cultural adequacy, safety, and more.

How municipalities can make a difference and take reconciliACTION:

- Ensure **meaningful engagement and participation** that re-centers Indigenous wisdom to help transform systems.
- **Prioritize vulnerable and marginalized** community members.
- Include **culturally appropriate wraparound services** to reduce barriers.
- **Reduce high-cost development fees** and provide low-cost financing.
- Include Urban Indigenous housing needs and data in **Municipal Housing Plans** and OCP to encourage non-profit and affordable development. **Implement** the portions of your business plan related to reconciliation and affordable housing.
- **Apply property tax exemptions** to non-profit organizations.
- **Include** local Indigenous people (especially First Nations) on the **community housing committee** and/or in the development of housing plans.
- **Engage** with **local First Nations** to develop a Memorandum of Understanding or Letter of



- Agreement to ensure First Nations are part of all community development.
- **Allocate** properties and **LAND BACK** to local Indigenous communities, where they belong.
- Help ensure the **not-for-profit and co-op housing sector** plays a key role in the acquisition of purpose-built rental stock. **Introduce replacement policies**, as these establish a percentage of net loss of rental housing units in a specific area and ensure lost rental units are replaced.
- Build on **free-lease land** such as above train stations, libraries, health care centres, fire halls, post offices, etc. Develop a **Community Land Trust** for Indigenous housing.
- **Rezone** and rethink adequate densities, parking, and onerous design requirements. **Speed up rezoning approval processes**, as the process for approval has a major impact on how quickly housing can be built. Facilitate the development of urban Indigenous projects.
- Approve **large-scale development**, including modular and wood frame technologies.
- **Apply a rights-based lens** to achieve justice and equity for those in core housing need (see UNDRIP).
- Understand the **economic case for change** (for every \$1 spent, \$7 returns to society).
- **Introduce demolition policies** that ensure a fee is charged per unit demolished, and that this fee is placed into a housing fund that pays for the construction of new affordable housing.
- **Empower affordable housing experts in the sector to take the lead** and preserve affordable housing stocks.
- **Partner with** experts like **AHMA** and Indigenous organizations for better results. Consulting the experts for advice on trauma-informed and culturally supportive approaches to housing for Indigenous tenants = success. Share your **urban Indigenous housing successes** with AHMA so we can share them more broadly.

Any call to action needs policy support and clear, sustained investment. There's nothing more empowering than being part of the solution. [Read and endorse AHMA's Indigenous Housing Strategy.](#)

Also, check out the [BC Non-Profit Housing Association's Municipal Toolkit.](#)

Thank you for supporting affordable, culturally safe Indigenous housing.