



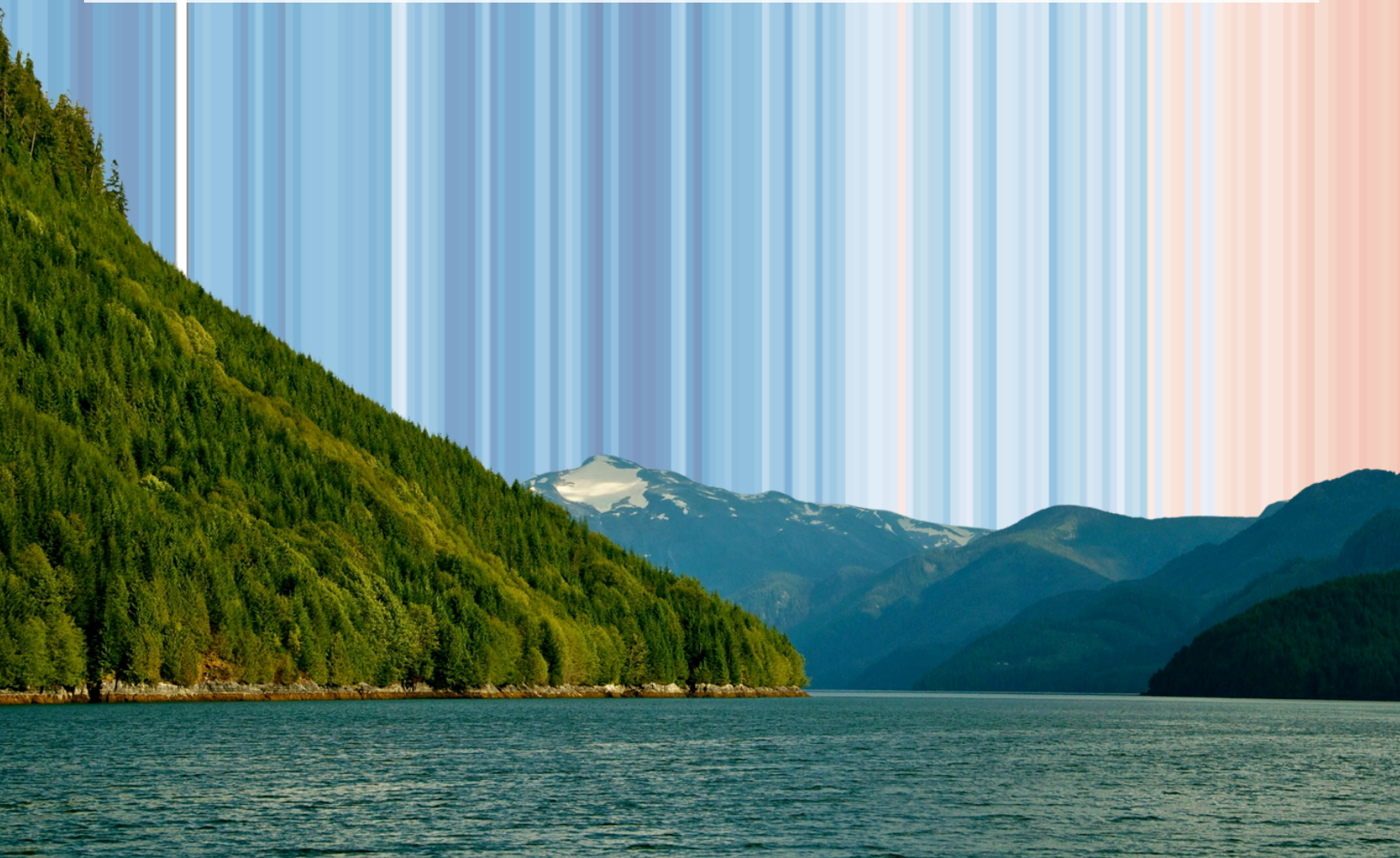
Aboriginal Housing Management Association

Over 30 years of Indigenous housing expertise

From Awareness to Action: Mapping Climate Hazards and Resources for Resilience in BC's Indigenous non-profit housing sector

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Territorial Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges that the work for this project took place on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xwməθkwə́əm (Musqueam) Nations. These Coast Salish nations have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial.

At AHMA, we honour Elders past, present and future from all nations and traditional territories. The land and waters colonially named BC are home to over 290,000 Indigenous people and more than 200 distinct First Nations. (Statistics Canada 2021)

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PICS plays a vital role in amplifying British Columbia's research and expertise to address complex climate challenges, fostering collaborative approaches that help inform effective climate solutions.

We also extend our sincere gratitude to the Esri Canada Nonprofit Program for providing AHMA with ongoing, affordable access to geographic information system (GIS) software, tools, and resources. This support enables AHMA to strengthen its data analysis, mapping, and planning capabilities in the service of our communities.

Researcher Bio

Sreya Ajay (She/Her) is a master's student in Urban Studies at Simon Fraser University, with a background in architecture and extensive applied research experience in climate resilience, housing, and urban inequality. Sreya has worked as a research assistant on several community-engaged climate projects, including the Downtown Eastside Climate Readiness Roadmap with SFU Community Engaged Research Initiative. Her work centers on climate adaptation in precarious housing contexts, knowledge mobilization, and the translation of research into practical tools for communities.

This project was conducted under the supervision and mentorship of the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of AHMA as an organization nor those of PICS.



About AHMA

The Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) was established in 1996 with a mission to “lead and advance housing rights for all Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia.” AHMA is comprised of 48 Indigenous non-profit housing and service providers located across BC. These members manage more than 95% of all Indigenous housing units in urban, rural, and northern areas of the province. AHMA administers funds, in partnership with BC Housing, for over 6,000 units and provides homes for more than 10,000 individuals and families who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, non-status, and self-identifying as Indigenous.

AHMA members provide a spectrum of trauma-informed, culturally safe housing, including affordable housing units, homeless shelters, transition homes, supportive housing and assisted living facilities. AHMA members provide a culturally safe space for Indigenous peoples to make their home, wherever they settle, by facilitating connections to community and cultural resources.

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Executive Summary

Climate change is no longer a niche or stand-alone issue that impacts only a few. It has now grown into one of the biggest problems faced by human societies across the globe. Climate change has led to unprecedented changes in weather worldwide, including hotter summers, more intense precipitation, wildfires, and drought. The province of British Columbia (BC) is predicted to face high risks of wildfires, seasonal and long-term water shortage, sea level rise, flooding, ocean acidification, glacier loss and heatwaves by the 2050s, if proper mitigation and adaptation measures are not taken (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, 2019). This affects various facets of the province, including crop and food production, biodiversity loss, the built environment, the economy, health and well-being, and more. These impacts compound existing inequities and place additional strain on equity-seeking groups. This research study focuses on understanding the extent of exposure to hazards and the landscape of existing support services and resources available to Indigenous nonprofit housing and service providers in BC.

There is a wide range of publicly available resources at the provincial and local levels. These extend across the different stages of emergency management. For the mitigation stage, the resources were primarily planning documents, policies, toolkits, and building regulations. Outreach and communication materials, early warning systems, and awareness programs were the most common resources focused on preparedness. The response stage included action plans, evacuation protocols, and alert systems that were activated during emergencies. The resources supporting the recovery stage were comparatively few and consisted mostly of case studies, best practices, and limited funding. In terms of hazards, many of these materials focused on extreme heat and wildfire, reflecting the state of emergency in the province in recent years.

While the province has made significant strides in addressing the climate crisis and there are several guides and resources to support communities and organizations in preparing for climate-induced hazards, a significant gap remains in the adoption and implementation of necessary measures to improve preparedness. Limited coordination among stakeholders, combined with differing operating mandates across housing types, often creates barriers to effective climate action and collaboration.

Executive Summary

Unsurprisingly, another major challenge was the lack of reliable, flexible funding for housing organizations. Municipal governments, on whom the onus of city-level climate action largely falls, often face a shortage of funding to provide grants to organizations to implement preparedness measures against climate hazards. Project-based funding programs often promote a piecemeal, time-limited approach to climate change rather than a long-term, sustainable pathway. This lack of funding invariably leads to capacity constraints for nonprofit housing providers. The lack of dedicated funding for preparedness measures and climate adaptation activities strains both organizational resources and staff capacity.

A glaring gap found throughout the study was the lack of dedicated support and preparedness resources for off-Nation and urban Indigenous populations. While there are resources for on-reserve communities, there is a shortage of dedicated resources for Indigenous peoples who live off-reserve. In British Columbia, the majority of Indigenous people—approximately 82%, or over 227,000 individuals—live off-reserve in towns, rural areas, and cities across the province (Urban Voices, 2026) . The cultural needs of communities living away from their home communities are often not adequately considered when developing emergency management and climate adaptation plans and policies.

The gaps voiced by the interviewees in this research include the need for long-term approaches to climate action, collaborative partnerships that span across sectors and levels of governments, transparency in decision-making and planning, reliable funding to ensure longevity of climate action strategies, and autonomous decision-making for organizations and communities to prioritize actions and measures based on their needs rather than forcing them to adopt prescribed solutions



Executive Summary

Recommendations

- 1 Mapping out risks and vulnerability of AHMA member assets:** Further developing the current hazard exposure map, by overlaying local factors like social infrastructure, evacuation shelter, transit etc., that determine the vulnerability of assets to different hazards. This comprehension can enable better emergency preparedness, planning and funding decisions for members.
- 2 Gather Data on climate impacts to assets and tenants**
Assessing the impacts of hazards on tenants (e.g., number of casualties, times tenants had to be evacuated, number of hospital visits or ambulance hiring) and assets would help to get an idea about the extent of impacts in previous years and the financial burden it could cost on AHMA members.
- 3 Building an AHMA member community network in different health regions:**
Facilitating the building of region-wide networks for AHMA members would be effective in providing support during emergencies through peer learning, shared resources and support.
- 4 Inclusive and context specific solutions:** Engagement of service recipients, tenants and Society employees to tailor inclusive and specific need-based solutions for climate action is more effective than a generic prescribed set of solutions.

The climate crisis and its associated hazards are becoming the norm and can no longer be ignored. There is a clear need for awareness, action and advocacy to ensure that the most vulnerable of our communities are safe, resilient and empowered in the face of climate change and are not left behind in emergency preparedness and adaptation measures. Unfortunately, climate action often takes a forward-looking approach without accounting for the ongoing inequities and impacts of colonialism. Climate action and preparedness must happen by acknowledging and actively working to dismantle the ongoing colonial violence faced by all Indigenous peoples, both on and off Nation. Future-proofing Indigenous nonprofit housing against climate-induced hazards requires an intersectional approach that addresses systemic issues in housing, infrastructure, health and well-being, emergency management and cultural safety.



Introduction

This research study focuses on advancing climate resilience and emergency planning for Indigenous non-profit housing and service providers across British Columbia (BC) by consolidating evidence, mapping resources, and developing decision-support tools for AHMA members. AHMA members are Indigenous non-profit housing and service providers, located throughout BC. The study is anchored around three key research questions:

1

What are the primary climate-induced hazards affecting AHMA members' buildings in BC?

2

What emergency management supports and resources are currently available to off-reserve and urban Indigenous non-profit housing providers facing climate-induced hazards in BC?

3

Where do gaps exist in emergency management capacity, supports, and resources for off-reserve and urban non-profit Indigenous housing providers?

Through a review of existing literature, resources, climate data, and interviews with stakeholders across sectors, this study aims to understand climate-induced hazards in BC, with attention to how these hazards affect Indigenous non-profit housing and service providers. This research was conducted with the operational needs and realities of AHMA's members in mind. While examining broader structural challenges, it is grounded in AHMA's Four Pillars of Cultural Safety in Housing: self-agency, relationships, trauma-informed practice, and reciprocity (Aboriginal Housing Management Association, 2024). These pillars provide an established framework that guides the research approach and helps ensure the findings are relevant, culturally safe, and responsive to member needs. It also considers how this knowledge can support AHMA and its members in preparing for and responding to climate-related emergencies.

Previous AHMA Research

AHMA has supported a growing body of research on climate resilience and emergency management that provides important context for this study.

- Lived Experience & Stories of Extreme Heat Among Indigenous Households in British Columbia engaged 16 AHMA members and found that rural and urban communities experience extreme heat differently, and communications with tenants relied on a mix of formal and informal methods, highlighting the need for more coordinated and community-specific approaches.
- Climate Resilient Buildings for Urban Indigenous Housing and Service Providers surveyed 15 AHMA members and interviewed six individuals from five societies, revealing limited emergency preparedness capacity, few formal emergency plans or risk assessments, and challenges related to funding, staffing, and climate-resilient asset management. It also identified opportunities, best practices, and resources to strengthen organizational capacity for climate adaptation and emergency preparedness.
- Preparing Together: Weather Emergency Management Across Indigenous Non-profit Housing Providers in British Columbia examined emergency management across the mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery phases, identifying gaps in funding, training, communication, and organizational capacity while recommending measures to strengthen resilience to climate-related emergencies.
- More broadly, AHMA's Resilient Futures: Position Paper calls for Indigenous-led approaches to climate resilience and energy equity, highlighting the disproportionate impacts of extreme heat, wildfire, flooding, and energy poverty on Indigenous communities and advocating for investments in resilient housing, Indigenous energy sovereignty, workforce development, and policy reform.

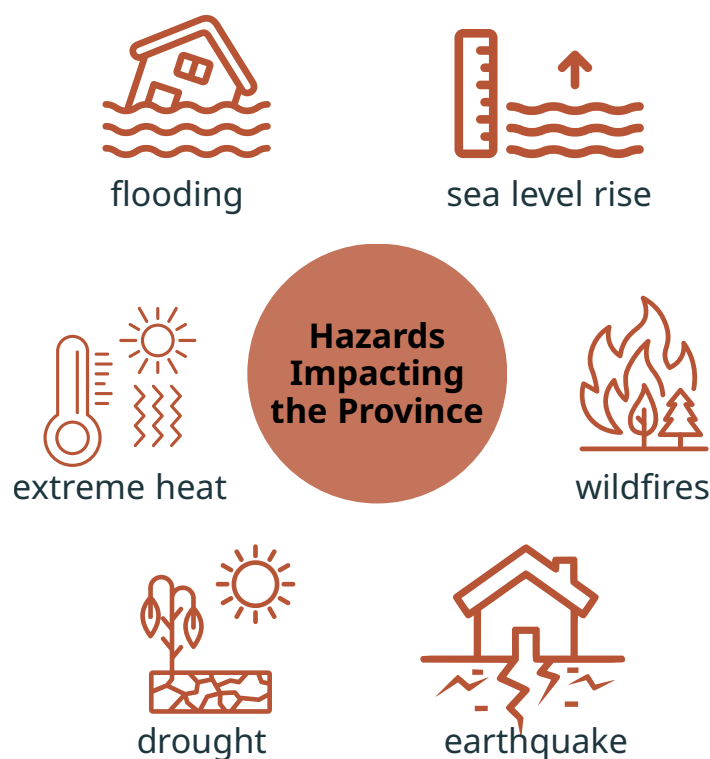
Collectively, these studies demonstrate that emergency management and climate resilience efforts among AHMA members remain uneven and evolving, with persistent challenges related to communication, funding, staffing, and organizational capacity.



Climate Change in BC

Climate change-induced disasters are becoming a major challenge across Canada. The large number of wildfires burning across the country is a testament to an alarming weather trend. Wildfires, extreme heat, and floods have been significantly increasing in recent years. In BC, for example, the area burned in the six years between 2017 and 2023 is much greater than in the previous 58 years. (Western Canada Wildfires Are Raging, Again | The Narwhal, 2024) Higher temperatures increase the risk of wildfires and lightning-caused ignitions, contributing to more wildfire activity, as observed in BC in 2026. BC has experienced—and continues to face—a range of extreme weather events that significantly impact communities, infrastructure, and the environment. Weather patterns are becoming increasingly unpredictable, and the likelihood of multiple extreme events occurring simultaneously is increasing (Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Resilience, 2026). These overlapping hazards place additional strain on Indigenous non-profit housing and service providers, many of which are already operating with limited resources and capacity. The 2021 heat dome, Lytton wildfire, and atmospheric river events are stark examples of how multiple hazards can occur simultaneously, creating compounding impacts across the province. These events were so significant that terms such as “atmospheric river” have entered everyday conversations.

Climate change is increasing both the intensity of extreme weather events and people's exposure to them, making previous projections and preparedness measures insufficient for the challenges ahead. Following the preliminary risk assessment conducted in 2019, the BC Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness published the findings of the Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, 2019). The 2025 Assessment identifies riverine and coastal floods, extreme heat, drought and water scarcity, and wildfires as the key climate-induced hazards in BC. Additionally, these hazards could trigger, amplify or coincide with other hazards, such as earthquakes, creating a situation of overlapping risks (Province of B.C., 2025; Alexander & Pescaroli, 2019).



Hazard vs Disaster: Know the difference!



Hazard is a process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

whereas a

Disaster is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.

Source: (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015)

As climate hazards become more severe and frequent, their effects are felt across multiple aspects of society and the environment. Figure 1 illustrates the impacts of climate change on communities, economies and well being. The consequences include the loss of biodiversity, the evacuation and relocation of communities, changes in crop growth and production patterns, declines in traditional food sources, water scarcity, and damage to critical infrastructure, among many other impacts. These challenges affect not only the environment but also the social, economic, and cultural well-being of communities. Moreover, current risk assessment methods tend to evaluate ecological processes in terms of their impacts on infrastructure and the built environment, often failing to account for the intersectional consequences that disproportionately affect diverse communities and vulnerable populations. (Wale & Huson, 2024)

Climate Change and Indigenous Non-Profit Housing

As climate-induced hazards become more frequent and severe, their impacts are not experienced equally across sectors and communities. When climate hazards intersect with systemic inequalities and compounding crises, such as housing and health, the risks and impacts of these extreme situations intensify.(Neimanis & Hamilton, 2018) (Guzman, 2026) The nonprofit housing sector, already stretched thin with underfunding, is facing new, complex, and unanticipated challenges that are driving up operating costs.(Vantage Point & BC Non Profit Network, 2025) As a result, nonprofits are often forced to balance addressing these emerging needs with limited funding and expertise. Housing, particularly nonprofit and social housing, is among the sectors most affected during emergencies.

Given the current housing crisis and government austerity at the provincial and national levels, exposure to climate-induced hazards places additional pressure on an already overburdened housing sector and housing stock. In recent research on the state of climate resilience of nonprofit housing in Canada, it was found that, as of 2024, more than half of the country's social and affordable housing stock was located in areas exposed to floods or large wildfires, thereby increasing the risk of displacement for their tenants (Joseph & Jafari, 2026). BC, in particular, had a high number of units and, by extension, a high population exposed to climate-related disasters; 73.5% of the province's social housing was exposed to various hazards (Joseph & Jafari, 2026). (see Figure 1)

Exposure to climate-related disasters among social and affordable housing units in 2024 varied across Canada (social and affordable housing units in areas exposed to climate disasters, 2024, per cent)

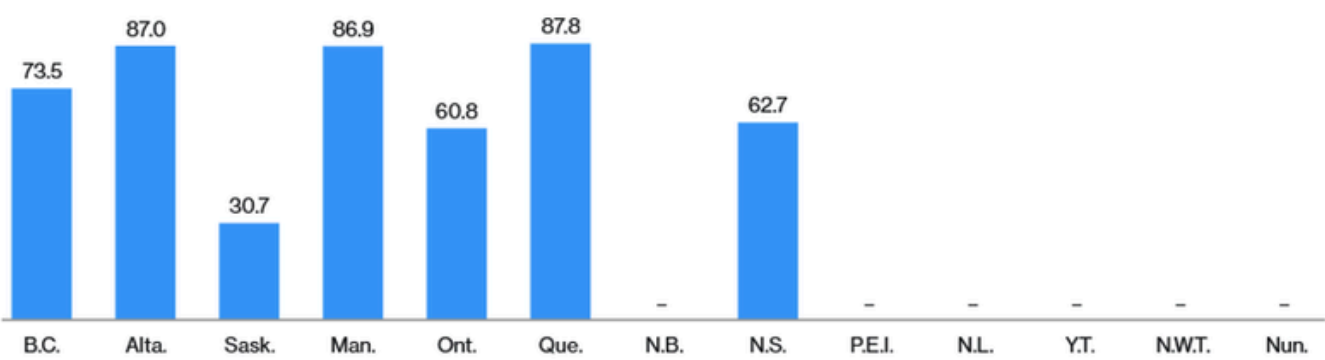


Figure 1 Province-wide percentage of social and affordable housing exposed to climate-related disasters in Canada (Joseph & Jafari, 2026)

Social housing providers, in particular, face multiple risks, such as unexpected costs, infrastructure damage, safety concerns, and Disruptions to business continuity. For tenants and communities, higher exposure means greater risks of evacuation, isolation, threats to traditional food sources, and affordability issues after reconstruction. Low-income and marginalized households face disproportionate risks and have fewer resources to manage displacement, rebuilding costs, loss of income, and other socio-economic impacts brought on by climate-related disasters. Additionally, the increasingly exclusive nature of insurance, especially its exclusion of certain areas of exposure, puts many nonprofits and households at risk (Joseph & Jafari, 2026; Wong & Reith, 2023).

The human cost of all of these is alarmingly high, and it adversely impacts First Nations and Indigenous populations more than others. According to AHMA's BC Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, more than 20% Indigenous households in the province face a core housing need (Aboriginal Housing Management Association, 2022). In the 2026 wildfire season to date, 24 First Nations were impacted, and 16 First Nations were forced to evacuate in BC alone (Canada, 2026).

Although communities living within their home Nations (on-reserve) experience substantial housing challenges, including inadequate housing quality and unmet needs, the circumstances facing Indigenous populations living off-reserve can be more complex due to fewer supports and wrap-around services. Compounded by a lack of research, the whole spectrum of impacts on off-Nation Indigenous communities is not fully understood. While many of the guiding documents in climate action, such as IPCC assessment reports and provincial and local climate action plans, identify and acknowledge that Indigenous communities are among the most vulnerable to climate extremes, the added vulnerability of off-Nation communities is rarely talked about in these strategies (Nurse-Bray et al., 2022).

Current risk assessments often fail to capture vulnerabilities stemming from institutional and colonial gaps, pushing communities further into climate risk (Wale & Huson, 2024). Urban Indigenous tenants are more likely to live in homes that are poorly insulated, lack adequate ventilation, and rely on inefficient or outdated heating systems. These conditions lead to higher energy bills, poor indoor air quality, thermal discomfort and other health impacts, further increasing their vulnerability to extreme weather and climate events (Joseph & Jafari, 2026; Indigenous Clean Energy & Canadian Climate Institute, 2025).



Methodology

The research was primarily conducted using three methods: literature review, exposure mapping, and expert interviews. The detailed methodology is provided in Appendix B.

Literature Review

- existing identified resources (both in AHMA and other organisations)
- Resources from health authorities (websites)
- BCNPHA, BCH and resources from province
- Indigenous communities specific resources

Exposure Mapping

- Current and future exposure of AHMA assets to major hazards in BC
- Hazards covered : Extreme Heat, flooding (coastal and riverine), Wildfires, Drought, Earthquake
- Multi Hazard exposure and hotspots

Interviews

- Resources and supports available for indigenous non profit housing providers.
- Focus area (stages of DRR, climate adaptation etc)
- Gaps and challenges in current system
- Needs and priorities
- Collaboration and partnerships

A total of six interviews were conducted with practitioners, experts, and other stakeholders working in housing, emergency management, and climate adaptation (see Appendix). The interviews explored participants' areas of expertise and perspectives on the available resources for Indigenous non-profit housing providers, implementation barriers, sector challenges, priority actions, and potential opportunities for collaboration with AHMA. The interviews were conducted with practitioners from BC Housing, VCH Public Health, the Canadian Red Cross, the BC Society for Transition Housing, the City of Vancouver, and Building Resilient Neighbourhoods.

State of Publicly Available Climate Resources

There are several publicly available resources on the different stages of emergency management, from the provincial and health region levels to the local level. Table 1 illustrates the types of data that were reviewed in this project. Of the nearly 60 resources, most focused on the preparedness and response stages. These were in the form of outreach and communication materials, toolkits, action plans, etc. Much of the outreach material was adapted from the provincial websites Emergency Info and PreparedBC. Compared to these stages, the focus on recovery was much less. The coverage of evacuation was also glaringly less amongst the reviewed resources.

Table 1: Types of Data and resources reviewed

Phase	Type of resource	Example
Mitigation	Plans and Policies, Building Standards, Frameworks and toolkits	• BC DCRRA; climate data • BC first nations climate strategy and action plan • Emergency Management & Service Continuity (EMSC) Program Planning and templates
Preparedness	Outreach and Communication, Awareness, Early Warning Etc	• Health Authority Websites • Newsletters • BC resource search tool • Fraser Basin Council Heat action planning
Response	Action Plans, Evacuation protocols, Alert systems	• Community Heat Action Plans • Emergency Info BC
Recovery	Best Practices and case studies, Funding resources	• Community energy alliance • UBC CLEAR • BC resource search tool

The relevant climate data and province-wide impacts were obtained from the provincial Hazard Insights tool and BC data catalogue. The province also has a large repository of resources on climate action, case studies, and policies implemented within the province. Apart from the province, there were also action plans and policies from municipalities, health authorities, and crown corporations such as BC Housing. While there were resources that addressed multiple hazards, more focused on extreme heat and wildfires. This shows the climate priorities for the province. The focus on other hazards, such as flooding, drought, and earthquakes, was relatively limited.

What we Heard

Lack of coordination and accountability

When discussing the adoption and implementation of climate adaptation and emergency management resources, plans, and policies, almost all interviewees raised several common concerns. One key challenge is the disconnected regulatory environment across different types of housing. The varying requirements and mandates make it difficult for organizations to effectively meet the diverse needs of the tenants and communities they serve.

Interviewees also highlighted the siloed nature of departments and organizations. Limited coordination between stakeholders, combined with the different mandates governing various housing sectors, often creates barriers to collaboration. This contributes to another major concern: the lack of clear accountability across departments and organizations. Many participants noted that there is no consistent mechanism to ensure coordination and shared responsibility. In some cases, even departments within the same organization struggle to work together effectively.

Funding and Capacity Constraints

A lack of sustainable funding was another major challenge identified by nearly all interviewees. Regardless of whether they worked in municipalities, non-profits, health authorities, or Crown corporations, participants emphasized that limited and short-term funding often hinders climate adaptation and emergency management efforts.

Most available funding is project-based rather than ongoing. As a result, once a project ends, organizations and communities are often left to find their own resources to continue the work. This creates challenges for maintaining long-term preparedness and resilience initiatives. It can also conflict with existing operational requirements. For example, housing providers operating BC Housing-funded buildings are required to have emergency management plans as part of their operating agreements, but they often receive little or no dedicated funding to develop, implement, and maintain these plans.

What we Heard

Interviewees also raised concerns about the types of projects that receive funding. Even when funding opportunities exist, there is often a preference for innovative or new approaches rather than supporting solutions that have already been tested and shown to work in communities. Participants felt that proven, community-based approaches should receive greater support, particularly when they respond directly to local needs.

Overall, organizations interviewed face significant limitations in accessing funding for climate adaptation and emergency management work. Dedicated and reliable funding streams are rare, forcing many organizations to rely on limited resources and piece together support from multiple sources to carry out essential programs and initiatives.

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"We've seen this extraordinarily high-impact work; extraordinarily impressive work being done by our partners and with our partners. Getting sustainable funding for things that we've already been doing, and we know how to do, is virtually impossible. And that is a problem. We see that at all levels of government. We see that all again, within the philanthropic sector too, where there's this like real obsession with "innovation projects and innovative projects". And so, we're constantly excluded from, and our partners are constantly excluded from applying for grants because there's a thing that they've already done or they're just trying to keep doing the thing that works."

Interviewee working on climate resilience

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This reflects findings from previous studies and the literature, confirming that non-profit housing providers lack the resources to adapt to changing climate hazards without targeted government support.(Carriere & Lesnikowski, 2024) The restricted funds under operating agreements often does not allow for expanding and adapting services according to the needs of Indigenous housing.(Cappe, 2021)

The funding constraint also often leads to approaches to climate change adaptation and emergency management being piecemeal and ad hoc. Because funding is typically project-based, actions and interventions tend to be implemented on a short-term basis rather than through a long-term or systemic approach to climate change. These challenges are compounded by severe capacity and funding constraints. For example, in some shelter and transition homes, despite being intended as short-term living situations, people end up residing there for months because of the housing crisis.

What we Heard

This is not to say that long-term planning and strategizing are not being done in the province at all. As seen in the previous section, there is no shortage of risk assessment and planning templates available to nonprofits. Resources such as the EMSC templates from BCSTH, nonprofit climate-readiness resources from Vantage Point, and the Climate Insight tool from ICLEI Canada provide detailed, step-by-step guidance for preparing for emergencies. However, as learned from the interviews, the key reason these assessment templates are not widely adopted and implemented is staff capacity constraints within the nonprofit housing sector .

Given the level of detail involved in most assessments, the process often requires a dedicated staff member to prepare plans and conduct assessments. As a result, existing staff, who are already occupied with their regular service responsibilities, must take on the additional work of emergency planning. Without significant funding support from regulatory organizations, planning and risk assessment activities, unfortunately, add to the burden on organizations already stretched thin by challenges such as worker burnout and staff retention issues stemming from wage gaps.

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“Part of the reason why it [the risk assessment templates] is so detailed, to be honest, was that we were really trying to give them these templates that they could fill out. But oftentimes, the organizations were doing it off the side of their desks, and they didn't have funding to actually do the work. So, it would be the executive director doing it on the weekends, literally, or they're, you know, combined office administrator, or HR person doing it, you know, off the side of their desk.”

Interviewee working in non profit housing society

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This nexus of lack of funding and capacity making nonprofits to take climate action is reflective of the findings from previous studies on the state of nonprofits and their service delivery in times of emergencies.(Ajay et al., 2025; Vantage Point & BC Non Profit Network, 2025) With continuing fund cuts and austerity measures(Sarchuk, 2026) to the housing sector in the province, the burden these nonprofits and their clients much starker in the future.

What we Heard

Lack of specific resources for Indigenous communities

One evident gap identified across the conversations was the absence of preparedness resources and materials focused on Indigenous nonprofit housing. While most stakeholders had dedicated departments for Indigenous communities, there was limited integration of this work with climate adaptation or emergency preparedness efforts. The approaches that did exist were not highly specific and tended to be lateral or supplementary forms of engagement with urban Indigenous communities.

While dedicated organizations such as the First Nations Health Authority and the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of British Columbia provide resources and support for First Nations communities on-reserve, few comparable resources exist for urban Indigenous communities and households living off-Nation. As a result, a significant gap remains in policies, programs, and services designed to meet the needs of Indigenous people living off-Nation. The cultural needs of communities living away from their home Nations are often not adequately considered when developing emergency management and climate adaptation plans and policies. Consistent with the findings from literature, this study found gaps with existing generic risk assessment processes, limited representation of Indigenous worldviews, clashes between differing worldviews, a lack of consideration for land and non-human life, and a lack of multiple ways of understanding time and space.(Wale & Huson, 2024; Knowles, 2020)

Additional challenges relate to cultural safety and the need for culturally appropriate supports during evacuations, including transportation, food, and recreation, particularly for people who are already fleeing violence, and are living in temporary shelters. As mentioned by one interviewee, access to safe transportation can be especially challenging in small communities, where victims and perpetrators may live in the same area. Reliance on shared transportation options in these situations can compromise the safety of those seeking to evacuate. AHMA's Gender Based Violence Housing Strategy also points out the risks of family separation and violence associated with climate induced displacement and inadequate emergency responses. (Aboriginal Housing Management Association, 2025)

What we Heard

Needs and Priorities

There is a need to integrate climate action into the organization's operations to move away from event- or project-based interventions. Embedding funding and climate action would also require clear exit strategies for projects to ensure the longevity of work that extends beyond the life of the project funding. In terms of funding, freedom and flexibility to use the current funding creatively and adapt existing programs based on the needs instead of designing new programs from scratch. Most programs already in communities have been effective for a long time and would see greater uptake than newly introduced programs.

There were considerable interest and priority placed on partnerships and community building, which came up in almost every expert interview. This partnership and collaboration are not just among community networks but across the different levels of organizations. Building partnerships across sectors, increasing transparency in the decision-making process, and advocating to influence how political decisions are made are important considerations for ensuring accountability in programs and interventions. The network between local governments and member organizations is also important for providing intermediate support during emergencies. BCSTH, for instance, has built a community of practice among its members, with flexibility for members to engage and reach out to BCSTH in case of emergencies and for support.

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"So, and what happens with our portfolio is many folks who come into it, they don't have the ability, they're on income assistance or no assistance. They have no cars. So, when you have to evacuate, a building or a community, they have very few resources to do that safely. So, a lot of it is, so we've built sort of a network of people across the province of all of our members who are willing to step up and support folks."

Interviewee working in non profit housing society

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Recommendations

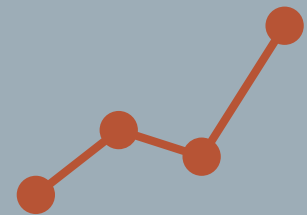
This study puts forth the following recommendations for AHMA to continue the work on climate resilience

Mapping out risks and vulnerability of AHMA member assets



An immediate future research work for AHMA would be to further develop the current hazard exposure map by overlaying local factors like social infrastructure, evacuation shelter, transit, etc., that determine the vulnerability of assets to different hazards. This could also be valuable during evacuations and emergencies by helping communities and responders locate important services and resources. As more organizations recognize the importance of this information and incorporate it into their planning and operations, it can support better emergency management. Volunteer led initiatives like Open Street Map (OSM) mapping can be useful for furthering this work.

Gather Data on climate impacts to assets and tenants



To gain a more grounded understanding of climate risks, evaluating vulnerabilities for assets and tenants would help guide future planning strategies. Tracking data such as the number of casualties, the number of times tenants had to be evacuated, the number of hospital visits or ambulance hiring, etc., could inform future research. In terms of infrastructure, data could include power-outage frequencies, the extent of structural damage, insurance claims, restoration times, etc. Using parts of the risk assessment templates from ICLEI, BCSTH, etc., may provide a preliminary understanding of the extent of impacts in previous years and the financial burden on AHMA members. A culturally safe risk assessment should be developed and carried out that considers the ongoing colonial violence and equity, not just environmental factors.

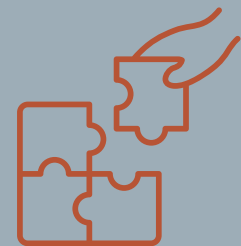
Recommendations

Building an AHMA member community network in different health regions

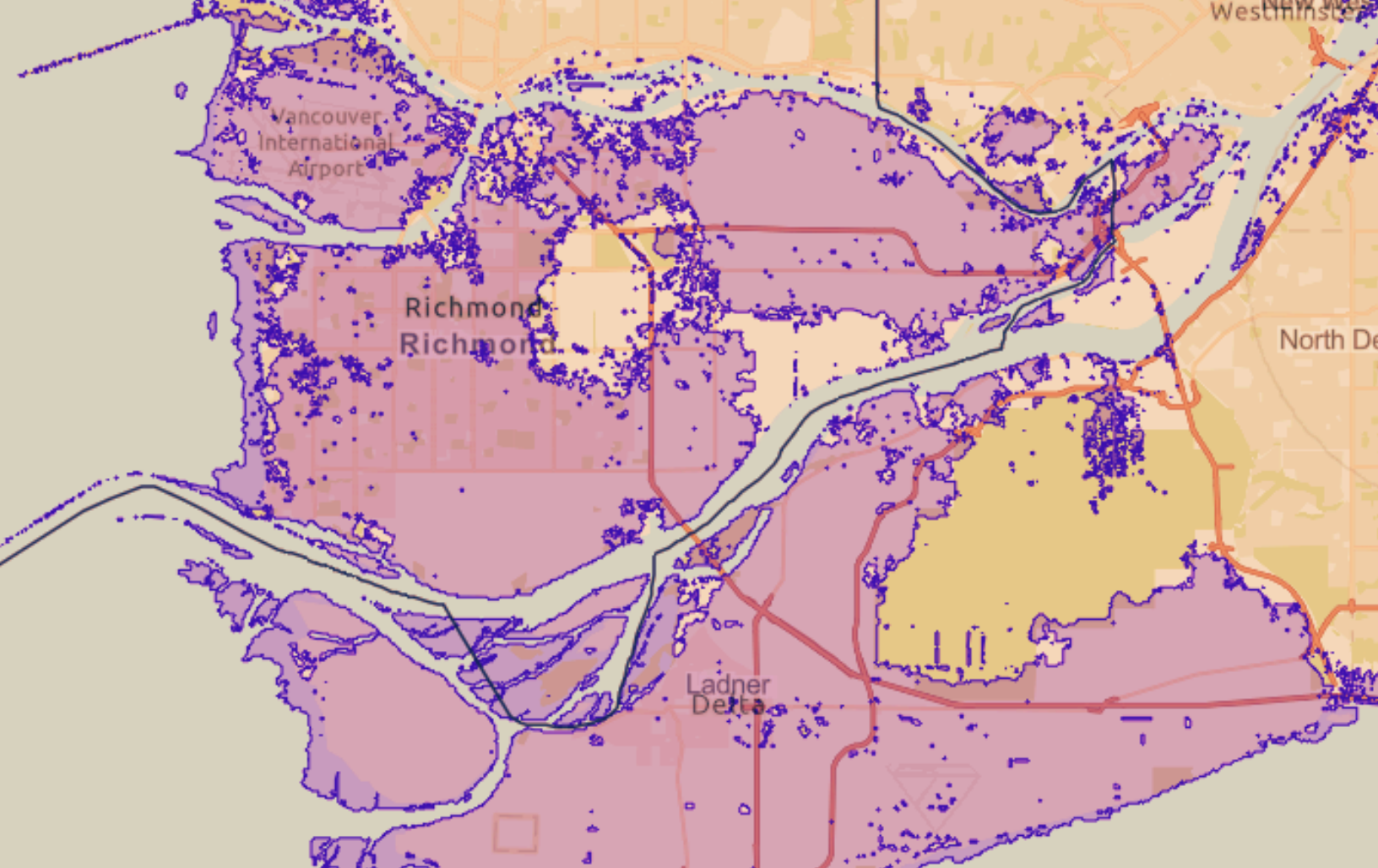


Community networks and collaboration are of utmost importance during emergencies. Facilitating the building of regional AHMA member networks would be an effective way to bridge the gap in response until assistance from AHMA and other institutional aid reaches the community. Opportunities for peer learning and resource sharing may also help members quickly reach out to other members without struggling to find support. This would also entail an initial assessment of each AHMA member's emergency preparedness maturity and the support they can provide to others during emergencies.

Developing Inclusive and context-specific climate solutions



Climate solutions should be designed around the needs of communities and members rather than applying a prescribed set of solutions for everyone. This involves identifying the needs of tenants and staff and adapting existing programs instead of creating entirely new ones. Programs such as Resilient Neighbourhoods' Connect and Prepare work with communities to develop preparedness plans based on their specific needs.

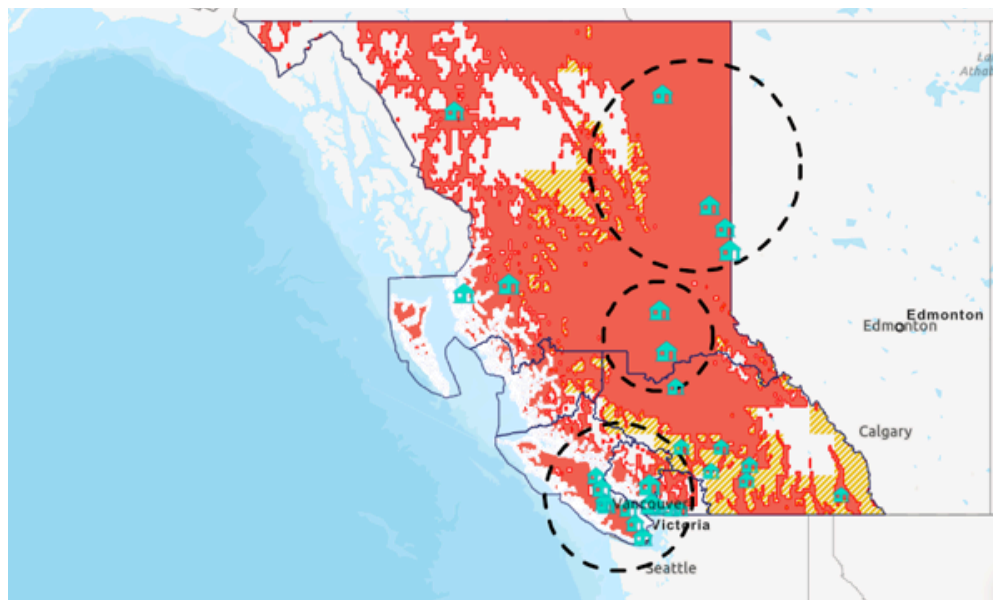


Hazard Exposure Map

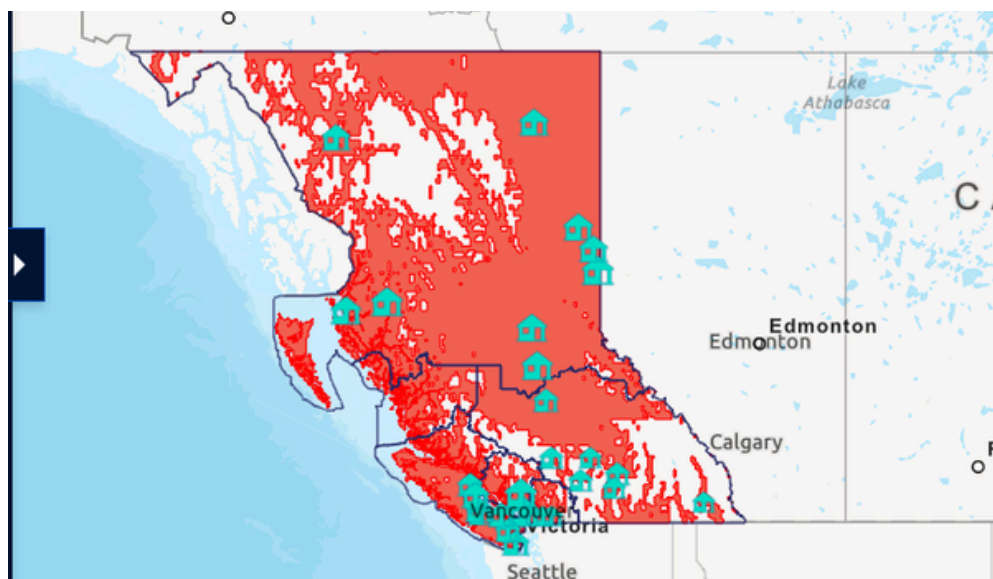
To better understand the hazard risk exposure of AHMA members' assets, an interactive map was developed using hazard exposure data from the BC Hazard Insight Tool and the BC data catalogue. Anonymized asset data from Asset Planner was overlaid on the Provincial exposure data to provide a broad sense of how many assets are exposed to which hazards, and how many are exposed to multiple hazards. The map is hosted as an [interactive story map](#) on ArcGIS platform. One of the key limitations of the map is that the hazard exposure data is at the provincial level; hence, it does not capture hyperlocal factors such as damage to key infrastructure and community cohesion that could be crucial in determining how much the communities will be impacted. While the mapping is broad brushed in its approach, it can be used effectively to take necessary preparedness measures for different hazards and to supplement future funding and planning decisions.

The map shows that majority of AHMA assets are exposed to one or more hazards. Hazards like flooding, wildfires and extreme heat, which are threats currently faced by the province, continue to become starker in the future. Overtime, the exposure to hazards like drought is also seemingly increasing, which could trigger a water crisis.

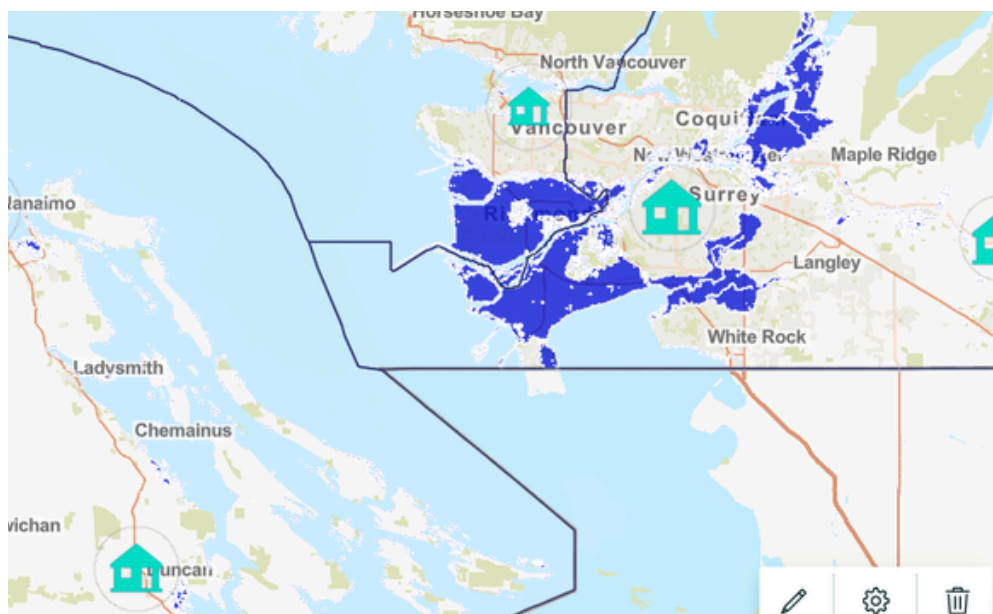
Around 171 assets in the Northern region have a high exposure to drought, wildfires and extreme heat



Map showing future exposure to extreme heat. Almost all of the assets are highly likely to be highly exposed to extreme heat in the future



Around 196 assets in the Vancouver Coastal Health and Island health regions are highly exposed to coastal flooding and sea level rise





Conclusion

Climate action cannot be confined to a specific time frame. It must be consistent, long-term, and integrated across sectors. The province's current approach views adaptation through a values-based lens. However, a one-size-fits-all approach to climate action will not be effective in the long run. To ensure meaningful adaptation, nonprofits and communities should have a greater voice in determining how climate adaptation is implemented. This research study examined climate resilience and emergency planning for Indigenous non-profit housing and service providers across BC by consolidating evidence, mapping resources, and developing decision-support tools for AHMA members. This is not definitive research but rather serves as a starting point for understanding climate impacts and adapting to them.

The transition from awareness to action and advocacy also needs to be more seamless. Achieving this requires genuine political commitment and the mobilization of resources, rather than simply checking boxes on paper. Communities already have access to organizations and collaboratives that are willing to provide support. An approach grounded in strengths and hope is far more effective than the prevailing narrative of doom and gloom surrounding climate change.

Finally, climate adaptation and emergency management cannot be addressed in isolation. They require an intersectional approach that spans multiple sectors and systems. Without addressing underlying systemic issues, including housing, infrastructure, health and well-being, and cultural safety, even the most innovative solutions will fall short if existing programs are not sustained.

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Appendix A : Glossary

1.5-degree temp increase	The 1.5°C threshold represents the maximum rise in global average temperature compared to the pre-industrial era. Staying within this limit allows for the implementation of pathways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate further warming. It is regarded as a critical tipping point, beyond which irreversible changes in weather patterns and ecosystems may occur, with significant consequences for life on Earth. (IPCC AR6)
Adaptation	In human systems, the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects. (IPCC AR6)
Adaptive Capacity	The ability of systems, institutions, humans and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences. (IPCC AR6)
Climate Induced Hazards	The occurrence of a value of a weather or climate variable above (or below) a threshold value near the upper (or lower) ends of the range of observed values of the variable. (IPCC AR6)
Core Housing Need	Core housing need refers to whether a household's housing falls below at least one of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability or suitability, and would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (attains all three housing indicator thresholds) (Statcan)
Critical Infrastructure	The physical structures, facilities, networks and other assets which provide services that are essential to the social and economic functioning of a community or society. (Sendai Framework)
Exposure	The presence of people; livelihoods; species or ecosystems; environmental functions, services, and resources; infrastructure; or economic, social, or cultural assets in places and settings that could be adversely affected. (IPCC AR6) The situation of people, infrastructure, housing, production capacities and other tangible human assets located in hazard-prone areas. (Sendai Framework)
Extreme Heat	A period of abnormally hot weather, often defined with reference to a relative temperature threshold, lasting from two days to months. (IPCC AR6)

Hazard	A circumstance, condition, process, phenomenon, activity or prescribed type of thing, whether natural or human-caused, that may give rise to an emergency (Sendai Framework, 2015)
Intersectionality	Intersectionality refers to the overlaps and combinations between different social categorizations, groups and identities, including Indigenous identity, race, economic, status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age and ability—and how these may result in compounding discrimination or adverse effects. (B.C. Ministry of Health, EDMA)
Mitigation	Phase in which measures are taken for the purpose of identifying and removing or reducing hazards so as to prevent emergencies from occurring, or reduce, to the extent reasonably practicable, the scale, scope and adverse effects of an emergency that may occur;
Preparedness	The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters. (Sendai Framework)
Recovery	The restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and “build back better”, to avoid or reduce future disaster risk. (Sendai Framework)
Resilience	The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management. (Sendai Framework)
Response	Actions taken directly before, during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected. (Sendai Framework)
Retrofitting	Reinforcement or upgrading of existing structures to become more resistant and resilient to the damaging effects of hazards. (Sendai Framework)
Risk	The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society or a community in a specific period of time determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity. (Sendai Framework)
Risk Assessment	A qualitative or quantitative approach to determine the nature and extent of disaster risk by analyzing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of exposure and vulnerability that together could harm people, property, services, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend. (Sendai Framework)

Riverine Flooding	A riverine flood is the temporary inundation of normally dry land by water that leaves the river channel and flows onto the adjacent floodplain
Sea level Rise	Change to the height of sea level, both globally and locally (relative sea level change) (at seasonal, annual or longer time scales) due to (1) a change in ocean volume as a result of a change in the mass of water in the ocean (e.g., due to melt of glaciers and ice sheets), (2) changes in ocean volume as a result of changes in ocean water density (e.g., expansion under warmer conditions), (3) changes in the shape of the ocean basins and changes in the Earth's gravitational and rotational fields and (4) local subsidence or uplift of the land. (IPCC AR6)
Social Infrastructure	The social, cultural and financial activities and institutions, as well as associated property, buildings and artifacts, and policy domains such as social protection, health and education that support wellbeing and public life. (IPCC AR6)
Vulnerability	The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. It embodies a variety of concepts and elements, including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt. (IPCC 2022) Vulnerability as the conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards. (Sendai Framework, 2015)

Appendix B: Methodology

The literature review was conducted to understand the current climate adaptation and emergency management resources available to non-profit housing providers in BC. Reports and studies on the province's housing situation were also reviewed to examine how climate change adaptation and emergency management are addressed within the broader housing policy landscape. The review was organized primarily through BC's health regions, as many services in the province are delivered through these regional systems.

The review covered approximately 60 sources across the following categories:

- Existing reports, studies, and webinars by AHMA
- Websites of BC's five health regions
- Resources from municipalities and Crown corporations
- Climate change resources specific to Indigenous communities
- News reports and opinion pieces
- Risk assessment and emergency preparedness templates
- Policies and plans related to emergency preparedness and climate adaptation
- Other relevant grey literature and reports

To complement the literature review with practical perspectives, interviews were conducted with stakeholders involved in climate adaptation and emergency management across the province. The goal of these interviews was to better understand the climate adaptation resources available to Indigenous housing providers, particularly in the areas of communication, risk assessment, and funding. The interviews also helped identify where AHMA members can be directed for support and resources during emergencies.

To understand the hazard exposure of AHMA assets, a main deliverable of this work involved creating a key deliverable of this work was a story map. The base data for the maps were accessed from the provincial data portal. The current and future exposure to key hazards in the province (extreme heat, wildfire, coastal and riverine flooding, drought and earthquake) were overlaid with the asset data to understand, and earthquakes) was overlaid on the asset data to identify which assets and locations were most exposed to different hazards. The data about AHMA assets were accessed from the asset planner. To ensure privacy, information of individual assets was hidden about individual assets was obscured, and buildings were clustered so that the information was and buildings were clustered, so that the information is not available in the public sphere.

Appendix C: Resource Table

Resource	Organization	Description
Risk Assessments and planning templates		
Climate Insights Tool	ICLEI Canada	The tool helps to understand risks to buildings from different hazards.-The tool also offers suggestions for building adaptations and retrofits based on the provided data. Only requires you to fill in basic information about the assets, their age, hazards, the building's location/postal code, etc.
Emergency Management & Service Continuity (EMSC) Program Planning for Women's Transition House and Support Programs	BC Society for Transition Housing	Gives step-by-step instructions on the actions and how to organize the different parts of the tool. This organization can be adapted for the project at different levels.
Non-Profit Climate Readiness Planning Templates	Vantage point	Provides different templates and planning documents for emergency management and planning for nonprofits. The website also has templates for nonprofit boards to aid in long-term planning.
PreparedBC	Province	Fillable guides and templates to prepare for emergencies.
Extreme Heat Mapping Resources	Fraser Basin Council	Provides a guidance framework report for mapping extreme heat planning. The report serves as a step-by-step roadmap for how to prepare, develop, and analyze an extreme heat mapping project, and can be applied without requiring extensive background knowledge or technical training.

Resource	Organization	Description
Outreach and Communications		
Community Resilience Planning	Interior Health	Has a wide range of information on climate change events and resilience planning for Interior communities. Provides an overview of preparedness measures for extreme heat, along with fact sheets and toolkits. Also hosts links to other province-wide resources, such as BCCDC and Prepared BC. Also have a newsletter for alerts.
Climate Change and Health	Fraser Health	Climate change and emergency topics are key health priorities for Fraser Health. Seasonal readiness and multilingual tips for organizations to access for winter, spring, and summer. Emergency kit prep plan. Also links to other provincial resources
Emergency Preparedness	Island Health	Preparedness measures in the event of different emergencies.
Climate Change and Health	VCH	Provides detailed information regarding the climate threats faced by the communities, categorised based on hazards. They also have a hazard risk assessment and adaptation framework.
Climate Change and Health	Northern Health	Provides information about climate change and outreach materials. Also hosts their climate change and sustainability roadmap
Extreme Heat and warnings	Northern Health	Provides warnings and communication material on extreme heat.
Emergency Info BC	Province	Provides real time emergency information for BC residents

Resource	Organization	Description
Data		
BC Health Geographies Portal	Ministry of Health	Web Portal providing information on BC Health Boundaries
Indigenous Climate Hub	Okwaho Equal Source	The purpose of the Indigenous Climate Hub is to provide helpful resources and information on climate change, and to provide a space to share resources, information, and impactful climate change stories from Indigenous perspectives.
Funding		
EMCR DRR Funding Dashboard	Ministry of EMCR	Includes information about disaster risk reduction funding programs managed by the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness.
BC Hazard Insights Tool	Provincial	The B.C. Hazard Insights Tool provides insights into how people and assets across the province are exposed to six priority hazards.
Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding program	Province	The Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) program provides funding to First Nations and local governments in B.C. to enhance their capacity to withstand and adapt to natural and climate-driven hazards.
BC Community Climate Funding Guide	Clean BC	Guide on climate action funding for Indigenous communities and local governments. Covers funding opportunities on climate adaptation, community infrastructure, sustainable transportation and clean energy

This image is an enlarged version of the change in global mean temperature between 1750-2100 graph by IPCC.