



**HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE:
 TRANSITION TO FIRST NATIONS CARE,
 CONTROL & MANAGEMENT OF HOUSING
 AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

OVERVIEW

The Chiefs-in-Assembly in December 2018 approved Resolution 57/2018, *National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy*, (the Strategy).

The Strategy was developed jointly by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Canada. The AFN, guided by the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure, led its development.

The Strategy is one of several key steps in a multi-year process whose goal is First Nations care, control, and management of housing and infrastructure. The Strategy, and its preceding foundational document, the **Policy Reform Framework: Towards a First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Strategy**, recognize the following key principles and considerations that First Nations have been advocating for decades:

- Cultural differences, Treaties and regional approaches.
- First Nations are rights holders.
- Transition to First Nations control will be at a pace dictated by First Nations.
- First Nations will be supported during and after the transition.
- New First Nations regional entities are needed to provide ongoing support and services.
- Stable, predictable, sufficient and long-term funding is required.
- The transition will rely on regular engagement of First Nations.
- New, First Nations controlled housing & infrastructure systems and regimes must include First Nations citizens and members living away from First Nations.

The process leading to First Nations control of housing and infrastructure has the following key milestones.

Milestone	Date & Status
Prime Minister’s 2017 written direction to key Cabinet Ministers to “...bring control and jurisdiction back to Indigenous communities.”	Ministerial mandate Letters; 2015 to 2018, & ongoing.
Federal Budget contains an additional \$600 million to Close The Gap in First Nations housing.	Announced in 2016; rolls out over 3 years; additional Close The Gap measures in coming years.
Co-Develop with Canada an AFN-led Policy Framework.	2017, completed & adopted by Chiefs-in-Assembly.
Co-Develop with Canada an AFN-led national strategy.	2018, completed & adopted by Chiefs-in-Assembly.
Data collection on housing needs to support future Federal Budget requests.	February & March, 2019; ALL FIRST NATIONS URGED TO PARTICIPATE.
Co-Develop with Canada an AFN-led Strategic Plan.	2019, currently in early stages of development.
Regional & First Nations readiness.	First Nations and regions at different stages of readiness.
Memorandum to Cabinet authorizing transformative change to First Nations control	Originally expected in late 2018, now expected late 2019 or early 2020.

ISSUE UPDATE

March 2019

Milestone	Date & Status
Discussion/negotiations to create new, First Nations controlled housing regimes and authorities at the First Nations, sub-regional or regional levels.	To start when First Nations/Regions are ready; e.g. BC region started discussion with Canada in 2018.

Milestone	Date & Status
Federal Government's sole role becomes to provide stable, predictable, sufficient and long-term funding to First Nations and to their housing & infrastructure authorities and entities.	New Federal funding-only role starts when legal agreements are signed, expected in the coming years.

UPDATE

An AFN-Canada Joint Working Group co-developed the Strategy (available on the AFN website) which provides a long-term approach to First Nations housing and related infrastructure on-reserve, as well as, housing for First Nations members who live in urban, rural, and northern areas. The Strategy reflects input of Chiefs, First Nations technicians, Indigenous housing providers in urban centres, and Federal officials, such input obtained through three national forums and several think tank sessions starting in 2016. The Strategy approved by Chiefs-in-Assembly in December, 2018 contains the following key features.

Draft Strategy Goals:

- 1) Establish a First Nations Housing Policy and Research Institute.
- 2) Establish national and regional housing and related infrastructure delivery frameworks to assist in the design of governance models that are independent from political influence.
- 3) Coordinate housing governance delivery systems across all jurisdictions to better serve First Nations members living away from their First Nation in urban, rural and northern areas.
- 4) Secure sufficient, sustainable, and predictable funding to support First Nations and First

Nations organizations to undertake the care, control and management of housing and related infrastructure.

- 5) Ensure the new First Nations-driven housing systems have funding that is adequate, predictable, and long-term, and is geared to satisfying First Nations housing needs.
- 6) Develop ways to leverage government housing and related infrastructure investments to enhance financial opportunities.
- 7) Identify and develop new financial mechanisms for housing delivery.
- 8) Maximize funding for housing delivery systems across all jurisdictions to better serve First Nations members living away from their First Nation in urban, rural and northern areas.
- 9) Ensure First Nations have the skills and capacity to exercise their responsibility, care, control, and management over housing and related infrastructure.
- 10) Hold information sessions with First Nations leadership, communities, technical experts, regional organizations, and underrepresented groups, etc., on strategic considerations of what incremental steps can be taken now, during and after transition.

NEXT STEPS

DATA GATHERING ON ALL FIRST NATIONS

This **data gathering** project supports First Nations creating their own baseline data to inform their needs and priorities. Having standardized and consistent data will also inform the Government of Canada on funding transfers required to fully address First Nations housing and related infrastructure needs on-reserve.

All First Nations will have the opportunity to participate in a questionnaire. **Participation in the questionnaire is of the utmost importance as collecting the most up-to-date and relevant data will assist in identifying solutions to the state of housing and related infrastructure for First Nations.**

It is expected that there may be gaps in the data collection where some First Nations do not, or cannot participate in the data collection exercise for various reasons. To compensate, the AFN has contracted the **First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)** to develop a sampling strategy that will extrapolate needs for non-participating First Nations so that a full picture emerges of real needs for all First Nations.

The AFN has provided funds to regional organizations to oversee the implementation of the First Nations-led, co-developed questionnaire with each First Nation in their region. The AFN has also arranged regional training for the regional overseers of the First Nations housing officials who will be either arranging with local First Nations staff the gathering of the data or collecting it directly themselves. The AFN contracted the **First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group (TSAG)**, a First Nations organization in Alberta, to develop the electronic data collection tool being used to gather the data, which will ensure quality and integrity of the data collected.

The data gathering exercise has started and is expected to be completed by the end of March 2019. The analysis, interpretation and matching of

needs to required funding amounts is expected to be completed by April or May 2019.

DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

The Chiefs, by Resolution 27/2017, *Development of a First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy*, directed the co-development with Canada of a strategic plan with short, medium and long-term objectives and outcomes. The strategic plan will also contain performance measures to help First Nations and the Federal Government track progress and adjust activities and projected completion dates, as required.

The AFN began to co-develop the strategic plan in early 2019 with expectations of its completion later the same year.

MEMORANDUM TO CABINET

The Chiefs, by Resolution 27/2017, also directed the AFN to co-develop, with Canada, any legislation, regulations, and policy instruments (such as a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC)) related to the **10 Year National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy**. The same Resolution requires that any resulting legislation be ratified by the Chiefs-in-Assembly before being introduced into the federal House of Commons.

It is expected that the preparation of the MC will significantly transform the Federal Government's First Nations housing policy and authorize the transition to First Nations control of housing and infrastructure to begin in mid to late 2019 for Cabinet consideration in late 2019 or early 2020. Federal officials are preparing their annual update to Cabinet expected to be considered in February 2019.