



HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE: FIRST NATIONS NATIONAL HOUSING AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

The AFN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) has been mandated by AFN Resolutions to work in partnership with First Nations and the Government of Canada on the development of a First Nations National Housing and related Infrastructure Strategy. Moving towards First Nations care, control and management of housing and related infrastructure has been the guiding principle. Related infrastructure refers to all infrastructure that is used to support housing, for example, roads, lot servicing, connections to water and waste water systems.

The AFN established a Joint Working Group comprised of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), CCoHI, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Employment and Social Development Canada. The Joint Working Group co-developed a Policy Reform Framework towards a First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Strategy.

AFN Resolution 87/2017, *Support for a National Housing and Infrastructure Policy Framework*, supports the Policy Reform Framework to be

included as an Annex in ISC's Memorandum to Cabinet (MC). The Policy Reform Framework sets the groundwork for fundamental reform to federal housing and infrastructure programming.

Policy Reform Framework Highlights:

- Understand the true costs of housing and infrastructure.
- Strategic research and data gathering exercise.
- First Nations to decide their own level of governance.
- Ongoing engagement to develop strategies and frameworks based on community needs and priorities.
- First Nations engagement sessions are required to ensure transition process is First Nations led.
- Develop a strategic plan with short, medium and long-term objectives.
- Develop options to start the transition process.

The December 2017 Cabinet date for ISC's MC was postponed but ISC is targeting the fall 2018 to include the Policy Reform Framework as an Annex in their MC.

UPDATE

The joint Working Group co-developed a Draft Strategy which provides a long-term approach for First Nations housing and related infrastructure on-reserve as well as housing for First Nations who live in urban, rural, and northern areas. The Draft Strategy was presented at a Dialogue Session held at the AFN July 2018 Annual General Assembly in Vancouver, British Columbia. The Draft Strategy is a work in progress and will be revised based on the input received.

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

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- 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 that 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

A key component to the Draft Strategy is undertaking a data gathering exercise to determine First Nations housing and related infrastructure needs on-reserve.

This will support First Nations to have their own baseline data to inform their needs and priorities. Having standardized and consistent data will also inform the Government of Canada on what is 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.

If there is a low participation rate, the AFN will work with the First Nations Information Governance Centre to develop a sampling strategy to ensure there is a representative sample at the regional and national level.

The AFN will be working with the joint Working Group and the First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group (TSAG) to develop the

questionnaire. The TSAG's electronic data collection tool will be utilized in the data gathering exercise which will ensure quality assurance and integrity of the data collected.

The AFN will be contacting First Nations regional organizations to request a proposal submission on how their organization will administer the questionnaire with each First Nation in their region. The AFN will develop Terms of Reference to assist First Nations regional organizations in developing their proposals.

The AFN would like to seek the assistance from the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) to support the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Their experience and expertise will support the credibility of the analysis of the data collected. Having FNIGC involved will support data stewardship and secure storage of the data ensuring privacy and security measures are maintained.

The data gathering exercise will commence in the fall 2018. The AFN is targeting to present the Draft Strategy and Data at the December 2018 Special Chiefs Assembly.