



## **HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE: CMHC ON-RESERVE PROGRAMS AND TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **OVERVIEW**

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Despite First Nations opposition, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) made a unilateral decision to change its delivery service and awarded a national contract to a single service provider called OZHI First Nations Professional Services (OZHI) to provide progress and physical condition reviews for CMHC's on-reserve programs. OZHI First Nations Professional Services was the successful candidate pertaining to a Request for Proposal (RFP) released by the CMHC titled, On Reserve Technical Services Providers. This RFP closed on December 18, 2015

This meant that the services provided previously by First Nations, Tribal Councils and Technical Service Providers were no longer required. First Nations expressed concerns with the selected contractor's readiness, responsiveness and capacity to carry out the work in a manner that meets the required

service standards and program deadlines as was previously provided by First Nation Technical Service Providers.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 28/2017, *Restore Technical Services back to First Nations for CMHC Housing Programs*, passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, called for the contract with OZHI to be rescinded and to restore the technical services provided by First Nations, Tribal Councils and First Nations Technical Service Providers.

As a result of the many letters issued by First Nations and their regional organizations and the advocacy work by the AFN, with support of the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure, CMHC is finally responding to First Nations' concerns. CMHC has extended the current contract with OZHI on a monthly basis until services are transferred and delivered by First Nations.

### **UPDATE**

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CMHC is asking for a coordinated effort - a regional model that can serve all First Nations in the region. Regional service providers will be expected to have their own internal quality assurance and operational reviews and an important aspect of these proposals is the inclusion of training and capacity building components.

In order to support the timely development and analysis of proposals, CMHC is requesting that the AFN assemble a working committee that would look into common elements such as cost proposals. This would include service fees for each type of technical review along with the travel expenses related to the on-site visits in line with the current market for this type of industry; details on how the proponent plans to communicate with CMHC and the

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service providers; processes and templates and information security and document management practices that will be in place to avoid any privacy breach and related risks.

CMHC provided basic information regarding the total number of projects and budgets in each region under each of the (CMHC) On-

Reserve Section 95 and Residential Rehabilitation and Assistance Programs in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 years. This information will be helpful when the regions develop their proposals. Regions will be submitting proposals according to the CMHC requirements and which will also meet the needs of First Nations at the same time.

### NEXT STEPS

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CMHC is open to receiving proposals based on their “Key Expectations for On Reserve Technical Service Providers” document and their Request for Proposal to serve as a guide for their outsourcing requirements.

The AFN Housing and Infrastructure sector has submitted a funding proposal to CMHC for the establishment of a Working Committee and Coordinator to assist and manage the technical service proposals that the regions need to submit by April 1, 2018. A certain number of Regions have confirmed they met this April 1, 2018, deadline. There is concern that CMHC will not break off the OZHI contract if all regions do not meet the deadline. In support of this, other regions will consider providing that support until that region can be in a position to provide that service.

Regions will be submitting their proposals according to the CMHC requirements and which will meet the needs of First Nations at the same time.

The AFN is proposing to organize a working committee that will provide feedback and direction on the request for proposals to be held in Ottawa, Ontario. The AFN will look after logistics of coordinating these meetings and telecoms. CMHC has indicated that they are willing to provide financial support for working committee activities.

An AFN Bulletin will be sent out to all First Nations informing them of CMHC’s new approach.

