



What is the history of this issue and how does it impact First Nations?

The backbone to transformative change in First Nations' housing and related infrastructure is the National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy (the Strategy) providing the framework for long-term approaches for First Nations to transition to assuming jurisdiction over housing and related infrastructure. The Strategy offers goals and actions related to governance and delivery, funding and finance, skills and capacity and information sessions while detailed initiatives, outcomes (short, medium, long-term), and performance measures are proposed in the Implementation Plan. The companion documents serve as a guide for First Nations to assume care and control over their housing systems.

How has the AFN's recent advocacy affected this area?

The National Chief continues to advocate for \$4 billion for First Nations housing as outlined in the pre-budget request to the Minister of Finance, which is considered a down-payment toward the full implementation of the Strategy.

Stronger advocacy by the National Chief and the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure through the COVID-19 pandemic has led to not only increased recognition of First Nations housing needs but also increased investments. This was seen through the \$1 billion Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) that prioritized "Indigenous" on- and off-reserve projects to house the homeless as well as the 2021 Federal Budget providing \$6 billion for First Nations infrastructure over four years, including housing.

The AFN commits to working with Canada towards a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) or similar mechanism and a Federal Budget submission that will clarify the federal policy. Its main feature is to support First Nations in negotiating agreements with Canada to transfer housing to First Nations control.

Where do we hope to go in the future?

The Strategy and its foundational documents will support a Memorandum to Cabinet to formalize Canada's fundamental housing policy reform expected late 2021 or early 2022. Essential to the submission will be the multi-year budget request reflecting total housing investments required to close the housing gap. The AFN has begun the work to develop cost estimates on the current and future housing need and will be based on the recent housing needs data report (First Nations

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On-Reserve Housing and Related Infrastructure Needs Technical Report, 2020¹) and other relevant data and studies. The cost estimates analysis will produce a range of scenarios on the investments required to close the housing gap in First Nations.

Other initiatives to advance First Nations jurisdiction over housing include:

- Developing a business model and business plan for Chiefs' consideration to establish a National First Nations housing policy and research centre;
- Conducting preliminary work required to update data on First Nations housing and related infrastructure needs;
- Developing a communication strategy to effectively convey Strategy implementation efforts to Chiefs, First Nations and wider audiences;
- Analyzing and identifying measures to fill the gaps in skills and capacity for First Nations housing professionals to effectively plan, lead, organize and control their housing;
- Implementing a 'housing Continuum of Care' approach that integrates health, persons with disabilities, education and other sectors into First Nations housing plans;
- Providing ongoing support to the Dene Nation to reach their housing goals;
- Advocating for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) improvements in information sharing and transparency; and
- Advocating for Federal departments' improved understanding of Treaty and inherent rights, reconciliation, self-determination and systemic discrimination in First Nations housing.

¹ <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Draft-First-Nations-Housing-and-Related-Infrastructure-Strategy-July-2018-1.pdf>