

NEHA Submission – Indigenous Services Canada

Access to safe, adequate, affordable, and culturally appropriate housing is essential to the health and well-being of all Canadians. Canada has committed to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing. However, Indigenous Peoples in Canada are experiencing a well-known and long-lasting housing shortage. Aging and inadequate housing and the absence of critical infrastructure in Indigenous communities, especially in northern Indigenous communities, has had ongoing negative consequences for social, health, and economic outcomes. Investing in housing improves quality of life, narrows socio-economic gaps and increases Indigenous participation in the economy.

Indigenous Services Canada delivers multiple programs and initiatives promoting safe, adequate, and affordable housing for Indigenous peoples, including women, Two Spirit, Trans, and gender-diverse people. The sections below provide an overview of these programs and how they work to address housing needs.

First Nations On-Reserve Housing Program

Overview

The First Nations On-Reserve Housing Program helps provide increased and better quality housing in First Nation communities in most of Canada and utilizes the authorities of the Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program to flow funding. While Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada remains the lead for Northern Indigenous housing, Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) On-Reserve Housing Program has a small allotment to support communities in Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Specifically, the First Nations On-Reserve Housing Program supports the construction of new homes, renovation and retrofit of existing homes, lot servicing, and subdivisions. Additionally, investments also support First Nation communities and related organizations with capacity enhancement, housing management and administration, technical services, and financial innovation.

Between April 2016 and December 31, 2024, ISC made targeted investments totaling \$2.67 billion to support 6,051 housing projects in 611 First Nations communities. This funding is in addition to approximately \$175 million provided annually by ISC in A-base or permanent annual funding to First Nations to support a range of housing needs. First Nation communities and their residents may also secure funding from other sources for their housing needs, including shelter charges and private sector loans.

Federal Funding Commitments for On-Reserve Housing since 2022

Budget 2022 committed \$2.40 billion over five years, starting in 2022-2023, to support First Nations housing on reserves, including:

- \$2.17 billion over five years to address pressing housing needs including construction of new homes, renovation of existing homes, lot servicing, subdivision development and energy-efficiency/climate resiliency upgrades;
- \$223 million over five years to support the recruitment, training and retention of qualified housing managers in First Nations communities, as well as investments into the development of professional training and designations, tools, resources and technical supports and services (e.g., circuit rider training programs);
- \$12.1 million over five years to support the creation of a network of Indigenous housing financial organizations under an umbrella housing authority to guide and support First Nations communities and members in building financial capacity and borrowing readiness.

Budget 2022 also provided \$2 billion for the purchase, construction, and/ or renovation of housing units in First Nation communities to meet the needs of children and families. Of this, \$209.4 million was disbursed to First Nations in 2023-2024, \$413 million in 2024-2025 and an additional \$438 million will be allocated in 2025-2026 to eligible First Nations.

The housing funding is intended to support First Nation children, youth and families on-reserve and in Yukon. The Fund aims to support the safety and well-being of First Nation children in a manner that is culturally appropriate, in their best interest, and provided on the basis of substantive equality. The housing funding will support all First Nations, including Self-Governing and Modern Treaty First Nations who are currently receiving FNCFS Program funding. First Nations exercising their jurisdiction in relation to child and family services through *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* also maintain eligibility for this housing funding.

Budget 2024 committed \$462.1 million over six years, starting in 2024-2025, reflected under Housing, including:

- \$426 million over five years, starting in 2024-2025, to support on-reserve housing investments; and
- \$36.1 million over five years, starting in 2025-2026, to support the Canada Greener Homes Initiative (supporting home energy efficiency and lower costs).

Conducting Meaningful Engagement, Respecting Indigenous Rights, and Incorporating Evidence-Based Targets, Timelines, and Milestones

ISC has practiced co-development with Indigenous communities and organizations; engaging in dialogues and liaising with partners continuously in working towards developing various policies, strategies, programs and establishing transfer partnership.

Additionally, the Government of Canada is committed to using the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) analytical tool to support the development of inclusive policies, programs and initiatives. GBA Plus analysis considers sex, gender, age, disability, education, ethnicity, economic status, geography, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation to inform the development of policies and initiatives to anticipate and mitigate any barriers to accessing or

benefiting from government programs and/or initiatives. GBA Plus considerations are used in all areas of the federal government, including engagement.

ISC worked closely with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and other government departments to engage with First Nations and to co-develop the National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy. As a result, the priorities and themes from First Nations communities identified through the Strategy have informed the On-Reserve Housing Program's funding streams where funding prioritized for training and capacity development, support for dedicated and qualified housing managers and administrative staff, in addition to funding for renovations and the construction#42 of housing units on-reserves.

ISC also continues to engage with communities, organizations and Tribal Councils that are ready to pursue the transfer of housing and infrastructure service delivery in lieu of existing ISC program and project management frameworks. ISC officials work with transfer partners to develop a model for service delivery in way that meets their needs, while recognizing that Indigenous control over service design, delivery, funding, decisions and priorities is essential to ensuring high-quality, culturally relevant services; services that meet the needs of youth, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, those in remote communities and other vulnerable populations.

ISC's work with the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council (FNHIC) is an example of a partnership and a federal engagement effort towards transfer. FNHIC continues to determine ways to provide practical supports and to respond to immediate needs through pilot projects and work through their First Nations Housing Managers Association. Most notably, ISC has also supported the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (ANFWA), an organization leading progress, innovation, and a long-term solutions for the transfer of water and wastewater management for all Atlantic First Nations communities.

Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing

Overview

The Government of Canada has committed \$4.3 billion towards urban, rural, and northern (U.R.N.) Indigenous housing.

Budget 2022 provided \$300 million to develop a U.R.N. Indigenous Housing Strategy and address urgent housing needs. ISC provided \$281.5 million of this allocation to the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc. (NICHI) to address immediate needs while the Strategy was being developed.

Budget 2023 committed \$4 billion over seven years towards implementing the U.R.N. Indigenous Housing Strategy, formed based on cross-country engagements led by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The Strategy takes a two-pronged approach: 1) \$1.18 billion delivered by ISC and CIRNAC to distinctions-based groups to direct towards

U.R.N. projects, and 2) the remainder for the establishment of a National Indigenous Housing Centre through a Request for Proposal process led by CMHC.

Conducting Meaningful Engagement and Respecting Indigenous Rights

The U.R.N. Indigenous Housing Strategy is specific to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals and communities. All funding is being directed towards initiatives supporting Indigenous housing. The Strategy uses a “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” approach that aims to transfer control of the funding to Indigenous groups.

The Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion’s 2021 mandate letter called for the co-development of a U.R.N. Indigenous Housing Strategy with Indigenous partners as a stand-alone companion to the National Housing Strategy, and the creation of a National Indigenous Housing Centre. Between January and April 2023, the Government of Canada, through CMHC, supported Indigenous-led engagements on the development of a U.R.N. Strategy. Over 40 in-person and virtual engagement sessions were held and 950 survey responses were received to inform the Strategy. Over 6,000 individuals participated in the engagement.

Through engagement, participants expressed that women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people had particularly acute housing needs. The Strategy included women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people as a priority group.

Addressing Urgent Needs – NICHI

Indigenous Services Canada provided \$281.5 million of the funding announced in Budget 2022 to the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated (NICHI) to address immediate urgent and unmet urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing needs through an open and transparent call for proposal process.

On November 25, 2022, the National Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Coalition issued a formal statement that outlined their intent to form a “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” housing entity that would seek to deliver urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing funding on behalf of the Government of Canada. On March 7, 2023, NICHI, as the operational arm of the National Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Coalition, submitted a business case to administer the \$281.5 million. The business case proposed an Indigenous-led application intake process to allocate funding in a manner that is equitable, accessible, and transparent. NICHI was granted permission to deliver the \$281.5 million to meet urgent and unmet urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing needs.

Since then, NICHI’s membership has expanded to over 100 Indigenous housing service providers. NICHI membership includes groups focusing on women’s housing, such as the National Indigenous Women’s Housing Network, the Ontario Native Women’s Association, and the Biminaawzogin Regional Aboriginal Women’s Circle.

NICHI held an expression of need process from November 2023 to January 2024 to seek proposals for projects to support. NICHI completed a series of Webinars to inform organizations

of the application process and timelines. Over 400 project proposals were received. All project funding decisions were made by NICHI's Project Selection Advisory Council, made up of experts in Indigenous housing.

Throughout summer and autumn 2024, NICHI and ISC jointly held regional announcements to announce the recipients of the funding, which included 74 projects across the country aimed at building over 3,800 housing units.

Funding Distinctions-Based Partners

Starting in 2024-2025, ISC is delivering \$533 million over seven years in U.R.N. distinctions-based funding to First Nations partners in the provinces. CIRNAC is delivering \$651 million over seven years in U.R.N. distinctions-based funding to Métis, Inuit, Self-Governing and Modern Treaty First Nations, and First Nations in the territories.

ISC's funding framework under the Strategy follows a "For Indigenous, By Indigenous" approach in delivering funding directly to First Nations partners, that set priorities and determine which projects to support based on engagement with their communities. Recipients include regional First Nations organizations, Tribal Councils, and service providers.

First Nations partners have designed and held engagement sessions, through financial support from CMHC, with First Nations leadership, housing directors, and service providers in their regions to formulate plans for the funding. ISC developed work plans for the implementation of the funding with First Nations partners and these partners selected the reporting requirements for monitoring, including the disaggregation levels.

Incorporating Evidence-Based Targets, Timelines, and Milestones

Data from CMHC reports and [the Census](#) shows that Indigenous peoples living in U.R.N. areas face distinct housing needs. Approximately 12.2% of Indigenous households in U.R.N. areas are in core housing need versus 9.6% for non-Indigenous households. Over 171,000 Indigenous people in U.R.N. areas are in core housing need as of the 2021 Census. The incidence of core housing need among Indigenous households ranges from 10% in rural areas, to 13% in urban centres, to 17% in the North outside Inuit Nunangat, and 41% inside Inuit Nunangat. In northern Indigenous communities, housing needs are exacerbated by increased construction and maintenance costs due to remoteness, a shorter construction season, and climate change. This evidence led to the creation of the U.R.N. Indigenous Housing Strategy and the decision to have NICHI administer funding to address urgent needs.

Research and engagement have also shown that Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, Trans, and gender-diverse people face heightened housing needs. CMHC's engagement towards forming the U.R.N. Strategy identified, among the groups experiencing greatest housing need, women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, given their increased risk of being targets of violence. The lack of affordable, accessible housing results in women staying in dangerous situations, or accepting unsafe housing due to a lack of other options. Several Calls for Justice from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry related to human security reference housing, including ensuring Indigenous women and gender-diverse people have access safe

housing, and the immediate construction of new housing and provision of repairs to meet the needs of this population. Lone-parent families (the majority of which are led by women and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ people) were also identified as being at greater risk of encountering affordability challenges because they have one income and many responsibilities to shoulder.

Based on these factors, partners identified people fleeing violence and 2SLGBTQIA+ people as priority groups in the U.R.N. Indigenous Housing Strategy.

The Government of Canada continued its “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” approach in the reporting element of U.R.N. funding, giving recipients the flexibility to set the indicators that would be most relevant to their projects and to their organizations’ needs.

Addressing Urgent Needs – NICHI

NICHI determined the indicators that it would be reporting on, including the disaggregating factors. ISC and Treasury Board Secretariat worked with NICHI to develop a reporting framework. Some of the results and performance indicators NICHI has chosen include specific provisions for women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, including:

Result: Increased capacity of Indigenous housing and service providers in URN areas to support Indigenous peoples as they progress through the stages of the housing continuum.

- Indicator: Number of Indigenous women, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities and/or those who are representative of the Two Spirited and LGBTQIA+ community accessing shelters and support programs in: emergency supports /safe houses / shelters; transitional / supportive housing; nonmarket / affordable housing; market rental housing; homeownership (single homes, etc.).
 - o Disaggregated by: gender, stage of life (age range), self-identification of having a disability, and self-identification of being a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Result: Improved access by Indigenous peoples to services and supports that help them move out of emergency shelters into supportive/transitional housing.

- Indicator: Number of Indigenous individuals served who are placed in more stable housing, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, non-market affordable housing, market rental housing, rentals, and homeownership.
 - o Disaggregated by: gender, stage of life (age range), self-identification of having a disability, and self-identification of being a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Result: Indigenous women, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities and/or those who are representative of the Two Spirited and LGBTQIA+ community are culturally safe and socially well as indicated through transitional and/or short-term housing.

- Indicator: Number of Indigenous women, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities and/or those who are representative of the Two Spirited and LGBTQIA+ community in transitional and/or short-term housing.

- Disaggregated by: gender, stage of life (age range), self-identification of having a disability, and self-identification of being a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

NICHI is working with project recipients to collect reporting.

Funding Distinctions-Based Partners

First Nations partners determined the indicators that they will be reporting on, including the disaggregating factors. Common indicators include:

- The number of units repaired / renovated through U.R.N. funding.
- The number of units acquired / built through U.R.N. funding.
- The number of households provided with affordability supports through U.R.N. funding.

Partners report twice annually on results: interim reports at the end of October and annual reports at the end of July. As partners received their 2024-2025 funding allocations in February and March 2025, it is anticipated that the 2024-2025 annual reporting that will be submitted in July 2025 will only include very preliminary results. The interim report in October 2025 and the annual report in July 2026 will likely include more fulsome results.

It is also anticipated that partners may introduce additional reporting requirements over the seven years of U.R.N. funding, as plans are solidified. These may include data that is disaggregated by gender. Any new indicators would reflect First Nations determination of projects and initiatives, some of which may be aimed to deliver results not solely focused on capital investments and builds.

Prioritizing Those in Greatest Need and Eliminating Discrimination

The URN Indigenous Housing Strategy is designed to specifically address the housing needs of Indigenous peoples living off-reserve and away from their community.

During engagement led by CMHC, partners identified the following priority groups:

- Youth including postsecondary students.
- Elders and elderly, including those residing in long-term care facilities.
- People fleeing violence including men, women, children and non-binary individuals.
- Persons with disabilities including those residing in care facilities.
- 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Women are included in all of these groups, and are the majority among people fleeing violence and the elderly. Transgender, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit individuals are specifically represented by the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, but are also included among members of the other priority groups.

Native Women's Association of Canada and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak received funding to lead engagement sessions and other National Indigenous Women's organizations including Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada and Ontario Native Women's Association provided written submissions. It is important to note that while CMHC engaged with National Indigenous

Women's Organizations, and the participants included those from the Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ community, there was no direct engagement with Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ organizations.

Addressing Urgent Needs – NICHl

NICHl formed an independent Indigenous Project Selection Advisory Council made up of impartial Indigenous leaders who are housing experts from across Canada and understand the needs of urban, rural and northern communities. In determining which projects to support, the Project Selection Advisory Council considered a variety of allocation factors, including the size of Indigenous population served; target population (First Nations, Métis, Inuit, women, elderly, 2SLGBTQI+, single adults, families, people with disabilities, elderly, etc.); remoteness and geographic location; cost of living; cost of supplies; and demonstrated need.

Many projects funded by NICHl are specifically targeted to support women and gender-diverse people. Examples include:

- Ksalsuti Wellness Resources in Oromocto, NB: \$1,341,224.50 to construct transitional housing and add supports for First Nations women and children escaping violence.
- Native Women's Shelter of Montreal in Montreal, QC: \$497,000.00 for capacity building to add staff and provide supportive services to Indigenous women.
- Fort Albany Women's Shelter in Fort Albany, ON: \$1,000,000.00 for capacity-building to add staff and provide supportive services to Indigenous women.
- Nahnahda-Wee-ee-Waywin in Sioux Lookout, ON: \$1,492,675.00 for a capital project to construct supportive housing for First Nations and Métis women and children escaping violence.
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres in Toronto, ON: \$1,000,000.00 for a capacity project to increase staff for supportive services supporting Indigenous women.
- Thunder Woman Healing Lodge Society in Toronto, ON: \$9,600,000.00 for a capital project to purchase and renovate affordable housing for Indigenous women.
- 2Spirit Manitoba in Winnipeg, MB: \$5,478,995.63 for a capital project for a mixed housing model of shelter space and transitional units with supports for Indigenous 2Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people.
- First Nation Healing Centre Inc. in Winnipeg, MB: \$1,700,000.00 for a capital project to rehab supportive housing for Indigenous women and children fleeing violence.
- Manitoba Inuit Association in Winnipeg, MB: \$1,000,000.00 for a capacity project to add staff and supportive services for Inuit women and children escaping violence.
- LaRonge Native Women's Council in La Ronge, SK: \$925,000.00 for a capital project to purchase and renovate affordable housing units for Indigenous women.
- Central Urban Métis Federation in Saskatoon, SK: \$1,461,439.00 for a capital project to construct transitional housing for Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and their children escaping violence.

- Tillicum Lelum Friendship Centre in Nanaimo, BC: \$1,000,000.00 for capacity development to add staff and supportive services for Indigenous women and their children.
- Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness in Victoria, BC: \$888,447.80 for a capacity project to add staff and provide transitional supports for Indigenous mothers and their children, with priority to those fleeing violence.

More information on these projects, including a full project list, is available on NICHl's website at www.nichi.ca.

Funding Distinctions-Based Partners

Funding was provided directly to distinctions-based groups under the U.R.N. Strategy to support a "For Indigenous, By Indigenous" approach, wherein First Nations organizations make decisions about the priorities and projects they will support in their region. First Nations partners determined, based on research engagement with their communities, which groups to prioritize in their U.R.N. projects. Some partners chose to focus on data collection as an early priority project to understand the needs of their community to enable them to make data-driven project choices.

Dedicating the Maximum of Available Resources

U.R.N. funding is intended to fill gaps in other programming. U.R.N. housing for Indigenous peoples is a complex issue linked to many other federal and provincial programs. Addressing housing needs in a holistic way requires supports, particularly in health, employment, and education, in addition to construction and acquisition of capital. In a [2024 report prepared for CMHC](#), the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples estimated that it would take a one-time investment of \$1.32 billion and annual investments of \$58 million to close the off-reserve housing gap and support 28,522 Indigenous households out of core housing need. The Assembly of First Nations estimated that it would cost \$135 billion to close the on-reserve housing gap by 2030. On-reserve and off-reserve housing needs are linked, as many people move off-reserve due to the lack of housing.

Addressing Urgent Needs – NICHl

Funding provided to NICHl was intended to address urgent needs across the country. In its expression of needs process, NICHl received over 400 proposals for projects addressing immediate U.R.N. housing needs totaling over \$2 billion. NICHl was only able to fund 74 projects with its allocation from Budget 2022.

Funding Distinctions-Based Partners

The distinctions-based funding is intended to address the priorities identified by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners. Some recipients have expressed that the funding allocated to their region is insufficient for the projects they wish to undertake. The remainder of the U.R.N. funding is to be used to develop a National Indigenous Housing Centre, which will include a process for Indigenous communities and service providers to access funding for U.R.N.

projects. The funding provided through the National Indigenous Housing Centre will mitigate the gaps that were identified by partners.

Employing All Appropriate Means and Ensuring Government Collaboration

The U.R.N. Indigenous Housing Strategy is an interdepartmental initiative, and ISC is working closely with CMHC and CIRNAC on its implementation.

Off-reserve housing for Indigenous peoples falls under multiple federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal jurisdictions. Many of the wraparound supports that would support people in accessing and retaining housing fall under other departments, including health, education, employment, and infrastructure. This interconnectedness could pose a barrier to addressing U.R.N. housing needs. Another potential barrier to advancement is the duration of funding. Funding was provided to NICHI for two years, ending in 2024-2025, and to distinctions-based partners for seven years, ending in 2030-2031, and the timing for the funding to the National Indigenous Housing Centre.

ISC is administering the U.R.N. funding under the Terms and Conditions of Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples, under the Housing Stream. In developing the Terms and Conditions, the parameters were set to be broad enough to cover an expansive range of housing initiatives that partners may choose to support, including construction and acquisition, repairs, housing support services, capacity-building, and research.

Promising Examples

Engagement on distinctions-based funding was led by partners rather than the federal government. This meant that First Nations organizations were designing the sessions, identifying participants, and choosing the discussion questions. To maximize engagement from the broadest range of participants, many partners designed their engagement approach to include a variety of in-person and virtual engagement sessions, in group and individual settings, coupled with surveys.

As projects funded through U.R.N. are still in their early stages, ISC does not yet have data to share on successful practices; however, many of the projects seem to include promising approaches to address housing needs. More information about the projects funded through NICHI can be found on NICHI's website at www.nichi.ca.

Family Violence Prevention Program

Overview

The Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) supports Indigenous women, children, families, and 2SLGBTQI+ people who are affected by gender-based violence through access to a network of emergency shelters and transitional housing (second-stage) across Canada,

including in the North and in urban centres, as well as through community-driven violence prevention projects. Key housing initiatives that the FVPP has jointly led with CMHC include:

The 2020 Shelter Initiative for Indigenous Women and Children

Through this initiative, \$44.8 million (CMHC) over five years was committed to build and \$40.8 million over five years and \$10.2 million annually ongoing (ISC) in operational funding for 12 new shelters (10 shelters in First Nations communities on reserve across the country, and two in the territories) to support Indigenous women and children.

The 2021 Comprehensive Violence Prevention Strategy

As part of this initiative, the Government of Canada committed \$724.1 million to expand access to a continuum of Indigenous-led culturally relevant supports for Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQI+ people facing gender-based violence. This included \$420 million over five years through CMHC that sought to support the construction of 38 emergency shelters and 50 Indigenous-led transitional homes across Canada. This is in addition to a \$304.1 million investment over five years and a further \$96.6 million annually through ISC to support the operation of these shelters and transitional homes, as well as the expansion of funding for culturally relevant violence prevention activities. New shelters are selected under the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative in collaboration with Indigenous and Inuit Steering Committees.

Conducting Meaningful Engagement and Respecting Indigenous Rights

The joint CMHC-ISC led Indigenous Housing and Transitional Housing Initiative is being implemented in consultation with Indigenous Steering Committees (including one Inuit-focused Steering Committee) comprised of representatives from national Indigenous organizations who advocate for Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQI+ people.

CMHC and ISC have been working with Indigenous Steering Committees (including one Inuit-focused Steering Committee) to select participating projects and to seek advice on the implementation of the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative.

Indigenous national organizations, including the National Indigenous Circle Against Family Violence, are also often engaged on an ongoing basis on the FVPP's activities including changes to its reporting and policies with regard to shelter and transitional homes' operations. The Program works collaboratively with partners to improve its reporting tools and indicators for enhanced data that is intersectional, distinctions-based, disaggregated, and captures the realities of the delivery of family violence prevention services on and off reserve, including in the North and in Urban areas.

Incorporating Evidence-Based Targets, Timelines, and Milestones

The FVPP collects data from the shelters and transitional housing to which it provides operational funding. This data is collected and analyzed on an annual basis and includes aggregated information related to the clients served at these facilities (average age,

sexual/gender orientation, average nights spent at the facility, number of accompanying minors etc.).

Data from existing ISC-funded shelters, which is distinctions-based and gender identity disaggregated, were collected and compiled to inform the implementation of the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative by helping to determine funding levels for new facilities and creating benchmarks to help assess applications for new shelters and transitional homes. The ongoing collection of data from shelters and transitional homes helps demonstrate gaps in Program funding, inform policies and determine areas where funding needs to be focused.

The table below provides an overview of targets, timelines, and actual results:

Result	Indicator	Target	Data Source	Date to achieve target	Actual Results
Indigenous women, children, families, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people receive an increased level of enhanced services and participate in violence prevention activities	Percentage of requests for overnight residence in ISC-funded shelters by women, children, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people that are met	100%	Program Data Collection Instruments	March 2024	2023-24: 77%
The safety and security of Indigenous women, children, and families, including 2SLGBTQIA+ people, are improved	Percentage of Indigenous women who report being a victim of intimate partner violence in the previous 12 months	Decrease results year over year.	Statistics Canada's Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces - Intimate partner violence: Experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women in Canada, 2018	March 2026 (Expected year of release of Statistics Canada survey)	2018: 17%

Due to the increased costs of construction, as a consequence of labour and material shortages, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the overall increase in the cost of living, there has been a delay in the construction timelines for some of the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative projects. Shelters are also experiencing challenges with rising operating costs due to increases in the complexity of client needs and the cost of living.

Prioritizing Those in Greatest Need and Eliminating Discrimination

The FVPP's network of shelters and transitional housing provide emergency and short term housing for Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQI+ people, as these groups are at a disproportionately high risk of experiencing family violence. Indigenous women face among the highest rates of violent and non-violent victimization of all population groups in Canada. Data from 2018 showed that 63% of Indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual violence committed by an intimate partner or a non-intimate partner in their lifetime, compared to 45% among non-Indigenous women. This was exacerbated during the height of COVID-19. Data indicates that the incidence of gender-based violence for the Canadian population in general not only increased but so did its severity, with Indigenous women experiencing more violence than usual. 2SLGBTQI+ Indigenous people face a similar risk – data from 2019 demonstrated that, compared to non-2SLGBTQI+ non-Indigenous people, 2SLGBTQI+ Indigenous people were more likely to have experienced intimate partner violence (37% versus 13%) or non-intimate sexual or physical violence (28% versus 5.9%). It is likely that this population also experienced more severe and more frequent violence during the pandemic.

Data from existing ISC-funded shelters, which is distinctions-based and gender disaggregated, was collected and compiled to inform the implementation of the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative by helping to determine funding levels for new facilities and creating benchmarks to help assess applications for new shelters and transitional homes. As new shelters and transitional homes open, ISC will monitor the facilities through annual data collection processes which includes GBA+-related data components to ensure that these facilities are benefiting who they are intended to and to make improvements if barriers are identified.

Funding levels for existing shelters are determined through a funding formula developed in 2006. This formula is being reviewed to include a needs assessment that reflects the true cost of operating a shelter or a transitional home.

GBA+ considerations have been integrated to the initiative since its inception and have informed policy/funding authorities, including the FVPP's terms and conditions - through which operational funding for these projects is managed.

Prior to 2020, ISC only had authority to provide operational funding for emergency shelters on reserve. With revised authorities approved by Cabinet and Treasury Board, the program was able to support shelters in the Territories (2020), as well as shelters and transitional homes across all of Canada (2021). The Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative (2021) addresses disparities identified with regard to accessing ISC's existing network of shelters including the need to increase access for Métis, Inuit, Urban Indigenous, and First Nations living off reserve. This also includes increasing access for 2SLGBTQI+ Indigenous people escaping family violence by funding facilities that address the specific needs of this group. Further, this initiative also expanded access to the continuum of housing services for all of the previously

identified groups by including new transitional housing as part of the initiative. These factors are also being taken into account in the redevelopment of the operational funding formula.

Dedicating the Maximum of Available Resources

ISC is currently undertaking a formal needs assessment through the redevelopment of the operational funding formula for shelters and transitional housing for Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQI+ people escaping family violence. This analysis will involve consultation with operators of these facilities and Indigenous organizations that specialize in this area. The existing formula was developed in 2006 and is outdated and only accounts for shelters located on-reserve.

Regarding the resources needed to resolve the issue, it is anticipated that additional funding will be required to implement a new funding model and increase operational funding levels for emergency shelters and transitional homes. Regarding the resources needed to meet the plan's targets and timelines, the FVPP will continue to work with shelter staff and Indigenous partners to identify and address needs. Ongoing challenges are expected due to the cost of living, the impact of tariffs, and the increasing complex needs of shelter clients who require mental health and addiction supports. The formula redevelopment work findings will help determine whether resources are sufficient.

Employing All Appropriate Means and Ensuring Government Collaboration

The Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative is a joint initiative with ISC and CMHC. The mandate to construct these facilities is within CMHC's purview. ISC is mandated to provide operational funding for emergency shelters and transitional housing within its network. Facilities not located on First Nations reserves are also subject to provincial, territorial, and municipal jurisdictions.

The Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative is associated with multiple Government-Wide Commitments related to the prevention of violence against and increasing safe spaces for Indigenous women, children, families, and 2SLGBTQI+ people including the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (22.2, 42, 43), the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice (1.8, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.7, 7.3, 16.7, 16.19, 16.29, 17.4, 17.20, 17.23), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan Measures (SP009), and the Gender Results Framework as it will help contribute to reducing the incidents of violence against Indigenous women and girls and ensuring that Indigenous Peoples are culturally safe and socially well. Further, the initiative advances the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice 4.7, 16.19, 16.29, and 17.20 that are directly related to housing rights for Indigenous women, Two Spirit, Trans, and gender- advancement on this issue. For example, Call for Justice 4.7 outlines the following:

We call upon all governments to support the establishment and long-term sustainable funding of Indigenous-led low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, transition homes, second-stage housing, and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people who are homeless, near homeless, dealing with food insecurity, or in poverty, and who are fleeing violence or have been subjected to sexualized violence and exploitation. All governments must ensure that shelters, transitional housing, second-stage housing, and

services are appropriate to cultural needs, and available wherever Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people reside.

Promising Examples

The Indigenous Steering Committees were actively engaged in the selection of projects to participate in the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative including through formal review processes which involved the creation of Selection Committees that were overseen by the Steering Committees. Ultimately, the Indigenous Steering Committees provided the final recommendations for projects to be put forward. The committees were comprised of representatives from First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Urban Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQI+ organizations with expertise in family violence prevention. Involving as many diverse bodies of expertise as possible was crucial for the successful implementation of the initiative and helps to ensure that as many of these groups are reached as possible with regard to providing shelter and transitional housing services.

The selected facilities that are currently under construction or are now operational as part of the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative will provide emergency shelter and transitional housing services for Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQI+ people across Canada escaping violence including in the North, remote, and Urban areas. These projects advance safe housing for women, Two Spirit, Trans, and gender-diverse people and help fill a critical gap in housing for these groups. As more and more of these facilities are constructed and become operational, results from this initiative will be shared, including best practices and highlights.

Child and Family Services

Overview

Additional to the housing funding commitment, and consistent with the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the reform agenda for the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) program has shifted the focus of the Program from protection to prevention and early intervention. Significant investments have been made in prevention services to support the well-being of First Nation children. These investments support First Nations in developing and implementing services that address the distinct needs of their children and families, including the safety and best interest of child(ren), in culturally appropriate ways, to keep families together. Funding for prevention services supports First Nations children, youth, young adults, families and communities and provides stabilized and predictable prevention funding allowing those who deliver services maximized flexibility. This ensures services are needs-based and community-led with the goal of preventing children entering into care and supports family reunification.

Between 2015-2016 and 2023-2024, the funding provided under the FNCFS program has increased from \$676.8 million to \$3,571.7 million. During the same period, the proportion of

prevention funding provided over the overall funding envelope increased from 9% (\$62.6 million) to 42% (\$1,493.5 million). In earlier years, the program solely provided funding to service providers (mostly First Nations Child and Family Services agencies and councils). Since 2018-2019, the FNCFS program has expanded its eligible recipients to include First Nations and, as of November 2024, the FNCFS program was providing funding to 568 First Nations and 118 service providers across Canada and in the Yukon. These funds benefited more than 480,000 individuals.

Under CHRT 41, and aligned with Provincial legislations and standards, ISC provides funding to support activities associated with the planning, preparation and construction of residential facilities such as group, emergency, transition and receiving homes. These homes enable communities to provide interventions that are culturally-based and that ensure continuity of family and community. They also help to maintain cultural connections for First Nations children, including those in alternate care. Since the inception of CHRT 41, ISC has supported the construction of 7 child/youth placement homes, 17 emergency placement homes, 14 family reunification homes, 7 shelters, and 25 transitional housing facilities, as well as supporting pre-capital planning related to a number of additional facilities.