



CANADIAN HOUSING AND RENEWAL ASSOCIATION
INDIGENOUS CAUCUS

Indigenous Innovation Forum 2023

A NEW LOOK AT INDIGENOUS HOUSING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Progress up to 2023.....	2
Feedback on the Indigenous Innovation Forum 2023	4
Participant Engagement.....	5
COMPONENTS OF A NATIONAL URN INDIGENOUS HOUSING STRATEGY	5
VISIONING OUR FUTURE DIRECTION	9
Appendix A – Raw Data	i

F I B I
For Indigenous By Indigenous

U R N
Urban, Rural and Northern

Progress up to 2023

Since Caucus Day 2018, the Indigenous Caucus of the Canadian Housing & Renewal Association (CHRA) has advocated for a “For Indigenous by Indigenous” National Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, based on the following ideals:

- Indigenous designed, led and delivered by an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous-governed entity
- Design and delivery reflect the unique needs and circumstances of Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous people
- Service-based, not distinctions-based
- Flexible approach to funding to: maintain and expand housing, support wraparound services and increase the capacity of Indigenous providers
- Ensure transparency, accountability and oversight in funding administration
- A Centre of Excellence for Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Research

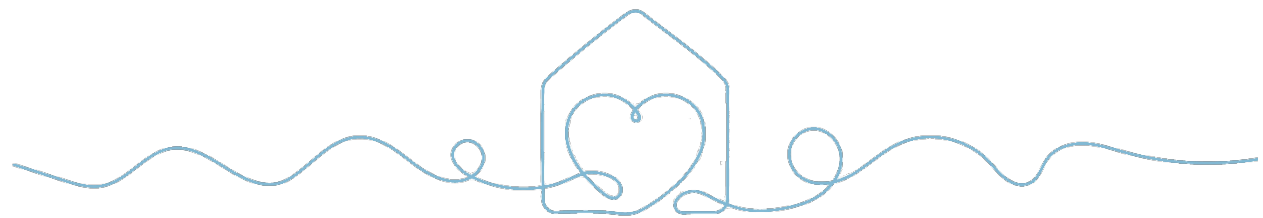
The cornerstone of the strategy would be the creation of a “For Indigenous By Indigenous” National Housing Centre. Indigenous designed, owned and operated, the Centre would take a service-based approach to meet the affordable housing and supports needs of urban, rural and northern families and individuals.

The Indigenous Caucus' work has resulted in the achievement of major milestones:

- National Housing Council's (NHC) Urban, Rural and Northern Housing working group recommended immediate, substantial and sustainable investment in URN Indigenous housing and homelessness and that an Indigenous governance entity would oversee the delivery of URN Indigenous Housing funding on behalf of the Government of Canada
- Federal Government committed to adding a dedicated Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy to the National Housing Strategy
- Dedicated federal funding of \$281.5M in federal Budget 2022, and \$4B over seven years in Budget 2023
- Formation of the National Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Coalition and signing of a Declaration asserting Indigenous Rights to a national urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy, created by and delivered by Indigenous people (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 23)
- Incorporation of NICH (National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc.) to roll out a National Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, distribute resources to Indigenous housing projects and support wraparound services. Its governance, management and operational structures utilize the strengths that Indigenous service organizations bring to the collaboration to actualize reconciliation promises and advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Feedback on the Indigenous Innovation Forum 2023

- **100%** agree or strongly agree that the **content covered was useful**.
- **100%** agree or strongly agree that the content covered was **presented at the right level**.
- **90%** agree or strongly agree that the **visual aids were useful**.
- **100%** agree or strongly agree that the **presenters and speakers were good**.
- **80%** agree or strongly agree that the **activities were effective**.
- **100%** strongly agree that the **MC/Facilitator was good**.
- **70%** agree or strongly agree that the **venue was good** (AV, temperature, accessibility, etc.).
- **100%** agree or strongly agree that the **catering was good** (food, beverage, clearing dishes, etc.).



Participant Engagement

Components of a National URN Indigenous Housing Strategy

Using an egalitarian input exercise, participants were asked to identify urgent, current and future needs to be addressed by a National URN Indigenous Housing Strategy. Themes emerged from the responses and are described below. For direct participant inputs see Appendix A.



Urgent Needs

Homes & Infrastructure

Participants emphasized the pressing need for diverse types of housing, including single-family houses, apartments and multi-family homes, which should be equipped with essential services such as water, plumbing and fire protection. It was identified that an Inuit women's shelter to provide a safe haven for vulnerable individuals is needed. The importance of transitional housing was also highlighted as a critical component to address immediate housing needs. Additionally, participants recognized the significance of capital repairs to existing units, emphasizing the importance of maintaining and improving current housing stock. In terms of implementation, participants suggested utilizing existing plans for apartment buildings to expedite construction and reduce costs. They also proposed incorporating Indigenous cultural elements into housing design, such as tipis or huts as self-contained units for single individuals, providing them with furnished starter places to support their transition towards self-sufficiency. Participants expressed enthusiasm for utilizing pre-built or quickly constructible tiny homes, involving Indigenous young people in the construction process to foster skill development and empower them to contribute to housing initiatives in other communities. Participants also suggested including options to purchase existing rental units to expand housing opportunities. The overarching sentiment conveyed by participants was a strong call to action to address housing needs by prioritizing construction and development efforts.

Coordination

Participants highlighted the significance of coordination among existing service providers and services to enhance the capacity of Indigenous people and communities. To promote effective coordination, the establishment of a FIBI structure is essential to facilitating collaboration in the housing sector, which is what NICHI represents. Participants emphasized the importance of channeling funding directly to existing housing providers through NICHI, rather than Indigenous governments, to ensure efficient and targeted support at the community level. Conversely, some questioned the delays in fund release and suggested utilizing a team of Indigenous housing partners to expedite the process instead of creating new bureaucratic structures. Participants also raised the importance of the equitable distribution of resources throughout the country and called for a simplified application process for new housing projects to streamline and expedite the allocation of funds, ensuring that all Indigenous communities have access to adequate housing. Additionally, participants called for the establishment of a mechanism that can expedite the approval process for housing funding and emphasized the benefits of large-scale buying of materials to reduce costs and increase efficiency. Participants also stressed the significance of obtaining data directly from Indigenous housing groups during the application process and highlighted the need to address various housing challenges including substance abuse, mental health issues and the affordability of housing for young Indigenous families. In summary, participants emphasized the importance of effective coordination, streamlined processes, equitable distribution and community involvement to address housing needs more efficiently.

Services & Programming

Participants shared many important perspectives related to Services & Programming. They called for the allocation of funds to hire housing support workers who can assist hard-to-house tenants with essential needs such as identification, medical cards, housing applications and liaising with social services. They emphasized the significance of Indigenous outreach supports provided by Indigenous people themselves to ensure effective engagement and support within Indigenous communities. Participants stressed the importance of incorporating culturally-based housing supports to address the unique needs and preferences of Indigenous individuals and families. They recognized that addressing housing challenges requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond physical infrastructure, emphasizing the need for prevention strategies. Specifically, participants highlighted the urgent need to address the negative social determinants experienced

by Indigenous women and their families, including violence and the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). They emphasized that all three aspects—bricks and mortar, prevention and addressing social determinants—are essential components of an effective strategy. Furthermore, participants called for a housing subsidy model, where a set amount per unit is provided directly to Indigenous housing corporations to support their operations and ensure affordable housing options for Indigenous communities. Overall, participants emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive and comprehensive programming and services that address the multifaceted needs of Indigenous individuals and families in the housing sector.

Advocacy

Participants shared valuable insights related to Advocacy. Clean drinking water emerged as a crucial advocacy issue, highlighting the urgent need for improved access to safe drinking water in Indigenous communities. While participants acknowledged the allocation of \$4B over seven years, they expressed concerns that this amount may not be sufficient to meet the extensive housing needs across the country. They called for efforts to advocate for funding on a community-by-community basis, emphasizing the need to view housing as a basic human right rather than a political tool. They highlighted the significance of a comprehensive approach, incorporating both prevention and physical housing solutions. Participants raised concerns about the shortage of available land for housing initiatives. It was suggested that it may be possible to access National Housing Strategy (NHS) funds through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Finally, participants called for extending operating agreements to ensure long-term support for housing initiatives. In general, participants expressed a strong commitment to advocacy efforts aimed at addressing housing challenges and ensuring that adequate support is provided to Indigenous communities across the country.

Current Needs

Participants identified many current needs with a specific focus on funding. They emphasized the importance of securing increased resources for housing initiatives and called for continued advocacy efforts in this regard. Participants also called for the timely distribution of funds to ensure efficient implementation. They highlighted the need for simplified application processes as well as streamlined approvals for straightforward applications. Participants emphasized the need for sufficient financial resources, including funds for capital repairs, modernization, maintenance and service administration. Additionally, participants suggested applying for funds from programs like Infrastructure Canada's Reaching Home.

In addition to funding, participants highlighted other priorities such as supportive and affordable housing of both single- and multi-family construction, providing opportunities for home ownership, accurate statistics and data representation from Indigenous perspectives, incorporation of Indigenous values into housing programs, programs for land-based education and healing for prevention, addressing capacity issues with housing providers and creating culturally respectful places for seniors and Elders to reside and receive end-of-life care. Overall, participants underscored the importance of comprehensive support and adequate funding to effectively address the diverse current needs in Indigenous housing.

Future Needs

Participants highlighted a few important future needs. They shared the importance of supporting sustainable organizations in the housing sector to ensure long-term success. Participants called for the implementation of rent-geared-to-income programs to enhance affordability for individuals and families. They stressed the need to look beyond cities to ensure housing solutions in rural and northern areas as well. Maintenance emerged as a crucial aspect, emphasizing the need for ongoing support and resources to ensure the longevity and quality of existing housing. Participants expressed the desire for Indigenous-owned multi-family complexes that provide affordable housing options within Indigenous communities. They emphasized the significance of land planning and acquisition, recognizing the importance of securing suitable land for future housing initiatives. In summary, participants called for a comprehensive approach that considers Indigenous ownership, sustainability, affordability, geographical diversity, capital maintenance and strategic land planning to address future housing needs effectively.

Visioning Our Future Direction

In an interactive breakout session, the following three questions were posed. The next section is a summary of the group responses – for direct inputs see Appendix A.

- Considering the advances made in the last year, what does For Indigenous By Indigenous look like going forward?
- What should be next for the Indigenous Caucus?
- If we took a rights-based approach, what would it look like?



FIBI Going Forward

During discussions, participants recognized that the concept of FIBI varies depending on the organization, region and community. To address this, they called for a more comprehensive definition that considers each community's perspective. They called for a service-based approach that prioritizes Indigenous individuals in need and fosters a supportive and unified framework. Participants emphasized the importance of Indigenous ownership, control, and authority over initiatives, ensuring that Indigenous individuals are "driving the bus." They discussed the challenge of avoiding government language and definitions, seeking to define FIBI in a way that is specific to housing and conscious of distinctions-based approaches. Participants recognized that self-determination equates to building capacity and many organizations rely on housing development to move forward. To ensure inclusivity and community-specific plans, participants emphasized the need for multiple partners and representation of all demographics. Participants acknowledged the diverse strengths and contributions that everyone brings to the table. They proposed putting FIBI into law, with reporting mechanisms to the community and debated whether FIBI should be seen as an organization, institution, or principle. They discussed the importance of sharing best practices, creating standards and taking responsibility for capacity growth. Participants emphasized the need to expand the network and include allies, engage in strategic planning, and have management responsibility. They stressed the importance of succession planning for the continuity of knowledge. Participants expressed that FIBI should reduce competition and foster collaboration, with Indigenous leadership selected by Indigenous communities to address their specific issues. They highlighted the need to have charter rights to association and be represented by diverse groups rather than existing organizations like the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Participants suggested standardizing priority needs and eliminating funding silos, calling for policies that address the whole person. They proposed the establishment of interdisciplinary Indigenous councils in each province to advise and inform governments. Participants stressed the importance of flexible funding and support, sharing best practices, increasing the frequency of community visits and ensuring that all voices are heard. They concluded by highlighting the transformative nature of FIBI and URN, emphasizing that it is a movement rather than just an initiative.

Next Steps for the Indigenous Caucus

During the discussion on the future direction of the Indigenous Caucus, participants put forward several suggestions.

Participants called for establishing a structure for the Indigenous Caucus, including a chair and a vice-chair, with defined roles and responsibilities and developing a strategic plan for the caucus. To this end, updating the terms of reference for the Indigenous Caucus and developing an organizational chart would be beneficial. Participants called for aligning the caucus with UNDRIP and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan (UNDA) while emphasizing the need to expand the resource base by applying for funding to advance the work and ensure operational sustainability.

Participants also recommended the development of communication strategies to clarify the scope of the caucus's work and the relationship between the caucus and NICHl to members and the public. Increased outreach with an aim to gain support for the declaration of NICHl, enhance awareness of the differences between NICHl and the Indigenous Caucus and engage a broader audience was highlighted. Participants proposed the creation of a brochure and its distribution through the CHRA website, sharing benchmarks and goals with communities and reporting back on progress. In terms of engagement, participants emphasized the importance of providing a platform for Indigenous voices to be heard and nurturing a sense of belonging, requiring financial support for smaller communities to attend meetings.

They also emphasized the importance of reflecting on historical data and experiences, highlighting both successes and areas for improvement – learning from past lessons. Participants stressed the need for quantifying housing needs through appropriate and community-owned data collection and studies. Budget constraints for research and data collection were discussed and participants explored ways to increase the budget to provide greater support and capacity.

Participants voiced the need for the Indigenous Caucus to support NICHl's independence and mandate to distribute funds, recognizing that NICHl will require financial and human resources to engage in policy development and advocacy efforts. Whereas, to ensure that Indigenous issues and concerns are effectively communicated to CHRA, NICHl and all levels of government, the Indigenous Caucus can continue to play a key role in lobbying and advocating for housing funding role, including organizing events like "Housing on the Hill."

Rights-Based Approach

Participants engaged in a discussion on adopting a rights-based approach and provided various suggestions.

Participants highlighted UNDRIP and its importance in government decision-making, calling for equal representation and Indigenous participation at all levels. The participants stressed the need for Indigenous communities to hold governments accountable for both successes and failures. Discussion ensued about the rights-based approaches of UNDRIP and UNDA. The participants highlighted the importance of two-way communication between federal, provincial and municipal governments and the inclusion of Indigenous representation in decision-making processes, striving for greater diversity and the principle of "nothing for us without us." They called for Indigenous representation at all levels of government, particularly in communication with community housing advisory boards. They called for the inclusion of diverse voices, including students, Elders and families and acknowledged the value of allies. Participants proposed the establishment of Indigenous advisory councils that are balanced, inclusive and representative of all Indigenous groups.

Participants emphasized the importance of data and statistics, including Coordinated Access Systems (CAS) statistics, to inform decision-making and support advocacy efforts. Participants suggested creating a national Indigenous housing advocate to champion Indigenous housing issues and support data collection to identify unique community needs. They emphasized the importance of data sovereignty and storytelling in promoting the rights-based approach, along with the potential for legal action to solidify Indigenous housing rights, garnering international media support and driving legislative change.

Participants discussed the return on investment in housing and highlighted the need to find and secure local partners for effective advocacy. Human rights were central to the discussion, with an emphasis on investing in housing to reduce costs in areas such as emergency medical services and supporting plans for hospital and prison releases. Self-determination was underscored as a fundamental principle in implementing a rights-based approach.

Appendix A – Raw Data

1. Wall Poster & Sticky Note Activity

Prompting Question

For Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous housing, the Feds have committed \$4 Billion over 7 years, without details on the scope of these funds. What should the National URN Indigenous Housing Strategy include to meet: a. urgent needs, b. current needs, c. future needs?

Responses

Urgent Needs

- Indigenous outreach supports employed by Indigenous people
- Houses! Single-family houses; apartments; multi-family homes with appropriate services, water, plumbing, fire protection
- Direct distribution to indigenous housing providers, not Indigenous governments
- Get funding out to existing housing providers through NICHI
- Clean drinking water
- Coordination of existing services to support capacity in our people
- Culturally-based housing supports
- Needs based allocation across the country, all regions
- FIBI structure
- \$4B seems like a lot of money but broken down over 7 years over the entire country means it is not enough to provide the necessary housing needed
- Whole communities need triple the housing they have now. Provide \$ for each community. Stop making it a competition
- Housing is a basic human right, not to be used as political fodder
- In addition to bricks & mortar, prevention is key to implementation. URN must address the urgent needs of Indigenous women and their families who suffer the

greatest negative social determinants, violence, MMIWG. All 3 aspects are needed. FIBI across the continuum to meet the peoples needs.

- Transitional housing
- Land shortage
- Equitable distribution throughout the country
- Inuit women's shelter
- Terry Wetton CMHC Winnipeg, access the NHS \$
- Support NICHI development
- Capital repairs to existing units
- Easy application process for new projects
- Include options to purchase existing rental units
- Housing subsidy (set amount per unit for all Aboriginal housing corporations) paid directly to the corporation
- Monies for hiring housing support workers for all hard-to-house tenants, help with getting ID, medical cards, housing applications, liaison with social services, help with move-in process and continue to support tenants once housed (very important when housing the homeless)
- The builders already have plans for apartment buildings and build them fast, use those plans because they will be cheaper than drawing up new ones. Also, to foster Indigenous identity, housing in the form of Tipis/huts little self-contained units for single Individuals would work to get them on their feet (starter places/furnished) the use of tiny homes that have already been built or could be built quicker would help (use Indigenous young people) to build and teach them new skills so they can build for other communities in the future.
- Funds need to be released ASAP.
- Data should come directly from Indigenous housing groups with their application process. The application for funding projects must become a simple process, not the complicated application it is today. I have only heard in the past two days

about housing the homeless who have alcohol, drug, and mental health issues, also have to look at solutions to house young Aboriginal families who are going to school, working and trying to get ahead of their monthly rental, utility, and rising food costs. Trying to afford a decent place plus being able to afford the rising fuel and repair costs.

- Why was NICHI developed? Great concept but stalls release of funds. Perhaps a team of Indigenous housing partners could be used to process without developing a whole new organ just to get money out.
- Extending operating agreements
- There should be a board that streamlines and moves the approval process for housing funding to make it quicker to get housing quicker for people who need it
- Large-scale buying of materials
- build, build, build

Current Needs

- Accurate statistics and data representation from Indigenous perspectives and worldviews
- Indigenous values incorporated into housing programs
- Provide this program information and contacts to FCM, NRC- network in MB, not just Winnipeg
- Affordable housing with the ability of homeownership opportunities
- Advocacy for continued increased resources
- Affordable Housing! Low rental housing; houses; apartments; multi-housing
- Programs for land-based education and healing for prevention
- Quick, timely distribution of funds

- Simple programs, application process
- Upgrade and address capacity issues with housing providers
- A culturally respectful place for our seniors and Elders to reside and receive end-of-life care
- Apply to Reaching Home for funds
- Obtain sufficient financial resources (see Daniel Brant calculations)
- Short streamlined processes for approved straightforward applications
- Inuit Men's Shelter
- Partner with MMF
- Capitol repair and modernization funds
- Supportive housing
- More money
- Maintenance money
- Program service money
- Increase in funding- administration and capital repairs
- newcomers to Canada make great allies. there are many common histories and some worse experiences

Future Needs

- Look to support sustainable organizations
- RGI
- Look outside Winnipeg as well
- Maintenance
- Indigenous-owned multi-family complex for affordable housing
- Land planning and acquisition

2. Breakout Group Activity

Prompting Questions

- A. Considering the advances made in the last year, what does For Indigenous By Indigenous (FIBI) look like going forward?
- B. What should be next for the Indigenous Caucus?
- C. If we took a rights-based approach, what would it look like?

Responses

A. FIBI Going Forward

- means something different to each organization, region, community
- Can FIBI be better defined? Consider each community's view
- Service-based approach
- Unified and supportive for those in need
- Indigenous should be “driving the bus”
- Indigenous-owned, control and authority over
- Be conscious of distinctions-based approach
- How to steer clear of government language and definition
- Consider regions in a global arena
- Define as related to only housing
- Self-determination equals building capacity
- Many organizations cannot move forward without housing development
- Need to ensure all demographics are represented
- Unique to the community needs to encompass many partners will look different by need and according to community
- Everyone brings varied strengths and gifts to the table
- FIBI put into law, reporting to the community
- FIBI and organization or institution? Or principle
- Sharing of best practices, creation of standards
- How do we take responsibility (capacity)

- Grow the network, include allies
- Strategic planning, management responsibility
- Succession plan, so that we have continuity of knowledge
- FIBI - reduce competition, increase collaboration, led by indigenous, selected by indigenous, for leadership on our issues
- URN – charter rights to association, not represented by existing groups (i.e., AFN, etc.)
- Standardizing priority needs
- Stop silos in funding, policy = whole person policies
- Each province has interdisciplinary Indigenous council to advise and inform governments
- Funding needs to be flexible and provide supports
- Provincial councils need to be diverse and inclusive
- Sharing best practices and lessons learned
- Capacity to visit each other's communities with increased frequency
- Support to ensure all voices are heard, need funding
- FIBI & URN is a movement!!

B. Next Steps for the Indigenous Caucus

- Ongoing support for NICHI: financial, policy, advocacy, people
- continued broader outreach, further the reach
- reflecting on historic data, movement, change; highlighting successes, shortfalls, gaps, lessons learned
- quantifying need, data, studies: appropriate and significant data collection to be owned by the community
- What are the budget constraints for research etc.? How does the indigenous caucus increase this budget to provide increased significant supports to provide increased capacity?

- strategic plan: Financial support for smaller communities to attend
- UNDRIP & UNDA action plan
- Structure for the Indigenous Caucus should include a chair and a vice chair
- clarify the relationship between the Indigenous Caucus and NICH
- to inform CHRA of indigenous issues and concerns etc.
- Lobby: systematic process to feed CHRA and NICH
- Update terms of reference
- broader inclusion of indigenous agencies, improved communication
- need organizational chart
- Outreach to gain support declaration of NICH
- education and awareness of differences between NICH and Indigenous caucus
- place to have voice heard
- nurture sense of belonging
- Communications enhanced
- support NICH independence
- Define the roles and responsibilities
- clarify scope
- brochure: something tangible, CHRA website
- share benchmarks and goals with communities, report back
- expand resource base: apply for funding to advance the work, keep operational
- Provide support to NICH around funding allocation mechanisms
- caucus to lobby and advocate for funding and organize “Housing on the Hill”
- NICH to manage distribution of funds

C. Rights-Based Approach

- Data & stats
- Return on investment
- Advocacy: find/secure partners (local)
- Human rights

- Invest in housing to reduce EMS costs
- Hospital & prison release plans, additional treatments
- CAS stats
- Educational awareness of all Indigenous
- Indian Math
- Federal/Provincial/Municipal rights-based info needs to trickle back and forth
- Having all Indigenous members at all tables/more powerful/more diverse speakers/advocates
- Nothing for us without us
- Indigenous advisory councils made-up of all groups that are balanced and inclusive
- Known indigenous representation at all levels of government in communication with Community Housing advisory boards
- Create a national indigenous housing advocate
- Data to establish unique community needs
- Platform to communicate community-specific needs
- Data sovereignty
- Sharing stories
- Legal action to solidify indigenous rights specific to housing
- International media support
- Drive change in legislation
- UNDRIP framework solid when change of government; we need a seat at the creation table, working groups, equal seats
- Students, Elders, family, external, internal voices
- Indigenous communities hold government accountable for successes and failures
- UNDRIP & UNDA comparison in a rights-based approach
- Self-determination
- Can't forget our allies



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