



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS  
**Special Chiefs Assembly**

December 5-7, 2023

Shaw Centre – Ottawa, Ontario

*Ottawa is located on the unceded unsundered Territory of the Algonquin People.*

ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS  
**Assemblée extraordinaire des Chefs**

Du 5 au 7 décembre 2023 - Centre Shaw - Ottawa ( Ontario)

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## Homelessness

### History

In 2019, First Nations-in-Assembly passed Resolution 79/2019, *Action Plan for First Nations Homelessness On- and Off-Reserve*, mandating the AFN to develop a National First Nations Homelessness Action Plan (Action Plan) to improve the delivery of federal government programs as well as the related social and fiscal mechanisms to address homelessness for First Nations.

The Action Plan will advocate for a comprehensive, multi-partner approach to reducing, preventing, and ending First Nations homelessness. This work aligns with the AFN's National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy and the goal of transitioning First Nations housing and related infrastructure to First Nations management, control, and care.

### AFN's recent advocacy

A draft of the Action Plan has been developed, reflecting the outcomes of comprehensive research, and several regional engagements with First Nations leadership and staff, service providers and community members. Most recently, the AFN held a national hybrid dialogue session in September 2023 seeking input on a preliminary draft of the Action Plan. The draft Action Plan is slated for discussion and approval by First Nations-in-Assembly at the December 2023 Special Chiefs Assembly.

AFN and Infrastructure Canada (INFC) hold regular meetings as a Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) to guide the development of homelessness initiatives, including the processes required to allocate First Nations distinctions-based funding under *Reaching Home*. The JTWG has recommended a regional model to address the distinct needs and priorities of First Nations across the country, and to enable maximum flexibility for these resources to be administered through processes as determined by First Nations in each region.

Several regions are in the process of working with INFC to develop agreements to deliver this funding. The AFN continues to stress the inadequacy of this funding relative to the need, particularly given the persistent lack of dedicated funding for First Nations to address homelessness impacting their citizens on- and off-community.

### Next Steps

The draft Action Plan will be presented for consideration at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2023 for approval by First Nations-in-Assembly. Once approved, the Action Plan will renew the AFN's mandate to address First Nations homelessness and provide a detailed roadmap for advocacy and action, along with supporting recommendations aimed at government and service providers. Next steps will include developing an implementation plan, seeking resources to support First Nations in implementing specific actions, and developing advocacy campaigns.



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The AFN will continue to advocate for immediate and urgent action, recognizing that long-term funding and policy reform fall short of addressing the immediate needs of First Nations citizens currently experiencing homelessness. To that end, AFN continues to hold discussions with INFC, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) on potential sources of funding to help First Nations address urgent and immediate needs facing their citizens. This includes discussions on how federal funding related to the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy could be targeted to support First Nations citizens experiencing homelessness, under the direct control of First Nations.

To help address knowledge and data gaps on homelessness within First Nations communities, the AFN is developing a methodology to support First Nations in gathering their own data on homelessness, in line with the First Nations Principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession). A draft of this methodology has been completed, and next steps include engaging with First Nations on how to implement it, and identifying the resources required to do so.

Finally, the AFN has completed preliminary research aimed at identifying the government investments required to end homelessness for First Nations. This research will inform AFN's ongoing advocacy, including its pre-budget submissions to the federal government.

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