



National First Nations Homelessness Action Plan

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly Dialogue Session

December 4, 2023





National First Nations Homelessness Action Plan



Vision Statement

First Nations control and deliver holistic and culturally safe supports and services so their citizens can access safe and supportive housing no matter where they live.



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Background

- *AFN 10-Year National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy*
- *AFN mandate on homelessness – Resolution 79/2019: Action Plan for First Nations Homelessness On and Off-Reserve*
- Research and Engagement
- Other ongoing work



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On/Off Community

- AFN Mandate to address First Nations homelessness on/off community
- Prevalence of hidden homelessness prevalent on-community
- Lack of dedicated off-reserve funding for First Nations, while many programs are also not available on-reserve
- First Nations increasingly asserting right to care for citizens no matter where they live
 - *Resolution 45/2023 – Supporting First Nations to Receive Funding for Off-Reserve Members*
 - *Resolution 66/2023 – Urban, Rural and North Indigenous Housing Funds Management in Breach of the UN Declaration*



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Statistics and Context



9,191

Existing data indicates that 9,191 First Nations individuals are experiencing homelessness on any given night. This is likely a low estimate given the limitations in existing data, and the lack of data on homelessness within First Nations communities.



28%

First Nations people accounted for 28% of the unhoused population in 44 communities that reported specifically on the number of First Nations people experiencing homelessness, but comprised 2% of the overall population in those same communities on average.



1 in 38

1 in 38 First Nations individuals face homelessness each night—a rate 23 times higher than their non-Indigenous counterparts.



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Causes of First Nations Homelessness

- Impacts of colonialism, Intergenerational Trauma
- Displacement & Migration
- The Housing and Infrastructure Gap
- Underfunded Social Services
- Jurisdictional Issues
- Child Welfare Involvement
- Other Factors



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First Nations Rights to Housing

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Treaty and Inherent Rights

Canada's Fiduciary Obligation

National Housing Strategy Act

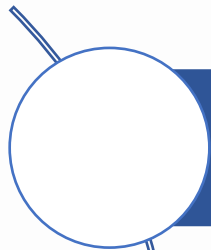
MMIWG2s+ Calls to Justice



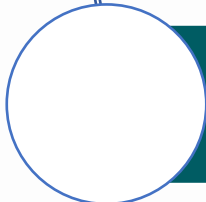
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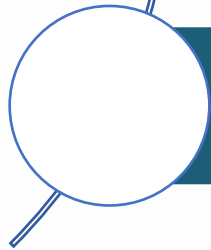
Definitions of Homelessness



Mainstream Canadian Definition: Four categories including unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated, and at risk.



Indigenous Definition (Thistle): Focus on relationships; concept of "home" beyond a physical structure.



First Nations Definitions: Emphasizes spiritual, cultural aspects; includes visible and hidden homelessness; Individual and community well-being.



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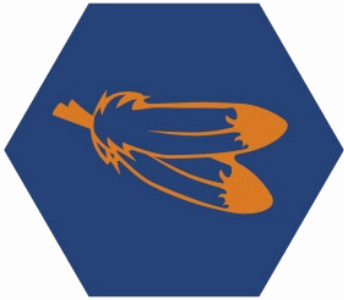


Objectives





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1. First Nations Jurisdiction

- Alignment with National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy
- Holistic First Nations-led housing & social services system
- First Nations jurisdiction over governance & funding



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2. Prevention

- Need to address First Nations housing and infrastructure gap
- Direct supports: income support, rent or food supplements
- First Nations social safety net - a holistic network of supports developed, controlled, and delivered by First Nations.

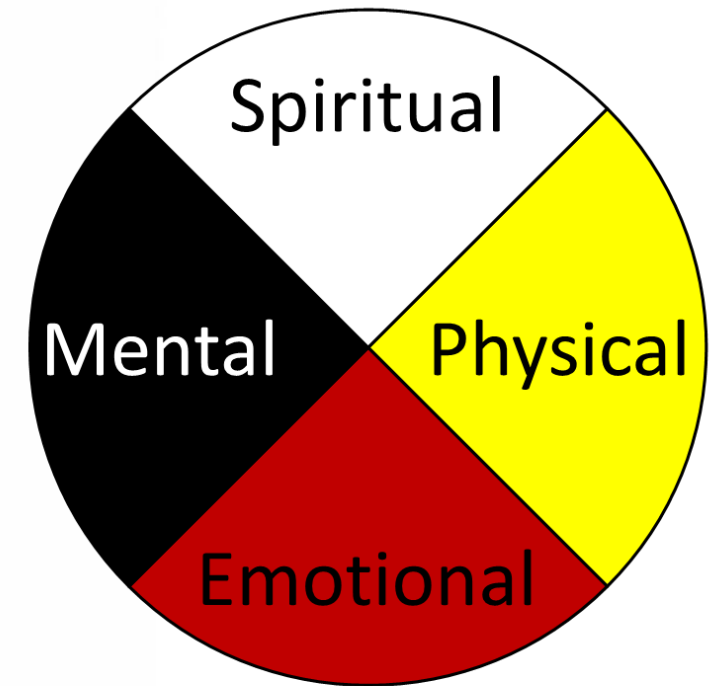


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3. Holistic and Culturally Safe Services

- Wrap-around service delivery
- Cultural Safety
- Services designed and delivered by First Nations for the benefit of their citizens





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4. Service Navigation

- Navigating the service landscape can be especially complex for First Nations people, especially those moving between jurisdictions on and off-reserve
- Dedicated resources are required to help First Nations citizens access available programs, housing, services, and related resources
- Resources to support those moving to urban areas



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5. Partnerships

- Supporting partnerships between First Nations, all levels of government, and service delivery organizations
- First Nations rights and responsibility to their citizens exists no matter where their members live
- First Nations right to access dedicated funding to control and deliver their own programs and services.



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6. Specific Needs

- First Nations youth, Elders, people dealing with addictions or in recovery, people transitioning from correctional facilities, women fleeing violence, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, single parent families, and Veterans
- Lack of existing data on distinct experiences and service needs
- Further research and engagement going forward



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7. Data Sovereignty

- Need for consistent data collection respecting First Nations Principles of OCAP[®] (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession of First Nations data)
- Significant gaps in existing First Nations homelessness data
- Support for First Nations-led data collection for advocacy and informed decision-making



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First Nations-Led Actions

Research and Data

Tools & Methods to collect First Nations homelessness data including on-community

Impacts of migration

Data Sharing

Specific Experiences: First Nations women, Elders, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, Veterans, & youth



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First Nations-Led Actions

Urban/Off-Community

Advocacy campaigns in support of First Nations citizens experiencing homelessness

Dedicated funding for off-community supports

Address service and funding gaps on and off-reserve

Identify jurisdictional gaps



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First Nations-Led Actions

Culturally Safe Services

Decolonized harm reduction approaches

Advocate for First Nations homelessness to be declared an emergency

Research and engagement on best practices

Advocacy campaigns to challenge stereotypes, advocate for policy changes and oppose unjust bylaws



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First Nations-Led Actions

Service Navigation

Identify resources for dedicated housing and social service navigators and outreach workers

Identify models and promising practices for First Nations to support their citizens in navigating and accessing services

Develop toolkits and social service inventories



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First Nations-Led Actions

Partnerships and Accountability

Ensure that First Nations are fully involved in the design and delivery of programs and services

Advocate for dedicated resources for First Nations to support their unhoused citizens no matter where they live

Dedicated resources for First Nations to engage in partnerships to co-develop and deliver programs and services



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First Nations-Led Actions

Direct Supports

Gaps in existing income support programs

Resources for discretionary funding to implement First Nations-controlled support programs

Resources for First Nations to provide job skills, financial literacy, home maintenance education, etc.



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First Nations-Led Actions

Specific Needs

Impacts of the child welfare system on homelessness

Supports for transition from the criminal justice system

Overrepresentation of First Nations 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender diverse people in the unhoused population, particularly among youth

Distinct service needs of First Nations women, Veterans, Elders and youth experiencing homelessness



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First Nations-Led Actions

Governance and Administration

Identify First Nations resource, governance, and capacity needs

Transfer of programs and services to First Nations care and control

Engage with Dene Nation and Yukon First Nations on distinct needs, governance models and approaches to jurisdiction and service delivery

National First nations homelessness network



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First Nations-Led Actions

Funding Immediate funding for urgent needs

Long term, sustainable and needs-based funding for First Nations-led service delivery



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Supporting Recommendations

- **Jurisdiction:** Transfer control of homelessness funding & delivery to First Nations.
- **Funding:** Close the First Nations infrastructure gap by 2030 and ensure proportional funding.
- **Prevention:** Address racism, fund direct supports and address CFS impacts
- **Culturally Safe Supports:** Flexibility to provide holistic wrap-around services
- **Partnerships:** Simplify access to existing programs and repeal discriminatory bylaws.
- **Data Sovereignty:** Data strategies and agreements respecting First Nations Principles of OCAP®.



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The Path Forward

- Establish a national committee to oversee implementation
- Implementation plan including timelines
- Advocacy plan to support First Nations accessing resources, and accountability from government
- Update and renewal in alignment with a renewed *National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy*



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ekosi
Thank you
kinanaskomitinawaw

It is deeply troubling to feel like you do not have a home on your own land. This was the place where our ancestors practiced their spirituality, defended their land, hunted, and sang songs to the Creator. Those cultural practices are directly tied to the land. Our community members are home.

-engagement participant

