



News release

For immediate release

Funding for urgent, unmet Indigenous housing projects in urban, rural and northern areas to be distributed through the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated

June 8, 2023 — Ottawa, Traditional unceded Algonquin Territory, Ontario — National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated and Government of Canada

There is an urgent, unmet need for adequate and affordable housing for Indigenous People in urban, rural and northern areas and immediate action must be taken to address these housing gaps.

This is why today, Jeff Loucks, Chief Executive Officer, as well as Gary Wilson, Vice Chair, and Robert Byers, Secretary of the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated (NICHI), and the Minister of Indigenous Services Patty Hajdu announced immediate funding in the amount of \$287.1 million to address the critical need for safe and affordable urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing projects. They were joined by the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion Ahmed Hussen and the Minister of Northern Affairs Dan Vandal, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

In recognition of the need for immediate action, the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated (NICHI) will deliver this funding through a proposal process for infrastructure projects that address immediate and unmet housing needs of Indigenous Peoples in northern, urban and rural communities. The process will prioritize those projects with funding shortfalls which are already underway and those which are ready to begin.

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NICHI brings together Indigenous-led housing, homelessness, and housing-related organizations to provide lasting solutions that address diverse housing inadequacies including homelessness for Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural and northern areas. Taking a “For Indigenous By Indigenous” approach to research, advocacy, partnerships and supporting housing providers in the building of homes, NICHI is well positioned to deliver housing investments to help address the immediate needs of urban, rural and northern Indigenous communities.

Budget 2022 committed \$4 billion to support housing including \$2.4 billion for First Nations on reserves, and \$1.6 billion for Inuit, Métis and First Nations Self-Governing and Modern Treaty communities. The funding so far has supported housing-related projects, including home improvements and repairs, and new homes.

Budget 2022 also provided \$300 million to co-develop and launch an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. This investment includes today’s announced amount of \$281.5 million from Budget 2022 and an additional \$5.6 million from Budget 2023 for Indigenous Services Canada to address urgent, unmet housing projects through NICHI, with the balance of funding going to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to support the engagement on the co-development of the longer-term Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. This Strategy is intended to complement the three existing distinctions-based housing strategies for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, as well as other investments in Indigenous housing. CMHC continues their work in co-developing the longer-term Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy with Indigenous partners.

A significant gap remains for Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural, and northern areas and there is an urgent need to act now.

Access to safe and affordable housing is critical to improving health and social outcomes, and to ensure a better future for Indigenous communities and children. This funding initiative is part of the Government of Canada’s commitment to address the social determinants of health and advance self-determination in alignment with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and Articles 21 and 23. Through these and other actions, the Government of Canada is moving ahead in the journey towards reconciliation.

Quotes

“Housing is a human right as declared in Articles 21 and 23 of UNDRIP (UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People). NICHI is here to support regional Indigenous housing

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providers from coast to coast to coast. They are the experts and understand the local needs. A *For Indigenous By Indigenous* approach can accomplish so much more than the current model to help our people thrive. Our collective lived experience enables us to provide relevant, culturally appropriate solutions that improve lives.”

Jeff Loucks

Chief Executive Officer, National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated

“Across the country, there is a tremendous lack of safe, affordable housing and housing supports for Indigenous Peoples in urban, rural and northern communities. But today, with the launch of NICHl and their call for proposals, solutions that are Indigenous led are much closer to being a reality. I thank the member organizations for their leadership and unwavering advocacy for decent and suitable housing. Your work will make a difference for the most vulnerable across the country.”

The Honourable Patty Hajdu

Minister of Indigenous Services

“No relationship is more important to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples. That’s why the Government of Canada is taking steps to support Indigenous partners with their immediate housing needs in urban, rural and northern communities. We’re working alongside Indigenous partners to co-develop a comprehensive strategy with long-term solutions. At the same time, with this announcement we can quickly address the most urgent needs of Indigenous people living in these areas that will have an immediate impact.”

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen

Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion

“I’ve seen with my own eyes and from speaking with people directly on the ground the challenges northern and Indigenous communities face with regards to building in the North and Arctic. A strong housing supply is critical to improving the health of residents, and has a direct impact on social and economic outcomes. With this investment, combined with other Northern and Indigenous housing investments we’ve previously made, we’re taking further concrete steps toward addressing these urgent needs.”

The Honourable Dan Vandal

Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for PrairiesCan and CanNor

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Quick facts

- In November 2022 a coalition of Indigenous housing and service provider organizations was formed, and prioritized housing as a human right. The coalition is comprised of a network of over 50 well-established independent national, regional, and local Indigenous housing and service provider organizations that can leverage an extensive inventory of housing knowledge, skills, expertise, and experience in key areas such as project and financial management to projects anywhere in Canada. In January 2023, a national organizational structure was created, the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated (NICHI). This set their commitment for a For Indigenous By Indigenous approach. This is an Indigenous-led, Indigenous-designed and Indigenous-delivered organization to advocate for Indigenous housing solutions.
- Budget 2022 committed \$4 billion to support housing for First Nations on reserves, Inuit, Métis and First Nations Self-Governing and Modern Treaty communities. Today's announcement includes an additional \$281.5 million to support housing in urban, rural and northern Indigenous communities, which is to be distributed through the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated.
- Budget 2023 provided for an additional \$4 billion, over seven years, starting in 2024--25, to implement a co-developed Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy led by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This will allow for longer term conversations and strategies around housing between the Government of Canada and partners, including National Indigenous Organizations and grassroots organizations.
- More than 40 Indigenous-led engagement sessions were held across the country to help inform an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. Input and ideas were sought from Indigenous housing and service providers, Indigenous governments and organizations, Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural and northern areas, and advocacy organizations, as well as to bring forward input from groups that have not yet been engaged.
- The Government of Canada, through CMHC, also gathered input and ideas on an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy between February 14 and March 31, 2023, through an online survey and via written submissions. A total of 965 surveys were completed, along with several written submissions received.
- Canada's northern communities face unique housing needs due to higher construction costs, shorter construction seasons, infrastructure gaps, a supply chain crisis more acute in the North than the South, and the effects of climate

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change that are increasing as the North has been warming at roughly three times the global warming rate. The rate of core housing need in the capital cities of Whitehorse, Yellowknife, and especially Iqaluit is higher than in the rest of the country. The average for Canada is 10.1%, while in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, it hovers just above 13%. In Nunavut, it sits at 32.9%.

Associated links

[National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated](#)

[Social programs \(sac-isc.gc.ca\)](#)

[Indigenous Housing | CMHC \(cmhc-schl.gc.ca\)](#)

[Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy \(cmhc.ca\)](#)

[Northern Housing Report 2022](#)

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