



## Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness: National Conference to End Homelessness

Each year, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness brings together communities from across the country for its national conference focused on ending homelessness. With the housing crisis deepening, more people are facing unstable living situations, and community services are being stretched beyond capacity. Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected, as systemic barriers and the legacy of historical injustices intensify the challenges. NICHI attended CAEH25 to learn from front-line workers, advocates, community leaders, and people with lived and living experience. The conference provided a meaningful space to share knowledge, build connections, and explore practical strategies for strengthening collaborative efforts to prevent and address homelessness.

## Indigenous Homelessness Stream at CAEH25



The Indigenous Homelessness stream focuses on the unique experiences and solutions related to homelessness among First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected by homelessness and experience it differently because of systemic factors such as colonialism, residential schools and intergenerational trauma.

The Indigenous Homelessness stream at CAEH25 explored a wide range of critical topics. Sessions focused on supportive housing for Indigenous youth with lived experience in the child welfare system, the right to housing for 2SLGBTQIA+ people, Indigenous data systems and sovereignty, culturally grounded approaches to harm reduction and safety, and the PATH Process on housing prioritization, ceremony, identity and belonging. Other highlights included Indigenous innovation and designing the future of housing. We are proud that several of our members shared their expertise by presenting in these sessions, helping to advance dialogue and shape practical strategies to end homelessness in Indigenous communities.

## Keeping Members Informed

As part of NICHI's policy and advocacy work, we attend national conferences and forums to monitor emerging issues, trends, and policy directions affecting Indigenous housing. This summary highlights key takeaways from CAEH25 to support members' awareness and planning.



Questions or follow-up? Reach NICHI's Policy Analyst at [smichaud@nichihousing.com](mailto:smichaud@nichihousing.com) or 343-500-3347 ext. 501

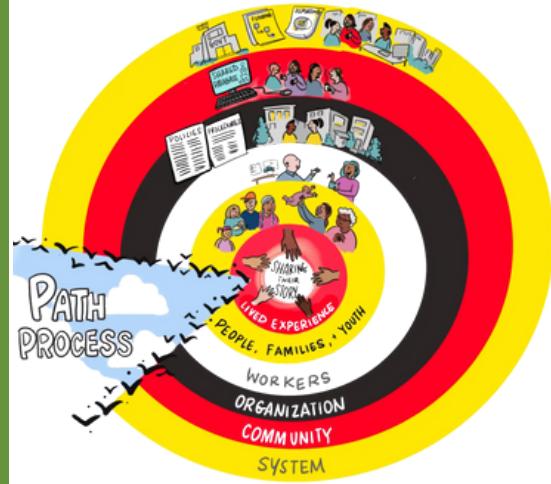
## Upholding the Right to Housing for Women and Gender-Diverse People

The NEHA Review Panel presented on the right to safe, adequate and affordable housing for women, Two Spirit, trans and gender-diverse people, and the government's duty to uphold this right. NEHA, meaning "our ways" in Kanien'kéha (Mohawk), reflects a way of life that is open, peaceful and healing. This panel was established following human rights claims submitted by member NIWHN and supporter WNHHN to the Federal Housing Advocate. NICHI submitted a detailed submission during the open call and emphasized the urgent need for safe, affordable housing for Indigenous women and those who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. Recommendations from the panel will be released soon, and the Minister of Housing must respond within 120 days. See the report linked [here](#).

## Indigenous Data Sovereignty – Reclaiming

### Story, Power & Policy

Data and Indigenous governance were primary themes at the Indigenous Homelessness stream at this year's CAEH Conference. Sessions focused on data sovereignty for Indigenous communities, emphasizing that while data is often perceived as neutral, it has historically been used as a tool of colonial control. The panel included representatives from the National Indigenous Homelessness Council, Lu'ma Native Housing Society, Brantford Native Housing and CIUSSS du Centre-sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CCSMTL). Discussions focused on why reclaiming data sovereignty is critical for self-determination, accountability and ending homelessness. Key points highlighted that hidden homelessness remains widespread yet underrepresented in data, and current reporting requirements often reinforce inequities and fail to reflect Indigenous community priorities. The session called for a 'For Indigenous, By Indigenous' approach to data governance, guided by OCAP principles (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession). Research with Indigenous communities must reflect these principles to ensure respect, equity and meaningful outcomes. Opportunities identified included defining community-driven outcomes, strengthening Indigenous governance in data systems and building capacity for evaluation.



### PATH Process: A Participatory Workshop on Housing Prioritization

The National Indigenous Homelessness Council (NIHC) hosted a workshop, where participants gained a firsthand look at how housing decisions can be made using a holistic, Indigenous-centred approach. The session highlighted the PATH (Personalized Assistance to Housing) Process, an Indigenous-led, culturally informed alternative to mainstream tools used in the homelessness sector and Coordinated Access systems. PATH was developed for Coordinated Access Systems under the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Program and aligns with its directive for a unified assessment process, ensuring service needs are evaluated consistently while keeping the person at the centre. Unlike conventional prioritization methods that rely on numeric scores, PATH emphasizes relationships between workers and people experiencing homelessness, fostering trust, collaboration, and understanding. The workshop included interactive role-playing exercises, showing participants the significant decision-making involved in prioritizing housing based on factors such as mental and physical health, child welfare interactions, homelessness status, barriers to housing, social supports, and other vulnerabilities, all within a system already stretched thin. Attendees saw firsthand how PATH moves the focus from scores to stories and from systems to relationships, offering a culturally grounded, trauma-informed, and person-centred approach.

### Indigenous Innovation in Housing

Innovation was also on display at CAEH25, with presenters from Niagara Regional Native Centre, Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing, and Flourish Affordable Housing Communities. The session opened with a quote emphasizing that Indigenous innovation isn't about doing more of the same or following mainstream approaches, it's about reimagining systems through Indigenous leadership, knowledge, and governance. Panelists shared strategies spanning transitional housing for women and families escaping violence, eviction prevention through wraparound supports, and partnership models that bridge municipal systems with Indigenous governance. The discussion also explored innovation in supportive housing, including culturally embedded design and housing with tailored supports for learners.

### Key Takeaways

From the importance of wrap-around supports for successful housing to exploring diverse housing models, and from advancing data sovereignty to strengthening Indigenous governance, the Indigenous Homelessness stream at **CAEH25** demonstrated a deep commitment to housing equity and reconciliation. The sessions showcased how experts from across Canada are working collectively to end homelessness for Indigenous peoples through approaches that are truly 'For Indigenous, By Indigenous', and honouring community-driven solutions.