



ENFORCING HOUSING POLICY

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HOUSING POLICY GUIDES THE DELIVERY AND ADMINISTRATION OF HOUSING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Approximately 30 years ago First Nations began to develop and implement policy to protect their housing investment, improve property management and maximize limited resources.
- As housing policy was implemented First Nations recognized that they could support a financial strategy to balance revenues and expenses.
- In 2017, most First Nations have a housing policy but struggle with consistent enforcement.
- Lack of policy enforcement prevents a First Nation from achieving the maximum benefit and value of the policy.

COMMON BARRIERS TO POLICY ENFORCEMENT

- Inadequate support for policy enforcement.
- Insufficient resources to enforce the policy.
- A policy that does not fit the community or its values.



OVERCOMING BARRIERS IS POSSIBLE WHEN A FIRST NATION

- Operates housing as a community business that is managed and monitored.
- Confirms the current and future housing needs in the community.
- Approves and enforces a policy that protects both people and property.
- Continuously informs its government and membership about housing issues, limitations and costs.



TO OVERCOME INADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR POLICY ENFORCEMENT CONSIDER:

- Offering opportunities to educate on the true cost of housing, how the community is investing *their* resources, how many members receive assistance, what their obligations are and confirming the demand for housing assistance.
- Holding a referendum on the policy, create a BCR or bylaw to support enforcement.
- Asking leadership to support the policy and consistent enforcement. Consider this statement:

In approving this housing policy, Chief and Council authorize the employees of the housing department/administration to carry out all the duties and responsibilities indicated in this policy, without requiring the consent or approval of the Chief and Council.

TO OVERCOME INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO ENFORCE POLICY CONSIDER:

- Developing and following housing budgets (operating, maintenance, staffing) which support policy enforcement.
- Allow staff to implement and enforce policy without exception and consistently support and champion this approach.
- Develop and follow a plan for human resources, property management, economic sustainability, etc.
- Consider sharing resources with other First Nations or Tribal Council.

TO OVERCOME A POLICY THAT DOESN'T FIT THE COMMUNITY CONSIDER:

- Review the policy and revise based on effective program delivery and property management practices and in consideration of the community and its values.
- Include procedures that are real and enforceable.
- Consider how a procedure will be carried out including responsibilities of all parties, time frames, etc.
- Avoid idle threats. When a policy has been violated, follow procedures and implement consequences without exception.
- Develop a policy before starting new programs or services.
- Create and follow an appeals process.
- Evaluate the policy on a regular basis and update to respond to changes that are required.

IN CLOSING

- Staff resources must be dedicated to policy enforcement.
- Work with tenants/occupants in a respectful manner.
- Recognize the value of the housing portfolio and treat it like the community investment that it is.
- Policy enforcement can be emotional -- a good policy allows for the opportunity to change behavior and to resolve the policy violation before implementing consequences.



QUESTIONS

