



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

Assembly of First Nations Updates on Housing and Related Infrastructure Priorities

February 26, 2026
First Nations Housing Conference
Thunder Bay, ON



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TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- AFN Overview
- Federal Commitment to Closing the Housing and Infrastructure Gap
- AFN's Response
- Recent Federal Investments
- Outlook
- AFN's Recent Advocacy
- Homelessness Priorities

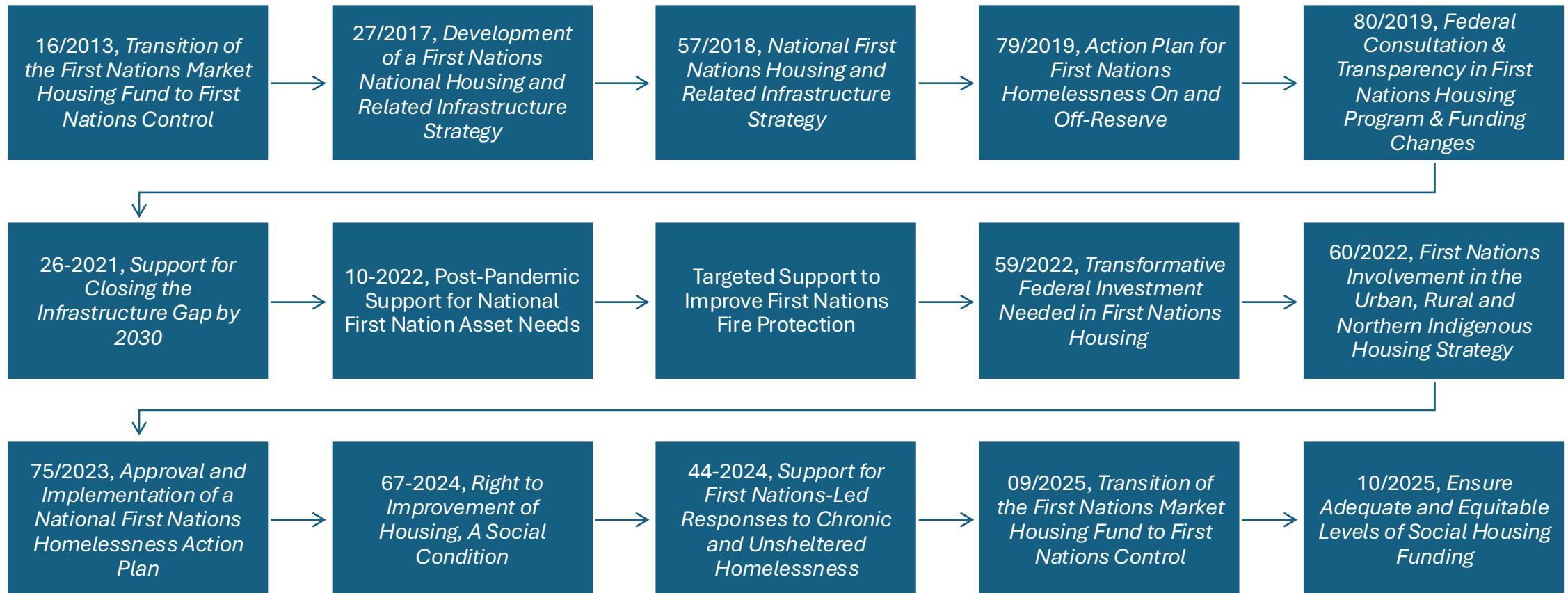


AFN Overview



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AFN Mandates on Housing & Infrastructure





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How We Work: AFN Secretariat

The Housing and Infrastructure Sector supports national policy and advocacy efforts to advance First Nations jurisdiction and authority over housing, infrastructure, homelessness, and clean drinking water, further to AFN mandates.

The Sector supports First Nations leadership with technical expertise, strategic advice, and coordinated advocacy, ensuring community-driven priorities shape federal policy and funding decisions.



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How We Work: CCOHI

The AFN's Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) provides political and technical guidance with respect to AFN's engagement with Canada on housing and infrastructure related issues.

Chairs of the CCoHI include Newfoundland Regional Chief Brendan Mitchell, along with Water Lead Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict. Together, the AFN and CCOHI advocate for First Nations care and control of housing and infrastructure, grounded in rights and distinctions-based processes.



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How We Work: Technicians and Joint Working Group

The Sector chairs the Joint Working Group on Housing and Homelessness comprised of Regional Housing Technicians and members from federal departments and agencies, including Indigenous Services Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada.

The JWG functions as a policy and coordination table to support distinctions-based housing policy reform, provide federal budget and program input, and co-develop multi-year workplans reflecting First Nations leadership and direction.



Federal Housing and Infrastructure Priorities: A Federal Commitment to Closing the Gap



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Closing the Housing and Infrastructure Gap: Background

For decades First Nations have called on Canada to end chronic underinvestment that has produced unsafe water systems, overcrowded housing, failing schools and limited year-round access. Such conditions will continue to widen infrastructure and socioeconomic gaps.

In 2019 the federal government mandated Indigenous Services Canada, with support from Infrastructure Canada, to co-develop distinctions-based infrastructure plans and close critical gaps by 2030, including sustained operations and maintenance funding.



Federal Housing and Infrastructure Priorities: AFN's Response

Closing the Infrastructure Gap: Findings

The National Cost Estimate from AFN's most recent report (2025) identified that approximately **\$349.2 billion** in capital and operations funding is required to fully close the infrastructure gap across 10 asset categories



Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
and the Conference Board of Canada

2025

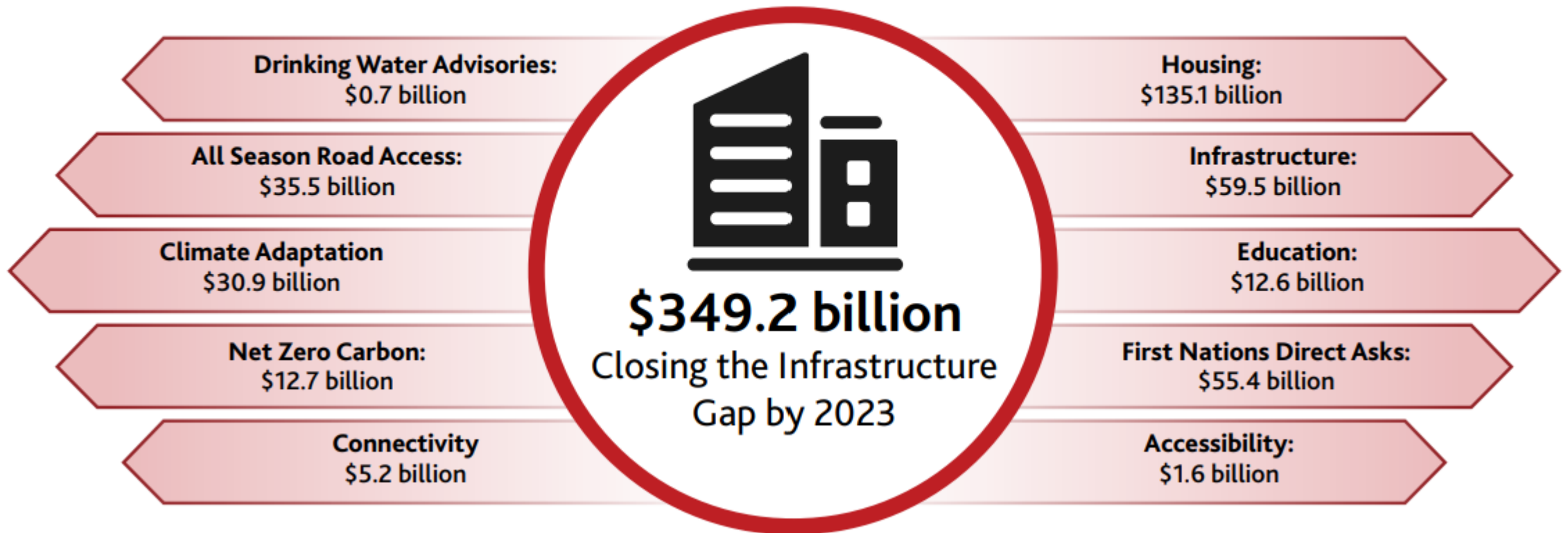
Benefits for All Canadians (Part 2):

Long-term Socio-economic Impacts of
Closing the Infrastructure Gap by 2030

*Presented to
Assembly of First Nations
May 15, 2025*

Closing the Infrastructure Gap: Asset Categories

Exhibit 1: The 10 infrastructure areas



Closing the Infrastructure Gap: Findings

Exhibit 2: Investment to close the First Nations infrastructure gap would generate significant economic benefits across the country

(total economic impact from 2023 to 2030)*



*Includes direct, indirect, and induced impacts
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.



Federal Housing and Infrastructure Priorities: Federal Investments



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Major federal investments

- Budget 2021 – **\$6B over 5 years** in distinctions-based infrastructure investments
 - \$4.3B Indigenous Community Infrastructure Fund (ICIF)
 - \$1.7B in on-reserve infrastructure operations and maintenance funding
- Budget 2022 – **\$4.3B over 7 years** to Indigenous housing:
 - \$2.4B over 5 years for on-reserve housing construction
 - Investment to expand housing for First Nations on reserve, Inuit and Métis communities, including initial funding for the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy.



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Major federal investments

- Budget 2023 - **\$4B Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy:**
 - Additional long-term funding starting in 2024-25 to implement a national Indigenous housing strategy off reserve.
- Budget 2024 - **\$918M over five years** to accelerate the work of closing the Indigenous housing and infrastructure gap.



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Major federal investments

- Reaching Home remains the federal government's primary homelessness program, with a \$72M First Nations distinctions-based stream (2023-28). Budget 2024 added \$37M in stabilization funds, bringing total funding to \$109M, set to sunset in 2028.



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Current status

The Auditor General of Canada (2024):

- "Indigenous Services Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation had not provided the support needed by First Nations"
- "Indigenous Services Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation were not on track to close the housing gap by 2030"

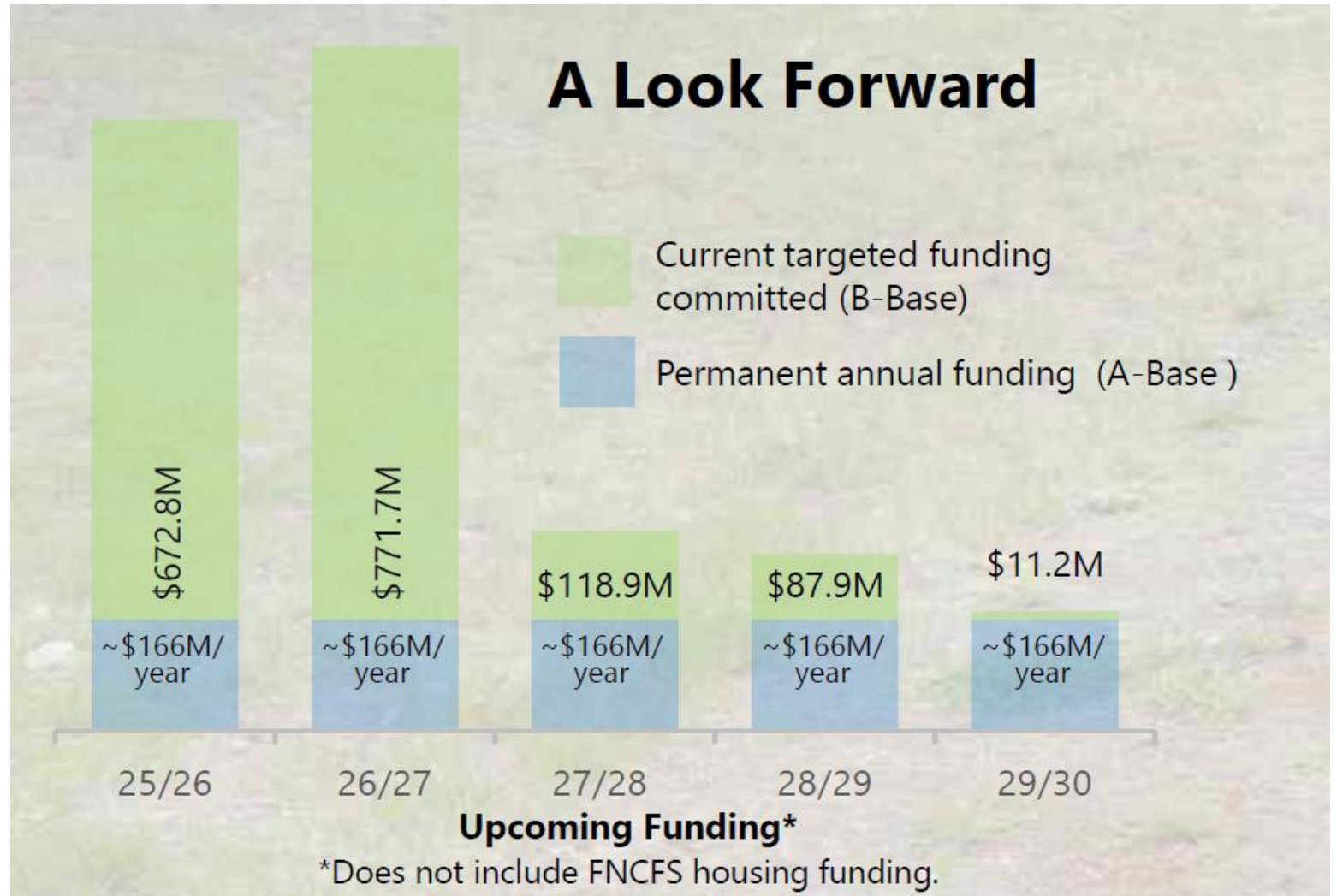


Federal Housing and Infrastructure Priorities: Outlook



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Current funding outlook: Indigenous Services Canada



**Graphic courtesy of Indigenous Services Canada*



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Current Outlook

Budget 2025 –

- Major national commitment to Build Canada Homes
- Commitment to a federal Indigenous Housing Strategy
- Limited new First Nations-specific investments:
 - \$2.3 billion over three years, starting 2026-2027, to renew First Nations Water and Wastewater Enhanced Program
 - \$2 billion to increase in available financing for Indigenous infrastructure via Canada Infrastructure Bank.
 - \$2.8 billion confirmed for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing.



Federal Housing and Infrastructure Priorities: Recent Advocacy



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Recent Housing-Related Advocacy: S. 95

CMHC's On-Reserve Non-Profit Housing Program (Section 95).

- CMHC held information sessions on its Section 95 program in response to AFN Resolution 24/2025, *Ensure Adequate and Equitable Levels of Social Housing Funding*.
- CMHC secured one more year of funding under the current funding model while it collaborates with AFN and regions on proposed changes.
- CMHC and AFN have discussed creating an ad hoc working group for Section 95 reform.



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Recent Housing-Related Advocacy: NFFN and FINA

In 2026, the AFN submitted a brief to the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance (NFFN) as part of their study on federal programs and initiatives to support the creation of housing.

On February 12, 2026, the AFN reiterated some of the main recommendations from that submission through another technical written submission and appearance to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance (FINA) to inform in study of Budget 2025 implementation



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Recent Housing-Related Advocacy: NFFN and FINA Recommendations

The AFN recommendations include, most critically:

1. The Building Canada Homes Act (Bill C-20) be amended such that, at all times, there must be at least one Director of the Board of Build Canada Homes who is a First Nations representative; and
2. Bill C-20 be amended to ensure that the purpose and objectives of Build Canada Homes include advancing First Nations priorities and needs with respect to housing.



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AFN's Housing and Infrastructure Strategy

Governance and Delivery

New systems, institutions, and ways to deliver housing services to First Nations people. A First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Policy and Research Centre will gather and provide First Nations with important housing information, tools, best practices, and innovative First Nations approaches to housing.

New financial instruments and additional government funding.

Funding and Financing

Skills and Capacity

Investments in skills and capacity, with the flexibility to direct the use of funding.

Responsiveness to where individual First Nations reside along the transfer of authority continuum in housing and infrastructure.

First Nations Information Sessions



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Next Steps for Housing Strategy Development and Advocacy

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is initiating Phase 1 of updating the 2018 10-Year First Nations National Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy (“the strategy”).



The core purpose of Phase 1 is to gather extensive quantitative and qualitative data to inform the structural redesign of the renewed strategy.



Eight regional hybrid engagement events. These events will contribute to updating the housing strategy, including through future work with the Joint Working Group on housing and homelessness.



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Closing the Infrastructure Gap: Follow-Up Study

- **Overall Research Intent:** The CTIG follow-up report aims to assess and advocate for closing the First Nations infrastructure gap through updated dollar value data, emphasizing long-term and sizeable yearly investments that yield socioeconomic benefits, climate resilience, and reconciliation-driven partnerships that boost both First Nation and non-First Nation industries.
- **Summary Goal:** Outline the historical and policy context of the infrastructure gap, including lessons learned, to build a case for why past programs fell short and introduce multi-year capital and operational investment projections.
- **Socioeconomic Outcomes Subgoal:** Detail how investments enhance education, workforce participation, health, economic self-sufficiency, and reduce public care/rehabilitation costs, positioning First Nations as contributors to broader Canadian prosperity.



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Closing the Infrastructure Gap: Follow-Up Study Continued

- **Alignment Intent:** Explore collaborative pathways for nation-building, aligning with Prime Minister's Office (PMO) priorities, Major Projects Office key goals, industry partnerships, and reconciliation efforts to foster shared economic resilience.
- **The “Story” of the Gap Intent:** Tell "The Story" through detailed chapters on each infrastructure category (e.g., housing, health, education), analyzing recent impacts, current needs, and targeted solutions to humanize the gap and propose actionable fixes specific to advocacy efforts between the applicable AFN and federal departments.
- **Research Next Steps:** Identify areas for improvement to the AFN’s Closing the Gap national research project, to better inform cross-sector advocacy efforts such as non-reserve arterial roads from nearest highway or urban centre to the applicable Reserve, emergency response investment needs, local airport improvements, retro-fitting of existing housing stock, etc.



Homelessness Priorities



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Priorities

- *Reaching Home*: HICC is currently conducting a program evaluation to inform future budget cycles and any potential program re-design, with AFN participating in the Indigenous Evaluation Working Group to provide First Nations specific input and influence the process.
- *Homelessness Action Plan*: HICC funding continues to support implementation of activities in the action plan, including regional engagement, policy development, and coordination through the JWG on Housing, related Infrastructure and Homelessness.



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Priorities Continued

- *Data Collection*: The First Nations on-community homelessness data collection methodology will be piloted to interested regions.
- *Veterans Homelessness Research Project*: The research examines systemic drivers of discrimination including program access barriers and transition challenges from military to civilian life for First Nation veterans.
- *Homelessness and Mental Wellness Forum*: AFN will be hosting a forum November 18-19 in Toronto to bring together policy makers, First Nations leadership, front line workers, and people with lived experience to discuss challenges and opportunities in addressing First Nations Homelessness and Mental Wellness.
- *Transition from the Criminal Justice System*: Research supports for First Nations in their transition from the criminal justice system including accessing and retaining housing.



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Next Steps

The AFN continues to push for:

- First Nations-led governance of homelessness services and funding;
- Transparent encampment strategies that include First Nations voices;
- ISC-HICC coordination or mandate alignment to address jurisdictional gaps;
- Community-controlled data and enumeration, advancing OCAP[®] and supporting long-term program evaluation.



Closing Remarks



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Questions and Further Information

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