



# INDEPENDENT FIRST NATIONS ALLIANCE

LAC SEUL | WHITESAND | KITCHENUHMAYKOOSIB INNINUWUG | PIKANGIKUM | MUSKRAT DAM

# **Advancing First Nations Housing Sovereignty**



## Purpose & Context

- Housing crisis in First Nations communities remains structural
- Overcrowding, infrastructure deficits, and economic constraints persist
- Federal funding formulas do not match current First Nations population realities
- This presentation links governance, data, infrastructure, and economic development to move housing forward



# Understanding Where We Currently Stand

- Leadership needs a clear baseline before solutions
- Housing inventory: how many units, what types, where located
- Overcrowding: household size, multi-family occupancy, waitlists
- Infrastructure gaps: water, wastewater, power, roads, broadband
- Population trends: current, projected growth, household formation



# Housing Data, Inspections & Planning Capacity

- Regular, standardized housing inspections (condition, mold, structural, ventilation)
- Asset management approach: lifecycle costs, maintenance backlog, replacement priority
- Match population and household data to housing need (5-, 10-, 20-year horizon)
- Technical units / housing departments analyze data and prepare evidence-based plans and proposals
- Outcome: an actionable community housing strategy with measurable targets



## The Reality on the Ground

- Chronic overcrowding (multi-family occupancy per unit)
- Aging housing stock and deferred maintenance
- Health and safety impacts (mold, ventilation, structural stress)
- Repair costs can exceed replacement in severely deteriorated units
- Construction timelines stretch due to access and procurement constraints



# Population Pressure & Demographics

- Younger demographic profile and growing population
- Larger average household sizes and multi-generational living
- Demand for new builds rises faster than housing supply
- Funding formulas do not align with actual community growth and household needs



# Infrastructure Gaps Compound Housing

- Housing expansion depends on infrastructure capacity
- Water and wastewater limits constrain new connections
- Power generation and distribution constraints limit growth
- Road access and broadband gaps increase cost and complexity
- Infrastructure planning must run in parallel with housing planning



# Indigenous Services Canada Funding Constraints

- Proposal-driven funding environment and annual uncertainty
- Capital envelopes often do not reflect northern and remote cost realities
- O&M and maintenance funding does not match actual lifecycle needs
- Cost escalation and procurement delays erode buying power
- Leadership must prioritize among urgent needs with limited tools



# Remoteness, Winter Roads & Climate Risk

- Seasonal access is a major driver of cost, schedule, and delivery risk
- Reliance on winter roads (often ~6–8 weeks; varies year to year)
- Climate change is increasing unpredictability (freeze-up delays, early thaw)
- Shorter windows mean higher freight premiums and missed construction seasons
- Long-term transportation solutions are needed: all-season roads, staging, and regional logistics



# Economic Development as the Foundation for Housing Sustainability

- Housing cannot rely only on government transfers long-term
- Employment and income growth increases housing affordability and stability
- Diversification builds a healthier, more resilient local economy
- Economic participation strengthens own-source revenue to reinvest in housing
- Housing strategy and economic strategy must be linked



# Diversifying into Emerging Industries

- Mining and critical minerals
- Renewable energy (solar, wind, hydro) and grid expansion
- Infrastructure construction and regional logistics hubs
- Forestry and land/resource management opportunities
- Align community workforce development to real project pipelines and market demand



# Structural Imbalance in the Federal Relationship

- The relationship is foundational but not balanced in outcomes
- Federal government controls key fiscal frameworks; communities manage impacts on the ground
- Funding levels and methods do not reflect real housing gaps and demographic pressure
- Limited own-source revenue reinforces dependency on annual agreements
- Housing has been treated as a program rather than sovereignty infrastructure



## Strengthening Partnership, Transparency & Coordination

- Improve transparency in funding methodologies and gap measurement
- Enable First Nations to define needs clearly and explain shortfalls with evidence
- Multi-year predictable capital frameworks to plan at scale
- Stronger federal–provincial coordination aligned to community-led strategies
- Include First Nations in mainstream infrastructure planning processes



# Emerging Northern Development Opportunity

- Growing focus on northern development: critical minerals, energy, corridors, and infrastructure
- Major projects are expanding in and near traditional territories
- This creates an opportunity window for equity participation and long-term revenue
- Housing outcomes improve when development includes ownership and community benefit structures



## Risk if Ownership Is Not Secured

- Projects can bring temporary jobs but not lasting fiscal capacity
- Profits can leave the region without equity or revenue sharing
- Communities remain dependent and housing gaps persist
- Economic extraction without ownership does not close the housing gap



## First Nations as Crucial Partners & Owners

- Equity participation in mining, energy, and infrastructure projects
- Revenue-sharing agreements tied to land and resources
- Community development corporations and regional economic entities
- Infrastructure partnerships that reduce long-term housing costs
- Predictable revenue enables housing strategies beyond annual cycles



# Linking Revenue to Housing Strategy

- Own-source revenue can support housing revolving funds
- Stable funding enables modular scale, bulk procurement, and workforce pipelines
- Support maintenance and lifecycle funding to protect housing stock
- Enable financing tools aligned to community priorities (where appropriate)
- Reinvest locally to create a sustainable housing system



# Building Local Housing Capacity

- Parallel strategy: import high-quality, climate-adapted homes AND build local capacity
- Evaluate new building systems that match community needs and northern conditions
- Regional modular housing facilities where viable
- Bring trades training to communities; align to active builds
- Adapt apprenticeships for remote and road-access realities; integrate youth pathways



# Strengthening the Technical Ecosystem

- Consistent inspection systems and quality assurance
- Strong technical support from Tribal Councils and housing authorities
- Clear coordination between leadership, contractors, manufacturers, and technical advisors
- Build strong working relationships and shared accountability across the construction team
- Capacity is built by building together and learning together



## Closing – A Path Forward

- Start with evidence: inspections, inventory, and quantified housing gaps
- Plan infrastructure and transportation as housing enablers
- Build economic participation and ownership to generate sustainable revenue
- Scale capacity through training, apprenticeships, and strong technical systems
- Housing is sovereignty infrastructure: For First Nations. By First Nations. Led by First Nations.