

A NEW FIRST NATIONS HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE AUTHORITY

MADE BY BC FIRST NATIONS – FOR BC FIRST NATIONS

Based on the feedback from HIC's first round of engagement sessions HIC has developed a proposed vision for the New Housing & Infrastructure (H&I) Authority. This proposal will be part of the next rounds of engagement and will be reviewed by First Nations leadership, housing professionals and administrators.

OBJECTIVES OF A NEW FIRST NATIONS H&I AUTHORITY

OUTCOMES

- First Nations with full responsibility for their own H&I, in the province, in each First Nation and within the individuals in each family—change of paradigm from dependency to self determination.
- Improved H&I services for First Nations across the housing continuum from housing the homeless to creating financing mechanisms for people who want to design and build their own home.
- A First Nations designed and managed institution that uses cutting edge H&I specialists from across the country.
- H&I services that close the gap between on and off reserve to reduce the barriers people encounter moving between communities and to close the gap between have and have not First Nations—a no First Nation left behind approach.
- H&I services that close the gap between on reserve H&I and the BC mainstream.

SERVICES

- New streamlined social housing programs that deliver social supports/wrap around services.
- A circuit rider type service that brings expertise to First Nations as needed wherever they are.
- Build-your-own-house support team to get First Nations hands back on their houses.
- Technical and management training—certified H&I courses—more professional designations.
- Education for leadership, community members to change the H&I paradigm from government delivered H&I programs to First Nations service delivery to augment individual initiative.



FINANCE

- New financial mechanisms developed with First Nations financial institutions.
- A full suite of financial tools (legally established) for new builds, additions, repairs, renovations and site services.
- A for-profit arm of the Authority that will work with suppliers and builders to turn H&I on reserves into a money-making venture.
- A wide range of funding from sources other than the federal government, including other levels of government, social investors and foundations.
- Opportunities for individuals to build their own financial plans to enhance their H&I situations.
- Opportunities for housing mobility on reserves, creating options to buy and sell homes as needed and desired.
- Opportunities to build equity even for the poverty-stricken.

MANAGEMENT

- New career opportunities for First Nations H&I professionals.
- A province wide database that all First Nations can connect with and access any information they need – ability to store their information on the system.
- A communications network for H&I professionals—on line—self-regulating communications tools.
- A BC First Nations H&I professionals association to manage, regulate and advocate for the professions.

“We shape our buildings;
thereafter they shape us.”

~Winston Churchill (1874-1964),
British Politician

HOW THE AUTHORITY WILL REPLACE THE SERVICES & RESOURCES OFFERED BY FEDERAL & PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS IN BC

- The Authority will create a new system that is focussed on improved, different and extended services, better streamlined service delivery and developing a new relationship between on reserve residents and their houses.
- The Authority will draw down the authorities from ISC and CMHC (and possibly other agencies) both in H&I and adopt the program delivery file in order to develop more appropriate programs.
- The Authority will make more community-based funding decisions.
- The Authority will not only replace federal agencies, it will expand the H&I portfolio as it pursues funding and financing mechanisms unavailable to government agencies.

HOW THE AUTHORITY WILL IMPROVE H&I FOR FIRST NATIONS IN BC

First Nations will have real and perceived control over their H&I successes and failures. They will have the opportunity to be proud of their achievements and to fix their own problems by:

- Developing a vibrant H&I sector with lateral working relationships between First Nations.
- Bringing First Nations H&I into the mainstream H&I sector—build relationships with H&I specialists from across the globe.
- Transforming on reserve H&I from a liability to a valued asset by changing the paradigm from government to First Nations control.
- Providing viable career paths for First Nations H&I professionals.
- Establishing new sources of revenues—new relationships with financial organizations (new legal financial tools).
- Establishing new methods of revenues—create a for-profit arm of the Authority and develop H&I businesses from construction to suppliers to social support services.
- Creating rehabilitation and social housing programs that fit First Nations needs and are focused on opportunities for housing mobility.
- Becoming a service entity that provides real, needed services that are connected to the communities.
- Providing H&I services that compliment the community's integrity and culture.
- Giving First Nations people real choices, not only based on need but in response to their dreams and desires thus developing a new relationship between First Nations people and their houses.
- Providing opportunities across the housing continuum from the homeless to the mansions.



RELATIONSHIP THE AUTHORITY WILL HAVE WITH CANADA

- Negotiate with Canada to achieve a settlement for the legacy of destruction caused by federal H&I restrictions.
- Negotiate for maximum funding for newly developed social housing programs and infrastructure services that have been designed to fit First Nations needs.
- Negotiate with the federal government to match funding from the province.
- Seek legal authority to establish new financial mechanisms designed for H&I.
- Work with a First Nations financial authorities to streamline First Nations funding and financing.

RELATIONSHIP THE AUTHORITY WILL HAVE WITH BC

- Work with the provincial government and urban indigenous housing providers to harmonize and integrate services—blur the boundary between jurisdictions.
- Close the gaps currently present between on and off reserve jurisdiction so that First Nations people will have continuous housing services as they move between communities.
- Work with the province and municipalities to ensure there are no jurisdictional barriers to First Nations H&I.
- Negotiate with the provincial government to establish an ongoing commitment to fund H&I on reserves.



“Being first is rewarding,
but also much more difficult.”

~Garry Merkel, HIC Executive Director
on creating a BC First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Council

RELATIONSHIP THE AUTHORITY WILL HAVE WITH FIRST NATIONS

- Bottom up—First Nations will have regular and meaningful input into the authority at every level.
- Services will be client based and determined by the needs of First Nations.
- Different relationships with First Nations depending on their size, location—one quarter of BC's First Nations have under 75 residents on their reserves—each First Nation requires a specific kind of service delivery.
- Many First Nations are well on their way to H&I independence—the services to these First Nations will be supportive, provide professional development, etc.
- Top down—BC chiefs will be a critical aspect of the Authority providing leadership oversight, political advocacy and legitimacy to the organization.
- Leadership will negotiate for and maintain a prominent place for H&I in the media and in the financial dealings of the province.
- The Authority will be managed and led by First Nations people with on reserve H&I expertise.
- The Authority will act as an umbrella for other First Nations H&I related entities.

