



A Time for Action:

A National Plan to Address Aboriginal Housing

Prepared by the

**National Aboriginal Housing Association/
Association Nationale d'Habitation Autochtone**

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*We also want to acknowledge and thank **Steve Pomeroy**, whose research is the basis of this proposed Action Plan. Mr. Pomeroy is the President of Focus Consulting Inc, based in Ottawa, and specializes in affordable housing policy and research. He is highly respected and widely acknowledged as one of the leading housing policy researchers in Canada and has previously done research for NAHA, preparing our proposed national Aboriginal housing strategy in 2004.*

Thanks as well to the members of the NAHA Research Committee for their dedication and input in reviewing and finalizing this Action Plan.

Executive Summary

The National Aboriginal Housing Association/Association Nationale d'Habitation Autochone (NAHA/ANHA) was created in 1993 as a membership-based organization representing non-reserve Aboriginal housing and shelter providers across Canada. The current focus of NAHA is on advocating for predictable and sustainable funding from the federal government to preserve the existing urban native housing stock and add sufficient additional dedicated stock to respond to unmet and growing housing need among Aboriginal households living off reserve.

NAHA strongly believes that the federal government's fiduciary responsibility to Aboriginal persons applies to all Aboriginal persons regardless of whether they live on or off reserve. Accordingly, NAHA has prepared this call for action to advocate to the federal government for the establishment of a Non-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust as a funding mechanism to respond to the disproportionately large level of housing need among Canada's non-reserve Aboriginal population.

Three-quarters of the Aboriginal population lives off reserve, but with the exception of the one-time off-reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust, which is now expiring, there has been no funding to address the housing needs of this population.

The small existing stock of social housing (totaling just over 10,000 units nationally), developed prior to 1994 in partnership with Aboriginal communities is reaching the end of operating agreements. Many of these existing properties will no longer be viable and will no longer be able to provide affordable housing to the Aboriginal population. Renewing and extending operating subsidies and investing in capital improvements can help to extend the life of these assets and preserve long-term affordability.

The incidence of housing need among the non-reserve Aboriginal population is over 20% compared to 12.4% among non-Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented among the homeless.

At a minimum, NAHA calls on the federal government to help NAHA redress these disparities and reduce the overall incidence of housing need to a level no higher than that among the non-Aboriginal population.

Examining existing housing need and the experience to date of Aboriginal Housing providers, this call for action identifies 5 targets to be pursued over the next decade:

1. Prevent further growth in housing need: As the non reserve population continues to grow stem the growth in need by providing assistance to 1,000 new households annually;
2. Reduce and equalize core housing need: To reduce Aboriginal need below 12.5% of the non reserve population requires provision of 3,000 dwellings annually (combination of new construction, acquisition and rental assistance);
3. Preserve and improve the existing social housing stock: 1,000 dwellings improved annually;

NAHA Plan for Action

4. Reduce Aboriginal homelessness: create 1,000 new transitional and supportive housing spaces with ongoing support services;
5. Increase the non-reserve Aboriginal home-ownership rate (54%, in 2006) to match that of the non-Aboriginal population (68%): provide assisted to 4,000 households annually to access affordable ownership.

Aboriginal housing providers have been unable to successfully compete in mainstream funding competitions to secure necessary funding for Aboriginal housing off reserve.

There is a need to strengthen and expand capacity in the non-Reserve Aboriginal housing community. This can be best achieved by providing the Aboriginal community with the resources, responsibility and accountability to provide and manage Aboriginal housing.

In accordance with the principles of Aboriginal control over Aboriginal housing and accountability by all parties, NAHA calls on the federal government to extend and make permanent the off-reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust.

NAHA further calls on the federal government to appoint a board of Trustees with Aboriginal status and background and expertise in housing to direct the allocation of funds across regions and to manage the investment of these funds to achieve the targets established in this plan.

Initially the Trust should be funded at \$100 million per year, gradually ramping up to annual allocation of \$386 million as NAHA and the Trustees develop capacity and demonstrate results from the investments.

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 CORE PRINCIPLES FOR A NON RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN	4
3 DEFINING THE ISSUES	6
Three quarters of Aboriginal Households do not live on Reserves	6
3.1 HOUSING NEED IS DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGHER AMONG NON-RESERVE ABORIGINAL HOUSEHOLDS	7
3.2 VERY HIGH INCIDENCE OF ABORIGINAL PERSONS AMONG HOMELESSNESS.....	8
3.3 EROSION OF LIMITED EXISTING ABORIGINAL HOUSING – EXPIRY OF OPERATING AGREEMENTS.....	9
Expiring Subsidy Agreements and Stock at Risk	10
4 FUNDING ISSUES - RECENT INITIATIVES RESPONDING TO NON RESERVE ABORIGINAL HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS	12
5 RESPONDING TO NEED.....	14
Building from experience	16
Identifying solutions	17
6 ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES AND DELIVERY TARGETS.....	17
6.1 IMPLEMENTING THESE TARGETS	19
7 COSTS AND DEDICATED ALLOCATIONS	19
8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	21

Appendix A: NAHA Directors (2008-2009)

Appendix B: Detailed Analysis of Non-reserve Aboriginal Housing Need

Appendix C: Estimates of capital grant and rental assistance

This Plan was prepared with the assistance of Steve Pomeroy, Focus Consulting Inc.

NAHA Plan for Action

1 Introduction

The National Aboriginal Housing Association/Association Nationale d'Habitation Autochone (NAHA/ANHA) was created in 1993 with funding from the federal government. It is a membership-based organization representing non-reserve Aboriginal housing and shelter providers across Canada. The current Board of Directors is listed in Appendix A. There are over 110 existing urban housing providers, and many homelessness and supportive shelters serving Indian, Metis and Inuit communities.

NAHA/ANHA was created to link such organizations by providing support and guidance in strategic planning and national policy development, and to advance the housing goals of all non-reserve Aboriginal housing interests. The Association's Board of Directors (see appendix A) is made up of representatives from each province & territory.

NAHA's mission is to build safe and healthy Aboriginal communities by supporting Aboriginal housing corporations to achieve standards of excellence in the management and delivery of quality affordable housing and counseling support services to Aboriginal tenants and potential homeowners.

The current focus of NAHA is on advocating for predictable and sustainable funding from the federal government to preserve the existing urban native housing stock and add sufficient additional dedicated stock to respond to unmet and growing housing need among Aboriginal households living off reserve.

The need for action

The housing conditions in Aboriginal communities have been well documented and compared to third world conditions. This focuses almost exclusively on Aboriginal housing on Reserve; less well known is the reality that almost three-quarters (73%) of the Aboriginal population do not live on reserve, and this non-reserve population is increasing. Moreover, the non-reserve Aboriginal population experiences a much larger rate of housing need than non-Aboriginal population in the same urban centres. Yet in most budget and program decisions this population and need is overlooked – there is no dedicated funding or strategy to address these issues, which as consequence have continued to increase.

NAHA believes there is a need and opportunity to proactively manage the impact of migration to non-reserve locations and to improve the housing opportunities and options for Aboriginal people moving or already living off reserve.

In 2004, *A New Beginning: The National Non-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Strategy* detailed the significance of the non-reserve aboriginal population, and the level of housing need across non-reserve communities.¹ It highlighted the disproportionate incidence of housing need in this Aboriginal population. The lack of funding to create housing for this population was identified

¹ The non reserve Aboriginal population includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit

and the Strategy called on the federal and provincial-territorial governments to take affirmative action. Specifically, it requests that targeted budget allocations be provided to respond to non-reserve Aboriginal housing need.

At that time, the initial phase of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) was underway, but no explicit allocations had been made for non-reserve need – urban groups had to compete for funding against non-Aboriginal need. The form of funding (only capital, with no ongoing subsidy) does not fit well with the deeper need among the Aboriginal population.

The National Homeless Initiative, now renamed the Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS), which commencing in late 1999, preceded AHI, did include a specific allocation of funding to address the needs of homeless Aboriginal people (focused mainly on shelters and transitional housing and supports).

Subsequently, in 2006 the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust, in the amount of \$300 million over three years, was funded to help provinces address housing needs for Aboriginal Canadians living off-reserve. However, the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust was a one-time commitment ending March 2009, and funding is now being depleted. The use of funds provided in trust to the provinces to deliver is uneven and in some cases minimal.

The AHI has been renewed for a five-year period (2009-2013), but again has no explicit budget allocation or conditions requiring provinces and territories to proactively support initiatives targeted to the non-reserve Aboriginal housing need. The HPS has too been renewed and is expected to continue an explicit Aboriginal funding stream, although this remains unconfirmed.

The general pattern in funding for affordable housing is one of on again off again with no long-term sustainable commitment. This is even more uneven in serving the disproportionate needs of a growing non-reserve Aboriginal population; funding arrangements are not channeled through nor premised on Aboriginal control and accountability.

The funding arrangements are just that, expenditure programs. They lack a coherent strategy with explicit outcomes – a point poignantly articulated by the BC Auditor General on his evaluation of Homeless funding initiatives in BC, which included elements targeted to homeless Aboriginal people.

“We found significant activity and resources being applied to homelessness issues but there is no provincial homelessness plan with clear goals and objectives. The foundation of many best practices appears to be in place. However, the absence of clear goals and objectives raises questions about whether the right breadth and intensity of strategies are being deployed”

John Doyle, BC Auditor General, 2009

Accordingly, NAHA reiterates the need to develop a comprehensive and purposeful strategy that establishes an explicit funding stream for non-reserve Aboriginal people linked directly to core objectives and measurable outcomes.

While speaking particularly for Aboriginal people, NAHA is not alone in advocating for predictable and sustainable funding for affordable housing. Canada's mayors and municipalities through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) have similarly called on the federal, provincial and territorial governments to develop a national strategy to address persisting homelessness, the lack of affordable housing, and more critically the erosion of the limited supply of affordable housing that already exists.² Other national housing organizations like the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA), Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) and Canadian Association of Apartment Associations (CFAA) have all endorsed the FCM plan and added their proposals for a national Strategy.

This Action Plan presents the data showing that Aboriginal communities outstanding housing and related poverty issues are significantly and disproportionately higher among non-reserve Aboriginal families and individuals than in the non-Aboriginal population. This information is then used to help shape a revised call for action, targeting gaps in funding and seeking to build on success, where this has occurred.

Following this introduction (section 1) the report is organized into sections as follows:

2. Core principles for a non reserve Aboriginal Action Plan;
3. Defining the issues: overview of Aboriginal housing need, homelessness and the expiry of existing funding agreements;
4. Funding issues - recent funding programs and trends, lack of dedicated aboriginal funding;
5. Responding to need - targets and actions
6. Establishing priorities and delivery targets
7. Financial implications of the Action Plan
8. Conclusions and recommendations for a more effective framework of response to non-reserve Aboriginal housing need

More detailed statistical information is provided in Appendix B

² See *Sustaining the Momentum: Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness*, Jan 2008)

2 Core principles for a non-reserve Aboriginal Action Plan

In advocating for a comprehensive approach, either within a broader national housing strategy or as a stand-alone Non-reserve Aboriginal strategy, NAHA has premised its mission on the following principles:

- Services for Aboriginal persons must be culturally respectful and sensitive;
- Services must be provided to all indigenous persons, regardless of “Aboriginal status”;
- There must be Aboriginal control over Aboriginal housing;
- There must be accountability at all levels (funders and Aboriginal service providers);
- Housing issues are complex and require comprehensive programs and a united effort among all partners.

NAHA takes the position that the right to housing for all aboriginal people is rooted in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 16, 1966 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and the conventions of the International Labour Organization that express social and economic rights, including a right to housing³.

While some of the aboriginal people have claimed the right is part of their understanding of the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* and sections 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and their respective treaty, many can not because not all of these instruments have universal application in Canada.

Beyond these rights based reasons, the facts speak for themselves; the aboriginal peoples are overly represented in the homeless numbers and in the core housing need figures used in Canada.

The federal government has a moral, ethical and legal responsibility to act to address the matter. It cannot hide behind the internal jurisdictional divisions of the country.

The Right of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada to special, targeted, specifically designed programs and allocations is due to the over representation of the aboriginal peoples in housing need compared to the general housing need. The market processes as well as previous programs and provincial allocation methodologies’ all seem to have systemic issues for the situations of the aboriginal peoples’ with the consequence that Aboriginal need has gotten worst not better since the termination of federal funding for new social housing (1994) and the process of devolution to provincial administration (commencing in 1996 but with formal agreements staggered over the following decade).

³ See the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report 1996, Volume Four, Chapter Four, Section 2.2 of Policy Foundation: the Right to Housing for more discussion on the right to housing. The report is on Line at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca.

NAHA strongly believes that the federal government's fiduciary responsibility to Aboriginal persons applies to all Aboriginal persons regardless of whether they live on or off reserve.⁴ This view was reinforced in the 2005 White Point principles adopted by provincial and territorial Ministers of Housing:

*The provinces and territories respect the special relationship and fiduciary responsibility that Canada has with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.*⁵

When the federal government terminated funding for new social housing (including the Urban Native program) in 1993, it concurrently directed CMHC, as Canada's housing agency, to maintain programs for on-reserve Aboriginal housing. It did not, however, direct CMHC to similarly serve the much larger and growing population of Aboriginal peoples living off reserve, many in urban communities.

The data in Appendix B reveal that the majority of Aboriginal persons live in non-reserve communities. The proportion of Aboriginal persons living off-reserve has increased from 70.6% in 2001 to 73.7% in 2006. Many have relocated from their traditional lands because of limited economic, educational and employment opportunity to sustain themselves and their families. They seek to improve their capacity to earn a living and to improve the opportunities for their children. In most cases they are pushed from the reserves by lack of opportunity. Aboriginal people should not forego the special relationship that historic rights have conveyed upon Aboriginal peoples and the associated funding obligations of the federal government.

At the same time, as citizens of urban communities Aboriginal persons access and enjoy a range of services and have needs that impose costs on provincial and municipal governments. So as Aboriginal people increasingly migrate off reserve (and existing non reserve families have children), funding for services they consume is increasingly paid by provincial and local government, with reduced federal support.

Housing issues are not isolated from poverty, education, health and employment issues, so a comprehensive housing strategy is not just about housing, it must be about how housing can contribute to other (non-shelter) outcomes, for example by providing stability to a household: enabling adults to improve education and potential labour market skills, while children also receive a good education to facilitate their future opportunities, enjoy good health (implying

⁴ In *Wewaykum Indian Band v. Canada* (2002), a non-section 35 decision, the Court sought to further clarify certain aspects of the Crown-Aboriginal fiduciary relationship and the scope of obligations arising under it, noting the post-Guerin "flood of 'fiduciary duty' claims ... across a whole spectrum of possible complaints." The *Wewaykum* ruling confirmed that: fiduciary obligations are not restricted to section 35 rights or to existing reserves: they come into play "to facilitate supervision of the high degree of discretionary control gradually assumed by the Crown over the lives of aboriginal peoples"..... [2002 SCC 79, 6 December 2002].

⁵ Approved Provincial-Territorial meeting of ministers responsible for housing White Point, Nova Scotia (September 22, 2005) and reaffirmed at P/T ministerial meeting June 17, 2006.

good quality housing) and in safe environments where parents and children are not victimized by crime and insecurity.

Concurrent with migration from reserves, and despite government efforts through homeless programs, Aboriginal homelessness is a growing issue, with Aboriginal people disproportionately represented in this population. In part, this relates to the BC auditor general's observation on the need for a more comprehensive connected strategy. In particular, permanent affordable housing is necessary to sustain a transition out of homelessness.

As such, an interdisciplinary and inter-governmental sharing of responsibility can generate more effective and positive incomes than compartmentalized approaches. Aboriginal organizations also need to enhance their coordination and collaboration.

3 Defining the issues

In support of this report, a detailed analysis of housing need and related issues among the non-Reserve Aboriginal population has been undertaken. The details of this analysis are presented in Appendix B, Non-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Need. This section highlights the main findings from that analysis.

Three quarters of Aboriginal Households do not live on Reserves

Perhaps the most critical statistic in making the case for a non-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Action Plan is that only one quarter of Aboriginal households lives on reserves. In 2006, the majority (73.4%) of Aboriginal households lived off reserve, an increase from 70.6% in 2001.⁶

While specific programs and funding continue to be directed to Aboriginal populations, this is often directed only to the First Nations that remain on reserve. For example, in the Jan 2009 federal budget, \$400million was allocated specifically for new social housing and remediation of existing housing on First Nations reserves (where conditions are very serious and require attention); no funding was explicitly identified for the larger and broader non-reserve Aboriginal population.

While Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA's) rank high on absolute counts, the small cities (Census Agglomerations, under 100,000) in the aggregate account for a substantial share of the non-reserve Aboriginal population. This has important implications for policy responses and budget allocation mechanisms – it is not exclusively nor predominantly a population of large metropolitan centres. Frequently, the allocation of AHI funding by provinces is directed to major centres and funds for non-reserve Aboriginal need in smaller communities is often very limited.

⁶ It is noted that reporting of Aboriginal identify has improved and the increase in this population is impacted by under reporting in earlier periods and census. This will impact the absolute counts, but the incidence rates are reliable.

3.1 Housing need is disproportionately higher among non-reserve Aboriginal households

As in 2001, core housing need among non-reserve Aboriginal households in 2006 was significantly higher than among the non-Aboriginal population. While many (three quarters of all Aboriginal persons), have relocated from reserves into towns and cities, where economic opportunities may be greater, they still fall short of achieving minimum housing standards much more frequently than their non-Aboriginal neighbours.

In 2006 one in every five Aboriginal households (20.4%), was in core need. This compares to one in eight in the non-Aboriginal population (12.4%). This variation is a critical issue that the proposed Action Plan seeks to address.

As noted in the general distribution of the Aboriginal population, Aboriginal housing need is distributed more broadly across CMA's and other mid-sized urban areas. While large western cities like Winnipeg, Vancouver and Edmonton have the largest counts; the incidence is often higher in the smaller cities, such as Regina and Brantford as well as in small northern communities.

Affordability is the predominant issue, but the proportion of households also experiencing adequacy and suitability problems is considerably higher in the Aboriginal population:

- More than one-quarter (27.5%) of Aboriginal core need households experience adequacy problems
- Slightly fewer (23%) live in unsuitable (crowded) dwellings (often in combination with an affordability problem).
- By comparison the rates in the non-Aboriginal group are 15% and 14% for condition and crowding respectively.

As in the general population, core need is mainly a problem for renters, who account for 77% of Aboriginal core need nationally.

Housing need is also skewed more toward young family households than in the non-Aboriginal population. While accounting for half the need in the non-Aboriginal population, families make up 70% of need in the non-reserve Aboriginal population. Lone parents experience the highest incidence of need (43% among Aboriginal versus 25%). Singles (and increasingly elders) also require housing and support.

Incomes are much lower – on average the income of non-reserve Aboriginal households is only 83% that of Non Aboriginal households. This reflects lower participation and higher unemployment rates, as well as employment in lower wage occupations.

Within those in core housing need, there is less disparity (all are low income). Although the incidence of need is significantly greater in the Aboriginal population, incomes and shelter costs were found to be more positive than might be expected. The average income in core need renter

families is almost identical for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal households. For unattached individuals (non family) the Aboriginal average income is 5% lower than that of non-Aboriginal.

From the data on shelter costs it appears that Aboriginal households have been more successful in securing lower cost housing. In part, this issue relates to the less metropolitan distribution (costs are lower in non CMA cities), and in part due to the fact they more frequently occupy dwellings in poor condition (the condition data show a much higher incidence of dwellings in poor condition among Aboriginal households).

The result is that, nationally, the average affordability gaps among Aboriginal families is less than half that in non-Aboriginal families; in non-family households it is 80% that of non-Aboriginal households. This suggests that where households occupy dwellings in sound condition, rental assistance could be an effective remedy to address affordability only problems and should be part of a housing strategy.

Non-reserve Aboriginal households have achieved a much lower rate of homeownership (54% versus 69% in the non-Aboriginal population) – suggesting opportunities to focus on improving home purchase and ownership of this important asset⁷.

3.2 Very high incidence of Aboriginal persons among Homelessness

There is no comprehensive official national enumeration of homelessness, however, examining homeless counts across a range of cities, Aboriginal homelessness is clearly a very significant issue:⁸

- In the Toronto Street Assessment conducted April 2006 the City found that Aboriginal people constituted 16% of all people surveyed (including those in shelters). Amongst the outdoor population, Aboriginal people constituted 26% of the homeless population. By comparison, Aboriginal people make up only 0.5% of the Toronto general population. Aboriginal people were homeless longer as well - on average 5.3 years compared to 3.1 years for non-Aboriginal people.
- The City of Calgary conducts a biennial street count and in 2008 this was augmented by a separate count by agencies involved in serving homeless need. The counts show some decline in the proportion of Aboriginal persons (down to 15.6% in 2008 from a high of 21.2% in 1994. However, over this 15-year period the absolute number of homeless has

⁷ Aboriginal Homeownership rate derived from CMHC data Housing in Canada data file for households identifying as having Aboriginal identity.

⁸ Data reflect response from the FCM Canadian Municipal Housing Action Network – data is weak for Maritimes, as the Aboriginal population is lower in that region; point in time counts have not been undertaken in northern communities – although shelter data is available in Yellowknife and Whitehorse, and reveals a stable or declining level of shelter use (this data does not distinguish aboriginal identity)

risen dramatically for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal. The total is up from 461 to 4,060 with the Aboriginal count up from 98 to 633 (an increase of 545%).

- A count in Lethbridge conducted October 6, 2008 reported a 60% increase in homelessness from 2007 with 45% of the total (276) determined to be Aboriginal
- Summarizing the results of the Homeless Needs Survey conducted from February 2007, in the Victoria Capital Regional District, one-quarter (25%) of people who were homeless or unstably housed identified themselves as First Nations, Aboriginal, Métis, Inuit or Native. This is almost ten times larger than the percentage of Aboriginal people in the overall local population. Local Aboriginal service providers have suggested that many Aboriginal people were missed by the survey and that the percent of homeless or unstably housed people who are Aboriginal is likely even higher than 25%.
- Edmonton conducts a count every other year on the third week of October (commencing with its most recent count in October 2008). Since 2000 the proportion of the homeless that have been identified as aboriginal has consistently hovered around 40%, whereas they are approximately 5% of the general population. The last count (2008) identified 38% as Aboriginal.
- A March 2008 count in Vancouver found Aboriginal representation at 32% and this had increased more rapidly than among the general population. Within sub-populations there were also significant variations including 39% of those under 25 and 45% of women.

The data reveal that Aboriginal people migrating off reserve are at much greater risk of being homeless than non-Aboriginal people. Any strategy must include efforts to respond to this very significant over representation of Aboriginal persons among the homeless. There is a need to provide both housing and support services to enable more successful relocation and transition, through Friendship centres and other culturally sensitive supports, as well as educational and employment opportunities.

3.3 Erosion of limited existing Aboriginal housing – Expiry of Operating Agreements

While growing population and growth of core housing need highlights the requirements to expand the urban Aboriginal housing stock for non-reserve Aboriginal individuals and families, there is a concurrent concern that the existing subsidized stock (just over 10,000 dwellings in urban areas) is at serious risk due to expiring operating and subsidy agreements. Existing programs were funded with long-term mortgages and concurrent long-term subsidy agreements. Both are beginning to reach maturity.

Over the past 40 or so years, non-reserve Aboriginal housing need has been served by two main housing programs: the Rural and Native Housing (RNH) Program in small communities under 2,500 and the Urban Native (UN) Non Profit Housing Program in communities over 2,500 and cities. The RNH program included, but was not exclusively targeted to Aboriginal households; the Urban Native program was 100% targeted. Most units were built or acquired under these two programs between 1973 and 1993. Under the Urban Native program, ongoing subsidy was

provided to help cover operating costs and repay mortgage loans (which ranged from 25-50 year duration, commencing in 1973).

As Dec 1994 there were some 25,000 RNH units under administration and 10,500 Urban Native.⁹ As a share of total social housing in Canada at that time, these represented 1.6% and 2.5% of all non-reserve social housing. Many RNH units were not targeted to Aboriginals so at best 3.8% (but more likely less than 3%) of the total social housing portfolio was targeted to the non-reserve Aboriginal population. Although this reflects the average non-Reserve proportion in the general population, it does not reflect the disproportionately higher incidence of need among Aboriginal households.

Expiring Subsidy Agreements and Stock at Risk

Focusing more particularly on the Urban Native portfolios totaling (in 2008) just over 10,000 units, the creation of these units was facilitated by programs with long term operating subsidy, matched to the mortgage maturity. Subsidy allows the providers to offer units at affordable rent-gear-to-income (RGI) levels. This is similar to most other social housing programs. Generally these mortgages and subsidy agreements are in place for 35-50 years.

In the case of the Urban Native portfolios, because these were serving the Aboriginal population in which large families make up a significant proportion, there was a need to provide family sized units. Often this was done by acquiring existing dwellings to create a scattered portfolio rather than a purpose built new apartment development. Where this acquisition approach was used the term of the mortgage and subsidy was reduced to 25-35yrs. Thus the expiry of agreements tends to come sooner for many Urban Native Properties compared to the larger social housing stock.

The expectations in the program designs were that like most homeowners, once the mortgage is fully retired, the property owner would have sufficient income to cover operating and maintenance expenses. Two recent research studies have examined the implications of expiring operating agreements and have determined that this theoretical expectation may come to fruition in just over half of the social housing stock.¹⁰

But certain programs have systemic features that will result in non-viable conditions post expiry. In any property where the rental revenues do not exceed operating expenses, the properties will be unviable. They will be unable to continue to serve the low-income tenants with the low RGI

⁹ The RNH program assisted households to purchase homes with direct CMHC loans and approximately two-thirds of the units under administration in 1994 were under the homeownership program; the remaining third were predominantly rental properties with some lease-to-purchase). Only the rental properties will remain as social housing assets. As of 2008 only 9,000 of these 25,000 RNH units remained under subsidy since most had a subsidy term of only 25 years, related to their mortgage. It is unknown how many remain occupied by Aboriginal households nor how many occupy their dwellings without affordability problems.

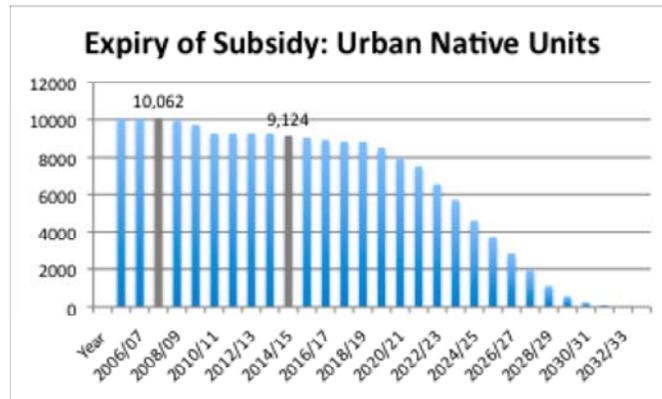
¹⁰ Connelly et al (2003), *Expiry of Operating Agreements* (CHRA); Pomeroy et al (2006) *Was Chicken Little Right: Trend Analysis and Impacts of Expiring Social Housing Agreements* (CHRA, SHSC).

rents currently in place, and in addition, providers will be unable to maintain the assets in sound condition.

Notably, it is those portfolios that are most targeted to low-income households (as distinct from those having a mix of low-moderate income tenants), including many dependent on social assistance (which pays extremely low rent when tenant is in assisted housing – the housing program effectively subsidizing provincial/territorial social assistance budgets) that are most likely to fail a post expiry viability test. The research work examined a cross section of properties and found that in almost all cases, Urban Native properties will not be viable at expiry – the rent revenues (from low income RGI households), are insufficient to cover even the ongoing operating expenses.

In short, almost all of the 10,000 Urban Native units currently serving this population are at risk and without renewed subsidy support and investment in capital repair and modernization could be lost.

Agreements began to expire in 2007 and over the next 20 years the entire stock moves out of subsidy, although this is very gradual with just 1,000 lost in the next 7 years. So there is some time to plan for expiry and develop a strategy to extend subsidy and preserve long-term affordability – but planning must begin now, not wait until expiries commence (and some have already started).



There are important insights from the expiry of agreements research.¹¹ Most particularly, developing properties or portfolios with all units targeted to very low-income households paying very low RGI rents may not be an effective use of subsidy. Such deep and extensive targeting creates long-term liabilities, rather than self-sustaining assets. This risk can be reduced through greater income mix (including market and RGI units).

In addition, concentrating low-income households in a single multi-unit property (often in poorer areas where land is more affordable for social housing) can contribute to other concerns

¹¹ For more detail see Connelly (2003) and Pomeroy (2006), *ibid*.

including lack of participation in the labour market, poor performance of children in school and risk of intergenerational welfare dependency.¹²

For cultural reasons, notably providing supportive culturally sensitive social networks and support, there has been a tendency among Urban Aboriginal communities to create 100% low-income targeted properties.

Thus the key challenge is to find the balance between creating supportive Aboriginal communities and avoiding the concentration of poverty that undermines the objective of increasing opportunity to participate in education and labour markets. If the objective is to use housing as a tool in a broader enabling and poverty reduction approach, the form of housing assistance (and its impact on concentrating poverty) is an important consideration.

Coupled with the issue of weak post expiry viability, many existing Urban Aboriginal properties originally involved acquisition of existing dwellings so many are older and in need of capital replacement. Most providers have insufficient capital reserves because these earlier programs underestimated funding requirements for reserves. However, given the current costs of new construction it is often more cost effective to invest in capital modernization of these existing assets. Adding new rent supplements with extended subsidy periods can concurrently sustain affordability for current and future low-income residents.

4 Funding Issues - Recent Initiatives Responding to Non Reserve Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness

Prior to the termination of federal funding for new social housing as of December 1993, there was a separate envelope of funding specifically targeted to the urban Aboriginal population (Urban Native and RHN programs). This had evolved since inception in 1973 and was targeted to the needs of the non-reserve Aboriginal population. The Urban Native program included enhanced assistance to address lower incomes and large family size, compared to those targeted in non-Aboriginal programming. It also sought to build capacity in helping to establish Aboriginal housing corporations in ownership and management of assets.

After 1993 there was no new federal funding for additional social or affordable housing until the federal government established a new funding framework, the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) in 2001. This was negotiated as a partnership with provinces and territories having a lead role and required to cost share federal funding; there was no requirement for provinces or territories to allocate any budget specifically to the Aboriginal population; and the form of funding was revised to capital grants, with no ongoing subsidy, thereby negating RGI rental assistance.

¹² Concentrated poverty is avoided in a scattered property portfolio, but only if the properties acquired are not in disadvantaged areas with pre-existing high incidence of poverty.

The new arrangements have not worked well for Aboriginal housing. Although some urban Aboriginal corporations have secured funding for new affordable development, compared to earlier social housing programs the form of capital funding has made it difficult to serve traditional program participants (i.e. without ongoing RGI subsidy). Also, in most jurisdictions, the Aboriginal corporations have had difficulty competing for grant funds as their larger unit types and deeper subsidies require larger grants and leave them less competitive in the typically “lowest grant wins” competition for funding. This has contributed to continued growth in non-Reserve housing need.

Separate from the AHI there have been two other new funding programs:

- The Aboriginal Component of the National Homeless Initiative (now Homeless Partnering Strategy) – Aboriginal share of funding (Phase 1 was \$59 million, representing 7.8% of total; the current round allocates \$14.6 million to Aboriginal homelessness, representing 10.8% of the annual budget for the HPS)¹³
- The Affordable Housing Trust Funds, with explicit and separate Off Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust of \$300 million representing 21.5% of total trust funding.¹⁴

The Aboriginal component of the NHI/HPS is a source of dedicated funding that supports responses to the disproportionately high incidence of Aboriginal persons in the homeless population. Initiated as an enhancement to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, this funding is directed to emergency shelters, and in more recent phases to transitional and supportive housing. Although the funding levels and duration create some challenges in sustaining support services, it is not directly contributing to expanding the supply of affordable housing.

The Off Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust has provided a short-term boost and one-time source of funding specific to the Non-reserve population although there have been unfortunate delays in allocating funds and production of housing. More important, while nominally identified as “Aboriginal Trusts” there was no delegation of trustee roles to the Aboriginal community. Decisions of allocating funding are left to the provinces (although the trust agreements do encourage provinces to design and deliver in partnership and consultation with Aboriginal groups in their jurisdictions).¹⁵

¹³ The initial phase of the NHI 1999-2003 had a total budget of \$753m with \$59 million for urban aboriginal homelessness); this program has been extended cyclically 2004-2007 and 2008-2009, with a further renewal recently announced and confirmed in the January federal budget. The current extension is for 5 years 2009-2014 with a similar annual funding level to that in 07-09, providing a total of \$134.8 million annually of which \$14.6m is directed to Aboriginal need.

¹⁴ This \$300M was allocated only to provinces – a separate trust “Northern Housing Trust” was established for the territories and includes funds for Aboriginal persons in those jurisdictions

¹⁵ For example in Ontario, although significantly delayed due to a federal –provincial dispute of broader transfer payments, the Trust funds were ultimately allocated under the administration of two Aboriginal organizations. \$20 million was allocated to Miz wi Biik for use in the GTA and the remaining \$60 million to the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services Inc. for use in rest of Ontario.

In conclusion, over the past decade there has been *some* dedicated funding to help address non-reserve Aboriginal housing and homelessness. There have been many variations in the way that funding has been allocated and the extent to which the process has (or has not) proactively and meaningfully engaged the Aboriginal community.

However, funding has been short term and unpredictable, and thus does not contribute well to sustainable programs and capacity building.

There are some positive experiments and approaches that provide a useful set of examples (e.g. Aboriginal Community Entity model) and practices to adapt for the future. There have inevitably also been some less positive experiences (e.g. difficulty of competing in “mainstream” funding competitions), but these too provide useful lessons to build on.

Notably, while the January 2009 Federal Budget announced a number of new funding initiatives including \$400 million for new construction and remediation of existing social housing on reserve, there was no funding for the much larger non-reserve Aboriginal population. As was the case under previous rounds of the AHI, it is left to the provinces to allocate funds and to enable participation of non-reserve Aboriginal sponsors.

Similarly for the \$1 billion allocated in the federal Budget for renewal of aging social housing – such capital funding is required for Urban Native portfolios, but it is unclear to what extent Aboriginal communities will be included or able to compete for funding. It appears that the allocation decisions will be deferred to provinces /territories (at least in those jurisdictions with a Social Housing Transfer Agreement (all except Alberta, Quebec and PEI).

In short, there is no FPT funding for housing (except some targets in RRAP) directed to the disproportionately high housing need of non-reserve Aboriginal people.

5 Responding to need

The review of housing problems (need) in section 3 (augmented by the details in appendix B) and the lack of sustainable predictable funding for non reserve housing, highlighted in section 4, reveals the following main issues:

- The incidence of core housing need is much greater among the Aboriginal population (20.4%) than the non-Aboriginal population (12.4%);
- Aboriginal households are significantly over represented in the chronic homeless counts;
- A large proportion of Aboriginal households are housed, but experience severe affordability problems, often combined with adequacy (dwelling in poor condition); they pay a high proportion for their housing, which crowds out spending for other necessities and can contribute to poverty issues;

NAHA Plan for Action

- A disproportionately large number live in poor quality housing (often in combination with affordability problems);
- There is an insufficient availability of affordable housing (lack of supply);
- In addition to insufficient new supply, the availability of more affordable housing in the existing stock is eroding:
 - o In the private rented sector, units are being demolished to make way for new higher priced development and even more frequently, demand pressure on rents is shifting rents to levels that are no longer affordable.
 - o In the existing social housing stock long term funding agreements are beginning to expire leaving some projects in unviable situations. This is particularly an issue in the existing Urban Aboriginal portfolios – they have insufficient rental income to maintain the properties and cannot continue providing housing at low RGI rents.

With some notable exceptions, these issues are not dissimilar from those faced by the non-Aboriginal population and articulated in the 2008 FCM Action Plan. Accordingly similar responses to those articulated in the FCM plan may be appropriate and in most cases acceptable. However whether delivered within a broader strategy or as a separate non-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan it is critical that specific and separate funding envelopes and outcomes be specified for this particular population. There is also a need to coordinate and integrate responses to non-reserve Aboriginal need with ongoing mainstream programming.

The exceptions are:

- While the provinces and territories have been increasingly recognized as having primary responsibility for housing, for Aboriginal peoples this is superseded by the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government for Aboriginal persons, regardless of whether they live on or off reserve;
- There is limited expertise and capacity especially in non-metropolitan urban areas and more so since any existing capacity has been lost since termination of new funding in 1994. Various Aboriginal agencies are active in economic development and cultural activities (e.g. Friendship Centers) but there has not been extensive housing activity so related expertise is limited and eroding;
- There continues to be an issue of discrimination that confronts Aboriginal households and often results in constrained access to housing, even when relatively affordable accommodations are available in the market;
- For Aboriginal persons arriving from a life on reserve there is a major cultural adjustment and accordingly, customized culturally sensitive programming and service delivery may be required especially if the goal is to facilitate successful transition. This includes supports in life-skills and in improving educational readiness and labour market skills so that these persons and families can secure employment and increasing self-sufficiency, rather than reinforcing poverty and deprivation with the only change being geographical;

- Friendship Centres, Urban Native housing associations and other Aboriginal service organizations play an important intermediary role in facilitating the transition to urban, non reserve life – housing is necessary but alone an insufficient response to broader social needs;
- The issue of expiring agreements and post expiry viability is more acute in the urban native portfolio because agreements were often shorter so expiry is earlier; and there tends to be deeper targeting – the residents are lower income and more concentrated;
- The small size and fragmented nature of Urban Native providers makes it difficult to work with capital programs providing no ongoing subsidy – these organizations lack the revenues to sustain their management activities and the low RGI rents do not cover management expenses;
- At the household and family level, owning assets improves potential to escape poverty, but Aboriginal households have a much lower ownership rate than non-Aboriginal households. This reflects, in part a lower income profile, but also the need for financial literacy education and assistance.

Building from experience

It is important to extract from lessons in past programming (particularly in the urban native portfolio).

- In efforts to minimize high concentrations of poverty, and reflecting the larger Aboriginal family size the Urban Native program frequently involved acquisition of existing dwellings as distinct from building multiple unit properties. Cost constraints on the price of detached homes does, however, mean that in larger cities a multi-unit apartment approach is more evident; but in the many non-metro cities acquisition costs are more manageable.
- To meet family requirements the acquisition approach has strong merit and could be expanded in larger cities by purchasing townhomes or larger apartments in the existing resale market.
- Acquiring older properties may result in less energy efficient dwellings, with resulting high utility costs exacerbating affordability. Where acquisition is pursued there will be benefits in undertaking green retrofit as part of the acquisition program.
- The weak viability of existing Urban Native social housing is a warning for future approaches. It recommends a more mixed income approach, rather than allocating housing only to those most in need. This can also be achieved through careful selection of acquisition properties – avoiding distressed low value areas.
- While taking care not to exacerbate concentration of very low RGI families in the existing rental portfolios, opportunities exist to facilitate transition to ownership for some Aboriginal households more successful in the labour market – thus freeing up limited

supply of existing rental units for other low-income Aboriginal households (potentially as a transitional urban settlement approach for recent migrants from reserves – linked to employment support and training).

Identifying solutions

The nature of the housing issue varies across communities and may be quite different in large metropolitan cities like Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto than in smaller communities like Port Alberni, North Battleford or Sept-Îles. Different responses also work better in some communities than in others. For example assisted homeownership is more viable in smaller communities where prices for resale homes are lower than in major centres; rental assistance is less effective in small cities with a limited rental stock but may be helpful in larger urban centres.

In short, a mix of responses is required to address locally defined need. And in that regard, locally defined housing and homeless plans, such as those used in delivering the SCPI/HPI program may provide useful lessons from which to evolve (including specific sub-plans for Aboriginal programming).

Addressing housing issues without concurrently pursuing the root causes of poverty – discrimination, lack of education and labour market skills and in some cases history of substance abuse, is unlikely to result in sustainable housing solutions. A comprehensive more integrated approach is required linking various interventions to defined target outcomes.

6 Establishing priorities and delivery targets

Six specific priorities have been identified.

1. Prevent further growth in housing need

In 2006, 81,800 Non Reserve Aboriginal households were determined by CMHC to be in core housing need. Since 2001 this has increased from 71,300, a growth of 1,000 per year. The first priority is to stem this growth. Assuming similar annual growth of 1,000 households per year, stemming growth requires provision of 1,000 housing units annually.

2. Over the next decade reduce core need among non-Reserve Aboriginal households to no more than that found in the Non-Aboriginal population)

In addition to containing future growth, efforts are needed to gradually reduce the backlog of need. Non Reserve Aboriginal core housing need is 20.4% compared to 12.4% in the non-Aboriginal population. If need was equal, there would be 49,800 Aboriginal households in need, compared to the 81,800 (in 2006). To reduce Aboriginal need to no more than the rate in the non-Aboriginal population means a reduction of 32,000 households – a target of 3,200 annually for ten-years (assuming no change in the non-Aboriginal rate, although targets have been proposed by FCM and others). A variety of program approaches can be used, depending on local circumstances and opportunities.

3. Preserve and improve the existing Urban Native Stock

The 10,200 existing Urban Native dwellings (2008) are a minimal and important resource, but are at risk of loss – both due to expiry of operating agreements, as well as insufficient funds to modernize and improve these units. A target of 1,000 units annually is recommended so that the entire stock can be modernized over the coming decade.

Capital investments should be linked to energy retrofit to both improve environmental impacts as well as reduce the impact of utility expenses that are a significant contributor to affordability issues. Ongoing affordability can be preserved through new rent supplement agreements and are a cost effective option to preserve affordability, as breakeven rents tend to rise more slowly than market rent levels.

4. Reduce risk of Aboriginal homelessness

Aboriginal individuals account for a very significant proportion of homelessness (often representing over one quarter of homeless counts) and require culturally sensitive appropriate interventions – housing first and supports to address addictions, mental health and where possible labour market reintegration. A target of creating 1,000 new transitional and supportive spaces over the next decade is established.

5. Increase the non-Reserve Aboriginal homeownership rate

Ownership is significantly lower among non-Reserve Aboriginal households. Many live in mid-sized communities where ownership prices are reasonably accessible. This priority should seek to increase the Non-Reserve home-ownership rate by 1% annually, to reach 65% by 2020. This means increasing the net growth in ownership among Aboriginal households by 4,000 annually. Initiatives can include financial literacy and education, pre and post purchase counseling and potentially, down payment assistance. Transitional options such as supporting lease-to-purchase and preferred interest rates should also be considered.

6. Build Aboriginal Capacity

Implementation of housing solutions requires expertise and both delivery and management capacity. In addition to housing investment, appropriate funding support is required to strengthen and broaden expertise of existing Aboriginal organizations and to enhance integration and coordination of service delivery so that in addition to being housed individuals and families can develop and expand the skills needed to function effectively in local labour market and, over time, increase their self-sufficiency.

With appropriate funding policies sustainability can be generated through fee for service in managing retrofit programs, property management fees in existing portfolios and through delivery of homeownership assistance support and counseling.

6.1 Implementing these targets

Locally appropriate programs and mechanisms.

The type of response should reflect both the nature of need and available opportunities in each community. This can include constructing new dwellings, acquisition of existing dwellings (potentially aligned with energy retrofit) for either rental portfolios or as assisted ownership opportunities, as well as rental assistance in those cases where families are housed in suitable and sound housing but experience an affordability problem.

One of the critical issues identified in this proposed Action Plan is the lack of predictable and sustainable funding, necessary to make the long-term commitment to achieving these targets. These need to be delivered within a local and provincial/territorial coordinated strategy, but with federal funding linked to explicit non-reserve Aboriginal targets.

The recent experience with a specific off-reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust is a mechanism that could be replicated. However this should be directed through a national Aboriginal Trust as a way to ensure aboriginal control and to help build Aboriginal capacity, both locally and regionally.

7 Costs and dedicated allocations

Cost estimates have been developed for the five quantifiable target areas outlined above (a similar target is not applicable in the case of #6, capacity building). This includes both one-time capital grant expenditures (related mainly to supply) as well as ongoing subsidy for rental assistance.

It is assumed that the target to reduce and equalize core housing need to the non-Aboriginal rate would be pursued with a mix of rental assistance and new supply (or acquisition)

Estimated costs for new development assume that tenants pay rent based on 30% of minimum wage and capital costs are averaged over a sample of metropolitan as well as smaller cities. It is further assumed that assistance for new supply is mainly in the form of capital grant, although an option would be to use the grant to reduce break-even rent to market levels with stacked rent supplements then used to cover the gap between market rent and RGI rent. From a cost perspective, the present value of ongoing rent supplements will be similar to the one-time grant cost, so the grant cost is used as the basis of the estimate.

This is premised on new construction, although the approach should include acquisition and modest rehabilitation of existing properties, where cost effective.

The overall cost to implement this volume of activity on an ongoing annual basis would be in the order of \$386 million annually. Because the estimates reflect a high proportion of new construction, it may be possible to lower this cost closer to \$300 million, consistent with the level recently funded under the Aboriginal Housing trust.

NAHA Plan for Action

The separate ongoing costs for supports and rental assistance reflect only the first year cost. This will multiply over time.

Annual Estimated Expenditures Required to Support Targets					
		Per unit costs		Total \$ Millions	
Theme	Units/year	Capital Grant	Ongoing subsidy/year	Capital	Annual ongoing
Prevent growth in housing need	1,000	\$96,400		\$96.4	
Reduce and equalize core need:					
a. via new supply	1,500	\$96,400		\$144.6	
b. via rental assistance	1,500		\$3,400	\$0.0	\$5.1
Preserve and improve existing stock	1,000	\$10,000		\$10.0	
Reduce Aboriginal homelessness	1,000	\$75,000	\$3,500	\$75.0	\$3.5
Increase Ownership	4,000	\$15,000		\$60.0	
Total	10,000			\$386.0	\$8.6

Details of these estimates are included in Appendix C.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

The recent approach to housing programs has involved partnership arrangements including federal funding with provincial delivery. To varying degrees this has included some consultation with the non-reserve Aboriginal community and some access to funds by Aboriginal organizations. But more often than not Aboriginal initiatives have experienced difficulty qualifying for funding allocated through competitive mechanisms. Separate funding mechanisms are required to level this playing field.

Specific targets should be adopted, as suggested in section 6, and monitored with the goal of achieving tangible results including: reduction in both the non-reserve Aboriginal population in housing need and on waiting lists and increase affordable rental and ownership opportunities to sustain ongoing reduction in need.

Priority should be given to preserving and extending the effective life of existing Urban Native affordable housing assets and extend RGI subsidy through new rent supplements.

While increased coordination is required, focusing solely on housing is insufficient. The low incomes and lower labour force participation among Aboriginal households is a critical contributor to the inability of these households to sustainably afford safe and sound housing. Integrated comprehensive poverty reduction, built on a foundation of affordable and safe housing is required.

Effective Aboriginal housing solutions require direct involvement and management by the Aboriginal community. NAHA would like to see ongoing consultation and ultimately increase Aboriginal control over funding programs and policy development

NAHA is calling on the federal government to accept its fiduciary responsibility for Aboriginal People, regardless of whether they live on or off reserve and regardless of ancestry (First Nations, Métis or Inuit).

In accordance with the principles of Aboriginal control over Aboriginal housing and accountability by all parties, NAHA calls on the federal government to extend and make permanent the off-reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust.

NAHA further calls on the federal government to appoint a board of Trustees with Aboriginal status and background and expertise in housing to direct the allocation of funds across regions and to manage the investment of these funds to achieve the targets established in this plan.

Initially the Trust should be funded at \$100 million, ramping up to annual allocation of \$386 million as NAHA and the Trustees develop capacity and demonstrate results from the investments.

Appendix A:

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIST OF DIRECTORS JUNE, 2009

Patrick Stewart **President**
Co-Chairperson, Vancouver Aboriginal Homelessness Committee, Vancouver BC

Marcel Swain **Secretary**
Chief Executive Officer, Lu'ma Native Housing Society, Vancouver BC

James J. Lanigan **Treasurer**
President, Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Ottawa ON

Gary Gould **Executive Committee Member at Large**
General Manager, Skigin Elnooq Housing Corporation, Fredericton NB

David Seymour **Director (Past President)**
Vice President, M'akola Group of Societies, Victoria BC

Jeannie Arreak-Kullualik **Director**
Policy Analyst – Housing, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Iqaluit NU

Sandra Brown **Director**
Manager, Lloydminster Métis Housing Group Inc. Lloydminster SK

Larry Bellerose **Director**
Manager, RNH Ops, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services Corp. Sault Ste. Marie ON

Edward Mesher **Director**
President, Melville Native Housing Association, Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Labrador

Robert Byers **Director**
Chief Executive Officer, Namerind Housing Corporation, Regina SK

Tracy Sauvé **Director**
Director-Resident Support Services, Anduhyaun Incorporated, Toronto ON

Gilles Bérubé **Director**
Manager, Corporation Waskahegen, Dolbeau-Mistassini QC

Charles W. Hill **Executive Director**
National Aboriginal Housing Association Office, Ottawa ON

Appendix B

Detailed Analysis of Non-reserve Aboriginal Housing Need

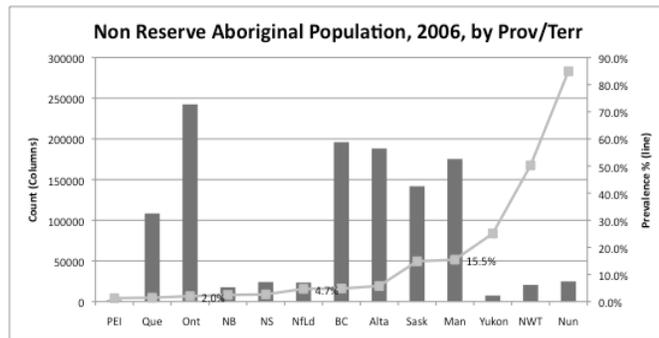
Distribution of the Aboriginal Population

Data from the 2006 Census provide a detailed distribution of the population that has self-identified as having an aboriginal identity. Compared to 2001 data, the 2006 census reveals that the Aboriginal population continues to grow at a much faster rate than non-Aboriginal. Moreover this growth is increasingly in larger urban areas.¹⁶

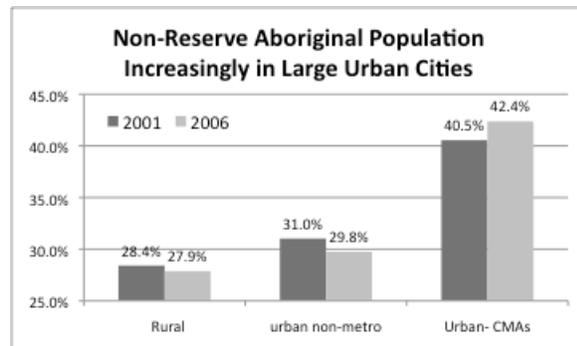
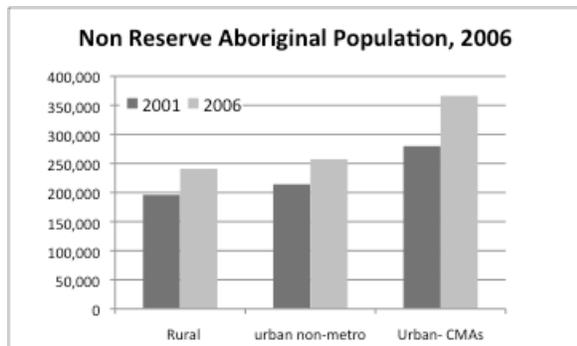
Overall, between 2001- 06, the Aboriginal population increased by 20.1%, while non-Aboriginal grew 4.9%. Focusing on non-reserve only, the variance is even larger 25.4% among Aboriginal versus 5.4 for non-Aboriginal population growth over this 5-year period.

Since 2001, the growth of the Aboriginal population has shown a continued increasing trend. The distribution of non-reserve Aboriginal persons has increased from 70.6% 2001 to 73.7%).

This population is predominantly located in the West, although the single largest count is Ontario (but there it represents only 2.0% of total population).



Meanwhile absolute counts in the Territories are much lower, but the aboriginal population dominates the population. This non-reserve Aboriginal population is also becoming marginally more urban, and more particularly, is found in the larger metropolitan areas. The distribution fell marginally in rural and small urban places while increasing from 40.5% to 42.4% in Census Metropolitan areas (CMA's)



¹⁶ Statistics Canada cautions that the counts from for this item are more affected than most by the incomplete enumeration of certain Indian reserves and Indian settlements. The extent of the impact will depend on the geographic area under study. In 2006, a total of 22 Indian reserves and Indian settlements were incompletely enumerated by the census. The populations of these 22 communities are not included in the census counts and thus the “on reserve” count is a low estimate.

Distribution of Non-Reserve Aboriginal Populations, 2006				
Top 20 by Incidence of Aboriginal Persons				
		Total population	Aboriginal identity population	Percent Aboriginal
1	Campbellton (Quebec part)	3,045	1,475	48.4%
2	Thompson - CA (Man.)	13,540	4,930	36.4%
3	Prince Rupert - CA (B.C.)	13,275	4,660	35.1%
5	Prince Albert - CA (Sask.)	39,800	13,570	34.1%
4	La Tuque - CA (Que.)	15,070	3,510	23.3%
6	Portage la Prairie - CA (Man.)	19,875	4,535	22.8%
7	Yellowknife - CA (N.W.T.)	18,510	4,105	22.2%
8	North Battleford - CA (Sask.)	17,310	3,550	20.5%
9	Terrace - CA (B.C.)	18,445	3,780	20.5%
10	Whitehorse - CA (Y.T.)	22,730	4,100	18.0%
11	Kenora - CA (Ont.)	14,950	2,365	15.8%
12	Williams Lake - CA (B.C.)	18,615	2,875	15.4%
13	Sept-Îles - CA (Que.)	27,495	3,830	13.9%
14	Dawson Creek - CA (B.C.)	10,930	1,475	13.5%
15	Port Alberni - CA (B.C.)	25,075	3,250	13.0%
16	Lloydminster (Sask part)	11,055	1,430	12.9%
17	Wood Buffalo - CA (Alta.)	52,555	6,465	12.3%
18	Wetaskiwin - CA (Alta.)	11,275	1,335	11.8%
19	Duncan - CA (B.C.)	41,030	4,800	11.7%
20	Quesnel - CA (B.C.)	22,335	2,590	11.6%
Top 20 by Count of Aboriginal Persons				
		Total population	Aboriginal identity population	Percent Aboriginal
1	Winnipeg - CMA (Man.)	686,035	68,385	10.0%
2	Edmonton - CMA (Alta.)	1,024,825	52,100	5.1%
3	Vancouver - CMA (B.C.)	2,097,960	40,310	1.9%
5	Calgary - CMA (Alta.)	1,070,295	26,575	2.5%
4	Toronto - CMA (Ont.)	5,072,070	26,575	0.5%
6	Saskatoon - CMA (Sask.)	230,855	21,535	9.3%
7	Montreal - CMA (Que.)	3,588,520	17,865	0.5%
8	Regina - CMA (Sask.)	192,435	17,105	8.9%
9	Prince Albert - CA (Sask.)	39,800	13,570	34.1%
10	Ottawa - Gatineau (Ontario part)	835,470	12,965	1.6%
11	Victoria - CMA (B.C.)	325,060	10,905	3.4%
12	Thunder Bay - CMA (Ont.)	121,055	10,055	8.3%
13	Greater Sudbury CMA (Ont.)	156,395	9,970	6.4%
14	Hamilton - CMA (Ont.)	683,445	8,890	1.3%
15	Prince George - CA (B.C.)	82,615	8,855	10.7%
16	Sault Ste. Marie - CA (Ont.)	79,040	7,760	9.8%
17	Ottawa - Gatineau (Quebec part)	281,650	7,620	2.7%
18	Kamloops - CA (B.C.)	91,910	7,050	7.7%
19	St. Catharines - Niagara - CMA (Ont.)	385,035	6,650	1.7%
20	Wood Buffalo - CA (Alta.)	52,555	6465	12.3%
Statistics Canada. Aboriginal Peoples Highlight Tables - 20% sample data (table). 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97-558-XWE2006002. Ottawa. Released January 15, 2008.				

Looking more specifically at which cities house the non-reserve population, while a plurality of the population does live in large metropolitan areas, there is also a significant and important distribution across mid sized communities (between 10,000 and 100,000 population). At a national scale non-reserve Aboriginals represent 3.8% of the total population. Only 6 CMA's exceed this threshold, and most of these are the smaller CMA's (Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Thunder Bay Sudbury and Edmonton); meanwhile 58 small cities exceed the 3.8% national average.

Tabulating the top 20 communities by incidence and count, only Prince Albert and Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray) appear on both lists. While Ontario has the largest provincial count, this population is spread across many cities. Toronto (CMA) accounts for only 11% of the non-reserve Aboriginal population in that province. Similarly in BC, Vancouver accounts for 21% of that provinces non-reserve Aboriginal population; Edmonton for 28% in Alberta.

While CMA's rank high on absolute counts, the small cities (CA's: Census Agglomerations, under 100,000) in the aggregate account for a substantial share of the population. This has important implications for policy responses and budget allocation mechanisms – it is not exclusively nor predominantly a population of large metropolitan centres.

Examining Housing Need

Housing need is typically assessed either using some general rules of thumb – spending more than 30% or 50% of income for shelter; and dwellings in need of major repair; or using a somewhat more comprehensive “core need” assessment model developed by CMHC. In the 2004 analysis, core need data (for 2001) was not yet available, so the first approach was used. For the current update and proposed action plan, core need data generated from the 2006 census has just been released, and provides detailed insight into both the nature and level of housing need among non-reserve Aboriginal population and also permits some comparison against the general non Aboriginal population.

In the preceding section, data presented were related to population count and distribution, and were drawn from the Aboriginal Peoples part of the 2006 census. In this section on housing need, the unit of analysis is the household. After adjusting the data file to remove uninterruptable records, as well as removing farm based, on reserve Aboriginal bands, the total household count on which CMHC core need estimates were based was 11.8 million, including a non reserve aboriginal count of 401,000 households¹⁷

¹⁷ The total count of households used in this analysis is an adjusted count derived by CMHC from the overall census data. In the census a small number of households report negative income; others report housing costs in excess of 100% of gross income. In part this is because the census collects data for shelter costs in April of 2006, but asks for the total annual income in previous year (2005). These records provide distorted and uninterruptable data so are removed from the data file prior to deriving core need estimates. Note, this adjustment removes 6.6% of renters and 2.7% of owners. For Further discussion see CMHC Research Highlight 09-05 (Feb 2009) 2006 Census Housing Series Issue 2.

CMHC's core housing need measure determines first if a household experiences a problem against three housing standards:

- Affordability (paying 30% or more for shelter);
- Suitability (too few bedrooms based on household size and composition); and
- Adequacy (dwelling is in need of major repair)

It then assesses the household income against a threshold (adjusted by household size and city) to reflect the income required to afford a median rental unit without spending more than 30% of gross income. Any household falling below any one or more standard, but with an income above the threshold is deemed to have the capacity to spend more and address their problem without assistance. Those falling below one or more standards and below the household size and city income threshold are determined to be in core housing need.

The core need model generates output to identify both overall need – households falling below any one standard as well as a breakdown by type of standard they miss. It also provides a detailed breakdown by tenure, geography, household type (family, non-family) and age of household head. CMHC has used an aboriginal identifier to further allow distinct analysis for non-reserve Aboriginal households.¹⁸

¹⁸ In the remainder of this section all references to Aboriginal household means non-reserve. Those living on reserve are excluded from this data. The comparisons are therefore solely between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal, not on reserve. The CMHC definition of an Aboriginal household, used to extract the Aboriginal data is as follows:

- any single-family household where at least one spouse, common-law partner or lone parent is considered part of the Aboriginal identity population, or at least 50% of the household members are considered to be part of the Aboriginal identity population;
- any multiple-family household where at least one of the families in the household is an Aboriginal household (as defined above); and
- any non-family household where at least 50% of the household members are considered to be part of the Aboriginal identity population.

The Aboriginal identity population is composed of persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or who reported being Treaty Indians or Registered Indians as defined by the Indian Act of Canada and/or who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation.

Overall Core Need Higher Among Aboriginal Households

The recently release 2006 core need estimates determine that in total 1.494 million households representing 12.7% of all households are in core housing need. This incidence of need is down from 13.7% in 2001; however the absolute count of households in need has not declined, it increased marginally from 1.485 million.

Notably, *the increase in core need is entirely attributable to non-Reserve Aboriginal households*. Need among non-Aboriginal households actually declined by 1,500; however among the much smaller Aboriginal population, it increased by 10,500 households.

Disaggregating Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal households, the non-Aboriginal rate in 2006 is slightly lower at 12.4%. This is because the incidence of core need among non-reserve Aboriginal households is much higher and pulls up the overall combined statistic.

	Total	Aboriginal household	Non-Aboriginal household
Can	12.7%	20.4%	12.4%
NFLD	14.2%	19.3%	14.0%
PEI	12.6%	10.6%	12.7%
NS	12.1%	16.2%	12.0%
NB	10.3%	15.1%	10.2%
QUE	10.6%	16.3%	10.5%
ONT	14.5%	18.7%	14.4%
MAN	11.3%	22.4%	9.8%
SASK	11.8%	26.2%	10.1%
AB	10.1%	17.1%	9.6%
BC	14.6%	22.3%	14.2%
YUK	16.3%	24.7%	13.9%
NWT	17.5%	26.2%	9.1%
NUN	37.3%	44.2%	12.9%

Source: CMHC Housing in Canada Online Series, percentages derived by author.

Nationally, one in every five Aboriginal households (20.4%) is in core housing need.

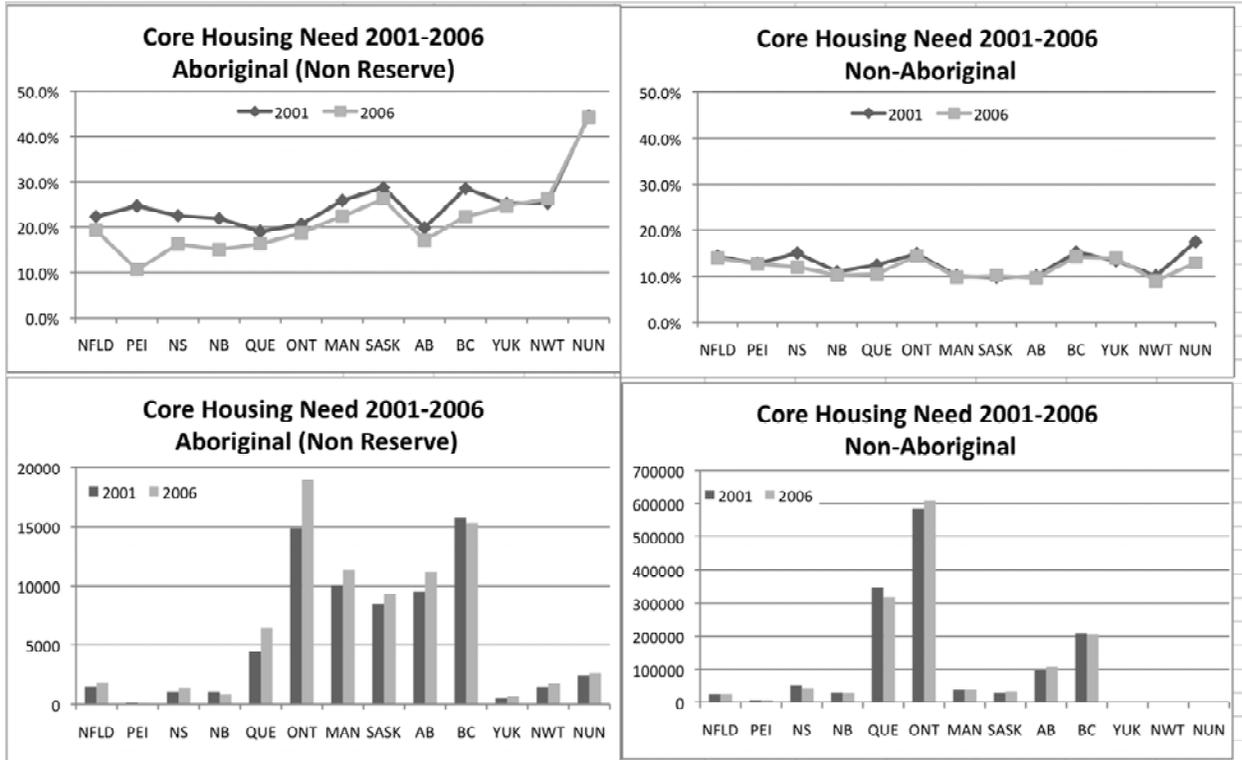
This relationship is true in all provinces and territories, but as identified in the table, the *incidence* of Aboriginal need is notably higher in the territories and in most Prairie Provinces, where the Aboriginal population tends to be larger (as a share of total population).

In absolute terms, the number of households in need tends to reflect the earlier distribution of the Aboriginal population. Those provinces with the largest populations also have the large count of households in need – Ontario and the western provinces (see detailed tabulations in Appendix A).

Mixed Improvement Since 2001 – Incidence Down but Count Up

Comparing data from 2006 to the previous census reveals a modest improvement in the proportion of households in core need – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Nationally the rate for non-Aboriginal households declined from 13.5% to 12.4%; non-reserve Aboriginal need

recorded a larger improvement, falling from 24.0% to 20.4%. These gains were seen consistently across all provinces and territories.¹⁹



However when the actual count of households in need is examined, the pattern is reversed. Among non-Aboriginal households, the count of those in core need declined in all provinces except Ontario; meanwhile the count for Aboriginal households increased in all jurisdictions (except new Brunswick where the number of non-Reserve Aboriginal households is relatively low). Nationally the number of Aboriginal households increased from 71,000 to just less than 82,000.

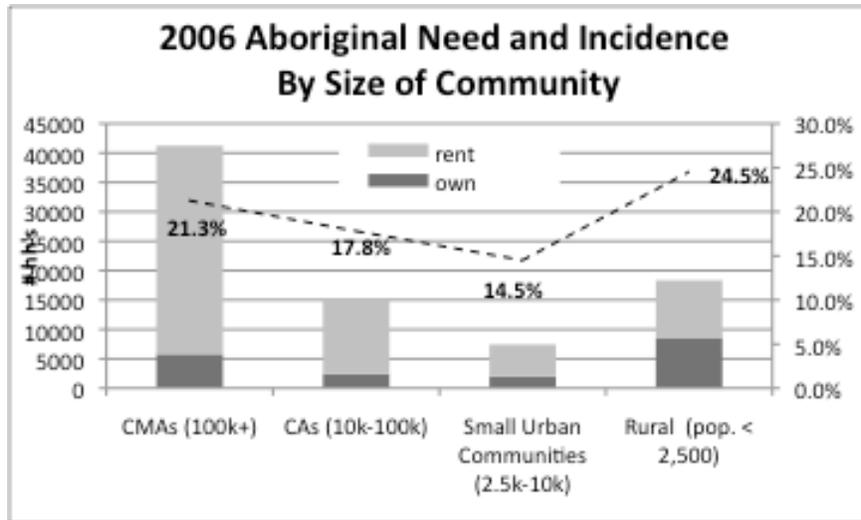
Need is Greatest in Large, But Not only in Largest Cities

Focusing on the more recent 2006 data, the most acute need is in larger cities (lead by Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto Saskatoon and Regina). These larger cities do not all necessarily have the highest incidence of need, although Regina and Vancouver rank highest in this regard. This broader distribution is quite different than the general population in which 43% of all core need is found in the three largest CMA’s – Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal); for non reserve Aboriginal need, these three CMA’s account for just under 13% of need.

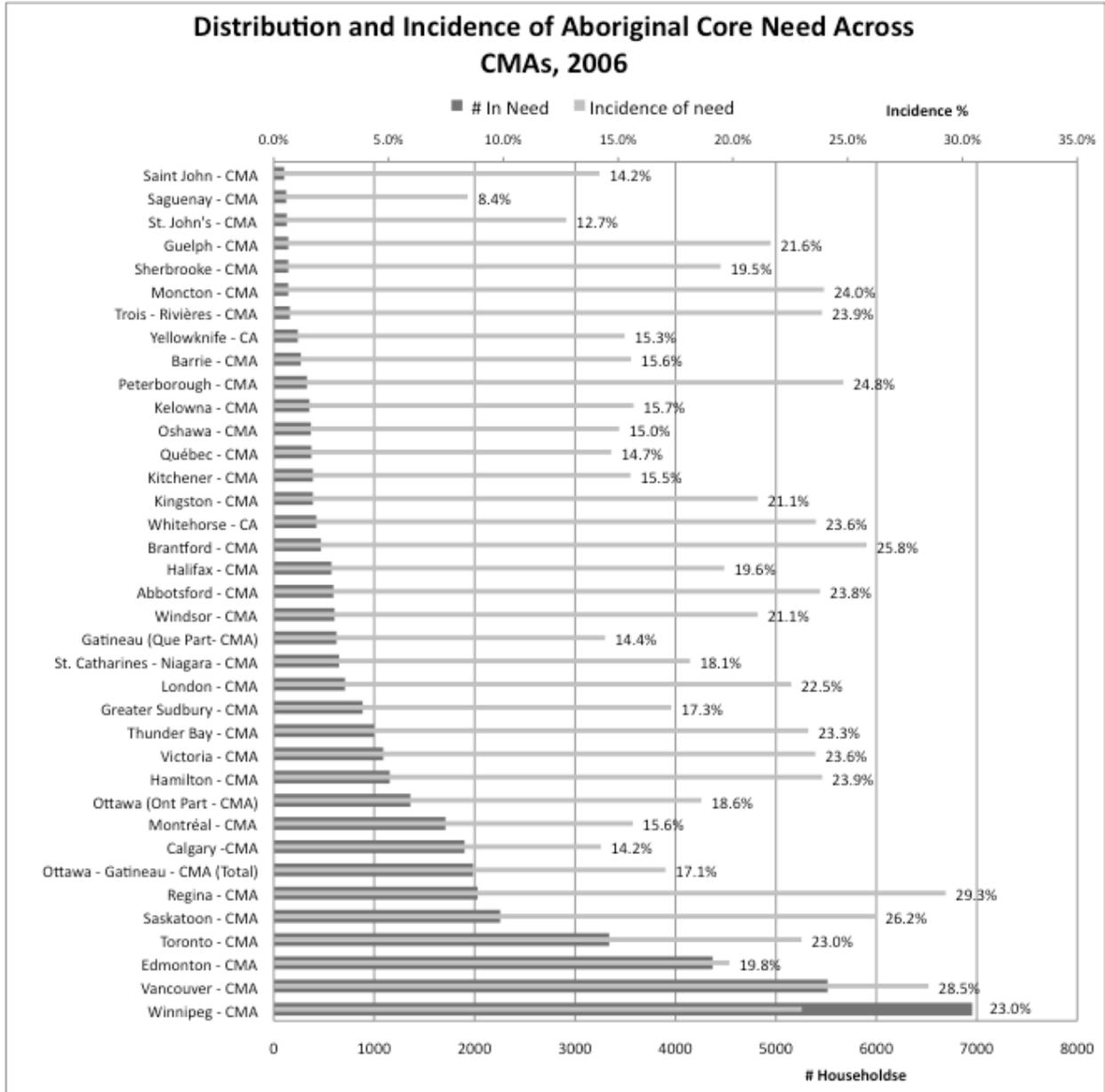
¹⁹ The incidence rate will be affected by the accuracy in the overall count of households declaring an aboriginal identity. This number increased by 25%, suggesting higher reporting than in previous census. As a result the much larger denominator (total non Reserve Aboriginal households) in 2006 acts to pull down the incidence rate more than may have been the case in the absence of earlier under-reporting.

More broadly, CMA's in aggregate account for half of Aboriginal housing need, where one in five (21%) of Aboriginal households are found to be in core housing need.

The highest incidence of need is in rural areas in places with populations below 2,500. These small rural places represent 22% of non-reserve Aboriginal need (18,000 households). Together small communities and cities under 100,000-population account for just over one-third of need (37%). In part because housing costs tend to be lower in smaller towns, the incidence of need tends, on average to be lower.



In the larger cities, core need is predominantly an issue for renters, but in rural areas, where there are fewer rental units, need is almost evenly split between owners and renters. Tenure patterns are discussed later.



Nature of Housing non Reserve Aboriginal Housing Problems

The core need measure assesses need against three separate housing standards. Generally the predominant problem is one of affordability. When issues of suitability (crowding) and condition (adequacy) do exist, more often than not these are in combination with an affordability problem. Affordability is still the primary concern, but suitability and adequacy issues are significantly more prominent among Aboriginal households in core housing need, compared to non-Aboriginal households.

Type of Housing Problem Among Households in Core Housing Need						
	Aboriginal household			Non-Aboriginal household		
	Below Adequacy Standard	Below Affordability Standard	Below Suitability Standard	Below Adequacy Standard	Below Affordability Standard	Below Suitability Standard
	Percent below each standard					
CANADA	27.5%	77.9%	23.0%	14%	90%	15%
CMAAs (100k+)	21.1%	86.3%	22.2%	12%	91%	18%
CAs (10k-100k)	22.5%	88.2%	18.7%	15%	94%	7%
Small Urban Communities (2.5k-10k)	24.7%	84.7%	16.9%	17%	92%	5%
	Overall incidence for each standard					
CANADA	5.6%	15.9%	4.7%	1.8%	11.2%	1.8%
CMAAs (100k+)	4.5%	18.3%	4.7%	1.6%	12.3%	2.4%
CAs (10k-100k)	4.0%	15.7%	3.3%	1.5%	9.5%	0.7%
Small Urban Communities (2.5k-10k)	3.6%	12.3%	2.4%	1.5%	7.8%	0.5%
Adding across columns exceeds 100% as households can experience multiple problems						

Nationally, more than one in every four Aboriginal households experiences a crowding problem (28%) or lives in a dwelling in poor condition (23%). These levels are almost twice as high as those for non-Aboriginal households.

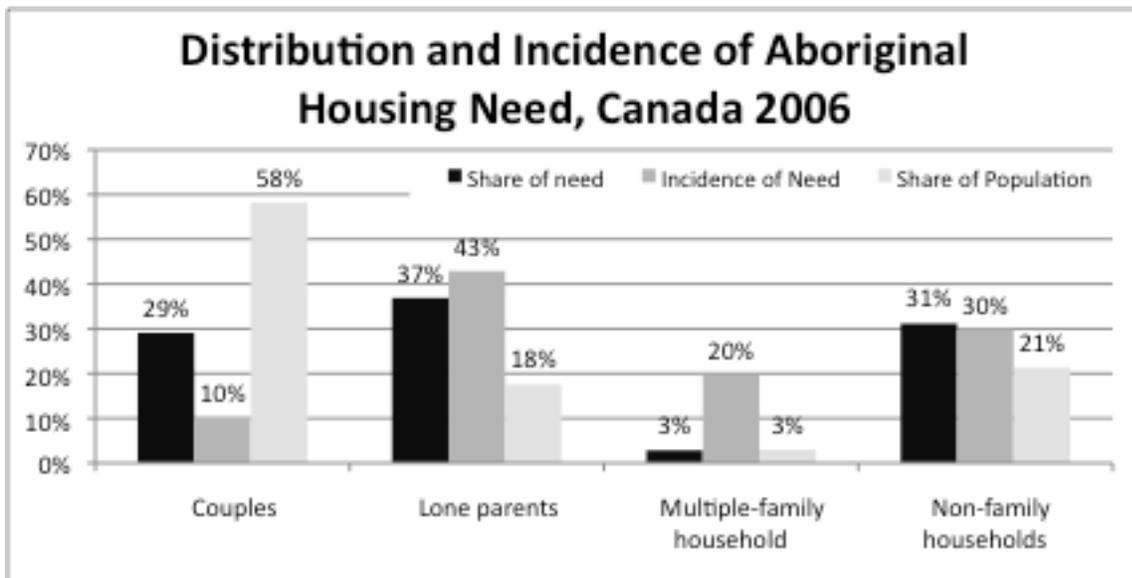
This suggests that while affordability is the predominant problem, it is not as exclusively affordability only as is more often the case in the non-Aboriginal population.

Families have an important impact/influence

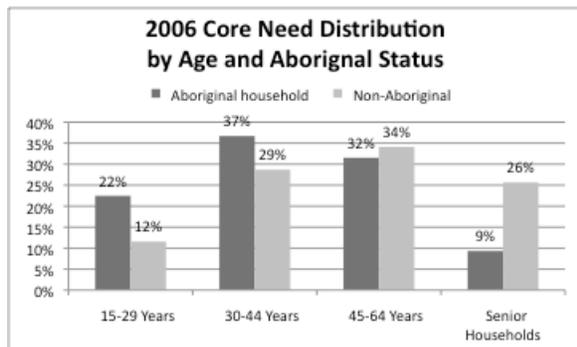
Core need among Aboriginal households is disproportionately found in families, who make up 70% of housing need among non-reserve Aboriginal households. In comparison, in the non-Aboriginal population, need is almost evenly distributed between families and non-family (mainly unattached singles).

This 70% share is fairly consistent across regions except in the north where there is a much lower share among non-family households (they account for only 8% of non reserve Aboriginal need in Nunavut).

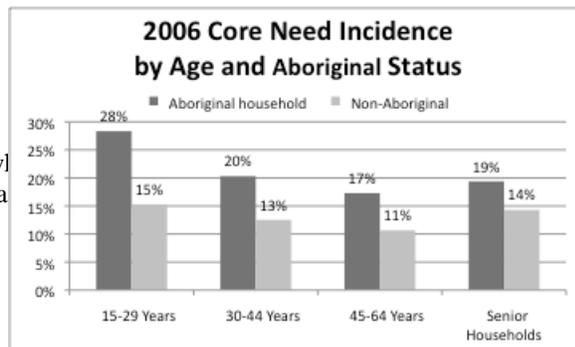
Examining family households more closely the following chart compares the representation of each household type in the aboriginal population against the distribution and level of core housing need. Couples, including both those with and without children living with them, make up 58% of Aboriginal non-reserve households, but account for only 29% of need; conversely lone parents account for only 18% of households but have a disproportionate share. The level (incidence) of need reflects this pattern. Need is most acute among lone parent families, followed by singles.²⁰



The large representation of families and particularly lone parent families among the Aboriginal need indicates that appropriate sized housing at reasonable cost (rent) is difficult for such households to access and afford. By comparison, the much higher share of need among non-family (mainly singles) in the non-Aboriginal population facilitates options such as shelter assistance as, in larger urban areas, there is a more plentiful existing stock of single person bachelor and one-bedroom units.



with a

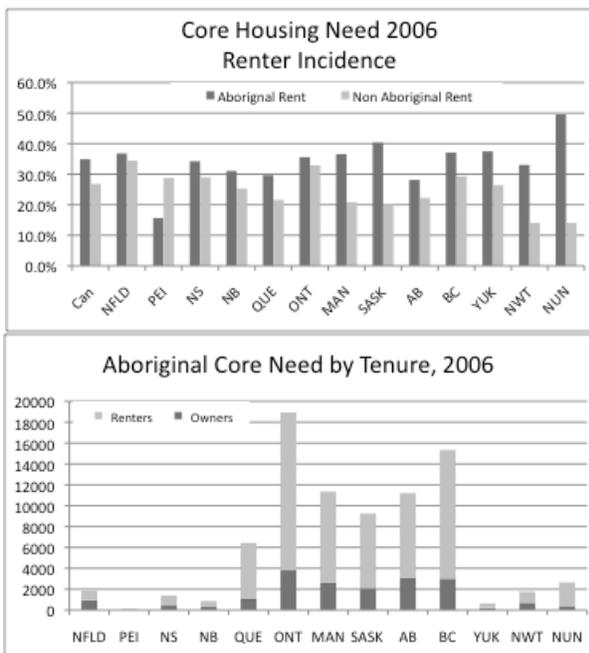


Reflecting the family characteristics, core need among Aboriginal households is also skewed toward younger households (base on age of primary maintainer). Among Aboriginal households almost 60% of core need households are under 45 years of age, while these age groups account for less than half of core need among non-Aboriginal households. At the same time seniors represent only one-tenth of Aboriginals in need, whereas they account for over one quarter (26%) in non- Aboriginal population.

Consistent with the earlier analysis, the incidence of core housing need is higher for Aboriginal households, but especially so for those under age 29 years, where it is almost double that among non-Aboriginals. For those headed by someone 30 and over roughly one-fifth are in housing need and in each of the three older age groups this incidence is approximately one-third higher than that among non Aboriginal households.

Need is mainly among Renters

Breaking this down by tenure, renters are much more likely to be found in core need and again, this incidence is much higher for Aboriginal households (34.9%) compared to non-Aboriginal (26.8%). The variance among owners is not as large, owners are generally much less likely to be in core need: 6.2% among non Aboriginal owners compared to 8.5% for Aboriginal households that own their home.



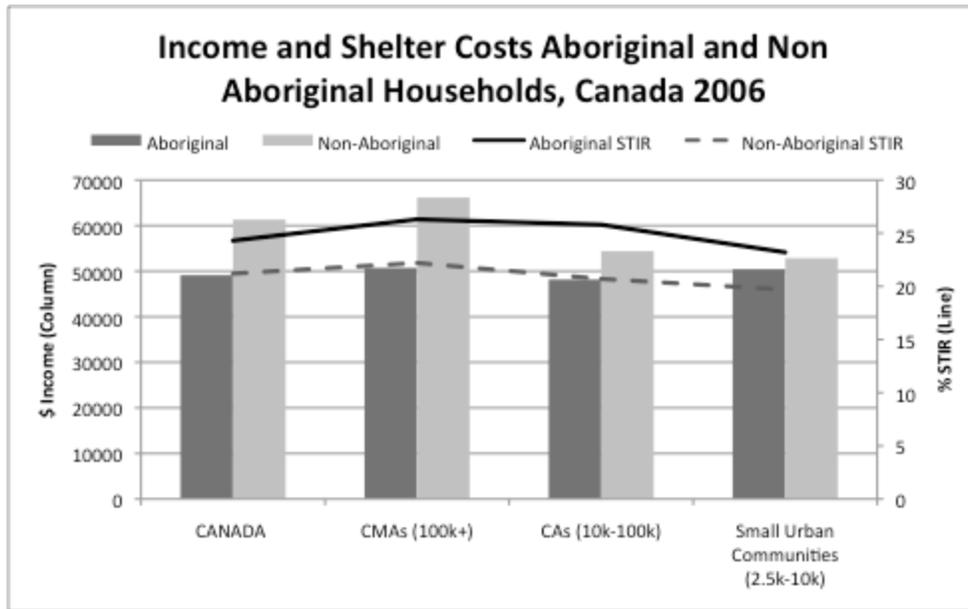
At an aggregate national level, renters account for 77% of core housing need among Aboriginal households in need. This is disproportionately large as on average only 45% of aboriginal households rent their homes (but much higher than 32% of non Aboriginals).

In BC, Quebec and Nunavut, the representation of renters is well above the national average, and so is the incidence of need among Aboriginal renter households.

Underlying factors contributing the core need statistics

The key factors causing affordability problems are income levels and the cost of housing.

Overall, looking at the full population of (non-Reserve) Aboriginal and non Aboriginal households, the data show that Aboriginal households, on average, have lower incomes and pay a high proportion of their income for shelter. At an aggregate national level, the average income of Aboriginal households is 83% that of Non Aboriginal and Aboriginal households pay about 2.5% more toward shelter costs (STIR is 23.2% vs. 21.7%). The income gap is greatest in the metropolitan areas but considerably lower in the smaller communities, where the average shelter-to-income ratios (STIRs) are also lower, reflecting lower housing costs.



Housing costs are significantly impacted by household type. Single persons have greater choice in shelter options, including sharing with others as well as smaller and consequently lower cost options. Meanwhile, families tend to need larger dwellings with more bedrooms, which inevitably involve higher costs, and are less plentiful in the purpose built rental stock (predominantly one and two bed apartments). Thus it is more useful to segregate the income and shelter cost data by household type – family versus non-family. In addition, the earlier examination identified a predominance of renters in the core need population.

Focusing only on renters in core need, the income and shelter costs are explored. This reveals two somewhat surprising patterns:

- First the income gap between Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal for this subset (renters in core need) is much narrower than among the larger population. On average, Aboriginal family households have almost identical income to non-Aboriginal (\$23,000); the income of non-family Aboriginal households (mainly singles) is slightly lower than for non-Aboriginal, but only by 5%.

- Secondly, on average Aboriginal households in core need have lower shelter cost burdens than non Aboriginal households: among families average shelter-to-income ratios are 7% lower; while for nonfamily (mainly unattached singles) they are 2% lower.

These patterns appear to be due, in part, to the geographic distribution of the population. Non-Aboriginal core need is more skewed to large metropolitan centres whereas that for Aboriginal is almost evenly split between large metropolitan and smaller communities and rural areas.

The housing costs in non-metropolitan areas are quite similar for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal renter households in need; in the CMA's however Aboriginal households (both families and non family) appear to have had greater success in securing lower cost accommodation. As noted earlier, there is a significantly higher incidence of Aboriginal households living below the adequacy standard, so the lower shelter costs could be associated with poorer quality accommodation.

Income and Shelter Costs Among Non Reserve Households, 2006				
	Family		Non Family	
	<i>Average Income</i>			
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
CANADA	23,203	23,089	13,818	14,606
CMAs (100k+)	21,340	23,903	13,978	15,136
CAs (10k-100k)	19,555	19,148	12,919	12,744
Small Communities (2.5k-10k)	21,720	18,042	12,739	12,879
	<i>Average STIR</i>			
CANADA	0.34	0.41	0.46	0.49
CMAs (100k+)	0.40	0.43	0.47	0.49
CAs (10k-100k)	0.42	0.43	0.49	0.47
Small Communities (2.5k-10k)	0.36	0.40	0.48	0.49
	<i>Average Shelter Costs</i>			
CANADA	659	790	528	591
CMAs (100k+)	714	816	548	618
CAs (10k-100k)	683	687	523	517
Small Communities (2.5k-10k)	650	654	505	507

Affordability Gap Narrower for Aboriginal Households

The consequence of almost similar incomes but generally lower housing costs is that the affordability gap is small for Aboriginal households – both for families and non-family unattached individuals. The affordability gap measures the difference between 30% of income (theoretically affordable rent) and the existing average rent. Somewhat surprisingly, the gap is larger for singles (non family) households, mainly because they have much lower income, as shown in previous table. This suggests that even though lone parents represent a significant

proportion of core need families, those families with two working members have on average larger income) and lower affordability gap.

Affordability Gap: Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal Households in Core Need
2006

	Family		Non Family	
	Aboriginal	Non- Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non- Aboriginal
CANADA	-79	-213	-183	-226
CMAs (100k+)	-181	-218	-199	-240
CAs (10k-100k)	-194	-208	-200	-198
Small Communities (2.5k-10k)	-107	-203	-187	-185

Again, geographic and distributional influences come into play. The more favourable average income for the Aboriginal households in small urban areas pulls up the overall average while lower shelter costs in these communities reduces the affordability gap. The more metropolitan distribution of the non-Aboriginal population tends to lower income and disproportionately raise shelter costs. Looking only at CMA's the difference between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families is much less than in the small communities.

The concept of the affordability gaps is useful in exploring program options especially in comparison with new supply options where the gap is between the breakeven cost of building new (or acquiring) and the 30% affordability level. Where a household is living in adequate and suitable housing but experiences only an affordability problem, an in situ solution providing rental assistance can address their issue, often at less expense than building new dwellings. The relative economics of these options are discussed later.

Key Findings on Non Reserve Aboriginal Core Housing Need

This section has confirmed that as in 2001, housing need among non-reserve Aboriginal households is significantly higher than among the non-Aboriginal population. While many First Nations Aboriginals have relocated from reserves into towns and cities, where economic opportunities may be greater, they still fall short of achieving minimum housing standards much more frequently than their non-Aboriginal neighbours.

Since 2001, the incidence of core need has declined, but the absolute number of Aboriginal households in core need has increased. In 2006 one in every five Aboriginal households (20.4%), is in core need. This compares to one in eight in the non-Aboriginal population (12.4%).

Aboriginal housing need is distributed more broadly across CMA's and other mid-sized urban areas. While large cities like Winnipeg, Vancouver and Edmonton have the largest counts, the incidence is often higher in the smaller cities, such as Regina and Brantford as well as in small northern communities.

Affordability is the predominant issue, but the proportion of households also experiencing adequacy and suitability problems is considerably higher in the Aboriginal population. More than one-quarter (27.5%) of Aboriginal Core need households experience adequacy problems and only slightly fewer (23%) live in unsuitable (crowded) dwellings. By comparison the rates in the non-Aboriginal group are 15% and 14% for condition and crowding respectively.

As in the general population, core need is mainly a problem for renters, who account for 77% of Aboriginal core need nationally.

It is also skewed more toward young family households than in the non-Aboriginal population. Lone parents experience the highest incidence of need (43% among Aboriginal versus 25%).

Although the incidence of need is significantly greater in the Aboriginal population, incomes and shelter costs were found to be more positive than might be expected. The average income in core need renter families is almost identical for Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal households. For unattached individuals (non family) the Aboriginal average income is just 5% lower than that of non-Aboriginal. Meanwhile somehow Aboriginal households have been more successful in securing lower cost housing (in part due to the less metropolitan distribution, and in part due to the fact they more frequently occupy dwellings in poor condition).

The result is that nationally the average affordability gaps among Aboriginal families is less than half that in non-Aboriginal families; in non-family households it is 80% that of non-Aboriginal households.

9 Aboriginal Homelessness

Separate from the issue of core housing, homelessness has emerged as a significant additional policy concern in many cities, and Aboriginal people are again highlighted for a disproportionately high representation in the homeless population.

As noted in a 1999 Senate Library Report:

There is no denying the obvious presence of homeless Aboriginal people in some regions of the country. A number of studies have attempted to quantify the problem in certain Canadian cities.

- *According to a report on the health of the homeless in Toronto, Native people, Blacks and Asiatics made up one third of the sample studied. In Toronto, Native people account for 25% of the homeless population, although they make up only 2% of the city's total population.*
- *It has been estimated that 72% of the homeless men in some Winnipeg neighbourhoods are Aboriginal.*
- *In Vancouver, a study of 60 homeless women in the downtown area disclosed that 50% of them were Aboriginal.*

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- *A survey in Calgary found that of the 615 homeless people surveyed on 26 May 1996, 20% were Aboriginal, 3% Asiatics and 3% Blacks)*
- *A Saskatoon study found that the majority of young people living on the street were Aboriginal.*

Generally speaking, the Aboriginal population differs significantly from the non-Aboriginal. Research has shown that the Aboriginal population is characterized, inter alia, by lower educational and income levels, higher unemployment and poverty levels, a larger proportion of single-parent families and generally poorer housing, which is more likely to be rented. These factors are major contributors to Aboriginal homelessness, although others (such as drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness) are often cited.²¹

A number of Cities have undertaken point in time counts of homeless persons and these similarly identify a significant representation of Aboriginal persons.

In the Toronto Street Assessment conducted April 2006 the City found that Aboriginal people constituted 16% of all people surveyed. Amongst the outdoor population, Aboriginal people constituted 26% of the homeless population. Aboriginal people were homeless longer as well - on average 5.3 years compared to 3.1 years of non-Aboriginal people.

The city of Calgary conducts a biennial street count and in 2008 this was augmented by a separate count by agencies involved in serving homeless need. The counts show some decline in the proportion of Aboriginal persons (down to 15.6% in 2008 from a high of 21.2% in 1994. However over this 15-year period the absolute number of homeless has risen dramatically for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal. The total is up tenfold from 461 in 1994 to 4,060 in 2008, with the Aboriginal count up from 98 to 633.

A count in Lethbridge conducted October 6, 2008 reported a 60% increase in homelessness from 2007 with 45% of the total (276) determined to be Aboriginal

Summarizing the results of the Homeless Needs Survey conducted from February 5 to 9, 2007, in the Capital Regional District of British Columbia, Canada - Victoria A quarter (25%) of people who were homeless or unstably housed identified themselves as First Nations, Aboriginal, Métis, Inuit or Native. This is almost ten times larger than the percentage of Aboriginal people in the overall local population. The 2001 Statistics Canada Census reported that 2.8% of the population in the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area identified as Aboriginal.

Local Aboriginal service providers have suggested that many Aboriginal people were missed by the survey and that the percent of homeless or unstably housed people who are Aboriginal is likely even higher than 25%.

²¹ Casavant, Lyne 1999. *Composition Of The Homeless Population*, Political and Social Affairs Division Parliamentary Research Branch January 1999

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Edmonton did its first homeless count in March '99 and most recent count on October 21, 2008. Since 2000 we conduct a count every other year on the third week of October. The proportion of the homeless that have been identified as aboriginal has consistently hovered around 40%, whereas they are approximately 5% of the general population. The last count identified 38% as Aboriginal.

A March 2008 count in Vancouver found Aboriginal representation at 32% and this had increased more rapidly than among the general population. Within sub-populations there were also significant variations including 39% of those under 25 and 45% of women.

Appendix C:

Estimates of Capital Grant and Rental Assistance

Exhibit C-1: Two Bed Units in Typical CA or CMA			
Estimated New Development Costs and Required Capital Assistance Comparing Units Targeted to Average Market Rent			
	Small Cities	Metro Cities	
Market rent	\$670	\$828	Ave Grant
Total Construction Capital Cost	\$117,000	\$148,000	
Total Rent Revenue	\$7,799	\$9,638	
Operating Cost Estimates (annual @ 40% gross)	\$3,120	\$3,855	
Grant required	\$64,700	\$83,400	\$74,050
RGI Rent Minimum wage (single earner)			
	\$375	\$375	
Total Construction Capital Cost	\$117,000	\$148,000	
Total Rent Revenue	\$4,365	\$4,365	
Operating Cost Estimates (annual @ 40% gross)	\$3,120	\$3,855	
Grant required	\$102,314	\$141,988	\$122,151
RGI Rent Minimum wage (1.5 earners)			
	\$563	\$563	
Total Construction Capital Cost	\$117,000	\$148,000	
Total Rent Revenue	\$6,548	\$6,548	
Operating Cost Estimates (annual @ 40% gross)	\$3,120	\$3,855	
Grant required	\$76,580	\$116,254	\$96,417
Assumes modest woodframe 2-Bed apartment (Ave Bach and 3 bed) at prevailing land and const costs including soft costs, averaged across larger and smaller cities. Financing assumed at 30 yrs at 4.5% to estimate maximum financing, Residual amount is grant required.			
Exhibit C-2: Annual rent Supplement			
	Rent	Affordable gap/month	Annual cost
Market less 30% of defined min wage income level			
Small Cities			
Market rent	\$670		
RGI Rent Minimum wage (single earner)	\$375	(\$295)	(\$3,540)
RGI Rent Minimum wage (1.5 earners)	\$563	(\$108)	(\$1,290)
Average (single and 1.5 earners)			(\$2,415)
Metro Cities			
Market rent	\$828		
RGI Rent Minimum wage (single earner)	\$375	(\$453)	(\$5,436)
RGI Rent Minimum wage (1.5 earners)	\$563	(\$266)	(\$3,186)
Average (single and 1.5 earners)			(\$4,311)
Overall average			(\$3,363)

