



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

PREPARED BY



THE CANADIAN HOUSING AND RENEWAL ASSOCIATION'S

Indigenous Caucus

THANKING OUR MEMBERS

Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge & Social Housing in Action of Lethbridge | Aboriginal Housing Society | Aboriginal Housing Society of Prince George | Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing & Homelessness | Aboriginal Housing Management Association | Alberta Government- Interagency Council on Homelessness | Aqanttanam Housing Society | British Columbia Non-Profit Housing Association | Camponi Housing Corporation | Capital Regional District | City of Lethbridge | City of Peterborough | Conayt Friendship Society | Corporation Waskahegen | Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society | Elbert Chartrand Friendship Centre | End Homelessness Winnipeg | First Light | First United Church Community Ministry Society | Gale Hagblom | Giant Developments | Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation | Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness | Groupe de ressources techniques – Bâtir son quartier | Habitat for Humanity Canada | Habitat International Coalition | Heart River Housing | Homeward Trust Edmonton | Inn from the Cold Society | Keepers of the Circle | Kekinow Native Housing Society | Keys to Recovery | Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society | Linda E. Ross Property Management Incorporated | Lloydminster Métis Housing Group Incorporated | Louise Atkins | M'akola Group of Societies | Mamele-awt Queesome Housing Society | Meadow Lake Native Urban Housing Corporation | Métis Urban Housing Association of Saskatchewan Incorporated | Miziwe Biik Development Corporation | Myriam St-Denis | Namerind Housing Corporation | Native People of Thunder Bay Development Corporation | Neech-ke-Wehn Homes Incorporated | Newfoundland & Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network | Niginan Housing Ventures | Nishnawbe Homes Incorporated | North Bay Indian Friendship Centre | Northern Spruce Housing Corporation | Nunavut Housing Corporation | Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services Corporation | Ontario Native Women's Association | Prince Albert Community Housing Society Incorporated | Phil Brown | Prince George Native Friendship Centre - British Columbia | Provincial Métis Housing Corporation | Red Cedar Strategies | Right to Housing Steering Committee | Robert Cohen | Sandy Hill Housing Cooperative Incorporated | Sasknative Rentals Incorporated | Silver Sage Housing Corporation | The Bloom Group Community Services Society | The Métis Nation of Ontario | Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority | Uquutaq Society | Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society | Vernon Native Housing Society | Victoria Native Friendship Centre | Vincent Paul Family Homes | Wachiy Friendship Centre Society | Wigwamen Incorporated | Woodgreen Community Housing Incorporated | Yorkton Parkland Housing Society | Skigen-Elnoog Housing Corporation



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CAUCUS SPONSORS



ABORIGINAL HOUSING
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A MESSAGE FROM ROBERT



Thank you all for your continued support of the work that the Indigenous Caucus and Working Group have done over the past year. 2019-2020 has been an incredibly busy but successful year for the Indigenous Caucus in pushing forward for the “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy.

It is unfortunate that we could not all meet together in my home province of Saskatchewan for this year’s Caucus Days due to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. It is my hope that the Caucus has been able to provide good, strong content for our members throughout the year to make up for the changes and adaptations we have all been challenged with. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at Caucus Days 2021 in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am pleased with our decision to bring in our first Indigenous Caucus Manager, dedicated to the work of the Caucus and ensuring our voice in Ottawa. I look forward to seeing what more we can do with having them on the team.

There are two things that this pandemic has shown us. The first is showing us that Indigenous peoples in urban, rural and Northern communities have faced a greater challenge responding to the pandemic based on a lack of federal funding. That being said, the pandemic has also shown us the spirit and resiliency of Indigenous housing providers in continuing to provide services to our communities without fail. We are dedicated to maintaining our goal in supporting each other and our communities no matter how difficult the challenge.

The Caucus connects us on the importance of issues of Indigenous housing and homelessness across Canada. These connections are our strength and bring us together in overcoming challenges and influencing transformation in a diverse network of communities. It is because of this strength, the strength of our communities, that I know that we will be successful in our efforts in lobbying the Federal Government on our “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” Housing Strategy. Again, I thank you all for your continued support of the work of the Caucus.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Byers'.

Robert Byers

Chair of the CHRA Indigenous Caucus Working Group



A MESSAGE FROM STEVE

As the first ever Manager for the CHRA Indigenous Caucus, the past few months have been an incredible learning experience. Having been in the role since early November 2019, I have spent time learning and listening from members of the Caucus and Working Group in order to serve the Caucus and implement its vision.

Unfortunately, the Caucus was unable to meet in person this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is certainly frustrating that we could not physically meet, I am very happy that we have been able to hold virtual meetings throughout the year, which will continue for the foreseeable future. While the Caucus was unable to provide sessions in person, my hope is that the sessions we were able to provide throughout the year were valuable to you all as members. It is my hope to see you all in person at the Caucus meetings in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 2021.

Over the past year, we have continued to push the federal government on the critical need for a housing strategy for Indigenous Peoples in urban, rural and northern communities. Implementation of the "For Indigenous, By Indigenous" strategy unveiled by the Caucus in 2018 remains both the Caucus' top priority, and CHRA's top priority. As affordable housing and service providers in your communities, you are best positioned to know and understand these needs. The Caucus will continue to work relentlessly to ensure that the federal government implements a long needed For Indigenous, By Indigenous housing strategy.

On a personal note, I want to thank you all for the warm welcome I have received since starting my new role. I have greatly benefited from the experience that you have all shared with me. I will continue to work hard for you into 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Sutherland', written in a cursive style.

Steve Sutherland

Manager of the CHRA Indigenous Caucus Working Group

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS



Robert Byers
CEO, Namerind Housing



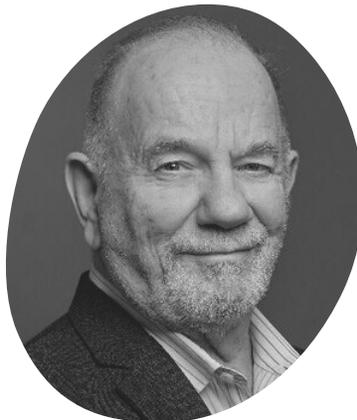
Kevin Albers
CEO, M'akola Housing Society
and M'akola Development
Services



Margaret Pfoh
CEO, Aboriginal Housing
Management Association



Richard George
President, Vancouver Native
Housing Society



David Eddy
CEO, Vancouver Native Housing
Society



Susan McGee
CEO, Homeward Trust
Edmonton

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS



Justin Marchand
Executive Director, Ontario
Aboriginal Housing Services



Christin Swim
General Manager, Skigin-
Elnoog Housing Corporation



Patsy Kuksuk
Executive Director, Programs,
Nunavut Housing Corporation



Phil Brown
Former CHRA Board President



Louise Atkins
Former Volunteer CHRA
Indigenous Caucus Coordinator



Tanya Powell
Housing First Coordinator,
Elbert Chartrand Friendship
Centre

ADVOCACY REPORT

The CHRA Indigenous Caucus and the Working Group have pursued considerable advocacy efforts and relationship building over the last year. Below is a snapshot of the meetings that have been held in pursuit of an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy for Canada.

A. Election 2019 and Beyond

The October 2019 federal election was a key opportunity to promote the needs of urban, rural and Northern Indigenous housing and homelessness providers with political parties and voters. Throughout 2019, CHRA led an aggressive campaign entitled “A Home for Everyone” that resulted in meetings with party platform committees, the launch of an election website, a press conference, the public release of the revamped Rental Housing Index, an all-party questionnaire, and the organization of Canada’s first ever National Housing Debate. This campaign helped ensure that housing was included in all the party platforms and will ensure a great deal of familiarity with housing issues by the new government. The top ask throughout this entire campaign was the development and implementation of an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy that would raise the housing standards of Indigenous peoples to that of non-Indigenous Canadians. In making this the top advocacy priority of CHRA, the Indigenous Caucus is well positioned for the future to ensure that an URN Indigenous housing strategy is achieved.

To continue the advocacy efforts from the election, CHRA, alongside the Indigenous Caucus Working Group, worked on a few different strategies throughout the year. One of the first things that was done was to send letters of congratulations to all Members of Parliament in late November 2019. Numerous responses were received and allowed for new relationships with MPs that had not before participated with the Indigenous Caucus.

The Indigenous Caucus also held a Tweet-a-Thon on February 6, 2020 that was shared by many in both the housing sector and within the Indigenous community. The Tweet-a-Thon was supported by an op-ed written in The Hill Times by the Caucus Manager, as well as a press release. The campaign was a success.

B. Stakeholder meetings

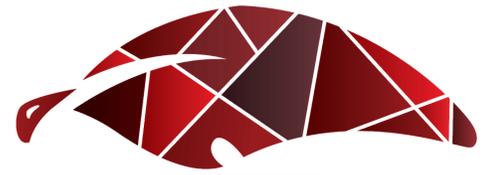


National Association of Friendship Centres

In May, Caucus representatives met with Jocelyn Formsma, Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC). NAFC expressed support of the Caucus' FIBI document, with both organizations agreeing to continue ongoing communications and to support our mutual efforts.

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

Caucus representatives met with Emma Stromberg and Juliette Nicolet from the Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres (OFIFC). This was another opportunity to share information, updates, and advocacy objectives. Both organizations agreed to continue to work together and support efforts to strengthen Indigenous housing.



OFIFC



National Right to Housing Network

The Indigenous Caucus Manager met with the Project Manager of the National Right to Housing Network to discuss opportunities to support one another's endeavors. This meeting was fruitful as both organizations have provided support on social media campaigns to one another.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The Indigenous Caucus Manager and the Executive Director of CHRA met with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to discuss updates on the Indigenous Caucus advocacy efforts with the "For Indigenous, By Indigenous" campaign for an urban, rural and Northern Indigenous housing strategy.



The Canadian Real Estate Association

The Indigenous Caucus Manager and the Executive Director of the CHRA met with representatives from the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) to discuss opportunities for CREA to support the Indigenous Caucus' advocacy efforts.

C. Parliamentary Meetings and Developments

Meetings with Spadina – Fort York MP Adam Vaughan

The Caucus Working Group held multiple meetings with Liberal Member of Parliament Adam Vaughan over the past year to discuss the importance of the urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing file. Early in the new federal government's mandate, Mr. Vaughan was tasked by the Minister responsible for housing, Ahmed Hussen, to develop an urban and rural Indigenous housing proposal. Throughout the year, Mr. Vaughan provided updates on his progress. Unfortunately, the pandemic delayed that process, but the Caucus Working Group continues to work with Mr. Vaughan to push that process forward.

Meeting with Vancouver East MP Jenny Kwan and Burnaby South MP Jagmeet Singh

CHRA Board President Kevin Albers, former Working Group member Marc Maracle, CHRA Executive Director Jeff Morrison and Indigenous Caucus Manager Steve Sutherland met with NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh and NDP Critic for Housing, MP Jenny Kwan to discuss the NDP's support for an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy. The meeting was well-received by all, and even saw MP Jenny Kwan ask a question regarding Indigenous housing and homelessness in the House of Commons.

Meeting with Minister Ahmed Hussen

In May 2020, the Canadian Alliance of Non-Profit Housing Association (CANPHA) held a virtual meeting with the federal Minister responsible for housing, the Hon. Ahmed Hussen. Margaret Pfoh, CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Management Association, and member of the Indigenous Caucus Working Group pressed the Minister on the status of the urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy that the Prime Minister had committed to delivering during the current government's term. Minister Hussen made clear that although the current COVID-19 pandemic has been the primary focus for the federal government, he was still committed to developing an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy.



C. Parliamentary Meetings and Developments ...continued



Meeting with Calgary Midnapore MP Stephanie Kusie

A meeting was held with Conservative MP Stephanie Kusie, who is the Conservative Shadow Minister for Housing. Ms. Kusie was briefed on the Caucus, the FIBI strategy, and the issue of Indigenous housing. Ms. Kusie asked the Caucus to continue to push the Liberals on the need for an urban, rural and northern strategy.

Meeting with Northwest Territories MP Michael McLeod

A meeting was held with Liberal MP Michael McLeod (NWT) to discuss Indigenous housing, particularly from a northern perspective. Mr. McLeod was clear that he has been pressuring the federal government to support a northern Indigenous housing strategy for some time and would work with the Caucus to continue to the fight for a FIBI Indigenous housing strategy.

Indigenous Caucus Chair Appears Before House of Commons Committee

In June 2020, Indigenous Caucus Chair Robert Byers, alongside the CHRA Executive Director Jeff Morrison, were invited to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development to discuss the federal government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Both Robert and Jeff advocated for an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy as a response to the crisis and urged the Committee to commence the study that they intended to pursue on urban and rural Indigenous housing prior to the crisis.



KNOWLEDGE

DISSIMINATION

In order to provide Caucus members with updated information and innovative developments, the Indigenous Caucus organized a series of webinars and information sessions throughout 2019-20 and continued to share updated research and knowledge with decision makers. Below you will find a snapshot of some of the knowledge dissemination activities that the Caucus undertook this year.

Virtual Indigenous Caucus Report and Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Caucus was unable to meet in person during the CHRA Annual Congress planned for Saskatoon in April 2020. As an alternative, a general membership meeting was held virtually in April 2020, which was an opportunity for the Working Group and staff to report upon Caucus developments throughout the year, and a chance to hear directly from members of the Caucus. These meetings will continue on a quarterly basis.

CMHC and Indigenous Housing

In April 2020, the CHRA Indigenous Caucus was invited to an update from senior CMHC officials on their new Indigenous housing programs and policies. Topics included the new Indigenous and Northern Housing Team, an overview of the National Housing Strategy (NHS) programs relevant to urban, rural and northern Indigenous providers, improvements to the National Co-Investment Fund, initiatives in response to COVID-19, along with other updates.

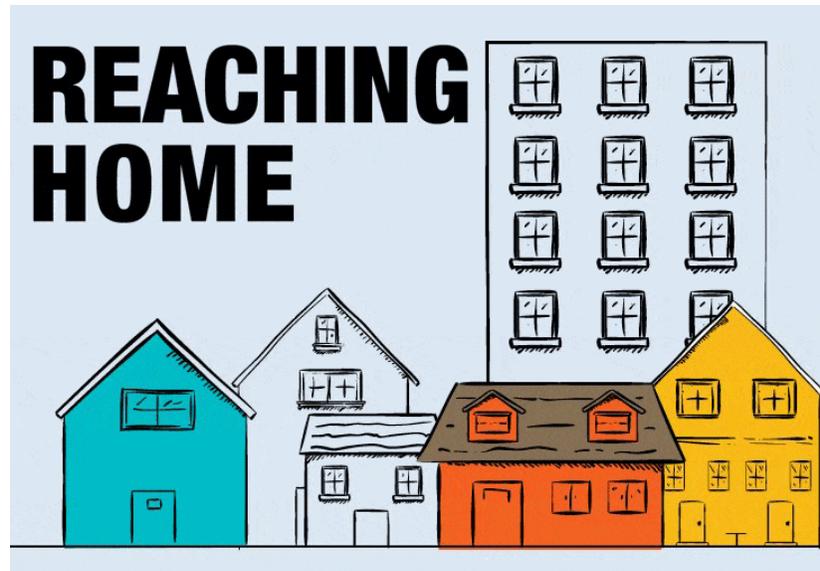


Webinar with Housing Investment Corporation

On June 8, 2020, the Caucus received a presentation from Howie Wong, who recently began a new housing investment vehicle called the Housing Investment Corporation (HIC) and Justin Marchand of the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services. The presentation from Howie and Justin provided an overview of the financial markets, the role of Indigenous housing in accessing financing for housing projects, and the opportunity that the Housing Investment Corporation could play in those efforts.

Webinar with Employment and Social Development Canada update on “Reaching Home” program

On July 14, the Indigenous Caucus was briefed by Employment and Social Development Canada officials about the federal government’s flagship program to address homelessness “Reaching Home”. The presentation included an overview of the program, the reasoning behind the creation of the regionally administered funding streams and increased funding to the program as a result of the pandemic.



Pandemic Response Roundtable

On July 23, 2020, the Indigenous Caucus hosted a pandemic response roundtable, sponsored by BC Housing. Members from the Working Group and Caucus presented on how their respective organizations have navigated the pandemic. Following the presentations, participants were asked to share their stories and ask questions of the presenters. The Indigenous Caucus would like to thank everyone for their participation and for BC Housing’s sponsorship.



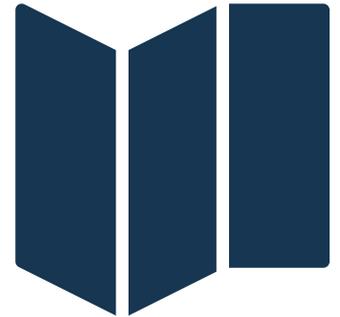
COMMUNICATIONS



The Indigenous Caucus has expanded its communications with members of the Caucus and other external audiences. The Caucus now has a Twitter account (@CHRAIndigenous) that has steadily gained followers since its inception. This has allowed for the Caucus to better communicate with the membership and quickly share information.



The Indigenous Caucus newsletter has also become a monthly feature instead of quarterly. This decision was taken to ensure that the Caucus can be more involved with the work of the Indigenous Caucus Manager and the Working Group.



The Indigenous Caucus has also developed promotional materials regarding membership information and benefits as a result of being a member of the CHRA Indigenous Caucus. If you are interested in receiving this material to share with other potential members, please contact the Indigenous Caucus Manager.

GOVERNANCE

In 2019, the Indigenous Caucus approved a new Terms of Reference that modernizes the governance and operation of the Caucus. This new Terms of Reference can be found on the CHRA website. These Terms of Reference were developed by the Caucus and the Working Group to outline membership in the Caucus, roles and responsibilities of Caucus and Working Group members, and the operational processes involved with the Working Group.

As a result of this new Terms of Reference, in 2020 the Working Group developed a new electoral process for the Working Group – more information on the process is available on the website. The

Caucus held its first round of elections to the Working Group in 2020, resulting in three new members to the Working Group; Patsy Kuksuk, Tanya Powell, and Christin Swim.