



NEWS RELEASE

Budget 2022: CHRA Welcomes the Housing Focus, But Raises Concerns Over Specific Measures, Notably Urban Indigenous Housing

(April 7, 2022, OTTAWA) – Following the release of the 2022 federal Budget by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) was pleased to see the federal government’s focus on housing, but closer inspection of its specific measures raises concerns over how much new affordable housing will be built, particularly for urban and rural Indigenous peoples.

The Budget contains a significant number of measures across the housing spectrum; some of which, such as the \$1.5 billion Rapid Housing Initiative, will spur development of new non market housing. However, other key announcements, such as expediting \$2.9 billion under the National Co-investment Fund, are merely reallocations of existing funding.

Notably, the Budget was a significant disappointment with respect to urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing, allocating \$300 million over 5 years to co-develop and launch an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. Despite the fact that 87% of Indigenous peoples live in these settings, and with urban Indigenous peoples facing much higher rates of homelessness and core housing need compared to non Indigenous peoples, \$300 million is grossly insufficient – especially after the Parliamentary Budget Officer recommended \$1.9 billion per year to bring urban Indigenous housing to a standard equal to non Indigenous housing. This announcement also comes against an offsetting backdrop of expiring federal housing agreements for Urban Indigenous people that will result in an increase in Indigenous homelessness.

“Over the past year, a Parliamentary Committee, all parties in the 2021 federal election, and the National Housing Council have recommended a comprehensive urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy”, said Justin Marchand, Chair of the CHRA Indigenous Caucus. “Although we welcome the acknowledgement of an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy in Budget 2022, \$300 million over 5 years will barely scratch the surface in improving housing for Indigenous peoples in urban settings. We hereby call on the federal government to immediately increase this investment by at least \$6 billion as recommended by the National Housing Council to a level that will make a meaningful difference in housing outcomes for Indigenous people living in urban, rural and northern areas”.

Among the announcements of specific interest to the non profit, community housing sector include:

- \$300 million over 5 years to co-develop and launch an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy.
- An additional \$1.5 billion over 2 years to be made available as a third round of the Rapid Housing Initiative
- \$4 billion for a Municipal Accelerator Fund that will expedite municipal approval processes for affordable housing

- \$4 billion over 7 years to augment the distinctions based housing strategies for First Nations, Inuit and Metis
- \$475 million to increase payments one time through the Canada Housing Benefit
- \$562 million over 2 years for the federal Reaching Home program
- \$2.9 billion of existing funding under the National Co-investment Fund will be expedited by 2 years
- \$458.5 million in low income loans and grants for low income housing providers under the Canada Greener Homes Loan program
- \$500 million to be reallocated under the National Co-investment Fund to target development of co-op housing
- \$150 million to develop new affordable housing in the three northern territories

“CHRA is pleased that the federal government has recognized the extent of the housing crisis in Budget 2022”, said Jeff Morrison, Executive Director of CHRA. “However, when you drill down, very few of the specific measures announced today will result in a significant increase in the supply of affordable housing, particularly for urban Indigenous peoples, which is what is desperately needed to address the housing crisis in Canada”, he added.

-30-

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