

# Ontario Urban & Rural

First Nations, Métis & Inuit Housing Policy

# Framework

October 2013



*the* Métis  
Nation of  
Ontario

# Acknowledgement

The MNO, ONWA and OFIFC would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to all the community engagement participants that contributed the development of OUR Framework.

**// Miigwetch  
Nya:weh  
Marsee  
Thank You  
Merci //**

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# Introduction

## SHARED GOAL

Good housing for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples recognizes the unique histories of housing and ongoing relationships to the land on which it is built. For FNMI peoples, housing is holistic<sup>1</sup>. Housing affects how FNMI practice their cultures and how they relate to their communities. A house is much more than the sum of its parts: its location, its neighbours, its distance from services, its ability to support education and livelihood, its connection to cultural activities, its quality and safety, and its ability to welcome families all affect how well a house shelters and protects those within.

Recognizing that good housing supports FNMI peoples' particular histories, cultures, and communities, a partnership to address the needs of FNMI peoples across Ontario was created. Together, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), and the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) invited urban and rural FNMI peoples from communities outside the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)<sup>2</sup> to share their experiences. At community sessions, FNMI people, FNMI organizations, and FNMI tenants voiced concerns and shared ideas for FNMI housing and related services. **MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC have congruent mandates to improve the lives of urban and rural FNMI people in Ontario:**



The **MNO**'s goals, as set out in the Statement of Prime Purpose, include: Pursuing a rights-based agenda and proudly asserting the Métis existence as a distinct Indigenous people; Protecting and preserving the distinct culture and heritage of the Métis Nation; and, Improving the social and economic well-being of Métis children, families and communities throughout the province.



**ONWA** is a not for profit organization that empowers and supports Aboriginal women and their families throughout the province of Ontario. ONWA is a unified voice for equity, equality and justice for Aboriginal women through cultural restoration within and across Nations. All Aboriginal ancestry will be treated with dignity, respect and equality and benefits and services will be extended to all, no matter where one lives and regardless of Tribal heritage.



**OFIFC** is a provincial Aboriginal organization representing twenty-nine member Friendship Centres located throughout the province. The Vision of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Movement is "to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people living in an urban environment by supporting self-determined activities which encourage equal access to and participation in Canadian Society and which respects Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness."

<sup>1</sup> Throughout **OUR Framework** it was decided to spell 'holistic' with a 'w', underlining the fact the FNMI view the world as an interconnected whole and reject any associations to the Western Judeo-Christian concept of 'holiness'.

<sup>2</sup> As **OUR Framework** explains, the delivery of urban and rural FNMI housing in Ontario is split between OAHS' FIMUR program outside the GTA and Miziwe Biik Development Corporation's (MBDC) GTA Aboriginal Housing Program inside the GTA. As OAHS provided the funding for the FNMI community housing engagement sessions, no session was held within the GTA.

# The three indigenous groups In Ontario are:

## FIRST NATIONS:

The Charter of the Assembly of First Nations (2003) defines First Nations peoples as “the original peoples of this land having been put here by the Creator”. Throughout Ontario there are numerous First Nations with diverse cultures, governments, and histories.

## MÉTIS:

During the fur trade a distinct peoples emerged who were the children of European men and First Nations women. As these children married among themselves “a new Aboriginal people emerged – the Métis people – with their own unique culture, traditions, language (Michif), way of life, collective consciousness and nationhood” (Métis National Council).

## INUIT:

“For more than four thousand years, Inuit ... have occupied the Arctic land and waters from the Mackenzie Delta in the west, to the Labrador coast in the east and from the Hudson’s Bay Coast, to the islands of the High Arctic” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami). Inuit are one of the Aboriginal peoples who originally inhabited the far Northern regions.



All across Ontario, FNMI people asserted that housing and related services are best delivered in a way that is culturally supportive and reflective of a wholistic FNMI perspective. Because FNMI communities are experts in their own housing needs, the decision to advocate for FNMI housing and related services to be owned, managed, designed, and constructed by FNMI communities, for FNMI communities.

In the absence of an Ontario First Nations, Métis, and Inuit housing policy framework, MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC held engagement sessions with FNMI communities to develop the

## Ontario Urban and Rural First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Housing Policy Framework (OUR Framework)

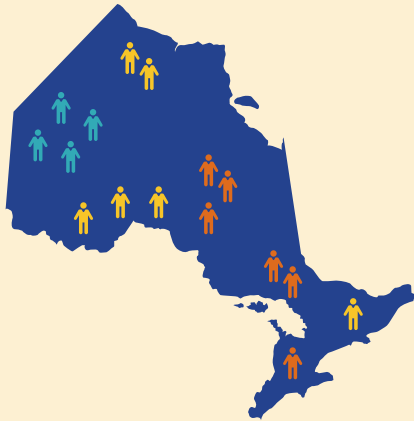
It is a proactive document that calls for renewed commitment, coordination, and communication to improve FNMI housing and related services in Ontario. As housing by FNMI communities for FNMI communities is needed, the framework advocates for the full devolution of urban and rural FNMI housing programs and related services to FNMI organizations.

## FNMI Peoples in Ontario

To reflect the diversity of Indigenous peoples and to include all, regardless of status, nationhood, membership or community affiliation, the terms “Indigenous,” and “First Nations, Métis, and Inuit” (FNMI) were applied interchangeably. However, it is acknowledged that many FNMI people refer to themselves differently and in their own languages. Furthermore, **OUR Framework** represents and guides FNMI housing in urban and rural communities outside of reserves where MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC provide service.

# Background

## FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT PEOPLES AND HISTORIES



**First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI)** peoples are the constitutionally recognized Indigenous groups of Canada. Their laws and protocols predate the treaties that would later inform the development of Canada's current constitutional monarchy. Prior to contact with Europeans, First Nations and Inuit peoples lived according to their own systems of government, knowledge of the land, spiritual traditions, holistic perspectives, and communal way of life.

At the time of contact, intermediaries were often needed to facilitate trade relations and to bridge European and Indigenous cultures. A distinct group, the Métis, would emerge. As the children of First Nations and European settlers, the Métis developed their own distinct culture, language and traditions.

Displacement from traditional territories and relocation to reserves or settlements, residential schools and the removal of children from their parents, forced enfranchisement, and laws prohibiting cultural practices became common practice and deprived FNMI people of their traditional way of life. The effects of these policies are evident in the higher rates of homelessness, addictions, poverty, unemployment, educational exclusion, violence, mental illness, family breakdown, children placed in care, and cultural disconnection experienced by FNMI people.

Despite facing colonialism and systemic barriers FNMI people have demonstrated strength and resilience by continuing to practice culture and spiritual traditions. These culture and spiritual traditions continue to be a source of strength, knowledge, and skill.

## A HISTORY OF FNMI HOUSING

FNMI communities across Ontario expressed the need to incorporate traditional perspective and values into contemporary housing. However, the history of FNMI housing policy and legislation in Canada has not made this possible.

Social housing first emerged in Canada in the 1940s. In the 1970s, the federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), committed to creating 50,000 housing units for urban and rural FNMI people. From this, two housing programs emerged, the Rural and Native Housing Program (RNH), which targeted FNMI and non-Indigenous people in rural communities, and later, the Urban Native Non-Profit Housing Program (UNH), which was exclusively for FNMI people.

When the federal government fell into deficit, CMHC withdrew funding for RNH and UNH. By 1993, only 20,000 of the promised FNMI housing units were provided and, with the exception of locally developed housing, 15 years would lapse before any new FNMI housing investments would be made.

In 1998, responsibility for social housing, including RNH and UNH, was devolved to the provinces. Ontario accepted responsibility for urban and rural FNMI housing in 1999, maintaining federal requirements and property management agreements with FNMI housing providers. Under the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000, Ontario further devolved social housing, including UNH, to municipalities. The province, however, maintained supervision of RNH and later transferred ownership to Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS).

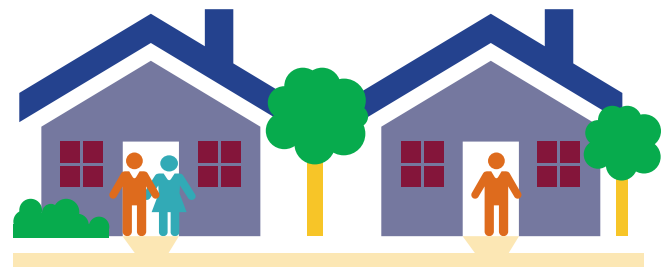
CMHC announced a one-time transfer to the provinces under Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust fund (OAHTF) in 2006. The following year, Ontario announced \$80 million to build up to 1,100 urban and rural housing units for FNMI families. Ontario divided the \$80 million between the GTA (25%) and the rest of the province (75%); a regional funding model that Ontario still uses.

In 2008, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) entered into agreements with MNO, ONWA, and OFIC to collectively engage FNMI communities on the design, delivery, and allocation of the OAHTF outside the GTA.<sup>3</sup> Based on recommendations from the provincial engagement process, the First Nation, Inuit, Métis Urban, and Rural Housing Program (FIMUR) was developed. FIMUR includes two components: assisted homeownership and social housing development. OAHS was selected to administer the program on behalf of FNMI communities.

CMHC further withdrew from social housing and programming by announcing in July 2011 a new Affordable Housing Framework (2011-2014) that combined federal and provincial housing and homelessness investments. Many housing programs once delivered by CMHC would be dismantled and the funds pooled and distributed for provincial delivery.

Consistent with Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, in **November 2011 Ontario announced \$480.6 million under the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program (IAH), including a \$26.4 million set aside for FNMI housing.** FIMUR and the GTA Housing Program models were used to allocate funds to FNMI communities. Funding under the IAH is set to end in 2014 without a long-term strategy for FNMI housing.

The legal and jurisdictional context of FNMI housing is complex and inconsistent. While Section 91 (24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 gives the federal government exclusive jurisdiction for "Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians", Canada continues to delegate urban and rural FNMI housing to the provinces. Since this devolution, Ontario has developed a provincial housing strategy; however, there is no FNMI specific housing policy. Instead of building on the success of FNMI community led and designed programs such as FIMUR and the GTA Aboriginal Housing Program, FNMI housing suffers from inconsistent funding, management, and jurisdiction.




<sup>3</sup> A similar process was in place for the GTA, where MBDC administers the GTA Aboriginal Housing Program. Although criteria varies between FIMUR and the GTA Aboriginal Housing Program, both support FNMI people in purchasing a home and in the development of affordable and supportive housing.

## CALL TO ACTION

Inconsistent and oppressive Indigenous policy in Canada has contributed to the systemic barriers that FNMI people face when accessing housing. These barriers were described by FNMI peoples in housing engagement sessions throughout Ontario and are demonstrated in other existing research and demographic data. Research demonstrates that FNMI people living outside of a reserve in urban and rural communities continue to experience high levels of homelessness, core housing need, family instability, violence, children placed in care, disability, mental illness, addictions, unemployment, low educational attainment, and poverty.

## DEFINING THE ISSUE

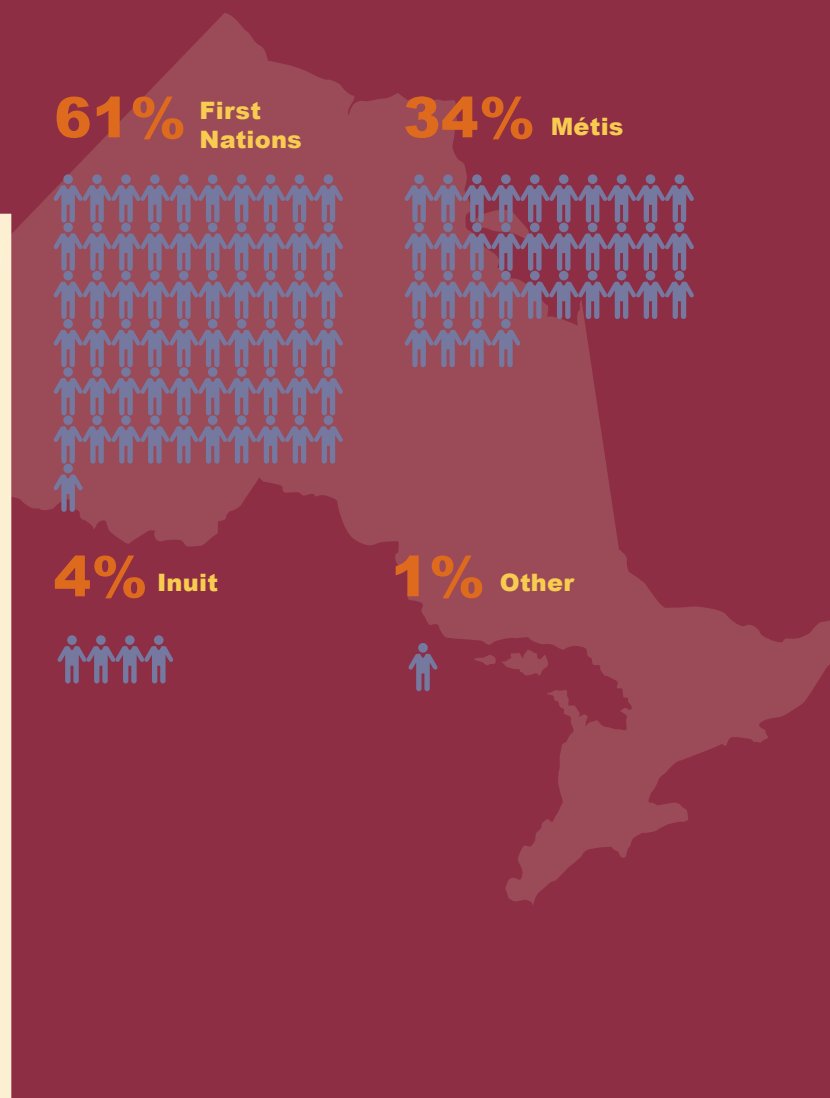
### Demographic Trends

 **The First Nations, Métis and Inuit population is growing at a rapid rate,**

significantly affecting housing and related services. Between 2006 and 2011<sup>4</sup> the urban and rural FNMI population grew at a rate **14 times greater** than that of the non-Indigenous population (68% and 5% respectively).<sup>5</sup> Over the next decade, the urban and rural FNMI population could reach nearly 400,000.<sup>6</sup> FNMI organizations and housing providers are already overextended and many lack the capacity to plan for future housing and service demand. As the population grows, so too does the demand for suitable and culturally safe housing and related services. Without long-term investments, access to culturally safe housing and related services will be limited, placing more FNMI families in precarious housing situations.

**Table 1 -**

## Urban and Rural First Nation, Métis and Inuit populations in Ontario 2011



<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada cautions that comparing census data with the National Household Survey 2011 should be used. The voluntary nature of the survey limits responses from certain groups, including FNMI people. The comparison made within the Framework do not take into account the different methodologies used for the census and NHS, thus comparisons are made when it is supported by previous research by others, such as the widely acknowledge increasing growth of the FNMI population in the province.

<sup>5</sup> The FNMI population growth rate is well beyond birth rates indicating that more people are self-identifying. Factors contributing: Increase awareness of changes in Indigenous rights, specifically Métis rights such as the 2003 Supreme Court decision in R. v. Powley providing more rights to Métis until section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, may be contributing factors to the increase in ethnic mobility. MacDonald, D. and Wilson, D. Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada (2013).

<sup>6</sup> If a minimum growth rate of 24% is maintained. Factors not considered birth and death rates, migration from on-reserve, political influences, such as the Daniels case or Manitoba Métis land claim, which may boost self-identification.



**While Ontario had the highest count of FNMI people than any other province, urban and rural FNMI are continually denied long-term targeted housing funding.** As previously noted, investments have been made through the OAHTF and IAH, but as with most FNMI funding, they were short-term and unpredictable. With that said,

**84%** of the FNMI population live outside of a reserve

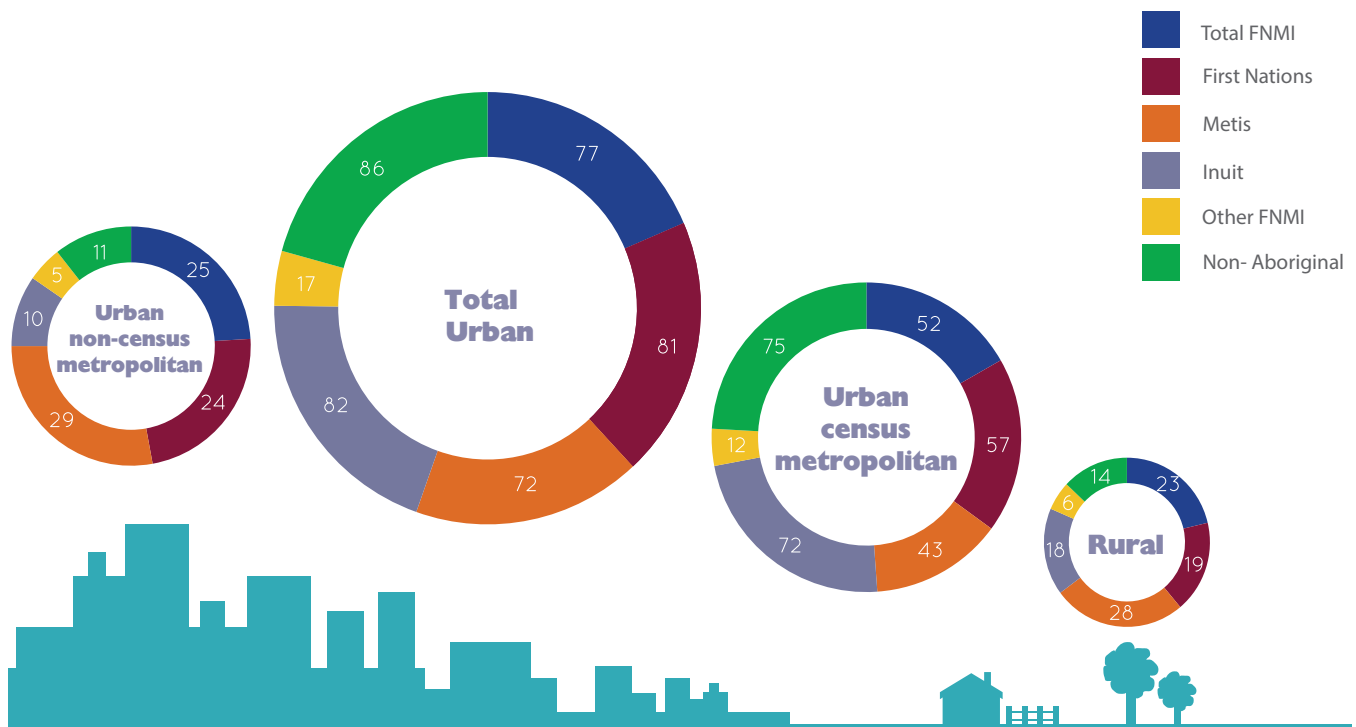
yet much of the FNMI specific funding is directed to the on-reserve population.<sup>7</sup> While urban and rural FNMI housing is underfunded, the lack of housing on-reserve means that First Nations families and individuals often must move to urban and rural areas to find housing. A provincial investment is needed to ensure Ontario FNMI people have equal access to housing as their non-Indigenous counterparts.



**The needs of FNMI vary from community to community, thus a 'one-size-fits-all' is not practical.**

FNMI communities echoed the immediate need to have housing created by and for FNMI, and as experts in their own housing needs, only FNMI communities can determine when their needs are met. The FNMI community is dispersed throughout the province, where broad provincial solutions would not be effective in all communities. For example, rural communities may determine that social housing needs to be centralized; whereas, urban communities may see scattered units as more appropriate.

## Table 2 - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit by Residency, 2006



Source: Statistic Canada, Census Population, 2006

<sup>7</sup> National Aboriginal Housing Association. (2009). A Time for Action: A National Plan to Address Aboriginal Housing.

## In 2006:



**77.2%**  
of FNMI people  
lived in urban  
centres



**18%**  
of FNMI considered  
rural areas home.<sup>8</sup>

Métis were more likely to live in rural communities than First Nations and Inuit. About 41% of all FNMI people lived in Northern Ontario.<sup>9</sup> Nearly half of FNMI people (45.8%) changed their address within a 5 year period,<sup>10</sup> indicating that many FNMI people transition between urban and rural communities—as well as reserve communities.

Although, FNMI live in large metropolitan centres, such as **Toronto (26,575), Ottawa-Gatineau (20,590), and Thunder Bay (10,055)**, they do tend to concentrate in smaller urban centres, such as **Kenora (16%), Midland (11%) and Sault Ste. Marie (10%).**<sup>11</sup> The fact that FNMI concentrate in smaller communities has significant implications to accessing to those accessing social housing. Housing funding, as well as other types of funding, historically are allocated based on population. As such, housing funding received by rural municipalities tends to be far less than what is received in urban centres, creating fierce funding competition between housing providers.<sup>12</sup> As a result, rural FNMI housing providers are less likely to secure funding to develop housing for FNMI people because they may lack the experience of non-Indigenous developers.



The FNMI population is younger than the overall population, with a higher proportion of children and youth under 25 years.<sup>13</sup> There are proportionately fewer seniors aged 65 and over (5.2%) compared to the total population (13.6%). By 2016, the FNMI senior population will nearly triple to nearly 20,000. FNMI youth and seniors were deemed to be a priority housing need in many communities across Ontario.

**FNMI peoples are among the poorest in Ontario, contributing to their inability to secure suitable housing.** A recent report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives noted that **30% of Ontario urban and rural FNMI children live in poverty.**<sup>14</sup> In 2006, the FNMI population had an average income of \$25,963, \$12,000 less than non-Indigenous people. FNMI people living in the north also face further income disparities, in comparison to their southern counterparts. While the average income for FNMI people in Northwestern Ontario was \$21,369, in Southern Ontario it was about \$4,600 higher.<sup>15</sup> Although, FNMI are willing to work, as reflected in labour force participation (66.7%), FNMI rates of unemployment (11.5%) are still higher than non-Indigenous people (6.3%).

<sup>8</sup> Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Fact Sheet-Urban Aboriginal Population in Canada. Retrieved from: <http://www.aadncaandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014298/1100100014302>

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. "Aboriginal People's in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Metis and First Nations" 2006 Census.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> 2006 Census Data - Aboriginal peoples highlights tables, 20% sample

<sup>12</sup> National Aboriginal Housing Association. (2009). A Time for Action: A National Plan to Address Aboriginal Housing.

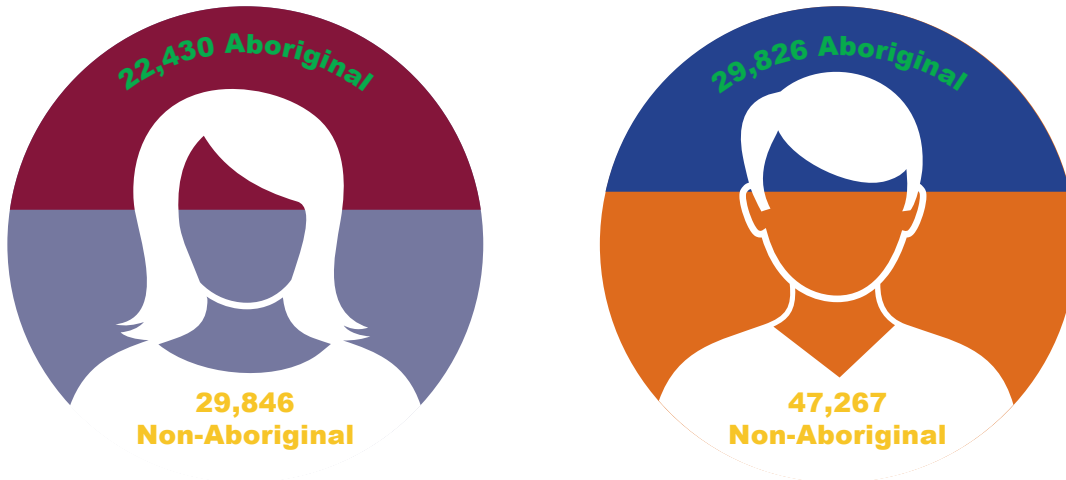
<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada. "Aboriginal People's in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Metis and First Nations" 2006 Census.

<sup>14</sup> Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2013). Poverty or Prosperity Indigenous Children in Canada. p. 17

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Lack of employment could also be attributed to the lower educational attainment of the FNMI population.<sup>16</sup> Lack of stable and adequate income further contributes to the inability to secure quality housing and increases the likelihood of falling into core housing need.

### Table 3 - Average Income before tax by status; gender, 2006



**Total Aboriginal - 25,963**  
**Total Non-Aboriginal - 38,318**

Source: Statistic Canada, Census Population, 2006

**By the end of 2017, FNMI people will represent 3.4% of the working population**, reaching nearly one million workers in Canada. As the skilled housing industry workforce moves into retirement, FNMI could be targeted to fill labour shortages. Integrating FNMI housing developing with employment and training programs, such as work placements, apprenticeships, and internships, would assist in building the FNMI workforce.

**Creating housing should have economic benefits to FNMI communities.** Research indicates that 1.2 years of on-site employment and 1.8 years of off-site indirect employment are generated for every new home built.<sup>17</sup> FNMI people have a lot to offer the housing sector, with many FNMI people disciplined in business, management, architecture, engineering, and related technologies.

Throughout Ontario, communities agreed that the economic opportunities provided by housing industries should directly benefit the FNMI community by using FNMI businesses and people when developing housing.

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada. "Aboriginal People's in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Metis and First Nations" 2006 Census.

<sup>17</sup> Pomeroy, S. (2008). The Role of Affordable Housing in Economic Stimulus Plan produced for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

## Assessing Housing Need

### Core housing need is more prevalent in FNMI households than non-Indigenous households.

In 2006, 18.7 % or 18,935 FNMI households living urban and rural communities were in core housing need compared to 14.4% of non-Indigenous households. FNMI people experience greater incidences of poverty, discrimination, violence, lone parent families, and large family households, which contribute to the increased housing need of FNMI communities. Although statistics indicate that a decreased in percentage of core housing need, the number of households in core housing need continues to grow.

**Table 4 - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Core Housing need by tenure, 2001-2006**

	2001			2006		
	All households	Owned	Rented	All households	Owned	Rented
	% in core housing need			% in core housing need		
<b>TOTAL FNMI Households</b>	20.6%	8.0%	35.2%	18.7%	6.5%	35.6%
<b>First Nations (status)</b>	22.7%	8.6%	36.7%	21.3%	7.1%	37.3%
<b>First Nations(non-Status)</b>	22.2%	9.3%	35.1%	20.5%	6.7%	37.3%
<b>Métis</b>	19.4%	8.6%	33.2%	14.6%	5.7%	31.4%
<b>Inuit</b>	28.3%	8.2%	42.2%	28.2%	8.2%	42.2%
<b>Non-Indigenous</b>	15%	7%	32%	14.4%	7.4%	32.9%

Source: CMHC Research Highlights

**Each year, on average, over 800 FNMI households move into core housing need**, with the potential to nearly double the total number of households in core housing need over the next 10 years. Across Ontario FNMI people emphasized that long-term consistent funding is needed to sufficiently address the current and future housing needs of FNMI people.

**Core housing need is greater for FNMI renters than homeowners**, 35.6% and 6.5% respectively. Affordability is considered one of the main factors leading to core housing need, especially for FNMI renters. With an average income of \$25,963, a FNMI individual can only afford to pay \$627<sup>18</sup> in shelter costs. However, the average cost of a two bedroom apartment in Ontario is \$1,002, a far cry from what the average FNMI person can afford. Assuming the rental amount includes utilities, one would need to have an income of at least \$40,080 in order to avoid slipping into core housing need.

## Table 5 - Income Scenario – to Purchase a home

<b>Average Ontario House Price</b>	<b>366,400</b>
<b>15% down payment</b>	<b>-54,960</b>
	<b>+5% interest</b>
<b>Monthly mortgage payment</b>	<b>1,811.35</b>



Source: CMHC Housing Observer 2012; Mortgage payment calculator

<sup>18</sup> If only paying more than 30% of their gross household income on shelter.

**FNMI households are less likely to own their home than non-Indigenous households**, with affordability being primary contributor to the low rate of FNMI homeownership. The average house price is \$366,000, to afford the mortgage payment of \$1,811.35.<sup>19</sup> A household would need to gross \$72,454 annually- nearly three times that of the average FNMI person.<sup>20</sup>

Contributing to the disproportionate number of FNMI households in core housing is that FNMI are more likely to live in homes that require major repair and/or are overcrowded. FNMI people are twice as likely as non-Indigenous people to live in homes that require major repair. Supporting this, the Urban Aboriginal Task Force Final Report (2007) found that 78% of urban and rural FNMI people in Ontario have unmet housing needs and that access to safe, affordable housing is a primary concern.

## Table 6 - Percentage of population living in a dwelling requiring major repair by identity (non-reserve), 2006

Identity	Dwelling Needing Major Repair (%)	Dwelling Overcrowded (%)
<b>Total FNMI</b>	12.9%	2.3%
<b>First Nations</b>	14.5%	2.7%
<b>Métis</b>	10.9%	1.3%
<b>Inuit</b>	10.4%	7.9%
<b>Other FNMI</b>	9.6%	2.3%
<b>Non-Indigenous</b>	6.3%	3.9%

Source: CMHC (census-based housing indicators and data)

**“More than half of Aboriginal people in Canada live in urban centres and rural areas... Cut off from the culture and traditions that strengthened them, many Aboriginal people feel isolated and powerless against discrimination. They often face grinding poverty and live in sub-standard housing or become part of the burgeoning population of the homeless. (National Aboriginal Housing Association)”**

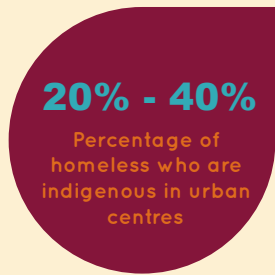
**When FNMI people face multiple forms of discrimination that intersect, they are at higher risk of poverty, family breakdown, illness, and homelessness.**

Discrimination is a significant barrier facing urban and rural FNMI people,<sup>21</sup> forcing many into inadequate and frequently over-priced accommodation – or into homelessness. Despite the existence of human rights legislation, FNMI communities across Ontario emphasized that overt racism, discrimination and complacency has created barriers in obtaining quality affordable housing.

<sup>19</sup> Excludes utilities and other shelter costs. As defined by CMHC, shelter includes rent/mortgage, hydro, fuel, water, municipal services; and for homeowners, it also includes property taxes and condo fees. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Canadian Housing Observer Tenth Edition

<sup>20</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Canadian Housing Observer Tenth Edition

<sup>21</sup> UN-Habitat (2005), Indigenous peoples’ right to adequate housing: A global overview. Report No. 7. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.



**FNMI people are significantly over-represented in the homeless population.** Due to the transient nature of homelessness and other inherent difficulties associated with enumerating homeless people over time, it is impossible to state the absolute number of FNMI homeless in Ontario with any certainty. However, in most urban centres the percentage of homeless who are Indigenous is likely to be between 20 and 40 percent.<sup>22</sup> **For northern urban centres serving as access points for remote First Nations communities, the picture is particularly dismal.**

Further, the majority of estimates of FNMI homelessness are likely to be low. This is partly as a result of hidden homelessness, such as ‘couch surfing’<sup>23</sup>, temporary stays in transition homes, treatment centres, healthcare centres and corrections facilities; and, because FNMI people are more likely to live in over-crowded conditions and experience higher levels of mobility and transience (between communities and on-off-reserve).



**FNMI women experience higher rates of violence than non-Indigenous women contributing to FNMI homelessness.** Violence is the leading cause of women’s homelessness in Canada.<sup>24</sup> Women with children will live with domestic violence to ensure they do not have their children apprehended due to homelessness.<sup>25</sup> Although Statistics Canada found that **close to 13% of FNMI women aged 15 or over stated that they had been violently victimized**, other research indicates it is actually much higher.<sup>26</sup>

Precarious housing not only increases FNMI women’s risk of experiencing violence, it also contributes to the risk of being trafficked and the high numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women

## FNMI Homelessness in Selected Cities

★ **HAMILTON** - FNMI people comprise 1.3% of the total population and yet 20% of the homeless are Indigenous.

★ **TORONTO** - FNMI people represent only 0.5% of the total population and 15% of the homeless; worse still, 26 percent of homeless people sleeping on the streets of Toronto are Indigenous.

★ **OTTAWA** - The recent Homelessness Evaluation Report for the city of Ottawa estimates that 25-30% of the homeless are FNMI.

★ **NORTH BAY** - FNMI people comprised over 25% of the absolute homeless but just 6% of the total population.

★ **TIMMINS** - 39% of homeless people are Indigenous.

★ **SIOUX LOOKOUT** - A recent study in found that a staggering 99% of homeless people in the municipality are Indigenous.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Maracle, Executive Director Gignul Non-Profit Housing June 22, 2012 OMSSA Meeting, 20 Bay Street

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> YWCA. Violence Against Women & Women’s Homelessness. <http://www.ywcanwt.ca/documents/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Violence%20and%20Women%27s%20Homelessness%20-%20Making%20the%20Connections.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Peter Menzies. “Aboriginal Homelessness.” <http://www.homelesshub.ca/Library/Aboriginal-Homelessness-49523.aspx>

<sup>26</sup> Sisterwatch. (2011). The Tragedy of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada. Vancouver. <https://vancouver.ca/police/assets/pdf/reports-policies/missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-canada-report.pdf>

## Evaluation Existing FNMI Housing

As highlighted earlier in **OUR Framework**, Ontario's Urban and Rural FNMI population have a limited number of social housing programs: **RNH, UNH and FIMUR**.

RNH and UNH were developed to better meet the needs of FNMI communities. However, aging housing stock, poor construction methods, culturally unsafe policies, and UNH's devolution to municipalities threaten FNMI housing. With limited alternatives due to discrimination and lower incomes,

In Ontario there are **3,777 UNH and RNH units and 521 newly developed FIMUR units, making 4,300 units available for FNMI people**. In actuality the numbers are far less, considering that only 35% of RNH units target FNMI tenants, the number of available units is only 3,300. In 2011, the social housing waitlist for Ontario is 150,000 with an average wait time of 1-4 years.<sup>27</sup>

**FNMI are at greater risk of homelessness or living in deplorably unsafe housing conditions than non-Indigenous people.** For this reason, it is imperative that housing be made available explicitly for FNMI people

## Table 7 - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Social Housing by region, 2013

Program	NW	NE	SW	SE	TOTAL
UNH	386	661	750	441	2,238
RNH	326	514	298	401	1,539
FIMUR	233	65	189	34	521
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>4,298</b>

Devolution of UNH to municipalities has limited access for FNMI people. Housing once governed independently is now part of the general municipal housing portfolio. Non-Indigenous people occupying FNMI housing, sale of units, and insufficient investments have reduced FNMI housing in Ontario.

**Without long-term investments, FNMI housing will continue to decline. Preserving existing FNMI housing is necessary to ensure FNMI equal access to housing in Ontario.**

<sup>27</sup> Ontario Non-Profit Association. "Waitlist Survey 2012."

## Community Capacity Challenges

**FNMI organizations are faced with greater challenges when developing housing than non-Indigenous organizations.** Across Ontario, many communities emphasized that insufficient capacity, inconsistent operational funding, unsupportive policies, and lack of meaningful research have contributed to limited availability of FNMI housing. Although the FNMI population is growing and rely more and more on FNMI organizations to access housing and services, organizations have seen decreases to both program and core funding. At the same time, “funders have increased the administrative and reporting burdens on organizations without providing resources to meet these new requirements”.<sup>28</sup> As a result, FNMI organizations struggle more often than non-Indigenous agencies to balance the growing needs of FNMI communities with increased expectations from funders.

**A 2008 survey completed by Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association found that 48% of FNMI housing providers lacked the expertise to undertake housing development.**<sup>29</sup>

When competing with the more experienced non-Indigenous housing sector for funding, FNMI specific housing projects are often defeated, further limiting FNMI housing in Ontario. Furthermore, if funding is secured,

municipal by-law restrictions, NIMBYism, and insufficient operating funds present barriers to development.

The lack of core funding was reflected in community housing engagement sessions where FNMI service providers expressed frustration at needing to apply for funding on a project-to-project basis. Project-based funding limits the ability to address the varied and intersecting issues that FNMI people face around housing, leaving service providers less able to deliver services in a wholistic, culturally safe manner. The shift to project-based funding was also described as a barrier to coordination between FNMI organizations, where such funding is offered through a competitive request for proposals. Although community members described a wide range of skills, creativity, and organizational capacity developed in response to limited funding, it was noted that **ongoing core funding is needed to retain skilled employees and to generate additional capacity.**

As reflected throughout the Framework, FNMI people are facing a housing system that does not accommodate or reflect our unique housing needs. With higher incidences of poverty, low levels of education, and experiences of violence, discrimination and overt racism, FNMI communities will never close the gap with non-Indigenous communities without ongoing support to develop FNMI specific housing and programs.

## THE CURRENT HOUSING SYSTEM

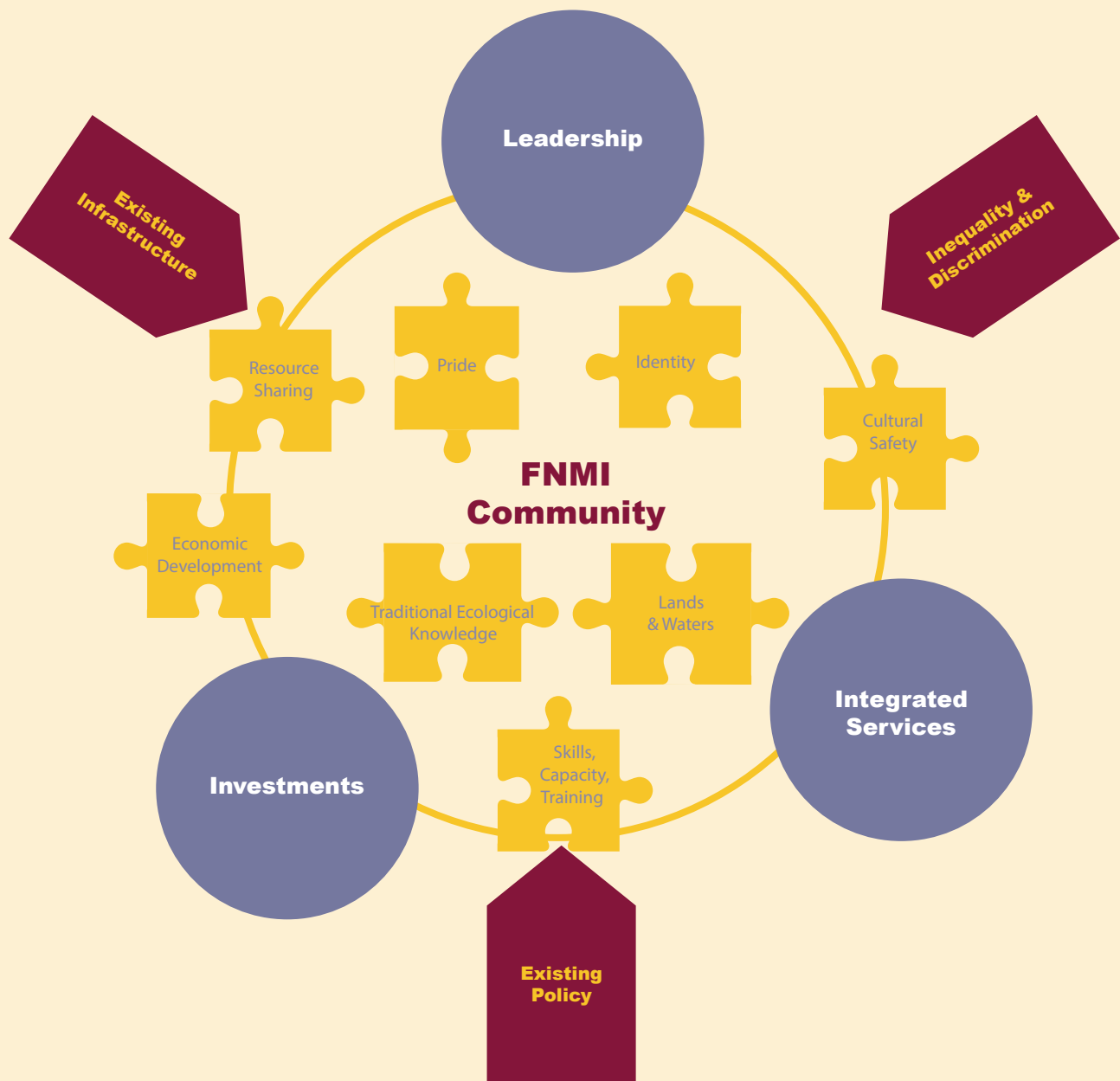
Fuelling disparities between the FNMI and non-Indigenous populations is a housing system that does not support the unique needs of urban and rural FNMI people. **Figure 1** shows the current FNMI housing situation in Ontario. The large circle represents the totality of FNMI culture; what is written within or partially within the circle indicates the extent to which it is consistent with FNMI cultural values. As it has been throughout FNMI history, community remains at the centre of FNMI culture. The smaller circles, when balanced, would lead to equitable leadership, investments, and wholistic integrated services. However, as FNMI housing now exists, dedicated FNMI leadership works without adequate investments or access to integrated services. The pressures external to FNMI culture are represented by the red arrows.

<sup>28</sup> Social Planning Network of Ontario. “Hard Hit: Impact of the Economic Downturn on Nonprofit Community Social Services in Ontario”

<sup>29</sup> Ontario Non-Profit Association. “Aboriginal Housing Provider Survey Report”, 2008



**Figure 1: Current Housing Situation**



## RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT FNMI HOUSING SITUATION

As the preceding information demonstrates, even with funding received through Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust Fund (OAHTF), more needs to be done to address the systemic barriers affecting FNMI people. MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC conducted a provincial engagement process in 2008 which concluded that a FNMI housing policy framework was needed. As a result, the Ontario Off-reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust Report (OAHT) recommended that the province collaborate with urban and rural First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to create a long-term provincial FNMI housing strategy.

# OAHT Report Recommendations

**8.10.1** It is recommended that the Ontario provincial government work with non-reserve Aboriginal organizations and communities to develop a long-term provincial non-reserve Aboriginal affordable housing strategy as part of its commitment to development of a long-term affordable housing strategy in the province.

**8.10.2** It is recommended that MMAH initiate inter-ministerial and inter-governmental coordination to facilitate innovative social policy development initiatives with safe, quality, culturally appropriate and affordable non-reserve Aboriginal housing as the foundation.

Despite these recommendations, the Ontario government has yet to develop a FNMI specific housing policy. **Instead, drawing on the voices of FNMI communities across Ontario, MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC have developed a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit housing policy framework.**

To write **OUR Framework** eleven housing engagement sessions were conducted throughout Ontario.<sup>30</sup> At these sessions, participants shared their personal experiences and challenges when accessing and securing housing.

These systemic barriers are legacies of the treatment of FNMI people by Canada and demonstrate the discrimination that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples continue to experience. Without a FNMI housing policy framework, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals, families and communities will continue to face barriers accessing housing and related services.



## Key issues that emerged include, but were not limited to:

- **Lack of First Nations, Métis and Inuit specific housing;**
- **Racism and discrimination in social and private housing;**
- **A mobile population and high rates of migration from rural or reserve communities to urban centres;**
- **Lack of capacity in FNMI organizations to develop housing and address issues affecting housing such as family instability and violence, addictions, mental illness, inadequate education levels, disability, and the need for culturally safe services;**
- **Lack of government funding or funding that is provided in a piecemeal fashion;**
- **Government policies that are not culturally safe;**
- **Municipalities that exclude FNMI perspectives;**
- **Services delivered by non-Indigenous providers in a manner that is not culturally safe; and,**
- **Lack of support for the Indigenous economy.**

<sup>30</sup> For information about the research process and methodologies see Appendix B.

# Building a Wholistic FNMI Housing Model

## SELF-DETERMINATION IN FNMI HOUSING

Collectively, FNMI peoples are the original peoples of North America and have inherited rights and responsibilities as original peoples. Inherent rights and responsibilities include practicing cultural and spiritual traditions, ensuring the continuity safety of families and communities, and maintaining their relationships with their environment.

Self-determination in FNMI housing recognizes both Indigenous and human rights. Housing is a human right; both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) identify housing as central to one's safety and standard of living. In Canada, human rights legislation prohibits eviction or exclusion from housing based on identifiable characteristics. Legislatively, the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) assures equal access to housing free from discrimination.

While human rights guarantee everyone access to shelter, FNMI people also have specific Aboriginal rights. In Canada, the Constitution Act, 1982 affirms Indigenous rights where, in Section 35, it is written that "The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the FNMI peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed." The United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) outlines Indigenous rights around the world and, although not legally binding, sets international standards. Article 23 states that:

**"Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions."**

Self-determination in housing exists insofar as FNMI people decide how housing and related services are implemented. In Ontario, FNMI people are currently not self-determining housing and related services. At each community engagement sessions, it was clearly stated that FNMI housing must be developed and managed by FNMI people, for FNMI people.

**Consistent with FNMI values and cultural practices, successful self-determination requires communication, equality and respect;** "It is the opposite of the one-size-fits-all, or one-size-should-fit-all, approach that characterizes universal citizenship in statute, policy and practice."<sup>31</sup> Because FNMI ways of relating to the world are unique, FNMI peoples' needs are not being met by the existing one-size-fits-all approaches. Instead, self-determination in housing would allow FNMI people to determine for themselves the policies and practices best suited to their cultures and communities.

**OUR Framework is a FNMI self-determined housing policy.** Devolution of FNMI housing to FNMI organizations is the only mechanism that will fulfill the FNMI peoples collective Indigenous rights to self-determination particularly in housing.

<sup>31</sup> Walker, R. (2008). Aboriginal self-determination and social housing in urban Canada: A story of convergence and divergence. *Urban Studies*. 45(1), 185-205.

## CULTURAL SAFETY

The provision of housing is not value free or culturally neutral. Non-Indigenous perspectives, designs, and cultural values are embedded in current housing policies and practices. This puts undue hardships on FNMI individuals, families, and communities. Although this framework advocates that services and housing be delivered and controlled by FNMI organizations, this does not preclude non-Indigenous providers from completing intensive and practical cultural safety training. **Culturally safe policies and practices are necessary to establish equal and respectful relationships between FNMI and non-Indigenous communities.**

The notion of cultural safety was developed by a Maori nurse, Irihapeti Ramsden. **Cultural safety is part of a continuum and moves beyond cultural awareness and cultural competency.** It acknowledges the systemic discrimination and structural barriers that FNMI people face, the existence of unequal power relations, and that housing and services are not culturally neutral.

Recent research examines how clients, elders, and staff create cultural safety within a mainstream homelessness organization;<sup>32</sup> this research illustrates how cultural safety within housing consists of a number of intersecting features including: awareness of FNMI cultures and histories, respect and trust, access to elders and cultural supports, non-judgmental interactions, inclusion and equal access to services, as well as consistent, reliable service and supports.



<sup>32</sup> Bird, C. E., Thurston, W. E., Oelke, N., Turner, D., Christiansen, K. (2013). Understanding Cultural Safety: Traditional and Client Perspectives. Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/ResourceFiles/Cultural%20Safety%20Final>

## ASPECTS OF WHOLISTIC HOUSING

All across Ontario, FNMI communities demonstrated a wholistic perspective on housing. Their comments reflected that housing is integral to their wellbeing. FNMI communities discussed how housing influences their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Because a FNMI perspective of housing has always been wholistic, it is recognized that housing is a social determinant of health. Good housing promotes wellbeing in all aspects of self, family, and community.



The **physical aspects of housing include its location and material conditions.** The location of a home affects how easy it is to access services and participate in community and cultural activities. The material conditions of a home can affect physical health, with good conditions contributing to good health. Both location and material conditions will affect the security of a home.



The **emotional** affects of housing are great. **Housing that is close to family, community, and social supports improve emotional health.** It also enhances one's ability to practice within their cultures and acknowledges unique skills and traditional knowledge. Good housing reflects the FNMI peoples identities and, most importantly, free from discrimination.



Housing contributes to **mental development by providing access to education, training, and employment.** The relationship between good housing and education and employment is well established; it can improve financial literacy, security, and develop the Indigenous economy. Good housing condition and energy efficiency also reduces costs, thereby, reducing financial.



Finally, for FNMI people housing has a **spiritual** dimension. Therefore **FNMI housing should have access to Elders and other spiritual persons, good connections to the outdoors, places to grow medicines, cultural services, and space where smudging and sacred fires are allowed.** Good housing reflects communal values, cultures, and connection to the land.

**Figure 2** visually demonstrates the balance of all four aspects in an urban housing infrastructure. All four aspects of self are essential to live a balanced life within the modern housing units; this balanced life is evident in the positive impact to family and community.

## Figure 2: Aspects of Wholistic Housing

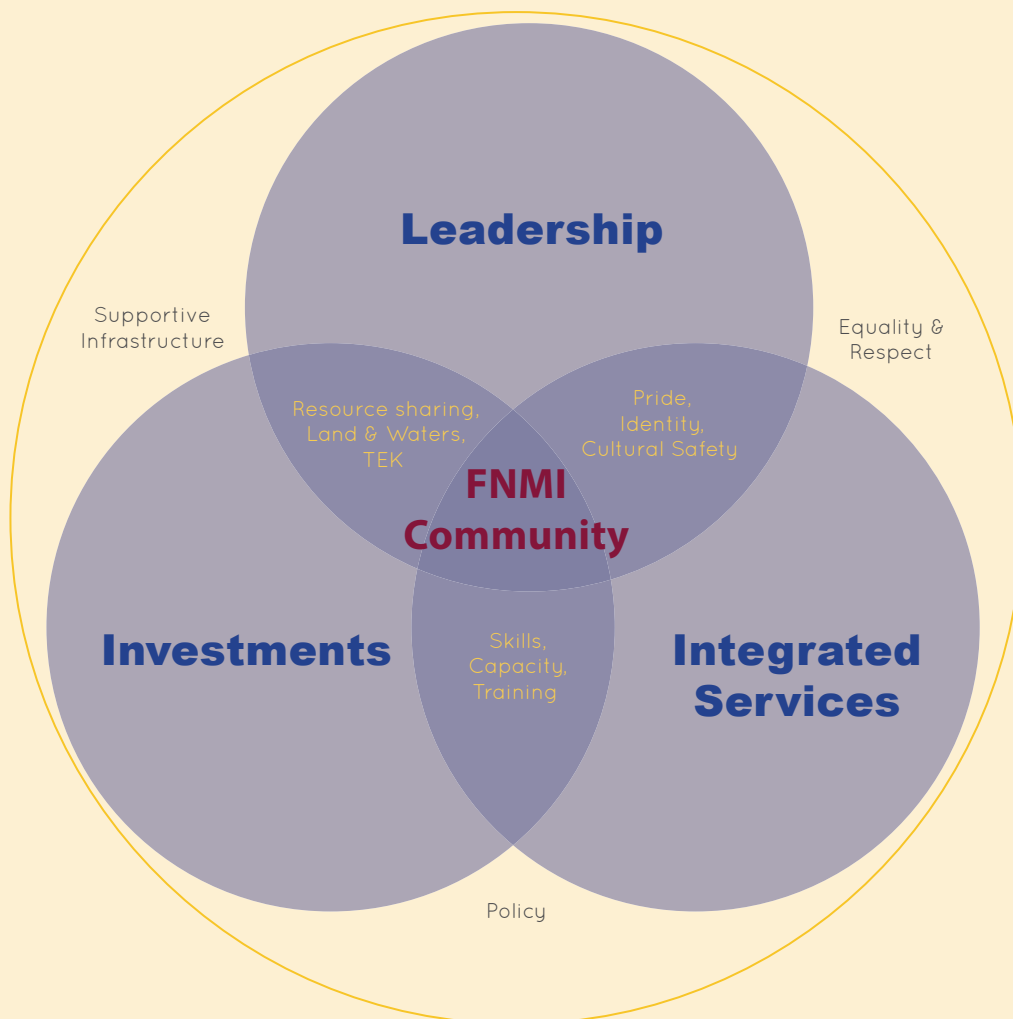


FNMI peoples have always done – that the fundamental conditions and resources for health include: **peace; shelter; education; food; income; a stable eco-system; sustainable resources; social justice; and, equity.** Just as the World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges housing as a social determinant of health, FNMI communities pointed out that because housing is wholistic, it intersects with all aspects of self.

## MODEL FOR FNMI HOUSING

Recognizing that housing is wholistic, the authors have developed a model of the FNMI housing system that is culturally appropriate and wholistic. The model contrasts with existing FNMI housing as depicted in Figure 1. Unlike existing FNMI housing, this model seeks balance between all aspects of housing and related supports. Promoting FNMI self-determination in housing, this model demonstrates how FNMI ownership, management, design, and construction of housing is different from the existing housing model which does not provide space for FNMI self-determination in housing.

**Figure 3: A Wholistic FNMI Housing Model**



Like **Figure 1**, the large exterior circle in **Figure 3** represents FNMI cultures. In this wholistic FNMI housing model everything that relates to housing takes place within the context of FNMI cultures. Therefore all housing, services and related economic and social development are thus consistent with FNMI perspectives. FNMI communities are at the centre of housing.

Around the edges of the circle are FNMI relationships with non-Indigenous individuals, communities and governments. In the balanced model these relationships are based on mutual equality and respect. In the area of policy, FNMI people work with municipal, provincial and federal governments to determine housing policies. Supportive infrastructure includes homes, buildings, shelters, institutions, and public transportation that are **physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually** safe for FNMI people.

Housing and related services are supported by leadership, investments and integrated services. **The newly developed model demonstrates that each of these areas overlap and, when balanced, FNMI people maintain their skills, develop individual and organizational capacity, have access to training, generate pride and identity, have access to culturally safe housing and services, preserve relationships with the land, safeguard traditional ecological knowledge and easily transition through the housing continuum.**

## Figure 4: The Housing Continuum



The benefits of good housing and policy contribute to the success of individuals, families, communities, and the whole of society. Providing housing and related services to FNMI people in a cultural, wholistic manner would:

- **Increase the supply and access to suitable, quality and affordable housing;**
- **Develop the individual and community capacity of FNMI people;**
- **Improve financial literacy and security;**
- **Create opportunities for education, employment and skills training;**
- **Provide ‘wrap around’ services for FNMI people;**
- **Support good relationships between individuals, families, and communities;**
- **Place cultural practices at the centre of housing;**
- **Create leadership within the FNMI community;**
- **Generate equality;**
- **Promote FNMI values of respect and community; and,**
- **Share FNMI knowledge and skills with non-Indigenous communities.**

Indeed, research indicates that FNMI health, families, and communities are drastically improved when programs are designed, controlled and managed by FNMI people for FNMI people.



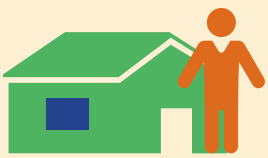
# OUR Framework

The need for a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) specific housing framework for Ontario is great. To reiterate, FNMI people experience higher rates of homelessness, core housing need, poverty, violence, children placed in care, disability, mental illness and addictions, and family breakdown that cannot be adequately addressed by non-Indigenous housing and service providers because FNMI peoples have experiences and cultural values that are unique, historical, and specific.

From the voices of FNMI community members, a vision and principles for a FNMI specific housing policy emerged.

**OUR Framework** addresses the unique housing and related needs of urban and rural FNMI people in Ontario. **OUR Framework** puts FNMI cultures and communities at the centre of housing. It is wholistic and recognizes that good shelter exceeds the materials that construct it. **OUR Framework** exposes gaps in existing housing policies and advocates for the devolution of FNMI housing to FNMI communities.

## VISION



**Indigenous ownership, management, design, and construction of housing that addresses the housing and related needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals, families and communities in a cultural, wholistic way.**

## PRINCIPLES

- 1.** First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have inherent, Indigenous, and treaty rights.
- 2.** Housing and related services must be integrated and wholistic, supporting physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.
- 3.** FNMI communities are experts in determining their housing needs.
- 4.** Housing is a social determinant of health.
- 5.** Housing supports the Indigenous economy, including success in employment, education, and training.
- 6.** Housing must be owned, managed, designed, and constructed by FNMI people, for FNMI people.
- 7.** Consistent and sustainable financial, social, and environmental investments improve FNMI housing and related services.
- 8.** Respectful and equitable coordination is needed to develop good relationships and FNMI leadership.
- 9.** Accountability and transparency are crucial.
- 10.** Policies are living documents that are both enduring and subject to change.

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

**OUR Framework's** goals, objectives, and actions reflect the experiences and ideas shared by FNMI communities.

### Four key themes emerged:

1. **FNMI specific housing and services**
2. **relationships with non-Indigenous communities**
3. **government coordination and cultural safety**
4. **FNMI community capacity and coordination**

1. The need for **FNMI specific housing and services** was emphasized throughout Ontario. Accessing culturally safe housing and services is essential for FNMI people as the communities revealed non-Indigenous organizations are often intimidating. Housing design consider both culture and the environment by using eco-friendly and natural building materials and integrating traditional techniques. Large communal areas, access to land and the outdoors, and safe places to hold ceremonies, light fires, and grow medicines were recommended. In some communities, it was suggested that co-operative housing could reflect a sense of community.

2. While recognition of Indigenous rights exists in some policies, these rights must be supported and put into practice. FNMI communities described ignorance and refusal to acknowledge FNMI people when engaging municipalities. Community members also experienced discrimination from neighbours who complained about their cultural practices and ceremonies. These experiences were identified as barriers to accessing and securing housing. To improve **relationships between FNMI and non-Indigenous people**, increased communication, knowledge sharing, and FNMI participation are needed.

3. Since housing is wholistic, FNMI communities wanted **government coordination** to create 'wrap around' services. Community members suggested that housing either be located close to services or that services be mobile. They also suggested that clear language and **culturally safe practices** be incorporated into all government documents and services.

4. **Coordination within the FNMI community** is essential to support wholistic housing. However, coordination remains difficult because FNMI organizations lack **capacity**. FNMI communities suggested identifying best practices and sharing information would increase collective skills and knowledge.

Goals, objectives and actions were developed from the above four key themes which will contribute to and improve FNMI wellbeing. The goals support the vision of housing that is by FNMI people, for FNMI people. The objectives incorporate community perspectives, FNMI histories, values of a wholistic housing model, and the means to overcome systemic barriers. The actions identified are the foundation to equitable dialogue and cooperative implementation of the framework. Further engagement with FNMI communities would generate more possibilities.

## MAKING PROGRESS

Since the OAHT Report was released in 2009, MNO, ONWA and OFIFC have worked collectively with OAHS to ensure that FNMI people have access to safe, affordable housing. Through their work with FIMUR, the organizations have made significant progress in achieving their goals.



## Since its creation, FIMUR has:

enabled **1,100 people** to realize their dream of home ownership, representing **400 families**



assisted **85 homeowners** to repair their homes, representing **200 FNMI people**



increased the FNMI housing supply by **521 units**



housed **1,000 FNMI people** in stable, affordable accommodations.

## Along with FIMUR, OAHS board members MNO, ONWA and OFIFC have:



housed **5,500 people** in long-term rent-geared-to-income housing through the RNH program



delivered over **\$135,000,000** in program, capital, and administrative funding over the past 5 years to assist FNMI people in reaching their housing goals



partnered with GreenSaver's saveONenergy Homeowner Assistance program to retrofit existing social housing units.

However, with over 300 households on the waitlist for FIMUR funding and the incidences of core housing need increasing by 800 annually,

**the need for additional support is great.**

Since 2009 there has been progress in improving housing outcomes for FNMI people.

## MOVING FORWARD

### Goal 1:

## Increase and stabilize the supply of First Nations, Métis and Inuit controlled housing

Lack of funding has limited quality housing for FNMI people in Ontario. Over 3,500 of FNMI specific housing units do exist in Ontario; however an aging housing stock, poor construction methods, culturally unsafe policies, and devolution to municipalities threaten the stability of FNMI housing. FNMI people in Ontario struggle to secure quality affordable housing, especially in non-Indigenous environments. FNMI self-determination in housing is imperative to ensure that FNMI people are able to access housing that is safe and culturally safe.

### Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit control of FNMI housing will:

- help reduce the number of FNMI people in core housing need
- ensure that FNMI people have access to quality safe housing
- bridge the housing gaps between FNMI and non-Indigenous people
- build FNMI community capacity
- remove systemic barriers that FNMI people face when accessing housing

### Priority Actions:

- 1.** Ensure that there is FNMI specific housing for FNMI people by:
  - Devolving remaining FNMI housing to the FNMI community;
  - Extending and reinstating expiring housing subsidy agreements; and,
  - Improving housing standards through repair and energy retrofits.
- 2.** Develop long-term funding strategies to increase the supply of FNMI housing.
- 3.** FNMI communities and all levels of government develop a FNMI specific housing strategy.
- 4.** Ensure that housing is delivered in a way that is consistent with OUR Framework.

## Goal 2:

# Improve First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples wellbeing through wholistic integrated housing

Housing is a social determinant of health that affects FNMI people's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Precisely because it intersects with many other aspects of life, good housing policy cannot be created in isolation. Dedicated resources and a coordinated approach are needed to reflect the connection between housing and other policies. Lack of coordination has meant 'working in silos', a practice that negatively affects services provided to FNMI communities. Furthermore, community-based research and housing data is needed to support the creation of FNMI housing.

### Improving FNMI people's well-being through wholistic housing will:

- improve access to housing for FNMI people across the housing continuum
- improve coordination on housing policy
- provide culturally safe, wholistic social services and community-based programs to assist FNMI people
- enable FNMI people to have equitable access to housing and related services
- provide important research and data when developing future wholistic housing and services

### Priority Actions:

1. Establish an inter-ministerial and inter-governmental FNMI housing committee to coordinate with FNMI organizations.
2. Establish funding models that reflect the need for culturally specific wholistic housing services.
3. Inventory FNMI housing and programs provincially, identify local FNMI organizations, and facilitate coordination to improve integrated service delivery.
4. Undertake community-based research to identify local FNMI housing needs, risks and barriers to housing stability.
5. Develop FNMI organizations' capacity to deliver culturally safe programs and conduct community-based research.

## Goal 3:

# Ensure housing policies are culturally safe

Frequently, neither consultation nor accommodation occurs when legislation or policies that affects FNMI rights are written, this creates discriminatory and assimilatory policies. Policies and legislation written without FNMI communities are not culturally safe. To address systemic barriers, all policies must recognize FNMI rights and cultures alongside other rights.

### Ensuring housing policies are culturally safe will:

- improve recognition of Indigenous rights, nations and populations in urban and rural communities across the province
- improve access to housing options for FNMI people by reducing discriminatory policies that limit access to FNMI housing and that limit FNMI housing developments
- enable FNMI communities and organizations to equitably participate in and have access to policy discussions that affect FNMI rights
- remove systemic discrimination from existing policies

### Priority Actions:

1. Recognize FNMI rights throughout all government policies.
2. Investigate incidences of discrimination in policies and provide accommodation to FNMI communities.
3. Develop FNMI organizations' capacity to participate in policy discussions and provide input to new or existing legislation.
4. Educate non-Indigenous people, organizations, and government about FNMI rights, cultures, and experiences.

## **Goal 4:**

# **Ensure housing supports FNMI community capacity and economic development**

Limited funding leads to insufficient staffing, inconsistent programming, and lack of effective research. As a result, FNMI leaders and organizations are overextended. Without support to overcome current capacity issues, organizations will continue to struggle to develop FNMI housing. The economic returns experienced when developing FNMI housing should directly benefit FNMI communities. Creating FNMI housing should generate business for FNMI companies, work for FNMI people and training opportunities for FNMI students.

### **Ensuring housing supports FNMI community capacity and economic development will:**

- improve local FNMI capacity to respond to housing needs
- provide employment and training opportunities for FNMI people in the housing industry
- support FNMI businesses through the development, rehabilitation, and management of FNMI housing

### **Priority Actions:**

- 1.** Collaborate with government, community leaders and industry to develop housing solutions that FNMI communities can deliver directly.
- 2.** Develop a strategy to improve FNMI economies through housing.
- 3.** Collaborate with post-secondary institutions to develop strategies to support FNMI youth pursuing careers in the housing and social services industries.
- 4.** Support FNMI organizations and communities to develop the capacity to deliver housing and related services

## **Goal 5:**

# **Establish broad commitment to OUR Framework**

The success of the OUR Framework is reliant on building consistent, respectful, and equitable relationships. Establishing equitable partnerships will ensure that FNMI people have equal access to adequate, affordable housing. Accountability and transparency must be embedded within the implementation of OUR Framework. All parties involved in the implementation are accountable to the FNMI community, thus activities, impacts, and performances must be publicly reported.

### **Establishing broad commitment to OUR Framework will:**

- restore the unique relationship between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and all levels of government
- support collective efforts to addressing the housing needs of FNMI people

### **Priority Actions:**

- 1.** Establish a working group to implement OUR Framework.
- 2.** Develop consistent, respectful, and equitable working relationships.
- 3.** Ensure an accountable and transparent implementation process.
- 4.** Establish clear and public reporting procedures to ensure accountability to FNMI communities.





# Appendices

## APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS

<b>CMHC:</b>	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
<b>FIMUR:</b>	First Nation, Métis and Inuit Urban and Rural Housing Program
<b>FNMI:</b>	First Nation, Métis and Inuit
<b>IAH:</b>	Investment in Affordable Housing Program
<b>ICESCR:</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
<b>MBDC:</b>	Miziwe Biik Development Corporation
<b>MMAH:</b>	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
<b>MNO:</b>	Métis Nation of Ontario
<b>OAHS:</b>	Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services
<b>OAHT:</b>	Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust
<b>OFIFC:</b>	Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
<b>OHRC:</b>	Ontario Human Rights Code
<b>ONWA:</b>	Ontario Native Women's Association
<b>RNH:</b>	Rural and Native Housing
<b>RTA:</b>	Residential Tenancies Act
<b>UDHR:</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UNDRIP:</b>	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
<b>UNH:</b>	Urban Native Housing

## APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

The housing policy analysts (HPAs) from MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC completed a survey and hosted eleven community housing engagements sessions for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) participants in eleven locations across Ontario.

At each session the HPAs took turns facilitating, taking notes, and recording participant feedback on flipcharts. The HPAs compiled the flip chart and two sets of notes recorded at each session into one set of notes. These combined notes were sent to the communities for feedback and any changes were made. Using these notes, analysis involved categorizing the points from each community into headings and emerging themes. This was done consensually, with all HPAs agreeing on a point before moving on.

A coding chart was developed and notes from each session were put into it. First, the data was organized according to headings: community profile, existing problems and experiences, culturally safe policy changes that are needed, implementation of policy and practices, FNMI solutions, and self-determination.

Data was then categorized according to emerging themes that could include: government policy, government coordination, discrimination, funding, capacity, natural/built environment, Indigenous economy, and FNMI coordination.

Finally, these charts were used to write a roll-up report for each community.

**OUR Framework** used the information provided by FNMI communities across Ontario to develop its vision, goals, objectives, and actions.



**The Métis Nation of Ontario**  
[www.metisnation.org](http://www.metisnation.org)  
TF: 1-800-263-4889



**Ontario Federation of Indian  
Friendship Centres**  
[www.ofifc.org](http://www.ofifc.org)  
TF: 1-800-772-9291



**Ontario Native Women's Association**  
[www.onwa.ca](http://www.onwa.ca)  
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