



**National Aboriginal Housing Association/Association Nationale d'Habitation Autochtone**  
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**FEDERAL BUDGET LEAVES URBAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OUT IN THE COLD!**

With approximately 70 percent of Aboriginal People living off-reserve, the federal budget announcement of \$2.075 Billion in funding for social housing contains nothing to address the deplorable housing conditions and homelessness among Aboriginal Peoples living in cities and rural areas across Canada.

Patrick Stewart, President of the National Aboriginal Housing Association, Chair of the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee in Vancouver and past President of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia stated today:

"The federal government is not listening at all to our concerns. Figures in the latest Census confirm that the gap in housing between Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal people is widening and this is a sense of hopelessness for those who are the poorest of poor in Canada. Moreover, our people in urban centres make up the highest percentage of the homeless population. In some cities the rates of Aboriginal homelessness is nearly 40 percent, yet the population of Aboriginal peoples in those regions make up only 1 percent. Yet homelessness is not even mentioned in Budget 2009!"

The federal government is failing to meet the needs of the urban Aboriginal Peoples and this is of particular concern to a population that is not guaranteed the same rights and benefits currently provided under the Indian Act for First Nations situated on-reserve.

"We need to create parity and some sense of equality for those Aboriginal Peoples situated off-reserve. We seem to have been forgotten by all levels of government", stated Ken Clement, President of Lu'ma Native Housing Society in Vancouver.

Mr. Stewart said, "What is lacking is a commitment by the federal government to implement a national housing policy for all peoples, but more importantly, the government of Canada cannot and should not turn a blind eye to a population that is suffering more than any other population in Canada."

He went on to say that the federal government needs to recognize its obligations to all Aboriginal peoples - Inuit, Métis and First Nations - regardless of where they are living, step up to the challenge and provide a sense of hope for urban Aboriginal peoples by guaranteeing the same levels of funding for urban Aboriginal Peoples as it does for First Nations citizens living on-reserve. Since 1993, when the federal government capped subsidies for the Urban Native Housing Program, First Nations on-reserve have continued to receive an annual budget for social housing, but for Aboriginal Peoples living off-reserve, no new funding has been provided, despite the fact that the population of urban Aboriginal Peoples has doubled in the past ten years, and now exceeds the number of First Nations living on-reserve.

As part of the remedy, Mr. Stewart proposed that at least 10% of the \$2.075 Billion be dedicated to the use of Urban Aboriginal Housing Corporations and Aboriginal Homelessness Organizations, and that this amount be channeled directly to them. This would ensure that housing for Aboriginal peoples would receive a significant portion of the available money, and would be a major step in addressing the current backlog of 25,000 housing units required to meet the needs of urban Aboriginal peoples.

"Its time for this government to decide whether it wishes to see Aboriginal Peoples in decent, affordable housing, or in coffins, care, or corrections," Mr. Stewart stated, "because the latter is the result for members of our community when the government fails to help us meet the needs of our people."



## **BACKGROUND**

**National Aboriginal Housing Association  
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### **Who is NAHA/ANHA?**

**NAHA was incorporated in 1994 as a membership driven association to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal Housing Corporations operating under CMHC's Urban Native (UNH) Program and its Rural and Native Housing (RNH) Program.**

**The Urban Aboriginal Housing Corporations in centres coast to coast own some 10,000 housing units that are rented to Aboriginal peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Almost 9,000 more units operate under the RNH Program.**

**Over half of the “Status Indians” in Canada live off-Reserve**

### **NAHA/ANHA's Goal**

**NAHA's goal is to work with and on behalf of the 110 Urban Aboriginal Housing Corporations and other non-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Providers to reduce or eliminate the backlog of needed Aboriginal housing units. At present, 25,000 additional units are required to address the need that exists in urban, rural and northern non-reserve areas across Canada.**

### **Key Principles**

- **Aboriginal Control over Aboriginal Housing**
- **Service to all Aboriginal persons, regardless of their legal status in Canada**
- **Culturally-sensitive Service Delivery**
- **Accountability at all levels of Operation**
- **United Effort to Address Aboriginal Housing Issues**

### **The Need**

**Analysis of the 2006 Census Data confirms that Aboriginal Housing is the worst in Canada. By NAHA calculations, at least 2,500 units per year for 10 years are required to meet the present need for safe, decent and affordable housing for urban Aboriginal peoples.**

*For information about **MEMBERSHIP**, visit our web site at [www.aboriginalhousing.org](http://www.aboriginalhousing.org)*