

# SHELTER INITIATIVE for Indigenous Women and Children

Canada



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### 1. Who is eligible for the shelters' initiative funding?

Indigenous governments and organizations providing housing on reserve or in the territories are eligible to submit an expression of interest.

### 2. What project types are eligible under this initiative?

Funding under this initiative is for new construction of shelters, or acquisition and conversion of existing properties, for the creation of new shelter spaces intended for Indigenous women and children escaping family violence.

### 3. What are the eligibility requirements for shelter proposals?

All proposed projects must be shelters serving Indigenous women and children escaping family violence. Projects must also be eligible to obtain appropriate loan security to cover the value of the forgivable loan (for instance, with a Ministerial Loan Guarantee or another form of security acceptable to CMHC), and be eligible to receive operational funding from Indigenous Services Canada. Also required for proposed projects are evidence of support, energy efficiency and accessibility.

### 4. Where will the shelters be located?

The locations of the 12 shelters will be prioritized, in collaboration with Indigenous organizations and other partners, in order to meet the greatest needs based on geography and populations served.

### 5. Why are there only 2 shelters for the territories?

Targeted funding is being provided to support 2 shelters across the territories. Indigenous organizations and territorial housing partners will be invited to provide input during the application process and to help prioritize the location of these shelters.

The targeted funding to support the 10 shelters on reserve will also be available to First Nations communities across the territories.

There are other sources of funding to support new shelters across the territories, including the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF). The NHCF provides capital contributions and low-cost loans for both new construction and the repair and renewal of shelters. This Fund is available to Indigenous governments and organizations, and other proponents, both on and off-reserve across Canada on an ongoing basis.

### 6. Will shelters under this initiative be accessible to LGBTQ2 persons?

It is recognized that there is an urgent need for shelter spaces among many vulnerable groups, including LGBTQ2 peoples. The intent of this initiative is not to exclude particular groups, and it will be the responsibility of the shelter service providers to confirm access to shelter spaces under their management.

### **7. How will the proposals be evaluated?**

Given the limited funding available, priority will be given to proposed shelters that serve the greatest needs. Proposals will be evaluated on a number of different criteria, including demonstrated need, number of communities served, geographic location, construction and operational costs, planned measures to ensure the safety of women and children, energy efficiency, and accessibility.

Proposals will be reviewed and assessed with input from representatives of Indigenous organizations and federal partner organizations (CMHC, Indigenous Services Canada, and Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada). There will be two selection processes, one for shelters in First Nations communities on reserve, and another for shelters in the territories. Outreach with Indigenous organizations is underway to confirm how they would like to participate in this initiative.

### **8. How much funding is available to build 12 shelters?**

CMHC will provide a total of \$44.8 million over five years to cover up to 100% of eligible capital costs for the construction of ten (10) shelters in communities on reserve across the country (\$31.7M) and two (2) shelters across the territories (Nunavut, Yukon, and Northwest Territories) (\$13.1M). Once built, the shelters will receive operational funding from Indigenous Services Canada's Family Violence Prevention Program whereby a total of \$8 million will be provided for shelters on reserve and a total of \$2 million for shelters in the territories.

### **9. Why is CMHC using two different programs to fund emergency shelters?**

CMHC will fund the construction of the 12 shelters through two programs: the on-reserve Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP), and the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF). Both programs will provide funding through a forgivable loan for up to 100% of eligible capital costs.

CMHC has authority to deliver the Shelter Enhancement Program on reserve only, while the Co-Investment fund is available to shelter proponents on and off-reserve, across the country.

### **10. What other options are available for shelter proponents whose proposals are not selected?**

For shelter proposals not selected for funding through this initiative, the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) is an option. The NHCF is an existing, ongoing program that provides capital contributions and low-cost loans for both new construction and repair and renewal of existing shelters across the country. Through the NHCF, the Government plans to help build and maintain at least 4,000 shelter spaces for survivors of family violence by 2028. The Fund encourages partnerships and the integration of support services within housing projects, such as to help those experiencing mental health or addiction challenges.

The Seed funding program is also available on an ongoing basis, this program provides interest-free loans and/or non-repayable contributions for early development costs associated with the construction of shelters.

### **11. What should be provided to support the rationale for project needs?**

To support the rationale for project needs, proponents can provide quantitative or qualitative types of information.

Quantitative information can be based on local data on family violence, data on assault crime rates, prevalence of violence in proposed location in comparison with provincial or territorial data. Also, the number of women and children in need of emergency shelter at any given time, how far women and children have to travel to reach nearest emergency shelters, and evidence of overcapacity in these shelters.

Qualitative information can be based on culturally relevant reports, narratives (not identified to preserve privacy), letters from nearby shelters describing situations of overcapacity, inadequacy of services offered by nearest shelters, gaps in culturally relevant services to Indigenous women and children. Other qualitative support can be in the format of reports from community wellness workers, or from local organizations with close knowledge of shelters' needs for Indigenous women and children.

## **12. Are applications for shelters off-reserve eligible in the Provinces?**

Under this initiative, shelters in the Provinces must be on Reserves and lands set aside by the Federal Government on behalf of First Nations Peoples, including lands negotiated under a Treaty Settlement or Land Claim.

## **13. Will lack of prior experience with construction or management of shelters affect applications negatively?**

Proponents can bring forward prior experience with other types of shelters (i.e. homeless emergency shelters, youth shelters) or other similar projects. Also, lack of prior experience can be mitigated by different measures such as hiring a general contractor for the construction, partnering with local or regional organizations with experience in the management of shelters, these are examples only. A mitigation plan of your own with the solutions devised to fit the uniqueness of your project is what should be provided with your application to address lack of prior experience.

## **14. Who can I contact for more information?**

Regional CMHC Indigenous and Northern Housing Solutions Specialists can be contacted for more information.  
<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/about-cmhc/contact-us/cmhc-departments/first-nation-housing-specialists>