



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

June 2013

FACT SHEET – FIRST NATIONS HOUSING ON-RESERVE

First Nations Housing Crisis at a Glance

- In 2005 there was an estimated back log of 80,000 units on-reserve.
- In a March 2012 report, AANDC estimates that between “2010-2031 a need for 130,197 new units to accommodate household and family growth, 11,855 replacement units to accommodate the deteriorated stock, and the major renovation of between 8,261 and 10,861 units¹.”
- As of March 14, 2013, First Nations self-reported a total of 107,627² housing units on-reserve.

Challenges

- Appalling conditions: overcrowding, mold contamination, lack of basic amenities
- Lack of or insufficient infrastructure: roads, water, sewer, power
- Obstacles to accessing Housing Programs: third-party management, soaring debt burden, lack of resources (human, financial and material)
- Fragmented program delivery (governmental and First Nation)
- Lack of accurate quantitative data

Housing Conditions on Reserve – Results from Phase 2 (2008-10) RHS and Community Survey

- 37.3% of First Nation households require major repairs, 33.5% minor repairs and 29.2% regular maintenance. 50.9% of First Nation adults reported mold and mildew present in their homes.
- 43.5% of adults with asthma and 52% of those with chronic bronchitis are living with mold in their homes.
- 52.3% of First Nations utilize band source funding to finance new constructions; while 20.7% use lending institutions.
- 89.9% of First Nations have suitable parcels of land to build on.
- 94.1% of First Nations have waiting lists for housing; while 30.4% of those people wait between 4 to 6 years for housing.
- First Nations people are now recognized as the youngest and fastest growing segment of the Canadian population, which only highlights the ever-growing demand for better housing on-reserve.

¹ Stewart Clatworthy report – Four Directions Project Consultants – March 2012 - AANDC

² AANDC - Integrated Capital Management System Report – Fiscal Year 2011-2012

Overcrowding

- 23.4% of First Nation adults lived in overcrowded housing. (The standard is having no more than two people per bedroom, parents should have a separate room, children aged five and older should not share with the opposite gender and unmarried household members eighteen and older should have a separate bedroom.)
- Overcrowding leads to a reduced life span of a house.
- Increased social and health problems such as family tension and family violence.

High Cost of Building Materials

- Housing goods and services, for the most part, can only be obtained from larger urban centres. Combined with the low income and distance of northern and remote First Nation communities from service centres, the goods and services are substantially higher.
- In Manitoba it costs approximately \$105,000 to build a house in the south and \$155,000 to build the same house in the north. In Ontario it is estimated that it costs 30% more to build a house in the north compared to the south.

Life Span of a House on Reserve

- Houses built in the last 20 years are in need of major repair due to climatic extremes, poor construction, crowding, high costs, and lack of sufficient income and skill to undertake continuing maintenance.
- One third of new houses built each year on-reserve are replacing existing homes that have fallen under disrepair.

Water, Sewage, Heat and Electricity

- Nearly 32.2% household water is unsafe to drink.
- 73% of drinking water treatment systems are at high or medium risk.
- 34% communities still get water by truck, from wells, or collect from river, lake or water plant.
- 10% of households have no electricity or existing electrical problems.
- 31% of households have unsatisfactory heating systems, 37% in mid and northern reserves.
- Higher incidences of hepatitis, shingles, pneumonia, asthma and tuberculosis can be linked back to the water and overcrowding conditions.
- 1,880 of the houses on reserve are without water service.³
- 1,777 of the houses on reserve are without sewage service.⁴

Considerations for further support

- Lobby the federal government for annual standardized funding to adequately deliver safe, secure and sustainable housing on-reserve.
- Lobby the federal government to lift the 2% funding cap.
- Seek support for Revolving Loan Funds and other funding programs, which have been shown to be successful, at the community level.
- Support establishment of housing authorities to deliver programs to First Nations.
- Long term considerations: economic development initiative on reserve related to housing.
- Access to Private Sector funding, Social Development Bonds.
- First Nations owned institutions for loans and mortgages.

³ AANDC's 2011 National Engineering Assessment

⁴ AANDC's 2011 National Engineering Assessment