



ABORIGINAL COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

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CRD Board
 625 Fisgard Street
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 Canada

Re: Request for 5 Years of Operational Funding

Incorporated in 2016, the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) Society is an Indigenous-led non-profit organization, Registered Charity, and housing provider operating on Lək̓ʷəŋən territory with a Vancouver Island-wide mandate *to lovingly provide culturally supportive, affordable housing and services that end Aboriginal homelessness on Vancouver Island.*

Since its inception, the ACEH has experienced substantial growth, gained a breadth of knowledge and understanding of the experiences and needs of the Indigenous Street Family (ISF), expanded its reach to include culturally supportive housing, and developed models of care that will potentially have national impacts for First Nations, Inuit and Metis (FNIM) peoples. The ACEH has consistently followed and delivered on an ambitious Strategic Plan that has driven the continual expansion of the culturally specific services and housing available for FNIM peoples on Vancouver Island. The ACEH's Strategic Plan guides the work of the organization and formalizes the voices of the ISF through the guidance of an Indigenous Advisory Council composed of community leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Language Speakers, Traditional Healers, Doctors, Chiefs, and Council Members from across Vancouver Island.

The ACEH's mandate and strategic directions align with the Capital Regional District's visionary interests in relation to housing and homelessness. The ACEH provides Indigenous-specific services and is the only culturally supportive housing provider on Vancouver Island. Moreover, the ACEH interfaces with the public, from neighborhood associations to city council, to advocate for the needs of unhoused FNIM peoples. The ACEH's is shifting focus to homelessness prevention, exemplified through its youth department development and Indigenous community-based justice program. The ACEH is also a leader of systemic change for individuals experiencing homelessness on Vancouver Island: it advocates and performs educational outreach across the island, and service providers are increasingly looking to the ACEH for pathways forward to help the city's most vulnerable population.

The ACEH's work also aligns with the principles of 'Housing First.' This principle is in alignment with the values espoused by Canada's National Housing Strategy, the 10 Year First Nations National Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy, and the Aboriginal Housing Management Association's British Columbia Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. 'Housing First' and its direct connection to the prevention and reduction of the unhousing process, is fundamental to the ACEH's vision of the future.

The work of the ACEH is directly aligned with the principles of reconciliation. To be successful, reconciliation requires rebuilding self-determined Indigenous structures, programs, leadership,

education, and modalities of being. It requires investing, broadly defined, in FNIM lifeworlds. As such, it is imperative that Indigenous-led initiatives are resourced respectfully and appropriately.

The ACEH's Strategic Plan has four components:

- 1) **Building Our Strength:** Secure core funding and infrastructure for operations and adopt sound business practices for service delivery.
- 2) **Finding Wellness:** Provide Island-wide culturally appropriate housing through the use of leading-practice housing models.
- 3) **Building Community:** Strengthen existing programs and services through an Aboriginal worldview.
- 4) **Bearing Witness:** Advocate for public policy and support for Aboriginal housing and services.

Our Programs & Services

Youth: The ACEH recognizes the importance of investing in homelessness prevention. In response, the ACEH is currently expanding its youth department and providing outreach services to Indigenous youth including weekly circles and opportunities for land-based healing. The ACEH just purchased a 6-bedroom home to prepare to open a culturally supportive housing program for Indigenous youth.

Place of Hope YEK,ÁUTW: With funding from the Department of Justice Canada, the ACEH launched a three-year Indigenous community-based justice program with an overall focus on prevention, diversion, and Gladue aftercare. This program works in collaboration with the Victoria Police Department, the Crown, Courts, BC Corrections, and other local service providers.

Outreach Services: Outreach services include emergency eviction prevention, basic needs assistance, transitional support, cultural support, and more, facilitated through Reaching Home funds.

Culturally Aligned Integrated Support (CAIS) Program: The ACEH launched a 3-year culturally supportive wraparound rent supplements pilot program funded through BC Housing – as part of the provincial integrated support framework in development. The ACEH has a longer-term plan to operate this program island-wide with a mobile wraparound care team.

Recovery Pilot: The ACEH is piloting a decolonized recovery program at Kwum Kwum LeLum (House of Courage). This program supports residents when they are ready and includes access to health, cultural and community support at home, with the support of an Elder, Cultural Mentor, nursing, and counselling.

Indigenous Alcohol Harm Reduction Residence Program (IAHRRP): Started in 2020, the IAHRRP is in its third year of operating, informed by the ACEH's Elders and Knowledge Keepers Advisory. This program provides a culturally responsive milieu of Elder mentorship, ceremony, and staff who are educated in Indigenous traditions and protocols. This year, the IAHRRP shows promising practice with its integration of a cannabis substitution program.

Family Reunification: The Family Reunification Program was developed in response to the ISF's expressed desire to reconnect with their families. This program supports intergenerational reunification and is one of the few such programs offered nationwide. The ACEH provides a 3-bedroom townhouse where family visitations can occur for up to one week, with the program coordinator arranging meetings with social workers and guardians, providing supervision as needed, overseeing the upkeep of the home, and helping to (re)connect ISF to their home communities when possible.

Land-Based Healing Camps: Since 2019, the ACEH has provided land-based healing camps for the ISF, resulting in positive outcomes at both the individual and community level. Participants report that the camps have been a catalyst for holistic change, leading to improved mental wellness and healing. The land-based experience is described as transformative, strengthening their spirit, self-identity, and community connection. The ACEH has done over 25 Camps, reaching approximately 125+ people.

Our Housing

SPAKEN: Is home to 22 Indigenous women+ experiencing homelessness with priority to those fleeing violence. 9% Kwakwaka'wakw, 18% Nuu-chah-nulth, 55% Coast Salish, and 18% Other Nations.

Kwum Kwum LeLum, House of Courage: Is a new home to 43 Family Members - 33% Nuu-chah-nulth, 30% Coash Salish, and 37% Other Nations.

XEXE PAHLATSIS LELUM: is a pilot program supporting Indigenous mothers and babies experiencing housing precarity and substance use upon discharge from hospital.

Where We Are Going

The ACEH is rolling out a 5-Year Housing Strategy which includes 4 main priorities for housing development:

- 1) Homelessness prevention: culturally supportive housing for Indigenous youth;
- 2) Perinatal Transitional Home for Intergenerational Healing;
- 3) a Wellness House in the downtown core (including pre and post treatment transitions, cultural support, employment and training, and transitions to independent housing); and
- 4) Island-wide partnerships and collaborations (with the vision to expand culturally supportive housing initiatives across the island.

Our Ask

Due to the ambitious outcomes of the ACEH, the capacity development necessitates enough office space to house its growing team. The current funding used for ACEH's office space ends March 31, 2023. Since 2017, the ACEH has relied upon core funding from Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples Organizational Capacity stream to contribute to the Executive Director's salary, the Executive Assistant's salary, and overhead costs. As exemplified above, the ACEH has benefited from this funding, but has yet to establish enough core operational funding through other sources. Therefore, is asking Capital Regional District to contribute \$150,000 annually (plus inflation) for the next five years:

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Executive Director	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000
Executive Assistant	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000
Overhead	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Subtotal	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Inflation %5	7,500	15,375	23,643	32,325	41,442
Total	\$157,500	\$165,375	\$173,643	\$182,325	\$191,442

The key goal of the ACEH's funding strategy is still to secure long-term, core funding to support its governance, leadership, and operations. Support in these areas will ensure the organization can achieve its Strategic Plan, 3 Year Operations Plan, and 5 Year Housing Strategy.

Sincerely,



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Our way is to care for all our people, from the youngest to the oldest. We are all one. Some of our people living away from home are suffering, isolated, and homeless. We stand together to end homelessness.

