

# 10 questions about on-reserve housing

(and answers)



## Current State of On-reserve Housing?

Currently, First Nations housing is characterized by inadequate housing stock, deteriorating housing conditions, and overcrowding.

## Differences?

Differences between First Nations on-reserve housing and off-reserve housing include, majority band-owned property, and provincial building codes exemptions resulting in difficulty qualifying for certain streams of federal infrastructure.



## Who's Involved?

First Nations housing decisions are shared responsibility between First Nations governments and the Canadian federal government.

off-reserve average

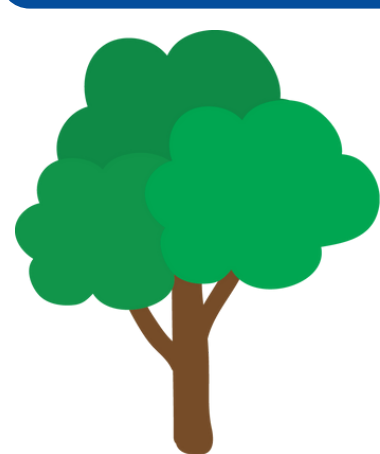
35 years

on-reserve average

15 years

Studies have found that on-reserve housing lasts about 15 years, significantly less than the off-reserve average of about 35 years

## Exacerbating Issues?



Geographic remoteness, limited land availability, lack of available housing units, and lack of a private housing market exacerbate issues prevalent in on-reserve housing.

## Construction-related Challenges?

- Lack of skilled tradespeople
- Limited access to high-quality building materials
- Remoteness and harsh climatic conditions

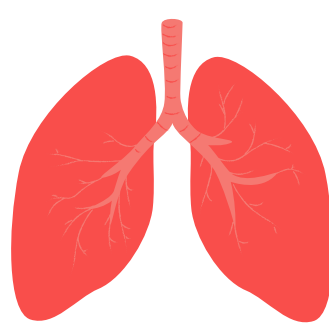
## Operational Challenges?

First Nations governments have reported a number of operational challenges to maintaining their on-reserve housing stock, including challenges presented by overcrowding and poor indoor air quality

## Effects of Poor Housing Quality?

The disproportionate prevalence of poor-quality housing among structurally disadvantaged populations, including Indigenous Peoples, has been recognized as a major contributor to long-standing health inequities.

### Physical Health



Poor on-reserve housing conditions have been associated with a number of respiratory illnesses, such as lower and upper respiratory tract infections, due to endotoxin and surface area mold respectively, as well as high prevalence of chronic bronchitis and COVID-19 within First Nation communities

### Mental Health

In Northern Canada, where more than 40% of Indigenous households live in overcrowded conditions, mental health outcomes were found to be poorer than the national average, including higher levels of stress, feeling of alienation, and an increase in risk behaviors



## Obstacles to Solutions?



- Long delays to application approval
- Unpredictable funding offers from the Federal Government
- Absence of occupant education and awareness programs to improve home maintenance and deterioration prevention, including access to skilled tradespeople

## Community Initiative Housing Solutions?

First Nations governments have reported a number of operational challenges to maintaining their on-reserve housing stock, including challenges presented by overcrowding and poor indoor air quality.

### Great Bear Initiative

In 2017, the Great Bear Initiative, an alliance of nine remote First Nations governments in British Columbia, published a series of guidelines outlining how its members could build energy-efficient and culturally-appropriate housing.

### Northlands Denesuline and Sayisi Dene housing initiative

A collaboration between researchers from the University of Manitoba and the Manitoba Dene First Nations communities of Northlands Denesuline at Lac Brochet and the Sayisi Dene at Tadoule Lake sought to identify ways of holistically addressing housing quality through the integration of Dene cultural values in construction design.

### First Nations Capital & Infrastructure Agency of Saskatchewan

A First Nations-led organization established to independently deliver housing, capital, and infrastructure to any participating First Nation reserve in Saskatchewan

## What changes are needed?

While there are numerous actions that could be taken to improve the situation outlined above, one general recommendation is to bolster the self-sufficiency of the community to allow them to combat the unique constraints they face