
Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness

Strategic and Business Plan



Artist: Evan James

Hunt-Jinnouchi Enterprises

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Thank you to the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, First Nations leaders, Aboriginal organizations and service providers in Greater Victoria

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Executive Summary

The Aboriginal Coalition to End Homeless (ACEH) is a newly formed society (2015) that was created to bring Aboriginal leaders from the three Vancouver Island tribal groups together to address Aboriginal housing and homelessness.

The mandate of the ACEH is to work with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) and draw on the participation and expertise of service providers and organizations to end Aboriginal homelessness by utilizing culturally sensitive approaches and strategies.



Part 1: Strategic Plan

Background

Aboriginal communities face unique barriers with respect to housing both on and off-reserve. Challenges such as the Indian Act, jurisdictional and coordination issues, residential schools, child welfare, social marginalization, isolation, systemic discrimination and stigmatization, and individual traumas all contribute to a lack of adequate housing for Aboriginal peoples (Thurston, W. & Mason, C., 2010).

Partially due to additional barriers for access to adequate housing on-reserve, there are increasing numbers of Aboriginal households moving away from their home communities. It was estimated in 2006 that 73.4% of Aboriginal Households reside off-reserve, with 54% living in cities (NAHA, 2009; Environics Institute, 2010).

The movement of Aboriginal peoples into cities provides unique sets of challenges for those individuals. In 2014/15 there were 1548 unique shelter users in Greater Victoria. Of that number 212 or 14% self-identify as Aboriginal (Victoria Cool Aid Society).

All Aboriginal communities are impacted by these challenges in unique ways and to different degrees, yet the consequences are, for the most part, universal: a lack of adequate housing for Aboriginal individuals and families both on and off-reserve.

Introduction

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) was created in 2008 with a mandate to end homelessness in Greater Victoria. The Coalition works primarily in the areas of research, communications, advocacy and policy planning. Since its inception the Coalition has been challenged to bring an Aboriginal voice to address Aboriginal housing and homelessness. The Coalition does not have the expertise and knowledge to develop an appropriate Aboriginal strategy on its own, yet it is critical that the Aboriginal experience is represented, as more than 30% of those experiencing homelessness in the region come from an Aboriginal background.

The Coalition and the University of Victoria co-sponsored an Aboriginal Housing Strategy Workshop in Victoria on January 20th, 2010, which brought together local Chiefs, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal housing and related service providers, academics, activities, researchers and consultants in the field of Aboriginal housing and homelessness. The [*Finding Our Path*](#) report emerged from this forum, detailing a multitude of outcomes and related actions. The critical need for an increased focus and prioritization of Aboriginal homelessness was evident.

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The Coalition hired Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi of *Hunt-Jinnouchi Enterprises* in 2014 as the next step in bringing in an Aboriginal perspective. Her role has been to invite Aboriginal leaders to help frame the issues and solutions, and to engage Aboriginal communities island-wide. It is recognized that island-wide participation is important because anecdotal information suggests a substantive proportion of the population represented by the Coalition are from the three Vancouver Island tribal groups. It was furthered agreed that local Métis and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations would need to be included.

Forming the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness

A Committee was formed in May 2014 and led to meetings in September, October and November. It was concluded that the most appropriate course of action was to act on the recommendation to create a distinct Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness to work collaboratively with the existing GVCEH. Several outcomes and directives were developed and initiated.

Committee Recommendations

- Move forward the recommendation in the *Finding Our Path* report to establish an Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) similar to the existing Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, with similar responsibilities but with an Aboriginal focus.
- Design a framework for an island-wide Congress and/or Gathering on Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness to raise awareness on shared concerns and goals, to foster relationships, and to create an island-wide Protocol/Memorandum of Understanding for working together to address Aboriginal housing and homelessness.
- Develop a mandate statement, the composition of ACEH, a job description for an Aboriginal Director for ACEH and a budget for 2015.
- Create an action plan and budget to implement one to three short and/or long-term goals from the *Finding Our Path* report for 2015/16.
- Begin developing culturally relevant resources in the downtown core.
- Support the 'Building Community' initiative (e.g., monthly lunches/breakfasts by being involved as helpers/volunteers and utilizing these monthly gatherings to strengthen relationships, introducing other services and events to the participants).
- Establish and strengthen relationships island-wide with Aboriginal leaders, communities and local service organizations.
- Coordinate a Gathering of Aboriginal Leaders on April 15th, 2015 to sign a drum to symbolize their commitment to end homelessness.

Gathering Ceremony

A gathering of Vancouver Island Aboriginal leaders, Métis Nation BC and Aboriginal organizations was held on April 15th on Esquimalt Nation territory, in their Big House. The celebratory gathering symbolically marked the commitment to ending Aboriginal homelessness through collective action.

Chiefs, Aboriginal leaders and local organization leaders signed a drum as a symbolic gesture of support and commitment to move forward to address Aboriginal housing and homelessness.



Celebratory Ceremonial Gathering

The words for “We Are All One” are written in the Nuu-chah-nulth, HUL’Q’UMI’NUM, Kwak’wala and SENĆOŦEN languages on the drum. The drum represents the connection created between the ACEH and respective partner communities.

At the ceremony members of the street community were stood up and covered with tunics provided by the Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre in Port Hardy.

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Thank you to Janet Hanuse and the Port Hardy Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre

Next Steps

In April 2015 the Steering Committee met to discuss next steps and registering to become a non-profit society. It was suggested that a short video story be created to send to the tribal groups to encourage their formal involvement and continued support.

In June and July 2015 Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi and Bernice Kamano organized three circles to bring the Aboriginal Street Community together to discuss who wanted to be involved with the video and the messaging they wanted highlighted, as well as upcoming priorities for the fall and 2016. Most important were 1) building on the support from "home communities," 2) continuing the monthly meals/gatherings and 3) finding opportunities to cook together and to be on the land learning traditional teachings and food preparation.



Special thanks to Sally Hunter for assistance and leadership in the creation of the short video, and to each individual who participated in the making of the video.

Definitions and Acronyms

ACEH	Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness
GVCEH	Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness
KDC	Kwakiutl District Council
NTC	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
SIWC	South Island Wellness Council
VNFC	Victoria Native Friendship Centre

Our Mandate

To work with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) and draw on the participation and expertise of service providers and organizations to end Aboriginal homelessness by utilizing culturally sensitive approaches and strategies.

Our Vision

**Our way is to care for all of our people,
from the youngest to the oldest.**

We are all one.

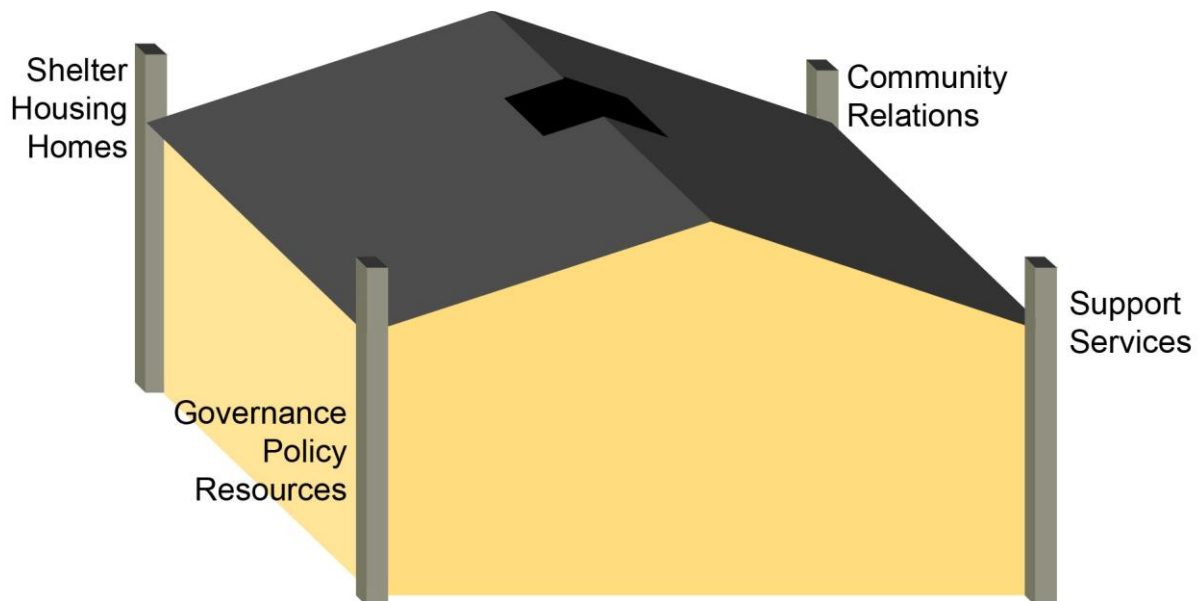
**Some of our people are living away from home,
are suffering, isolated, and homeless.**

We stand together to end homelessness.

Artist: Fiona James

Strategy

The four posts of the Big House represent the ACEH's long term Aboriginal Housing Strategy. Big houses have four corner posts, each providing a different perspective and support to the House. For this strategy, each post represents one strategic initiative. All four posts are equal in urgency and importance and together provide the structure for Aboriginal housing in our community. The centre of the House provides the warmth and the fire that united us in this work.



Shelter, Housing, Homes – Build and maintain a range of new housing opportunities to meet the diverse needs of Aboriginal youth, adults, elders and families.

Community Relations – Foster an inclusive and cooperative approach to housing solutions across on reserve, off reserve, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, governments and organizations.

Governance, Policy and Resources – Engage leaders, policy makers and funders in sharing responsibility for ending homelessness.

Support Services – Provide holistic and culturally safe support services to assist Aboriginal individuals and families to secure housing, maintain housing and to transition along the continuum of housing opportunities.

Action Plan for 2015-2016

These goals and strategies will be short term, 2015-16. They are designed to lead to the long-term goal of establishing viable housing for Aboriginal people in the Greater Victoria region who are homeless and/or facing housing challenges.

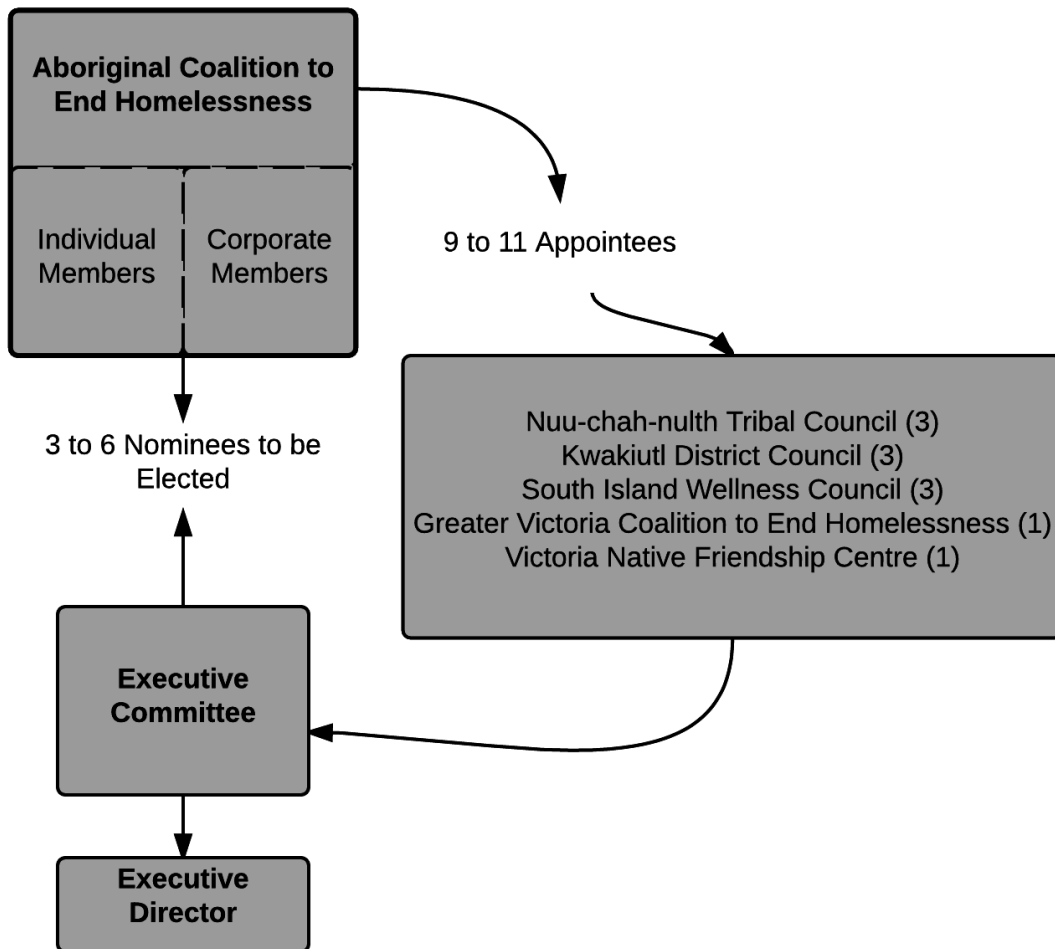
Pillars	Objective	Action	Success Measure
Shelter, Housing, Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate meetings with Aboriginal leaders and key stake holders to develop an island-wide protocol agreement to address Aboriginal housing and homelessness challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify three meeting dates in 2015/16 Identify appointees/directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for meetings is secured ACEH has island-wide representation
Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness Coordinate monthly meals for Aboriginal street community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director brings an Indigenous lens to assessment and services Secure location for Monthly Community Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More of the Street Community involved in discussing challenges and solutions Suitable facility is identified
Governance, Policy, Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find funding Form a Society Hire Executive Director Hire a Street Cousin to maintain contacts, gather information and serve as a bridge to the 'community' Develop a business plan Support production, integration of high quality evidence for ending and preventing Aboriginal homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate job postings in Oct; interview in November Continue to gather information, anecdotal and published. Write a research proposal to identify Aboriginal specific services and current gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding is confirmed for 2015/16 Qualified candidates are hired Evidence-based research will direct the longer-range plan
Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support research into and evaluation of the cultural relevance of existing services for Aboriginal community members currently experiencing homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ two University of Victoria graduate students to lead the Research Project Street Cousin coordinates and navigates meaningful engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support service providers in the urban downtown core better meet the needs of Aboriginal people

Governance

The Executive Committee is comprised of all the directors of the ACEH and is responsible for approving the strategic planning process and the strategic plan on a periodic basis. The ACEH Executive hires, supervises and evaluates the activities of the Executive Director.

The Executive Committee meets regularly and collectively supervises and provides direction for implementation of directives of the ACEH Board.

The Executive Director is responsible for the leadership and management of the ACEH in accordance with the strategic direction established by the ACEH Board.



Relationship between GVCEH and ACEH

The ACEH will work with the GVCEH and bring an Aboriginal lens to problem solving. The intent is to cross-pollinate where appropriate and to share knowledge and resources. The ACEH will also appoint members to the GVCEH.

Key Stake Holders

- Coast Salish
- Nuu-chah-nulth
- Kwakwaka'waxw
- Métis
- Aboriginal Victoria Street Community
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness
- University of Victoria
- Aboriginal Service Organization
- M'akola Housing



Part 2: Budget

The following outlines the budgetary considerations to meet the four goals within the context of operational priorities and the ACEH Strategic Plan.

Pillars	Objectives	Budgetary Considerations	Budget
Shelter, Housing, Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate meetings towards developing island-wide protocol agreement and long range plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility rental Travel Accommodation costs for out of town members Supplies 	\$15000
Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness Coordinate monthly meals for Aboriginal street community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Coordinator (Bernice Kamano) monthly wage/stipend 	\$4800
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility rental Costs for distributing information Travel Special events (i.e. Christmas) 	\$5000
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications 	\$10000
Governance, Policy, Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a Society Hire Executive Director Develop a business plan Find funds Support production, integration of high quality evidence for ending and preventing Aboriginal homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director salary/contract 	\$70000
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mileage Supplies, Office and Overhead 	\$25000
Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support research into and evaluation of the cultural relevance of existing services for Aboriginal community members currently experiencing homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two University of Victoria graduate students' wages Materials Supplies 	\$20000

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		In-Kind Support (volunteer hours etc.)	\$30000
		TOTAL	\$179,800