



Logo by Evan "Raven" James



# 5 YEAR HOUSING STRATEGY

2023-2028

## PREPARED BY

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT



The Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society (ACEH) acknowledges all Nations across the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw Tribal Regions, for it is the generational stewardship of these lands and continued practice of our cultures that provide pathways to healing for the Indigenous Street Family across Vancouver Island. The ACEH has spent time across many territories in its commitment to providing Culturally Supportive Housing and services, including ləkʷəŋən, WSÁNEĆ, T'Sou-ke, and Sc'ianew, and is deeply thankful to the keepers of these lands.

In recognition of the land on which it operates, the ACEH is committed to prioritizing its Culturally Supportive Housing in Victoria for Coast Salish Family Members (participants). Following protocol in this way will continue as the organization works toward its island-wide mandate.

## FOREWARD

With excitement, I present the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) Society's 5-Year Housing Strategy. This plan reflects over six years of knowledge gathering and responding to needs conveyed by the Indigenous Street Family. Our approach to housing development began in 2016 with lessons learned from the Priority One 3-Year Pilot Program. At this time the ACEH collaborated with Island Health and the Victoria Cool-Aid Society to provide housing for 20 Indigenous people identified as high-risk with complex needs. Initial findings were positive and suggested cultural support to improve housing sustainability as a potential leading practice. From there, the *Dual Model of Housing Care* took form, with Culturally Supportive Housing provided alongside decolonized harm reduction practice as a pathway to healing and recovery.

My thanks begin with the ACEH Board of Directors who provide the support, vision, and approval to move these strategic priorities forward in our shared effort to "lovingly provide culturally supportive, affordable housing and services that end Aboriginal homelessness on Vancouver Island." It was in 2018 they established the ACEH's strategic priorities — Finding Wellness, Building Community, Bearing Witness, and Building Our Strength — all of which pay attention to equitable access, our youth, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ family.

I would also like to acknowledge the Indigenous Street Family whose voices and stories contributed to the development of the strategy, along with staff who have played a role in sharing information and supporting this process.

Moreover, the ACEH would not be where we are today without champions including former Mayor Lisa Helps, Heidi Hartman from BC Housing, MLA Grace Lore, MP Laurel Collins, and Michael Sadler with the First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Council. Among this group of champions is also organizations including the Real Estate Foundation, who provided funding to support the creation of this Strategy.

Most importantly, I want to extend personal gratitude to the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations on whose traditional lands we began our work, as well as our partners across Vancouver Island. As our Vision says "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." I wholeheartedly believe that the *Dual Model of Housing Care* is the solution with provincial and national application.

In closing, we have an ambitious target of 450 housing units that we will strive toward over the next 5 years. The needs are great, and the crisis for unhoused Indigenous peoples living away from home is multi-generational and complex. In this context, our model sheds a beam of light that offers hope. Our aspirations and commitment to bring Indigenous practice and epistemology to this work will have far reaching positive implications beyond housing to health and wellness, community and family connections, and reunification. Our commitment is to continue to honour the people on whose territory we work by ensuring their members who are living away from home have the first priority for housing on their own lands and to broaden our scope to meet our island-wide mandate by partnering to deliver Culturally Supportive Housing across Vancouver Island.



**Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi**  
Executive Director



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## Introduction

### 5-YEAR HOUSING STRATEGY

In 2018 the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society (ACEH) broadened its mandate, from providing cultural support to the Indigenous Street Family to “lovingly providing affordable and culturally supportive housing to end Aboriginal homelessness across Vancouver Island.” Since this time the ACEH has established British Columbia’s first Culturally Supportive Housing with support from BC Housing, which operate according to the *Dual Model of Housing Care*. This model of care takes into account the distinct determinants of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis health by providing housing with on-site Elder mentorship, Aunty support, traditional foods, and access to cultural programming inclusive of native medicine gardens. Going beyond housing, this model which is deeply rooted in land-based healing, provides pathways to healing and recovery from substance use. With these offerings, the ACEH has welcomed home First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) peoples to programs where they are able to strengthen their Indigenous

self-identity, find a sense of belonging, and begin their pathways to healing. The impact of the ACEH’s Culturally Supportive Housing in addressing the overrepresentation of unhoused FNIM peoples has been recognized as leading practice by the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, who awarded the ACEH Housing Provider of the Year – Innovation award in 2022. It has also been recognized by the Victoria Real Estate Board who awarded the ACEH the Award of Excellence in Supportive Housing in 2021.

With Culturally Supportive Housing now developed and evaluated, the ACEH looks toward expanding this model across the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw Tribal Regions. Directions and plans for 2023-2028 are outlined in this Strategy, to guide development over the years ahead. The four central Strategies — Youth, Family (Re)Unification, Island-Wide Expansion, Decolonized Harm Reduction Infrastructure — have been developed in accordance with voices of the Indigenous Street Family and the ACEH’s vision, that *“Our Way is to care for all of our people. We are all one. Some of our people living away from home are suffering, isolated, and homeless. We stand together to end homelessness.”*

#### DECOLONIZED HARM REDUCTION



Art by Doug Lafortune

#### CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



DUAL MODEL OF HOUSING CARE



# CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONTINUUM

\* = In development as part of the 5YHS

UNHOUSED

HOUSED



## DECOLONIZED HARM REDUCTION

- Land-Based Healing and infrastructure\*
- Cultural Mentorship
- Indigenous Alcohol Harm Reduction Residence Program
- Culturally Supportive Recovery
- Family Reunification \*

TRANSITIONS

## OUR REASON

Before the ACEH became a housing provider, there was an absence of Indigenous-led and operated Culturally Supportive Housing in Victoria for high-risk FNIM peoples experiencing homelessness and substance use. This was a great source of concern for the organization, having learned from the 2018 Point-in-Time count that FNIM peoples account for 33% of the unhoused population in the city. Far from an anomaly the overrepresentation of FNIM peoples in the unhoused population reflects a broader trend across the province, with 38% of respondents to the 2018 BC Homeless Counts being FNIM.



38% of people surveyed as part of the 2018 BC Homeless Counts identify as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

6% of BC's total population identify as First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Solutions to FNIM homelessness involve an acknowledgement of its major contributors. Generational impacts of colonial projects are well established among these, with all levels of government having used its legislative authority to displace consecutive generations of FNIM peoples from their communities, cultures, and land. Related determinants of FNIM homelessness identified by the Aboriginal Housing Management Association include:

- **ON-RESERVE HOUSING CRISIS**

**36%** of households on-reserve were experiencing housing adequacy issues according the 2016 Census.

- **LOWER AVERAGE EARNINGS**

**22%** of Indigenous households had a low average income compared to 14.5% of non-Indigenous households.

- **JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT**

**43%** of youth admitted to correctional services in 2017-18 are Indigenous, up from 26% in 2007-08.

- **FOSTER CARE INVOLVEMENT**

**68%** of youth in BC are Indigenous and often enter into homelessness upon aging out at 19.



- POPULATION GROWTH

**2.5X** The Indigenous population is growing at more than 2.5 times the rate of non-Indigenous population.

- MORE LONE PARENT FAMILIES

**21.5%** of the Indigenous households were lone parent families, over double relative to non-Indigenous households

- RATE OF DISABILITIES

**32.8%** nearly one-third of Indigenous people 15+ have at least 1 disability.

- EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples, individuals with mental health challenges, and youth with system involvement are overrepresented.



Above all, solutions also involve honouring the voices of the Indigenous Street Family, who have shared their experiences, perspectives, and visions with the ACEH. As part of the Priority One Pilot program, the ACEH learned that homelessness among Indigenous women was intimately related to gender-based violence. Feedback received also suggested that the loving care provided by the ACEH's Elder, Gloria Roze, would become an integral part of the model, the *Dual Model of Housing Care*. In this context, Culturally Supportive Housing is needed to ensure that FNIM peoples in urban and rural areas have safe, affordable, and appropriate places to live.





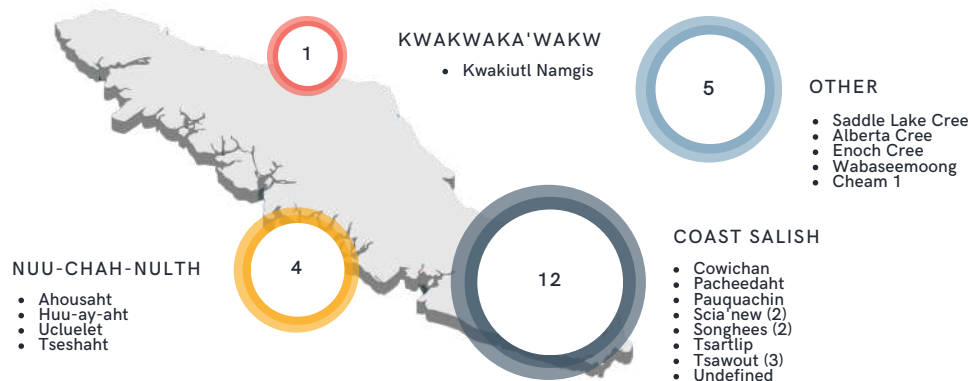
## CURRENT CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



Opened in 2020, Speqəŋéutxw House (House of Flowers) offers 21-units for 22 Indigenous women, with priority given to those fleeing violence. Central to the cultural programming is the on-site therapeutic native plant and medicine garden.



The following Family Member demographics were compiled to share with First Nations and Métis leadership across Vancouver Island as part of the ACEH's 2022 Annual Housing Report. Previous versions are available.



## 2020-22 OUTCOMES

32 out of 33 women who have resided at Speqəŋéutxw have maintained housing after 20 months

13 women from the original intake remain housed at Speqəŋéutxw

11 women from the original intake have transitioned to subsidized housing

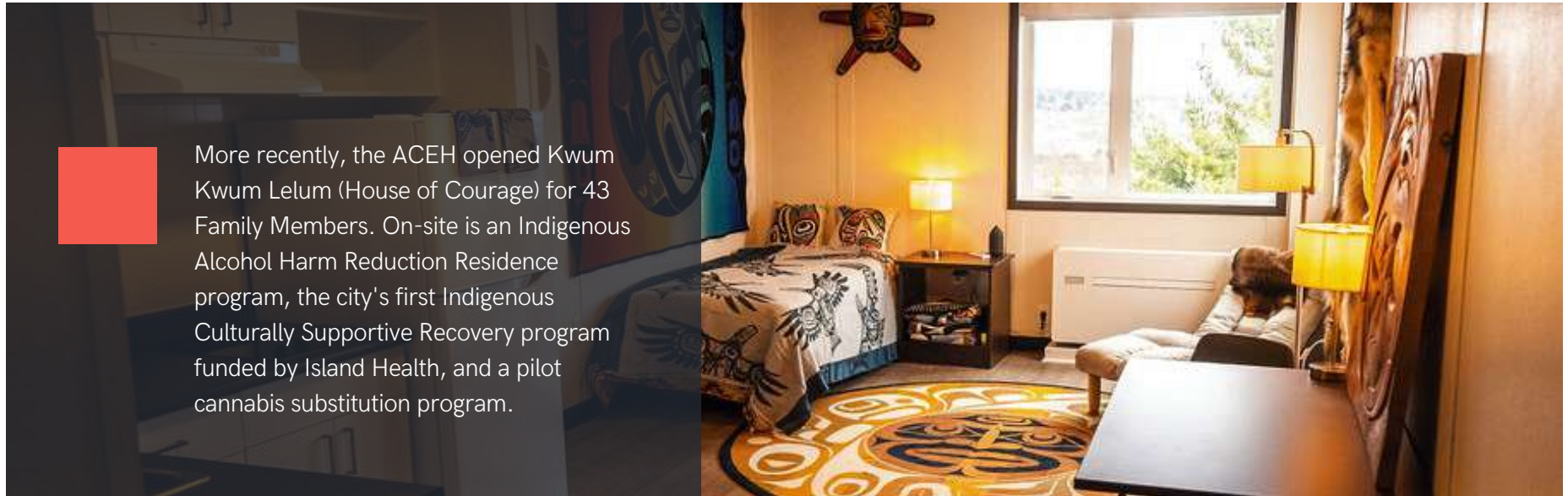
0 Evictions into homelessness



**LOIS GABITOUS**  
Coordinated Access and Assessment Manager



## CURRENT CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



More recently, the ACEH opened Kwum Kwum Lelum (House of Courage) for 43 Family Members. On-site is an Indigenous Alcohol Harm Reduction Residence program, the city's first Indigenous Culturally Supportive Recovery program funded by Island Health, and a pilot cannabis substitution program.

Until March 2023 the ACEH also operated Culturally Supportive House – an 'emergency shelter' for up to 14 Indigenous Street Family Members with the Indigenous Alcohol Harm Reduction program on-site. This program was transferred over to House of Courage to provide Family Members with personal units after years of communal living.

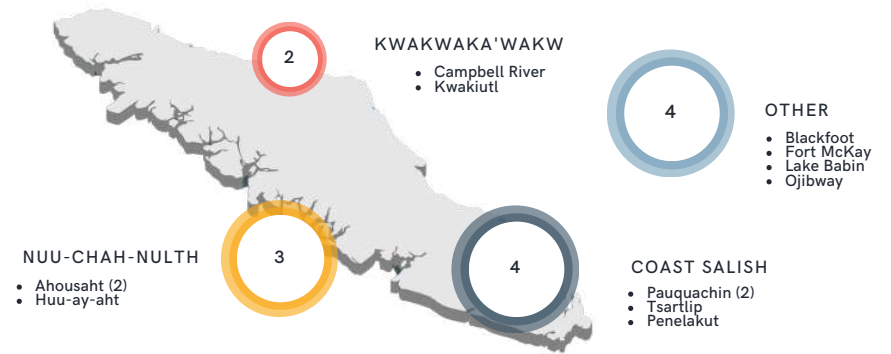
*... I didn't know who I was and I didn't have an identity, you know, so it was helpful to be around First Nations... Elders and staff. It made me feel, some pride. I guess to get out of my other part of my different masks that I wore on the street... It was important to me I think, yeah, to find my voice.*



## CURRENT CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



Additionally, the ACEH continues to support 13 individuals who have transitioned primarily from Culturally Supportive Housing into independent subsidized housing in the Westshore as well as maintain relationships with the Priority One cohort. For this cohort, a culturally informed Peer Training and Work program was developed and piloted in 2022, leading to multiple long-term employment opportunities within the organization.



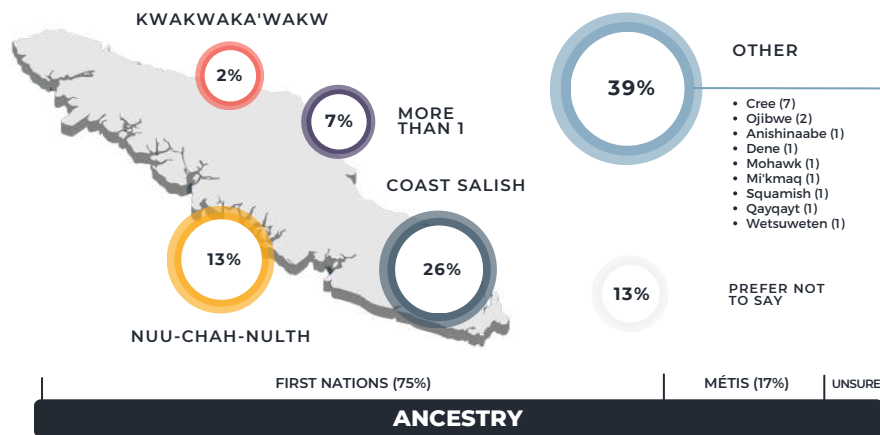
## Strategy 1: Youth Prevention & Precarity

### Summary:

- Youth Care and Healing House
- Cultural & Life Skills Program
- Transitions home from incarceration

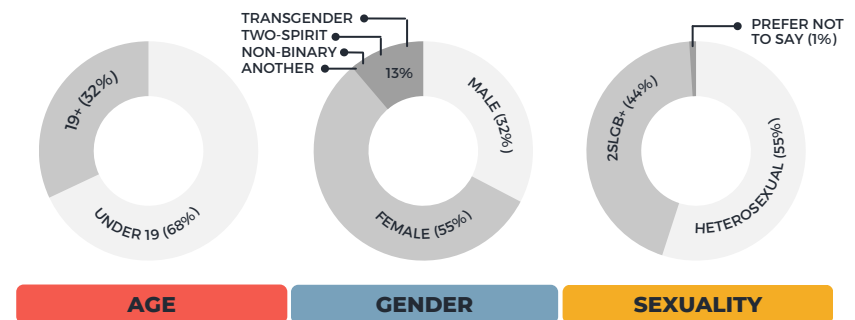
### BACKGROUND

FNIM youth (13-24) are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness across Canada, estimated at 20% relative to 7.7% of the population. Introducing FNIM-led interventions at this time is critical, knowing that 1 in 2 unhoused people reported cycles of homelessness beginning before age 25. Exposure to homelessness leaves youth vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and substance use in the process of finding housing stability. To begin supporting unhoused and at-risk FNIM youth locally the ACEH began with knowledge gathering and learned about the diversity of our youth, summarized below:



Known among the contributors to youth homelessness is the child welfare system, described as the government’s replacement for the Indian Residential School system. FNIM youth, dating back to the 1960s, have been placed into government care based on child protections concerns surrounding their familial or community living environment. Decisions to remove FNIM children result in children being raised away from family, with disruptions to their culture continuity, language, and traditions. At age 19 when youth reach state-defined adulthood and “age out,” there are insurmountable challenges to securing housing including rising rental costs, racism, and lack of available transitional / navigation support. The rate of FNIM in provincial Ministry care has reached an alarming 52%, suggesting that the overrepresentation of FNIM youth experiencing homelessness will continue. Of the 69 FNIM unhoused at-risk youth the ACEHS connected with in 2022, 60% expressed experience with the child welfare system.

A related factor in FNIM youth homelessness is gender identity and sexual orientation. From what the ACEHS learned from its Knowledge Gathering 2022, 44% of the unhoused and at-risk FNIM youth self-identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+. With the social marginalization this population continues to experience, additional pathways into homelessness for FNIM youth include family disapproval; self-internalized shame and isolation; and elevated levels of violence.



## PREVENTION

Starting in 2023, the ACEH will set out with a focus to prevent initial incidences of homelessness by proactively facilitating transitions of FNIM youth in care and in custody as they reach state-defined adulthood at 19.



### Youth Care Home

One way the ACEH will do this is by partnering with Surrounded by Cedar Child & Family Services to open a 6-bed Care Home for FNIM youth. In operating this program, the ACEHS will be able to build loving relationships with FNIM youth, provide them with daily access to cultural support (i.e., Elder mentorship), and be proactive in ensuring their housing security beyond the age-dependent program. Based on youth's needs, the ACEHS can transition them into one of its 19+ Culturally Supportive houses, provide a rent supplement to support their independence, or help with referrals to other available supports.



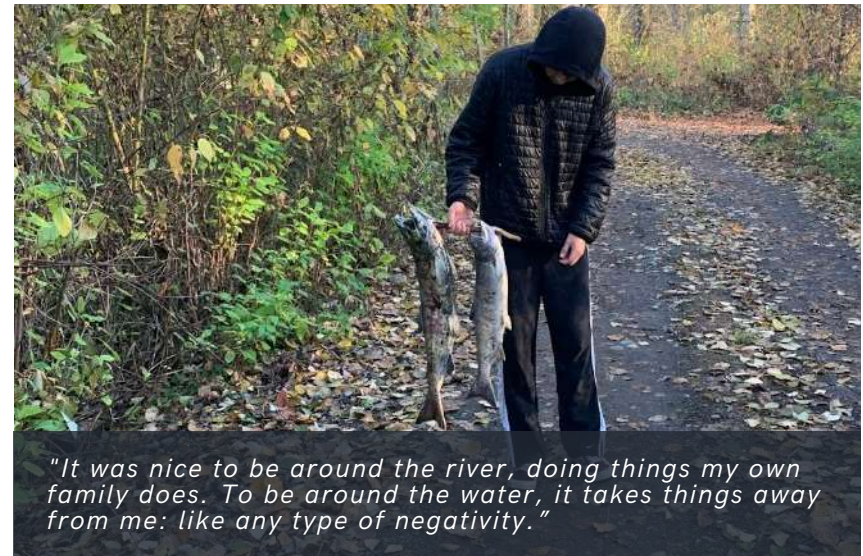
### Transitions Home

Recognizing the disproportionate rate of incarcerated Indigenous youth, the ACEH's Place of Hope Justice team will facilitate relationship building with youth in the system and support Care Plans to transition them to safe and supportive homes. The ACEH's Youth Coordinator will also expand their outreach-based services to facilitate transitions to home Nations across Vancouver Island where desired, starting in 2023.



### Cultural & Life Skills Program

The ACEH will also continue delivery of its youth cultural life skills program, currently based out of its Quadra Street location. Launched in 2022, this program has quickly gained momentum is now regularly attended by unhoused FNIM youth, as well as youth in-care and in precarious living situations (50+). Sessions are provided weekly-biweekly, subject to funding, with each week focusing on a new life or cultural skill. Service providers, including the Construction Foundation of BC, have attended to introduce their service and provide accessible connections to housing services. Through maintaining and building this family unit with FNIM youth through consistent programming, the ACEH is becoming established as the main contact for FNIM youth when housing and health needs arise.



## PRECARITY



### Transgender & Two-Spirit (2S) Housing

1 in 3 unhoused youth in Canada are 2SLGBTQQIA+. Among this population, transgender and 2S peoples disproportionately experience homelessness due to family nonacceptance. With emergency shelters and supportive housing being known sites of “humiliation and physical or sexual victimization,” their experiences of homelessness are unnecessarily long and can lead to service avoidance for self-protection. The ACEH recognizes that a dedicated Culturally Supportive Housing program is needed and overdue for our transgender and 2S relatives. This program will have designated transitional units for Family Members to live while they receive gender-affirming care, and units where they are welcome to live until safe, independent, affordable housing can be secured.

41.3%

of unhoused transgender youth report experiencing sexual assault in the last year, compared to 8.2% of males and 37.1% of females (Gaetz et al., 2016)



### Culturally Supportive Housing Program Partnerships

The ACEH will actively seek opportunities to open and operate a Culturally Supportive Housing program for youth. Partnerships with experienced housing providers will be strongly considered to bring together the strengths in our experience. This program would address current homelessness among FNIM youth in Victoria and the surrounding area.



## Strategy 2: Family (Re)unification

### Summary:

- Perinatal Transitional Home for Intergenerational Healing
- Expand Family Reunification programming

### PERINATAL TRANSITIONAL HOME FOR INTERGENERATIONAL HEALING

Violence in its many forms – partner, family, stranger, financial, and institutional – is often the predicator to homelessness for FNIM women. The ACEH began to witness this reality in its first year of operation, with 100% of the FNIM women it supported in Victoria’s Priority One cohort experiencing homelessness as a result of partner violence. This experience is far from an anomaly in Victoria but is reflective of a pervasive trend of gender-based violence leading to homelessness for FNIM women across the country, documented extensively by the 2019 MMIWG report with its mention of housing over 900+ times.



In beginning its response to this urgent need, the ACEH opened Speqə́ḡéútxw House with support from BC Housing – a 21 unit Culturally Supportive House for FNIM fleeing violence. Referrals for this program exceeded 90 in the first intake alone, signalling that while a good start, the first Indigenous-led program for FNIM women would only begin to address the needs in our community. In addition to operating Speqə́ḡéútxw, the ACEH has continued over several years to build relationships with the unhoused Indigenous Street Family and provide culturally-informed services. At Speqə́ḡéútxw to date, there have been 0 evictions into homelessness and 13 transitions into independent living. In becoming intimately familiar with the realities of unhoused people living away from home, further service gaps related to gender-based violence have emerged. Among the most pressing is the structural and physical violence impacting unhoused and at-risk, pregnant FNIM women with experience of substance use.

According to a BC-based study, First Nations women are 14.6 times (95% CI 9.5–24.8 unadjusted) more likely to report violence in pregnancy compared to other women. Violence continues into the postnatal period and beyond, with 88% of women in NWAC’s MMIWG2S+ database being mothers. This elevated level of violence and residual stress presents not only health risks to FNIM women but to the development of their babies. Relatedly, substance use is a known response for coping with violence, which too has implications for the wellbeing of our future generations. With no safe and affordable housing to turn to, FNIM women are left with little option but to remain in relationships of dependence OR enter supportive housing where their child must be placed in care.



Violence against pregnant FNIM women also increases the likelihood of child apprehension into Ministry care, based on protection concerns. This is a grave outcome - and one experienced disproportionately - as it perpetuates state-sanctioned cycles of familial and cultural disruption. In this context, a culturally supportive housing program would be able to provide FNIM women with safety and support, where they can fully embrace and experience the sacred time of birthing and mothering without needing to rely on an unsafe living environment for survival. The unification of FNIM mothers and their children is also made possible by removing the threat of violence and concurrently promotes cultural continuity and intergenerational healing.



#### PROGRAM MODEL

To support pregnant and new FNIM mothers in this time of heightened vulnerability to violence, the ACEH is proposing to develop a multi-unit Culturally Supportive House where Family Members (residents) can stay during their perinatal period and their child's early years of development. Units will range from 1-3 bedrooms to accommodate larger FNIM family sizes. On-site there will be 24/7 staff support, as well as specialized cultural and health services provided by an Elder and Indigenous doula. One unit will be dedicated as a nursing and birthing room where traditional FNIM practices and ceremony can take place. Partnerships will be formed with Island Health to staff the birthing unit with RNs, physicians and an obstetrician as needed. The inclusion of this unit is critical as substantiating evidence indicates that hospitals have long been sites of substance use stigma and racially-motivated birth alerts.

As part of this program, the ACEH will also look to establish an on-site daycare, where FNIM children can be cared for while FNIM women seek employment, attend meetings with service providers, upgrade their education, and so on. This support aligns with Indigenous communal ways of raising children, sets FNIM women up for stability in their transitions to independent living, and reduces the risk of child apprehensions.



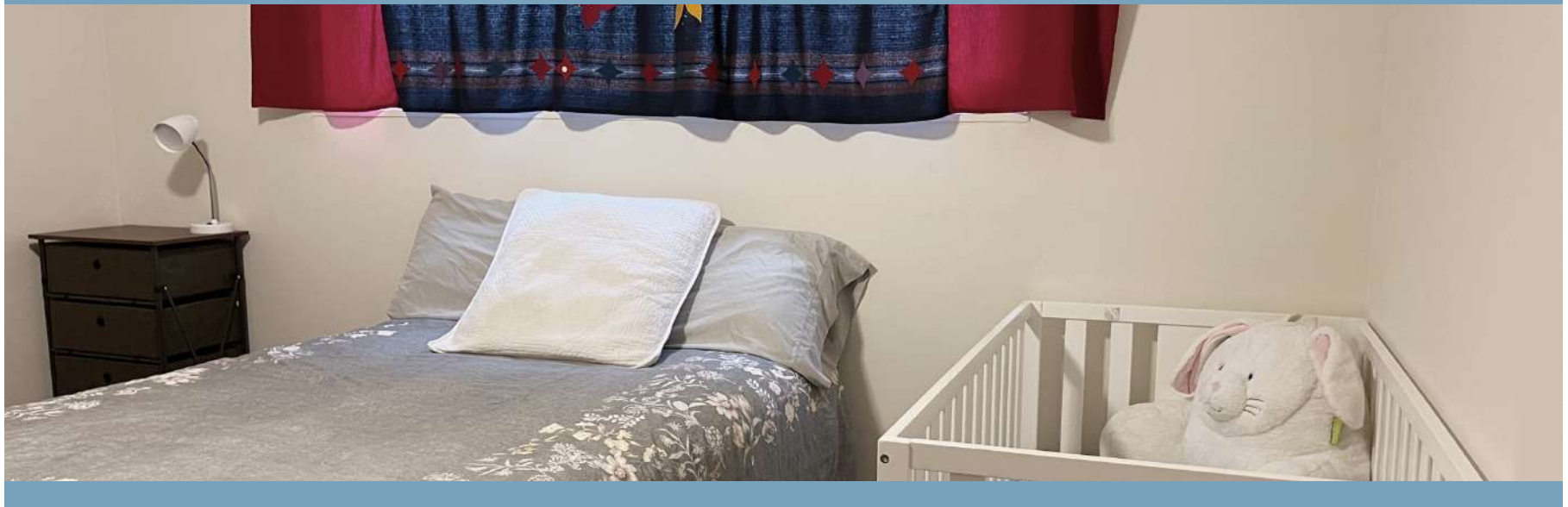


## EXPAND FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROGRAMMING

As part of the *Dual Model of Housing Care*, ACEH Family Members have access to the ACEH Family Reunification Program - a three-bedroom townhouse for parents and grandparents to have overnight visitations with their children in Ministry care. This program has been accessed regularly since its establishment in 2021, highlighting the centrality of family connection in healing. The ACEH has witnessed the harm reduction impacts of this program, with Family Members abstaining from substance use ahead of, and following visitations. It has also provided a home environment where relationships can be nurtured on an ongoing basis, toward permanent reunification.

Building on the success of this program, the ACEH will advocate to include 1-2 Family Reunification Units in all Culturally Supportive Housing programs moving forward. This expansion will help to meet the demands on the program as new sites are opened and more Family Members are welcomed home. The ACEH will also advocate as part of the Evergreen Redevelopment for additional housing dedicated to supporting intergenerational healing and family reunification for FNIM families, including a 3 plex for emergency housing, as well as a 2BD and 3BD unit for family reunification.

### FAMILY REUNIFICATION TOWNHOUSE



## Strategy 3: Island-Wide Expansion

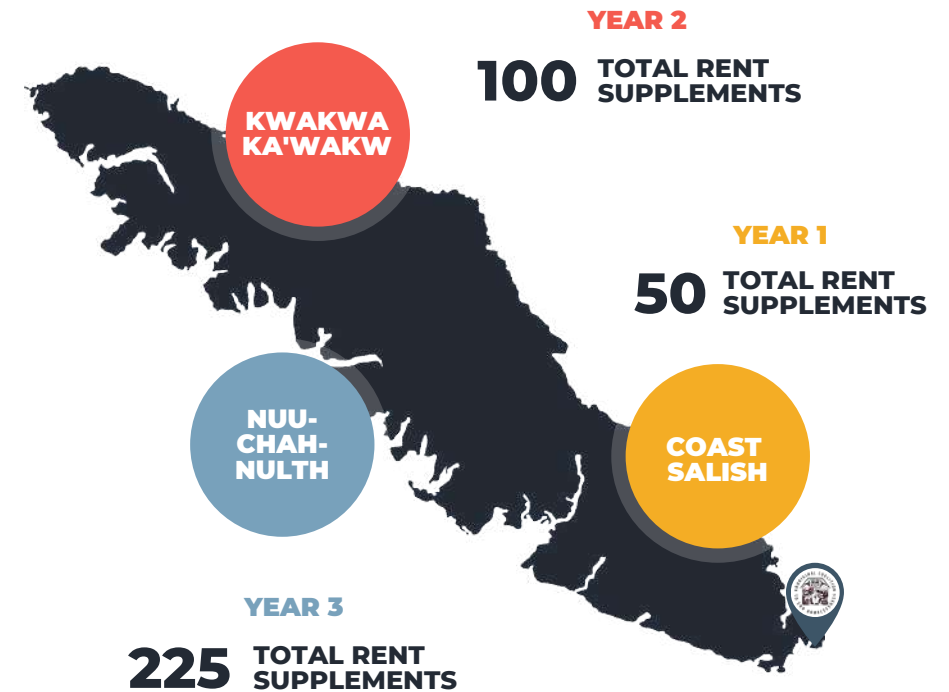
Summary:

- Culturally Aligned Integrated Support (CAIS): Wraparound Rent Supplement Program
- Apply to Requests for Proposals for Supportive Housing and Rent Supplements as they are announced

### CULTURALLY ALIGNED INTEGRATED SUPPORT (CAIS): WRAPAROUND RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

CAIS is an Indigenous-led initiative that provides wraparound health, housing, and social supports with up to \$600/month rent supplements. It is being funded through the Province of BC as part of the Supported Rent Supplement Program (SRSP), with the goal to prevent and reduce homelessness. CAIS aligns with the new provincial Integrated Support Framework – a system of health, social, cultural, and housing supports for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness across various unsheltered and housing settings who have needs not well served by other programs.

The ACEH was selected as the first pilot site and administrator in BC for CAIS, with a total of 225 available rent supplements that will be made available over 3 years. These Rent Supplements with wrap around supports offer the ACEH a new opportunity to continue Family Members along the housing continuum and to become an active participant in breaking down stigma in the private market.



### WRAPAROUND CARE TEAM



BC HOUSING



island health



BRITISH COLUMBIA

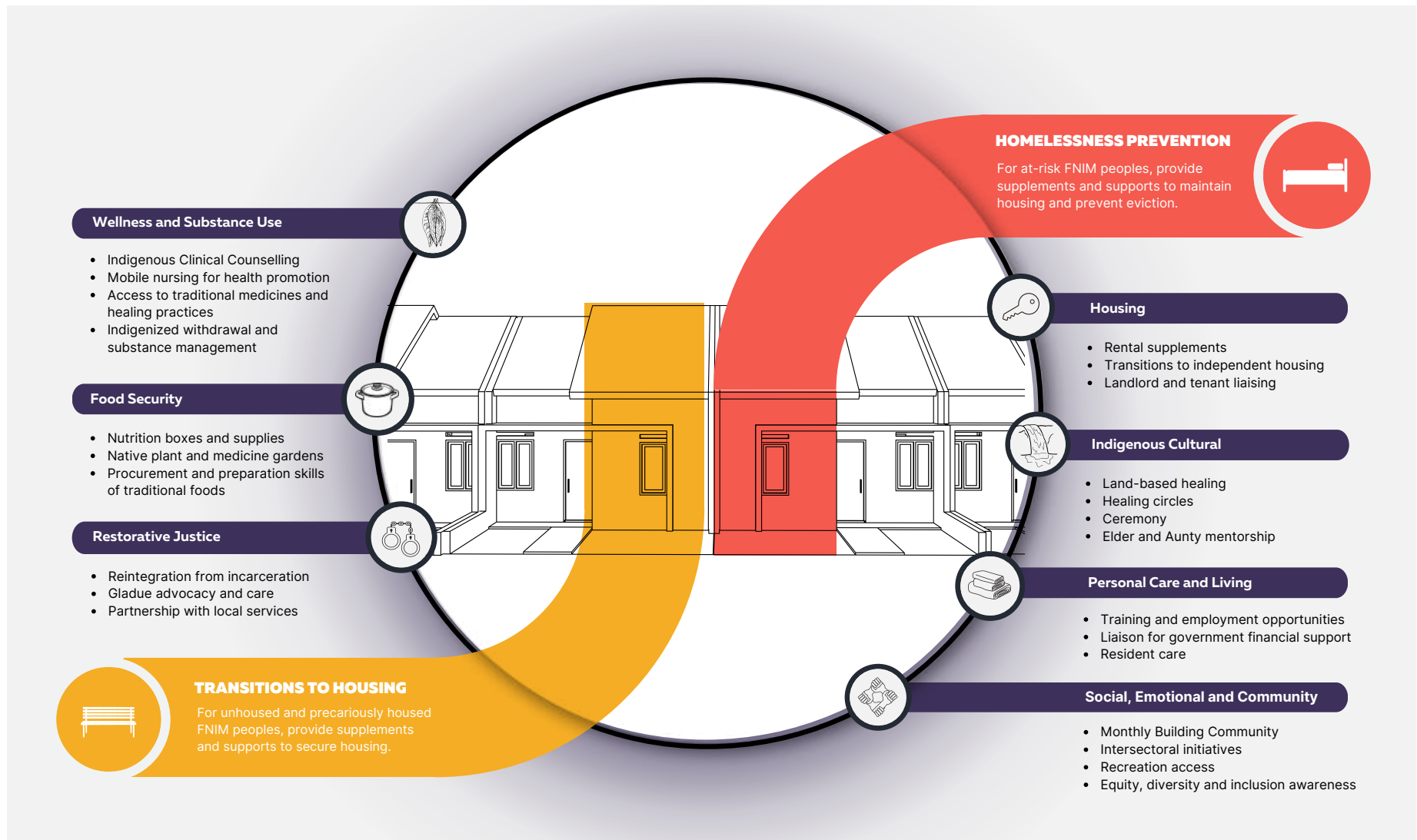
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Mentor</li> <li>• Outreach Worker</li> <li>• Housing Navigator</li> <li>• Manager</li> <li>• Program Assistant</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Mentor</li> <li>• Nurse Practitioner</li> <li>• Clinical Counsellor</li> <li>• Social Worker</li> <li>• Resident Care Aide</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Integrated Specialist</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|



Additional funds for 50 move in kits was provided by Social Planning & Research Council of British Columbia in 2023



## CAIS WRAPAROUND SERVICE MODEL



## HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

In 2022 the ACEH developed a Toolkit for Nations and island-wide communities that includes learnings, challenges, and successes experienced in the process of opening the province's first Culturally Supportive Housing. With this resource successfully completed and rolled out, the ACEH is ready and well positioned to support communities throughout Vancouver Island to adapt the *Dual Model of Housing Care* to local contexts. Following the guidance from the 2018 Elders and Knowledge Keepers gathering, the ACEH will work to establish partnerships across the Island with those interested in opening new Culturally Supportive Housing, providing training support in the early stages to support operational readiness.



Culturally Supportive Housing Toolkit highlights:

- Pre-planning
- Dual Model of Housing Care
- Data collection and governance
- House design and partnership building
- Operational planning and budgetary considerations
- Recruitment and staffing preparations
- Staff wellness

## 450 CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS

In a matter of years, the ACEH has grown without core funding to over 100 staff serving the Indigenous Street Family. To maintain the organization's momentum and impact, there has been an unsustainable reliance on short-term grants and project agreements. Toward stability and strengthening for ACEH leadership and staff, the ACEH will be looking to establish 450 units of Culturally Supportive Housing across Vancouver Island. To do so, RFP opportunities and partnerships with aligned organizations and Nations will be pursued. In attaining this goal, the ACEH will secure the minimum administration and operational funds needed on an annual basis to no longer depend on annually-determined external funding opportunities. In establishing additional Culturally Supportive Housing units, the ACEH is committed to supporting the development of local community and Nation capacity by ensuring all on-site jobs go to local community members, while offering 2-years of training during the early operational years.



## Strategy 4: Decolonized Harm Reduction Infrastructure

### Summary:

- Wellness House: Pre and post treatment transitions
- Land Acquisition to sustain land-based healing

### WELLNESS HOUSE: PRE AND POST TREATMENT TRANSITIONS

As part of the ACEH's Indigenous Systems Improvement Map project the Indigenous Street Family highlighted pre and post treatment support as an existing service gap in the city. This gap was also identified at the ACEH's 2018 Wisdom of the Elders Gathering, where guidance was received to open a 'Healing House' in the downtown core.

Too often when individuals express readiness for substance use treatment, they are met with wait lists that pose a barrier to healing. Current wait times for Indigenous people to access detox facilities ranges from 2-4 weeks and following detox, another 4 weeks to access stabilization programs. The wait times for Indigenous-specific treatment programs ranges from 4-12 months. These long waiting periods build on the already challenging and stigmatized act of reaching out for help. Lives continue to be lost in this period, demonstrated by the reality that 16% of overdose deaths in the province between January and May of 2020 involved Indigenous peoples, relative to 3.3% of the population (FNHA, 2017).



### PROGRAM MODEL

In response, the ACEH plans to build a Wellness House, that will provide culturally supportive transitional housing and services for individuals as they wait to enter treatment. The Wellness House will also provide a home to return to after completing treatment, to avoid returning to unsafe environments where there is active substance use. To achieve this goal, the ACEH is in discussion with BC Housing as well as the Capital Regional District and has applied for construction funds through the Rapid Housing Initiative.

Differing from other approaches, strict time restrictions will not be imposed for those living at the Wellness House, as the ACEH understands that pathways to healing and recovery are non-linear and can span extended periods of time. In this transitional period, the ACEH will seek to facilitate transitions to independent living and home communities where desired.

To design and construct the Wellness House, the ACEH is working with BC Housing. It is currently visioned as a four storey facility with 32 studio and a two-bedroom family size unit. On the ground floor will be a range of social, health, cultural, education, and land-based healing services to support the Indigenous Street Family (ISF) on their paths toward healing and recovery. The building design reflects cultural values and priorities including East and West facing outdoor spaces for ceremonial activities, and a high degree of sustainability with low energy use, including reuse of materials from the existing building to reduce embodied carbon and future GHG emissions. This first-of-its kind facility in B.C. addresses an identified gap in the housing continuum by providing timely housing, cultural support, and health support as soon as Family Members express a readiness to begin their recovery journey.





## WELLNESS HOUSE SUPPORT

The ACEH expresses thanks to all individuals, organizations, and bodies who offered letters of support for the Wellness House development.

MP Laurel Collins

MLA, Grace Lore

City of Victoria Mayor, Lisa Helps

Capital Regional District (CRD)

Federal Housing Advocate

Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC)

BC Housing

Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

Dr. Bernie Pauly - University of Victoria

Dr. Ami Brosseau

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

North Park Neighbourhood Association

Anglican Diocese of B.C.

Victoria Police Department



*Site plan by award-winning  
Indigenous architect Alfred  
Waugh at Formline  
Architecture & Urbanism*





### LAND ACQUISITION FOR LAND-BASED HEALING

Central to the *Dual Model of Housing Care*, alongside Culturally Supportive Housing, is the decolonized harm reduction practice of land-based healing. The ACEH aims to sustainably build on its land-based healing program by securing property ideally situated in a private and serene location near the ocean or river and in close proximity to a well-maintained forest. The establishment of this permanent site for land-based healing will be carried out in phased segments and will provide a platform for unhoused FNIM peoples across Vancouver Island to reengage with their land-based teachings, culture, healing, and language.

In the first phase, the priority is to secure land and build a temporary shelter and non-residential spaces for programming and group activities. Once the land has been secured and operational use has been confirmed, capital improvements and investments will be part of a second phase; this may include the construction of a meeting hall/space, and seasonal accommodations for program and work experience participants.

The camp vision includes a therapeutic garden, which will have the potential to support a social enterprise business through the growth of marijuana as part of the Indigenous Alcohol Harm

Reduction and Cannabis Substitution program. This program aims to provide a culturally sensitive and effective approach to addressing alcohol-related harm among Indigenous communities.

To address the healing priorities and needs of the Vancouver Island FNIM peoples, this land-based program will be community-driven, drawing upon local cultural resources and Elders who possess a wealth of knowledge about culturally specific and place-bound ways of doing and being that create purpose; purpose that is embodied through physical presence on the land. The ACEH's land-based healing camp will include activities such as harvesting, education, ceremony, recreation and cultural-based counselling as components of a fully integrated practice. These programs will prioritize spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical wellness to foster a sense of hope, belonging, and provide meaning in the lives of Family Members.









The ACEH is actively seeking a long-term lease, a donation of a parcel of land, or capital contributions to support the development of the Land-Based Healing Camp. The ideal parcel of land would be between 3 to 10 acres and located within a day travel from the capital region, such as a Southern Gulf Island or south of Duncan. The acquisition of a suitable parcel of land is a critical step in the development of the Land-Based Healing Camp, and ACEHS is dedicated to securing a location that meets the needs of Indigenous communities and supports the healing and growth of its participants.

To help support the development of the proposed Land-Based Healing Camp, the ACEHS is looking for partners to enter into formal agreements for land, capital, and operational support to pilot this multi-phase project beginning in 2023.



## 5-YEAR HOUSING SNAPSHOT

Targeted Completion Years

Strategy		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	# of units
1	Youth Care Home						6
	Trans & 2S Home						21
2	Perinatal Transitions Home						18
	Family Reunification Units						5
3	CAIS Program						NA
	Island-Wide Partnerships						80
4	Wellness House						32
	Acquisition for Land-Based						NA
<b>TARGET UNITS OVER 5 YEARS</b>						<b>162</b>	
<b>TOTAL INCL. CURRENT UNITS</b>						<b>226</b>	

Research, engagement and planning for the next phase of the strategy will be completed to secure 450 units overall.







# CONTACT US

*for more information or to discuss potential alignments*

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