



April 21, 2021

The Honourable Ahmed Hussien, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
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Minister Hussien,

We are the Indigenous Caucus of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association. Since 2013, the Indigenous Caucus has grown to become the national body for developing and providing Indigenous policy advice on housing and homelessness. Today, The Caucus' membership includes more than 100 Indigenous-led or Indigenous-serving organizations from across the country.

More than 80% of Indigenous peoples are not currently served by the distinctions-based strategies. But again, with this budget, we see absolutely no funding for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing and service providers. This is a national disgrace; one made more apparent through the pandemic.

Minister, you have repeatedly said that you have placed significant importance on the development of an urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing strategy. If this strategy is important to you, then why, through multiple budgets and fiscal updates, has this government chosen to ignore the very mandate letters that were set for you and other ministers? In the last two mandate letters, you were given clear direction, alongside Minister Vandal, Minister Bennett, and Minister Miller that an urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing strategy was a priority for this government. If it was indeed a priority, why has it been overlooked yet again in this most recent budget? One time could be considered a mistake. This time it feels much more deliberate. The Prime Minister has failed you, and you in turn have failed us. If reconciliation is the ultimate goal of this government, it has been a total failure.

We have worked closely with this government, appearing at committees, participating in roundtables, and having MPs from the national parties join us at our Indigenous Caucus Day to better understand the needs of urban, rural, and northern Indigenous providers. We have done the research and we have brought numerous organizations together to see this strategy developed. All that was required was your government's commitment to an Urban, Rural and Northern For Indigenous By Indigenous National Housing strategy, a National Indigenous Housing Centre and funding to get started.

We are beyond disappointed, disheartened, saddened, and frustrated. These words fail to scratch the surface of our discontent. And yet, we are still here, ready, willing, and able to work in partnership with you to ensure the housing needs of all Indigenous peoples in urban, rural, and northern areas are met.

Minister, your government needs to join us and our partners at the table to ensure that all Indigenous peoples have a space to call home. Let's repair this broken relationship and find a way to move forward, together, for the more than 80 per cent of Indigenous peoples who live in urban, rural and northern areas across this country.

We look forward to meeting with you directly. We will contact your office shortly to arrange a date and time.

CC.

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Dan Vandal, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.
Mr. Adam Vaughan, M.P.