

The Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association (MNPHA) hosted an Indigenous Housing Provider Forum in Winnipeg, MB on November 27, 2018.

The Forum has been an annual event organized between Indigenous Housing Providers, MNPHA, in partnership with Manitoba Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This year, the forum was sponsored by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In total, 22 people attended the Forum. Organizations attending the Forum included:

- Sioux Valley Housing Authority
- Payuk Intertribal Housing Co-Operative (SAM Management Inc.)
- KeKiNan Housing (Winnipeg Housing and Renewal Corporation)
- Swan River Friendship Centre
- Dial-a-Life Housing
- Indigenous Women's Healing Centre
- Kinew Housing
- Manitoba Housing
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Summary of the Forum Discussion

1. *What are the successes participants have experienced in the past year?*
 - Restructuring the waiting list
 - Developing and implementing stronger policies and procedures
 - Accessing funding for needed renovations
 - Finding contractors to take on renovations
 - Providing housing to a number of youth who have aged out of the care of Child and Family Services
 - Joining MNPHA and networking with more housing providers
 - Having a full staff contingent
 - Undertaking an office move
 - Instilling hope in the people the organization serves
 - Planning for a future detox centre
 - Developing a new tenant guide
 - Connecting tenants and their families with a new Sunday school and youth program
 - Providing greater education for families

2. *What are the challenges participants have faced this past year or anticipate in the year to come?*
 - Renovations have led to disruptions for residents, especially elevator repairs/replacements
 - Rise in meth use in communities (this was repeated by most of the attendees)
 - Keeping properties secure when tenants leave
 - Homes being broken into
 - Trying to support tenants struggling with addiction
 - Finding tenants who have knowledge of tenant responsibilities
 - Older buildings need major repairs/improvements
 - Lack of funding/no increases to budgets each year despite increasing costs

- Waiting list continues to increase; currently 224 families
- Pest control

Manitoba Housing's Application Process for Direct Managed Housing

Manitoba Housing recently updated their application process as part of implementation of their revised Social Housing Rental Program policies and procedures. The social housing rental program is client focused and supports delivery of a program and providing a home.

Manitoba Housing was invited to present their application process to provide awareness for non-profit providers to adopt aspects considered to be of value to their organizations.

The program's application process has been applied to units owned and managed by Manitoba Housing.

The process considers:

- Right client – Right fit
- Delivering home
- Children first
- Rewarding education
- Supporting choice

The application process consists of three areas:

1. Eligibility

The program eligibility criteria is the same for Manitoba Housing and housing providers receiving operating subsidy. In order to be eligible for the program applicant(s) must:

- a. be in core housing need;
- b. be either a Canadian Citizen, permanent resident of Canada, a refugee claimant or have legal status to live and/or work in Canada;
- c. have total adjusted household income at or below the program income limits established by Manitoba Housing; and
- d. be able to live independently, with or without supports

2. Application

Applications are available on-line or from a Manitoba Housing office and processed centrally to ensure consistency.

Applicants are point rated based on information provided on the application. Point rating of applicants is required by non-profit providers receiving operating subsidy as identified in their operating agreements. The point rating criteria may differ from Manitoba Housing or other non-profit providers.

Applicants are provided written notice of program eligibility/ineligibility, or where missing information is needed to continue processing their application. Applicants eligible for the program are placed on a list awaiting interview.

3. Interview and Approval

Applicants are contacted for interview once it is reasonable to expect a future unit offer is imminent based on vacancy turnover rates.

Interview is our first opportunity to build a relationship with our clients. Information on the application is verified, applicants provide documented proof to support information on the

application at this time. Discussions on renting and program responsibilities, assessment of housing needs, and choices of housing occur.

Changes to Manitoba Housings Social Housing Rental Program include:

- Application and eligibility processing changed from a decentralized process to a balanced intake process. Applications are received throughout Manitoba and processed centrally. Centralizing processing ensures consistency in applying program eligibility.
- Applications accepted from persons:
 - with past arrears with MB Housing. We work with applicants to develop a payment plan for outstanding balances;
 - under age 18, where it is demonstrated they are able to live independently.
- Eligibility to the program and qualification/approval for housing is completed prior offering a unit.
- Interview and approval of eligible applicants for housing provides earlier opportunity to build relationships, support successful tenancies, and ensures applicants are making informed choices for housing. Documented proof supporting application information provided by applicants and assessed at interview, closer to potential unit offers.
- Rental history used to identify need for potential supports. Negative history resulting from non-payment of rent considered an affordability issue and would not affect a person's ability to enter the program.
- Income of dependents:
 - under the age of 22 not used in the income calculation for program eligibility;
 - 22 - 25 in full-time study not used in the income calculation for rent while in school.
- One unit offer provided as needs assessment and housing choice has occurred during the interview and reconfirmed prior to unit offer. Circumstances beyond the control of the applicant (e.g. lease commitment) are considered on a case by case basis for reasonable refusal of an offer.

To ensure fair and equitable access to subsidized housing, organizations must be able to demonstrate their rationale for selecting applicants. Non-profit partners are encouraged to review their application processes with support of their Board.

Manitoba Housing encourages non-profit providers to contact their housing representative for questions about our policies and samples of our documents (e.g. interview guide).

Discussion on the National Housing Strategy

What are the challenges with the Co-Investment Fund that MNPHA should communicate to CMHC?

- The requirement for financial viability seems to assume organizations will be/should be self-sustaining post-operating agreement.
- The affordability requirements are not aligned with Urban Indigenous Providers' needs. The majority of providers have 100% rent-geared-to-income portfolios and would not access a funding stream that would require them to increase rent for families in need.
- Operating agreements provide strict limitations on loans and it is very challenging for organizations to take on lending until there is some clarity regarding operating agreements and subsidies

What does a post-operating agreement future look like for Indigenous Housing Providers?

- Devastating.
- There is a sense that CMHC and/or the Government of Canada would like to see those providers with 100% RGI projects move towards mixed income models. Requiring organizations to self-subsidize units through operating a number of market units means the organizations would no longer be able to help those they have been established to help. Rents would certainly increase and tenants would be forced to move.
- Many of the locations, whether the communities or neighbourhoods, where Urban and Rural Indigenous Housing Providers currently own and manage properties could not sustainably be converted into mixed-income projects. The demand for existing RGI units is high and keeping these homes for individuals and families is essential. The demand for median market or “affordable” rental units is not high enough; projects were not designed with a self-financing model in mind.
- Subsidies will be necessary to provide housing for the families and individuals Indigenous Housing Providers serve for the foreseeable future; any funding to support organizations should be to preserve existing rent-g geared-to-income units or build more, never to support a loss in them.

What research or planning could MNPHA propose that would support Urban and Rural Indigenous Housing Providers?

- Understanding housing needs from an Indigenous lens; recognizing the distinctions between rural and urban communities
- Solving the meth crisis; best practices for housing providers in the climate of increasing meth use; examples of effective post-treatment housing models for people who have used crystal meth
- Revisiting Housing First: demonstrating the need for congregate supportive housing as a housing first model; looking at homelessness and housing (including transitional housing) with a gender-lens; supporting flexibility in/equity across housing first models (e.g. some have access to resources such as unit repair funding, damage deposits, furniture, while others do not, meaning they struggle to access housing)
- Demonstrating the need for support within housing; developing partnerships between housing providers and support services
- Effective models of multi-generational housing
- Partnerships between housing providers and social enterprise

Board Governance

A workshop on Governance was provided by Rolande Kirouac, who is working with Lorch and Associates to undertake the Indigenous Housing Provider Support Project. From November, 2018 - December, 2019, they will work with Indigenous Housing Providers in Winnipeg to develop:

- Updated bylaws for the organization that are consistent with legislation and with organizational culture
- Plans to deal with the succession needs of the organization
- Board and Employee policy manuals and templates that can be adopted by the organization

- A centralized repository for documents, templates and samples accessible to board members and staff the organization and other urban Indigenous housing providers

MNPHA has sent a proposal to MB Housing to include Indigenous Housing providers outside of Winnipeg in the project, and is waiting to hear if they can fund it. The workshop provided is part of the project, and slides from the workshop presentation are attached.

Objectives

- ▶ 10 Principles of Good Governance: Rolande
- ▶ Responsibilities of the Board and how Directors handle those responsibilities
- ▶ Relationship of the Board to: Executive Director
- ▶ Governance vs Management
- ▶ Understanding Policies
- ▶ Review of current situation
- ▶ How to create effective by-laws and policies

Governance, Policies and By-laws Indigenous Housing Provider Forum November 27 2018



Presented by Rolande Kirouac

10 Principles of Good Governance

1. Board acts on behalf of the owners of the organization
2. Board is accountable to the owners for everything that happens in the organization and can't give that accountability away.
3. Board has authority as a collective.
4. Board speaks through its policies and actions taken through approved motions.
5. Board speaks with one voice.

10 Principles cont'd

6. Board delegates its authority for the operations of the organization to the Executive Director.
7. Board can best work with the ED by giving direction through policy and approved motions.
8. No individual board member has the authority to direct the work of the ED or any other staff member.
9. Board evaluates the Executive Director against compliance with the policies and progress on the strategic plan.
10. The relationship between the Board and the ED is one of partnership and collaboration.

Key Responsibilities of the Board

1. Establish the organization's mission, vision, direction and purpose, and develop policies and actions to ensure they are attained:
 - ▶ Board creates a strategic plan that outlines:
Organizational values, Mission, Vision, and Priorities and strategies that serve the mission
 - ▶ Asks the ED to report on progress on the strategic plan, not on operational matters

Things you need to know:

1. Evidence that the organization is true to its values
2. Who is responsible for the priorities in the strategic plan
3. The timeline for achieving the priorities in the strategic plan
4. What the success indicators are for the priorities (how will we know we have achieved the priorities?)

Key responsibilities cont'd.

2. Select, support, guide and evaluate the Executive Director:
 - ▶ Establishes a Personnel Committee to select and support the ED
 - ▶ Develops policies that outline how the ED must manage the organization
 - ▶ Appraises the ED's performance against identified measures

Things you need to know:

- ▶ How do we delegate our authority to the ED?
What policies are in place?
- ▶ How is the organization faring in the accomplishment of its strategic priorities?
- ▶ How will the ED's performance be appraised and measured?
- ▶ What is the difference between curiosity and need to know? How do we define what reports are actually needed for the Board's work

Key responsibilities cont'd.

3. Ensure the financial health of the organization and manage risk by ensuring there are adequate resources to carry out its work and by monitoring the budget and expenditures:
 - ▶ Review and approve regularly provided financial statements
 - ▶ With the ED establishes the budget, approves it and regularly reviews it for variances
 - ▶ Spearhead fundraising efforts
 - ▶ Assess areas of risk and develop plans to mitigate or eliminate the risk

Things you need to know

- ▶ Are we projected to have a deficit or surplus? Why?
- ▶ If a deficit, have we sufficient unfettered reserves to cover it? If not, how will it be covered?
- ▶ If we achieve a surplus, what will happen with it? Do we have a policy specifying how surpluses will be handled?
- ▶ How realistic are the projections to year-end? What are the assumptions that underpin those projections?
- ▶ Is there a need for action now related to operations to deal with the variances and/or projections to year-end?

Key responsibilities cont'd.

4. Oversee the Board's operations by: determining its role; developing policy to govern its behaviour; evaluating its progress and effectiveness; and recruiting, training and evaluating individual board members
 - ▶ Develops policies that direct how the Board will govern itself, usually kept in a Board Governance Manual
 - ▶ Creates intentional documentation about how it will delegate its responsibilities to the Executive Director
 - ▶ Defines how the success of the organization will be measured and how the ED will report on its success

Things you need to know

- ▶ What traits and skills would be helpful for new Board members to exhibit? How do we ensure those characteristics are sought out in new board members?
- ▶ What is the role of Board Committees? What are the terms of reference for the committees? Do they act in the interests of good governance? How do they report/connect to the Board?
- ▶ What policies are in the Governance Manual? Are there others that are missing or need to be developed? How do we review the policies? How do we change them?
- ▶ What policies do we have to delegate the board's authority to the ED? What additional policies do we need?
- ▶ How do we measure our own success/challenges as a Board?

Relationship to the ED

- ▶ It is the Board's job to:
 - ▶ Ensure that the ED is protected from doing work that belongs to the Board (eg. orienting new board members, managing board succession, developing board policies etc)
 - ▶ Avoid making more work for the ED than is absolutely necessary; eg. reporting
 - ▶ Watch over the operations from a strategic standpoint. 'Eyes on, hands off'
 - ▶ Appraise the ED's management of the organization on pre-determined criteria and measurements; unfair to 'change the goalposts'

Governance vs Management

Type of decision	Governance Role (Board)	Management Role (ED)
Development of mission/vision/values	Creates or modifies	Relates decisions to the statements
Strategic plan	Co-creates	Co-creates
Board policies	Creates	Advisory role
Operational policies	Ensures they are in place	Creates and uses to guide
Communication	With membership and ED	With Board, staff, committees and community
Oversight	Board oversees ED	ED oversees all staff
Budget	Approves	Develops