

Housing Supports Initiative Profile

The Housing Supports Initiative, a \$2.56m program funded by the Government of Manitoba and administered by the Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association, is currently funding 19 unique projects that expand the capacity of organizations supporting people who are exiting or at risk of homelessness. The Initiative will run for two years, and is projected to improve the housing circumstances of around 450 individuals, and provide eviction prevention support to around 900 individuals.



Kinew Housing Inc. will connect with vulnerable tenants, preventing eviction and ensuring healthy tenancies and strong community relationships

Kinew Housing Inc. was created in Winnipeg in 1970 by a small group of community members who were concerned about the lack of decent and affordable housing available to Indigenous people in this city. At the time, Kinew Housing Inc. was the nation's first Indigenous-led non profit urban housing corporation. Kinew's success has stimulated the creation of many more urban Indigenous non-profit housing societies located across Canada.

Kinew focuses primarily on the acquisition and rehabilitation of older homes, and is using the HSI funding to hire a Housing Support Worker who is connecting with vulnerable tenants. In addition to helping create secure tenancies and prevent eviction, the Support Worker is undertaking a training program with Mediation Services.

Although the position is very new, results are already being seen. Kinew Manager, Lawrence Poirier, says "the Support Worker has been working with tenants to make sure they are staying on top of water and hydro bills, trying to make sure readings are accurate, bringing that aspect under control. The last thing we want is to evict someone because of a water bill". The Support Worker has also been working with tenants who struggle with hoarding, which Poirier says "is an ongoing process, from something as simple as bringing a handful of garbage bags to their home to connecting tenants to resources that can help them".

Kinew's properties are mainly single family homes with yards, and waste disposal and basic yard maintenance is the responsibility of the renter. When this is neglected a tenant runs the risk of garnering complaints based on the Neighbourhood Liveability By-law, which regulates the maintenance of properties. Accessing waste disposal services through 311 or navigating complex application systems for supportive programming can be onerous, and the Support Worker helps tenants move through these processes, ensuring they are aware of their responsibilities and reducing complaints from neighbours.