



Building Strength Through Shelter

Policy prescriptions for Indigenous
Healthy Energy Homes



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Recherche autochtone

**INDIGENOUS
CLEAN ENERGY**

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The Healthy Energy Homes concept



Photo Credit: Indigenous Clean Energy

- Energy efficient, climate resilient, and support the long-term well-being of inhabitants.
- Co-ordinated, wholistic, Indigenous-led approach.
- Preventative healthcare.

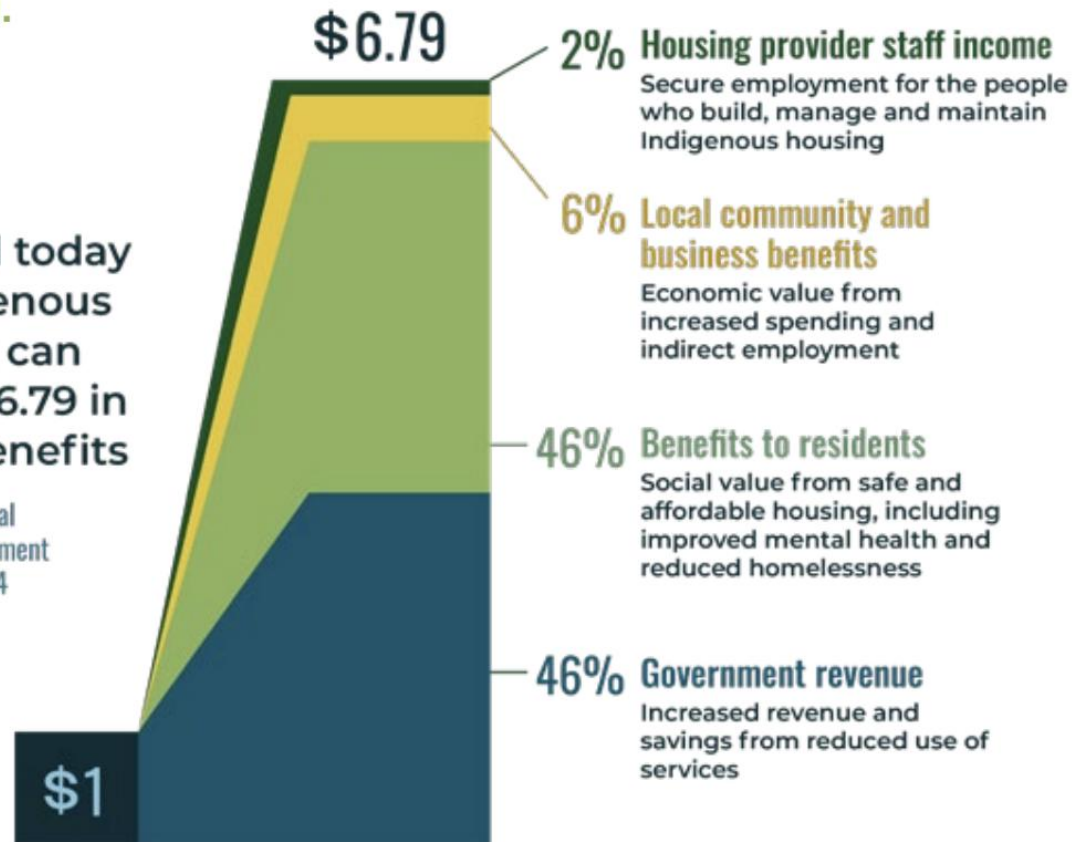
Investment pays off

FIGURE 5:

Investing in Indigenous housing pays off in the long run.

A dollar invested today in Indigenous housing can return \$6.79 in social benefits

Source: Aboriginal Housing Management Association 2024



The overlooked link between housing, health, energy and climate

Inadequate housing contributes to poor health



Yet housing-related healthcare costs are unvalued

Climate change magnifies impacts of inadequate housing



Yet climate and energy considerations are treated as add-ons

Key barriers to Healthy Energy Homes

Fragmented government accountabilities

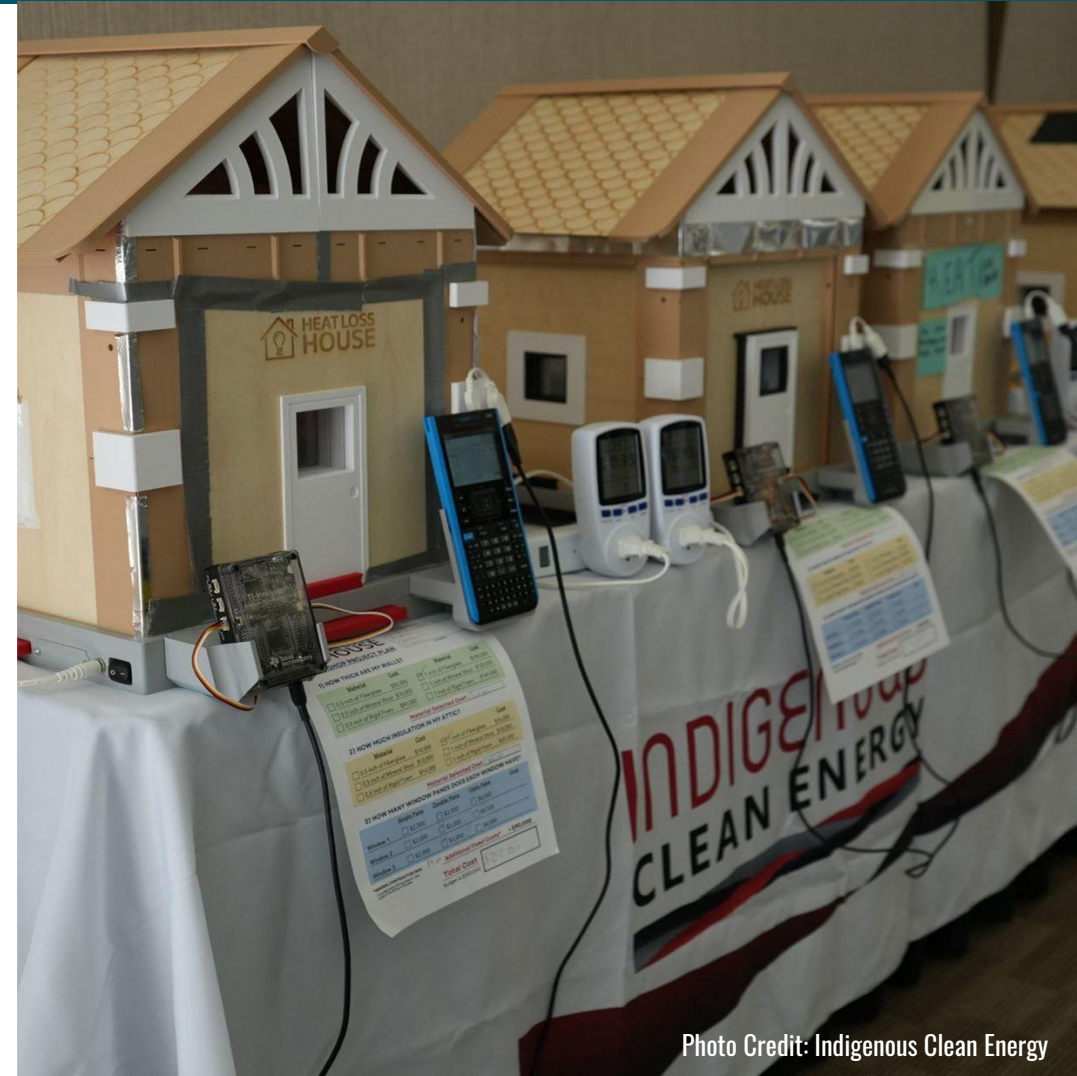
Insufficient, inflexible, short-term funding

Community capacity constraints



Key findings

- Healthy homes are fundamental to Indigenous health, well-being and self-determination.
- Current government approaches remain fragmented and fail to empower Indigenous leadership.
- Wholistic approaches deliver the most sustainable and equitable outcomes.



The solution

Collaborative policy +
innovative finance =
healthier people, stronger
communities, and climate
resilience

Integrated
government action

Co-development with
Indigenous leadership

Long-term investment

Wholistic reporting

Flexible funding
choices

Support capacity
building

Recommendation 1

Co-ordinate and integrate government action



Federal, provincial and territorial governments and their agencies should create explicit co-ordination mechanisms with Indigenous governments to integrate policy frameworks, reduce duplication, streamline access to resources, and re-allocate existing funding to support shared goals and benefits.

Recommendation 1

In practice

- Develop a single-window approach.
- Interdepartmental working group between main government agencies involved at the federal level should:
 - Take a collaborative approach to Indigenous housing.
 - Develop and implement a distinctions-based strategy.
 - Develop an Indigenous advisory council.
 - Identify opportunities to re-allocate or co-ordinate existing funds to maximize and more effectively distribute the resources available.

Recommendation 2

Co-develop policies and programs with Indigenous leadership



Federal, provincial and territorial governments and their agencies must co-design policies and programs with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leadership to ensure cultural relevance and regional adaptability. Co-development strengthens trust, enables tailored solutions, and reflects the principle of self-determination.

Recommendation 2

In practice

- Develop an approach to ensure all government agencies and programs are accountable for taking a distinctions-based approach.
- Co-develop a guiding document on best practices.
- Support training in Ethical Space.
- Work to co-create funding programs and initiatives to support the delivery of Healthy Energy Homes.
- Update building code standards.

Recommendation 3

Commit to long-term investment agreements



Federal, provincial and territorial governments should commit to multi-year funding agreements with Indigenous rights holders. Stable commitments enable long-term planning, the construction of new Healthy Energy Homes, upgrades and retrofits to existing housing, and investment in health measures such as indoor air quality monitoring.

Recommendation 3

In practice

- Invest in and prioritize long-term commitments and agreements co-created with Indigenous Nations, communities and organizations.
- Collaborate with Indigenous Nations, communities and organizations to map out phased approaches to long-term funding agreements.

Recommendation 4

Provide flexible funding options



Federal, provincial and territorial governments and their agencies should offer a range of funding models that allow Indigenous communities to select the approach most suited to their goals and capacity—whether traditional funding, blended finance, outcome-based agreements, or community-led mechanisms.

Recommendation 4

In practice

- Create open-ended funding programs.
- Create funding programs with increased flexibility in how funds can be spent.
- Create funding programs specific to pre-planning activities to support recipients in preparing for more “shovel-ready” funds.
- Explore and pilot an outcomes-based procurement program.

Recommendation 5

Measure the wholistic benefits and impacts of housing



Federal, provincial and territorial governments and their agencies should ensure that reporting requirements for housing projects capture social, cultural, environmental, and economic impacts—not just project outputs. This approach supports evidence-based decision-making, ensures future funding is better aligned with real outcomes, and reflects the lived experience of communities.

Recommendation 5

In practice

- Enable Indigenous Nations, communities and organizations to identify their own metrics of success.
- Co-develop evaluation frameworks with Indigenous rights holders from the outset to track metrics, impacts and progress.
- Draw on global examples (e.g. New Zealand, Ireland).

Recommendation 6

Ensure funding programs are accessible and capacity-responsive



Federal, provincial and territorial governments and their agencies should ensure funding programs are straightforward and accessible. Application and reporting processes should be simplified, and support training, skill building, and job creation to ensure communities can fully benefit from the opportunities available.

Recommendation 6

In practice

- Approach Indigenous communities to identify their needs and connect them with the appropriate agencies or resources.
- Build on accessible program models (e.g. radon testing library lending programs).
- Integrate funding specific to capacity-building initiatives in all funding allocations.

Reflection Question



How do you see these policy recommendations fitting into your work?