



Housing Resources Service

Summer 2024 Gathering Summary

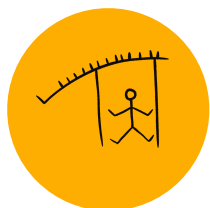
Time has quickly passed since our last Housing Resources Service (HRS) gathering in March. The HRS Summer 2024 Gathering was held July 3rd and 4th at the Sandman Hotel and Conference Centre in beautiful downtown Kamloops, BC.

Housing representatives from all three of the Tribal Nations – Secwépemc, Nlaka'pamux and Syilx, as well as representatives from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) participated in a full and informative one-and-a-half day gathering.

During the Summer 2024 Gathering, participants took part in the following interactive sessions and presentations:

- 1. Networking:** Panel of Peers & Funding and Support Partners
- 2. Asset Management Systems:** Presentation by Trevor Wiens of Louis Toolkit
- 3. FireSmart:** Programs and Funding Presentation by First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS)

The gathering began with an update from HRS which, included a review of the March Gathering, a presentation of the Strategic Plan, and the revised Data Collection Template which can all be found on the HRS website. Feedback from the presentation of the Data Collection Template have been incorporated into the form and we thank you for your input.



Panel of Peers & Funding and Support Partners

Many thanks to the following for their willingness to participate and share their wealth of knowledge and expertise during the Panel of Peers and Partners segment of the agenda: Jordana McIvor-Grismer, Upper Nicola Band; Tahnea Alphonse, Esk'etemc; Jesse Goodwater-Paul, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc; Jeff Mercer, Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC); Pardeep Sidhu, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

So many good and useful pieces of information and suggestions came from the free flowing conversation.

Peer Tips

There were many helpful tips generated for those working in Housing from those working in the field and we have grouped them into 3 themes: Planning and Asset Management, Projects, and Everyday Operations.



Theme 1: Planning and Asset Management

- There is a need for software to track renovations to put what is in your head into an e-file so others can have the information.
- Plan to address both under housing and over housing
- Complete a Housing Needs Assessment
- Strategic Plans and Comprehensive Community Plans always support funding requests and further demonstrate project readiness – planning readiness is key to successful funding proposals.
- Have a Housing Projection and Absorption Plan ready.
- Gather current data that will be needed to access programs and complete reports

Theme 2: Projects

- Hire a Project Manager to assist with staying on track, within budget and in alignment with what the band wants to achieve.
- Spend allocated funds so you don't have to send them back – this means proper planning so you don't run out of time to spend funds.
- Diversity of tenant incomes is necessary to make projects viable.
- Have information ready for rapid housing – infrastructure, need, contribution (OSR), etc.
- BC Housing will work with Bands to project rents.
- Establishing rents is critical for both the affordability to tenants and the viability of the project.
- Rents should be affordable according to the Band's socioeconomics and not that of the local municipality or province.

(List continued on next page.)

- Be “shovel ready” at all times by having a Class A cost analysis done, a housing needs assessment, workforce data, band-owned equipment availability, land base information etc.
- Serviced lots are ideal because approved projects on unserviced lots does not include the infrastructure costs.
- Water/waste project funding and sub-division funding is demographic data driven
- ISC supports projects that have demographic studies and these studies are funded by ISC.
- CMHC funds some needs assessment projects and there is seed funding to plan projects.
- Key pieces of information that get projects approved: inspection reports for renovations complete with contractor quotes and timelines. If total cost exceeds the subsidy then confirmation of other funds is needed to support the application. Submit clear, complete plans that answer who, what, where, when and how with a project team plan and Class A where applicable.
- Funding sources (that can sometimes be stacked) are ISC, CMHC, FNMHF and BC Housing.

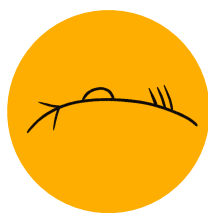
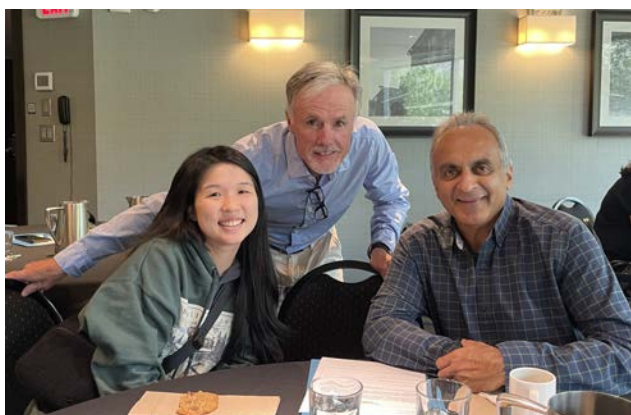
Theme 3: Everyday

- Set boundaries and do things one step at a time.
- Do your best to answer questions because “people just want to hear an answer”. Ignoring people just makes them angry.
- Don’t assume you know the facts – always ensure your data and information is reliable.
- Remove people from Housing Waitlists if they haven’t updated their application in a year.
- Try your best to prevent or address rental arrears before they become unmanageable.

Table Exercise – Community Case Studies

The participants organized into 3 groups. Each led by the community who had their shared project selected from a random draw. The projects varied in size and type from a water project to a 24 unit housing project to renovations. Inspections, management, funding, sourcing, and planning were all topics of discussion during this interactive session. Giving and receiving of ideas, project wins and learning from mishaps and unknowns were all valuable learning opportunities.

By the end of the day, it was evident that all of the information collected and shared once again proved just how important it is to network and lift one another up. It is through the sharing of knowledge that we strengthen each other.



Asset Management Systems

Asset management is a reoccurring topic of conversation at past HRS gatherings. The HRS gathering last March really drove home the realization that Housing Managers are responsible for housing assets with multi-million dollar values. The majority of these multi-million dollar portfolios are not adequately recorded in any kind of asset management system.

So, HRS did some research and after noting that the Louis Toolkit was favourably reviewed by a number of different First Nations, HRS invited Trevor Wiens to present to the HRS staff and a member of the HRS Steering Committee. The presentation went well and Trevor was invited to present the Louis Toolkit at the Summer Gathering.

After the presentation, Trevor answered questions from the audience and it was clear that Trevor is willing to tailor the software according to the unique needs of communities and also build upon the networking capabilities of the software.

Four of the nine communities present at the gathering expressed a great interest in learning more about the Louis Toolkit and the possibility of participating in a pilot project to launch the software if funding and support can be secured. The other five communities either already have an asset management system they are using or have developed their own systems.

HRS will continue to pursue asset management options and will keep everyone informed.

More information about the Louis Toolkit can be found on the [HRS website](#).



Preparing for Wildfire Season

At the March gathering First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) did an amazing and informative session on how to reduce the risk of fires in the home. The session was so well liked that HRS invited FNESS's FireSmart Team to share what services they provide to mitigate fire risk outside the home and in the communities.



HRS was pleased to have Malina Garner, Dan Stevens, and Amanda Reynolds do a fabulous presentation about the programs and services available to communities to help protect homes and properties in the event of wildfires. They were enthusiastic and very knowledgeable. They fielded some very good questions and provided some good written resources which are available on the [HRS website](#).

Fun at the Gathering

The winner of the Loonie Auction, with all proceeds going to the winner's chosen charity, was Maria Beaurain from Neskonlith. Maria's number was drawn and she took home a Ribbon Skirt and a fabulous Yeti cooler filled with all sorts of goodies.



Gathering Evaluations

The gathering was a success, once again, due to the participation and exchange of knowledge between the communities. HRS continues to learn from the feedback received from participants and is what is used to help us grow and deliver community driven resources that set the agenda for future gatherings.

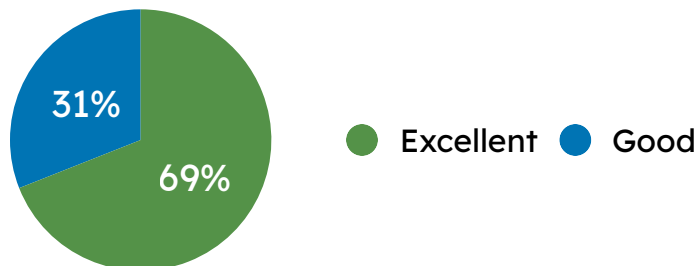
The completed evaluations scored as follows:



Question 1. The Session was productive and a good use of time.



Question 2. As a result of attending the Gathering, I have gained knowledge that will assist our community.



Question 3. There was sufficient opportunity to contribute and engage in discussion during the Gathering.

Question 4. How would you rate the following:

- HRS Update: 62% Excellent; 38% Good
- Strategic Plan Review: 46% Excellent; 64% Good
- Data Collection Template: 54% Excellent; 46% Good
- Panel of Peers, Challenges/Wins of a Housing Manager: 62% Excellent; 38% Good
- Louis Toolkit Presentation: 62% Excellent; 38% Good
- FireSmart Presentation: 62% Excellent; 38% Good

Question 5. How would you rate the following aspects of the Gathering:

- Facilities 38% Excellent 54% Good 8% Fair
- Speakers 62% Excellent 38% Good
- Format 62% Excellent 38% Good

Question 6. Would any of the following areas of training interest you, if provided?

- Excel: 54% interested
- Outlook: 31% interested
- SharePoint: 69% interested
- Zoom: 38% interested

Question 7. Would you like a community visit?

46% responded yes but not all respondents are from communities thus skewing the data.

Future housing topics to explore: seasonal preparations, any and all, maintenance planning and training, community success stories.

In Closing

Given this valuable feedback we will be planning the next gathering accordingly.

Thank you again for allowing HRS to work alongside you in this adventure to make a better future for those seeking housing for generations yet to come.

