



Making a difference...together

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File: 0230-20

To Federal and Provincial Funding Agencies:

Re: Support for the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society

I am writing to express the Capital Regional District's (CRD) support for the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society's (ACEH) request to secure core funding for at least five years in order to deliver on its mandate of providing culturally supportive housing, land-based healing, managed alcohol programs and other cultural supports to Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness on Vancouver Island.

Since 2016 – relying almost solely on one-time patched-together grant funding – the ACEH has made incredible strides in working to meaningfully engage Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness in the capital region and in beginning to provide culturally appropriate housing and health support services. These vital support services can no longer be effectively delivered in an ad hoc way and the ACEH now seeks stable and predictable annual funding.

The CRD has provided \$150,000 per year for three years in support of the services the ACEH provides to address the needs of the disproportionate number of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness. This contribution, though instrumental in supporting the work in the early years, is not able to keep pace with the increasing demand for the critical services the Society provides. While Indigenous Peoples make up 4.8% (2016) of the general population in the CRD, they make up approximately 35% of those experiencing homelessness. The ACEH has a mandate to change this and are demonstrating early success, including:

- Recent opening of Spa'qun House, the first culturally supportive housing site in Canada, where 21 Indigenous women who were identified as the most at risk segment of the homeless population are now residing in a safe, secure, supportive housing building with embedded cultural and clinical supports to meet their specific needs;
- Designing and implementing a Managed Alcohol and Land Based Healing Program at Cultural Supportive House, a small housing site in downtown Victoria;
- Outreach and distributed support services to Indigenous Peoples residing in parks so they may be more formally connected to services that can best accommodate their cultural and clinical/social health needs;
- Delivering nutrition boxes to those who are housing and food insecure; and
- Providing transition and in-reach support services to Indigenous Peoples as part of the CRD's Regional Housing First Program, a \$120 million partnership between the CRD, BC Housing and Island Health.

The ACEH has made tremendous strides in working collaboratively to meet the needs of our region's Indigenous Peoples and, though working with a relatively small team, has had a tremendous impact on the lives of those the Society serves. Building on this success and taking the next steps in rising to meet the demand will require additional capacity and resourcing. I truly hope the ACEH can count on your support in providing the funding needed to sustain the organization and to provide the life-changing housing and healing opportunities that are both necessary and befitting for Indigenous Peoples in this region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin Plant', is positioned below the closing 'Sincerely,'.

Colin Plant
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

cc: CRD Board
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD
Kevin Lorette, General Manager, Planning & Protective Services, CRD