

Tenant Advocacy Toolkit

About this Toolkit

This toolkit has been created to help you advocate for your affordable housing needs ahead of the impending loss of government subsidies in 2028. Included in this document are helpful resources you can use to make your voice heard by elected officials and members of your communities.

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Your needs matter! Your voice matters!

Elected officials will pay more attention to this issue when they hear from you and other people directly affected by it. **Together, we can send a strong message that affordable housing for Indigenous people is important to protect.**

Please get in touch with us at info@makola.bc.ca if you have any questions about using this toolkit.

Key Information

- M'akola Housing Society (MHS) has 528 rental homes that will lose their government subsidies when operating agreements expire by March 31, 2028.
- This funding that allows MHS to offer deeply affordable rents comes from the federal government, through their Urban Native Housing funding program. The funding is delivered by an operating agreement made between the government and MHS.
- More than three-quarters (76%) of the people living in these rentals are paying “shelter rate” rents, the most affordable price available in British Columbia. We recognize that many tenants can not afford to pay higher rent. This is why we are advocating for government subsidies to be renewed.
- If the subsidies are allowed to expire, MHS will need to increase the rental prices to cover the costs of maintaining buildings, completing necessary repairs, insurance, property taxes, and ensuring safe, quality homes for residents.
- There is a major shortage of subsidized rental homes across BC. People who depend on deeply affordable rent will struggle to find an alternative option if these subsidies are allowed to expire.
- We are asking that Federal and Provincial leaders work with MHS and other housing providers to protect these affordable homes. Our ask of them includes:
 - Renewing or replacing expiring housing operating agreements
 - Continued government investment in building affordable Indigenous housing
 - Work with housing providers such as M'akola Housing Society to develop long-term solutions that protect affordability for current and future tenants
 - Ensure that Indigenous families and Elders are not displaced due to rising housing costs
- Protecting these deeply affordable rentals directly supports government commitments to reduce Indigenous homelessness, restore housing affordability, advance the right to housing, and support reconciliation.
- Preserving existing Indigenous affordable housing is not only a practical housing solution, but it is also an investment in community well-being and economic stability.

List of Elected Officials by Area

Contacting your elected officials via social media or email is a very effective way of making an issue matter to someone who can influence government decision making.

Who to contact:

Your Community	Your MP	Your MLA
Duncan	Jeff Kibble jeff.kibble@parl.gc.ca	Debra Toporowski Debra.Toporowski.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Esquimalt	Stephanie McLean stephanie.mclean@parl.gc.ca	Darlene Rotchford Darlene.Rotchford.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Langford	Jeff Kibble jeff.kibble@parl.gc.ca	Ravi Parmar Ravi.Parmar.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Nanaimo	Tamara Kronis Tamara.Kronis@parl.gc.ca	Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo - Gabriola) sheila.malcolmson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
		George Anderson (Nanaimo - Lantzville) George.Anderson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
North Cowichan	Jeff Kibble jeff.kibble@parl.gc.ca	Debra Toporowski Debra.Toporowski.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Port Alberni	Gord Johns gord.johns@parl.gc.ca	Josie Osborne Josie.Osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Prince Rupert	Ellis Ross ellis.ross@parl.gc.ca	Tamara Davidson Tamara.Davidson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Saanich	Will Greaves will.greaves@parl.gc.ca	Nina Krieger Nina.Krieger.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Terrace	Ellis Ross ellis.ross@parl.gc.ca	Claire Rattée Claire.Rattee.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Victoria	Will Greaves will.greaves@parl.gc.ca	Grace Lore (Victoria – Beacon Hill) Grace.Lore.MLA@leg.bc.ca
		Nina Krieger (Victoria – Swan Lake) Nina.Krieger.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Housing Ministers	Gregor Robertson gregor.robertson@parl.gc.ca	Christine Boyle Christine.Boyle.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Raise Awareness on Social Media

A great way to increase support for our cause is to share real human impact stories on social media. Sharing how losing affordable housing will impact your life will show others, especially elected officials, how important it is to renew funding.

We encourage you to use one of the examples we've created below. If you're comfortable doing so, you can also personalize your post by changing what we've included to better reflect your life and your needs.

Tips for making an effective post:

- How will the loss of affordable housing impact your life? Let others know.
- Make your post personal, short, and readable.
- Include a call for elected officials to work with M'akola Housing Society to renew funding for Urban Native Housing.
- **Tag elected officials in your area (see who to include on page 9).**
- Include hashtags: *#ProtectVulnerableTenants #ProtectAffordableHousing*.
- Add a photo of you / your family, ideally in front of your home, to highlight that there are real people being affected by the loss of funding.
 - You can use one of our graphics included in this document if you're uncomfortable sharing a personal photo.

Example Social Media Posts

Single Person

I'm worried about what the future holds for me and my home. I live in a deeply affordable rental operated by M'akola Housing Society, and like many of my neighbours, I rely on this support to make ends meet. Funding from the federal government makes this possible, but when funding for Urban Native Housing comes to an end in 2028, our rent is going to double.

With affordable housing already in short supply across BC, finding another place to live isn't a realistic option for us. I'm asking [tag elected officials here] for your help. Please work with M'akola Housing Society and other housing providers to renew expiring housing agreements, and ensure people aren't displaced because they can no longer afford the place they call home.

#ProtectVulnerableTenants #ProtectAffordableHousing

Family

For X years, my family has lived in affordable housing provided by M'akola Housing Society. It's given us a stable place to live, my kids go to school nearby, and we've made strong connections to the people and places in our neighbourhood. We're at risk of losing our home when government funding expires, and I don't know what we're going to do. We can't afford to pay thousands of dollars a month extra, and there's nowhere else for us to go with a shortage of affordable housing for low-income families.

Losing access to affordable housing is going to have a devastating impact on us and other Indigenous families across the province, but the federal and provincial governments have the power to stop this. They can renew funding for Urban Native Housing so that hundreds of families like ours don't face homelessness. Please share if you support affordable housing for Indigenous families.

[tag elected officials in your post here]

#ProtectVulnerableTenants #ProtectAffordableHousing

Elder

I'm an Elder living on a fixed income, and for many years I've been living in affordable housing provided by M'akola Housing. My home provides me with security, independence, and connections to the support I need in my community. Sadly, I've learned that I will lose my affordable housing when government funding for Urban Native Housing ends in 2028. This worries me because it's already hard to pay for food and medication with affordable rent, and I don't know how I'll afford it all when my rent doubles without government support.

My home is where I feel safe, connected, and supported. I'm asking Federal and Provincial leaders to work with M'akola Housing Society and other housing providers to protect affordable homes and ensure Elders are not forced to leave their communities because of rising housing costs.

[tag elected officials in your post here]

#ProtectVulnerableTenants #ProtectAffordableHousing

Living with Disability

I live with a disability and rely on financial assistance to cover my basic needs. My subsidized rent is one of the few reasons I can make it work, but it's going to drastically increase in 2028 when government housing subsidies end. This is going to leave me short on money for food, medications, transportation, and other needs.

Access to affordable housing is the difference between stability and crisis. I need Federal and Provincial leaders to work with M'akola Housing Society to renew funding agreements to help me survive. Please help spread the word.

[tag elected officials in your post here]

#ProtectVulnerableTenants #ProtectAffordableHousing

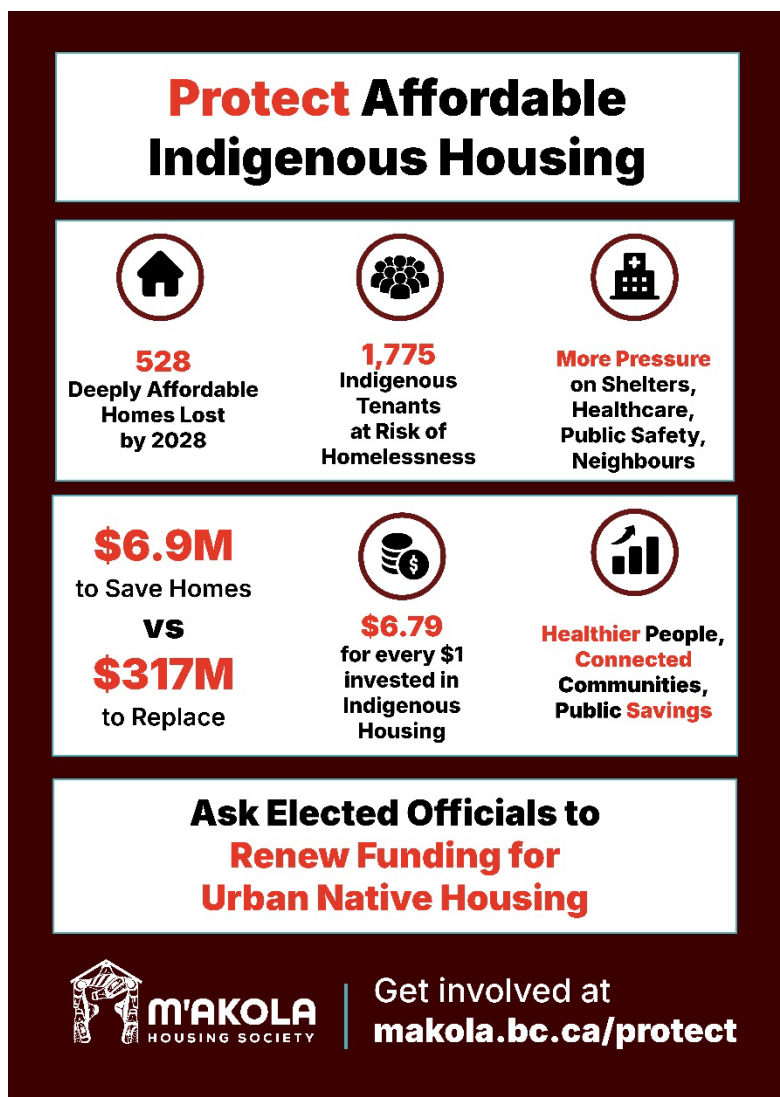
Social Media Images

If you aren't comfortable including a picture of you or your family, we suggest choosing one of these 3 image options for your social media post(s).

- 1) A campaign infographic that highlights key information about the issue and solution.
- 2) What's at stake graphics showing funding decisions will impact people and communities.
- 3) One of the following Protect Affordable Indigenous Housing images.

You can click [this link](#) to download the graphics.

#1 - Campaign Infographic



#2 – What's at Stake Comparisons

What's at stake?

What We Keep

- ✓ *Indigenous affordable homes*
- ✓ *Community connections*
- ✓ *Cultural and family support networks*
- ✓ *Housing stability*
- ✓ *Peace of mind*

What We Risk Losing

- ✗ *Housing affordability*
- ✗ *Neighbourhood ties*
- ✗ *Support systems*
- ✗ *Financial stability*
- ✗ *A place to call home*

Get involved at makola.bc.ca/protect



What's at stake?

If Funding is Protected

- ✓ *Maintain affordable rents*
- ✓ *Stable housing for Indigenous singles, families and Elders*
- ✓ *Tenants remain in their communities*
- ✓ *Safeguard access to community connections and support*
- ✓ *Employment and school stability*

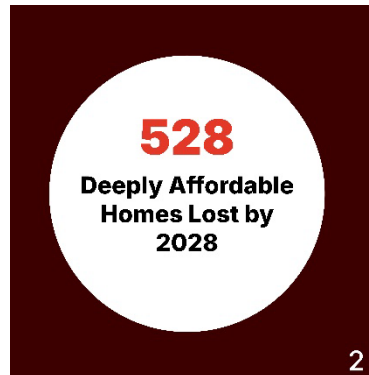
If Funding Expires

- ✗ *Unsustainable rent increases*
- ✗ *Increased risk of homelessness*
- ✗ *Higher risk of tenant displacement*
- ✗ *Loss of community connections*
- ✗ *Disruptions to work, school and other important activities*

Get involved at makola.bc.ca/protect



3- Protect Affordable Indigenous Housing Image Series



Emailing Elected Officials

Contacting elected officials directly is a great way to bring attention to this issue. Here are some tips on how to contact them, along with an email template you can use.

Tips for your email

- Talk about how the loss of affordable housing will impact your life.
- Include a call for elected officials to work with M’akola Housing Society to renew funding for Urban Native Housing.
- Ask to meet with them in person (if you feel comfortable doing so).

Affordable housing has helped me:	Without affordable housing, I would struggle to:
keep a roof over my head during difficult times	avoid falling into homelessness
stay in the community where I have built my life	remain in the community I call home
afford the rising costs of groceries, utilities and transportation	keep up with rising living costs
remain connected to family members and friends in my community	stay close to my family and support network
stay close to the people and services I rely on	continue living independently
build a career working in my community	attend work and remain employed
participate in cultural activities in my community	connect with my community and my culture
provide a stable and safe place for my kids to grow up	provide a better life for my children
keep my kids in the same school as their friends and teachers	provide a safe and stable environment for my kids to grow up
support family members who rely on me	have the time to care for others
invest in my future career success	complete my education
save money to safeguard against emergencies	pay my monthly bills and avoid taking on debt
pay for medications and healthcare expenses	afford the necessities of life
reduce the stress and anxiety that comes with unaffordable housing costs	maintain my mental and physical health
build a better future for myself and my family	feel secure about my future

Email Template

Dear [Elected Official]

I recently learned that the operating agreement that funds my subsidized housing is set to expire in March 2028. Without government support for Urban Native Housing, my rent will more than double, far beyond what I can afford. Like many people living in M'akola housing, I rely on shelter-rate rent to make ends meet, and finding another place to live at the same price isn't a realistic option.

Losing access to affordable housing is going to have a devastating impact on us and other Indigenous families across the province. The federal and provincial governments have the power to stop this.

I respectfully ask that you:

- Advocate for the renewal or replacement of expiring housing operating agreements;
- Support continued government investment in affordable Indigenous housing;
- Work with housing providers such as M'akola Housing Society to develop long-term solutions that protect affordability for current and future tenants; and
- Ensure that Indigenous families and Elders are not displaced due to rising housing costs.

Please help ensure that people like me don't lose access to affordable housing because of the expiration of these agreements.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering the impact this issue will have on residents in your community. I would appreciate hearing how you will support Indigenous affordable housing.

Thank you,

[Your Name]