



Qalipu First Nation  
**Housing Strategy**



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## 1.0 Introduction

The Qalipu First Nation has undertaken this initiative to establish a long-term vision and strategy to address the housing needs of the Qalipu membership.

The QFN has delivered housing assistance programs since its formation in 2011, and prior to the formation of the QFN the Federation of Newfoundland Indians was quite active in the delivery of housing repair programs. In that sense the QFN has a strong history of assisting members with housing needs.

The program responses to date have been a result of time limited federal funding programs that have enabled the QFN to deliver some housing repair services directly. Anecdotally, the QFN knows that these programs have had a profound impact on the lives of the members who have been able to access them. The lived experience and knowledge of Chief and Council, and QFN civil service, tells a story of a large and critical unmet demand that exceeds the ability of periodic short term funding programs to effectively respond.

It is this knowledge and awareness that provides the impetus for the development of a comprehensive Housing Strategy that will proactively plan for long term solutions to verified and quantified housing requirements. It is in many ways a structural strategy that incorporates planning for a strong foundation for future programming.

All strategies and plans must strike a balance between planning and doing. Research and data collection are important in terms of ensuring that the decision to set priorities and allocate resources are based on empirical and verified data. That does not however preclude acting on broader known needs while research is ongoing.

In its early-stage implementation, the Strategy will strengthen program delivery through a strong policy, procedures and evaluation framework, and an assessment of the capacity and structure of the Department to respond to the priorities of the Strategy. The Strategy will also facilitate member access to existing government programs and services through a formalized community outreach initiative, source funding programs that allow the QFN to directly deliver services and build beneficial partnerships.

In the medium term, the Strategy will work toward development of a strong empirical understanding of the housing needs of the membership, identify long term solutions and build the capacity of the Department to implement the Housing Strategy.

The long-term implementation of the Strategy will focus on public sector and private industry efforts to provide the long-term solutions identified by the Housing Strategy.

The development and implementation of the Housing Strategy will be guided by an Advisory Committee of Stakeholders where the QFN is represented by members of the Standing Committee of the Department of Health and Wellness.

Due to its nature of being a ‘Foundational’ Strategy, the Advisory Committee will review the document at an Annual Housing Forum, evaluate progress and adjust as required.

Implementation of the QFN Housing Strategy will require the following:

- Support and funding of the Qalipu First Nation to develop and sustain the human resource infrastructure necessary to successfully evolve and implement the Strategy;
- Funding and resources from both the Federal and Provincial Government to develop and implement housing solutions.
- Ongoing engagement with provincial housing organizations to ensure coordination and maximum effectiveness; and
- Ongoing collaboration with provincial and national Indigenous Housing Sector organizations to exchange knowledge, build capacity and develop joint solutions.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Housing Strategy

The Qalipu First Nation Housing Program will utilize a strategic approach to addressing the various housing needs of the Qalipu Mi’kmaq. The services provided through our housing program respond to the immediate needs of our people, while actively working to build for the long-term supporting responsive housing solutions that adapt to the changes within the community and strengthening economic growth to ensure affordability for future generations. Beyond the services outlined below, the overall focus of our housing program is to bring together all interested parties along with evolving information regarding the housing market (both internal & external) to create a supportive housing system for the Qalipu Mi’kmaq. This system will promote safety, affordability, and help position our People to take advantage of the social and economic benefits a home can provide.

## 2.0 Statement of Principles

### 2.1 Vision

Qalipu will develop long term, sustainable housing development programs that are affordable and obtainable with a wide range of housing options that contribute to the health, wellness, safety, and betterment of all our people. While building on our strengths and successes, QFN will continue to work closely with our members to become a leader among First Nations, paving the way for other Indigenous groups to develop sustainable housing initiatives.

### 2.2 Mission

Qalipu Mi’kmaq First Nation (QFN) exists to achieve the advancement of our people. We accomplish this through being spiritual, accountable, professional, and progressive. QFN will leverage its existing capacities while building strong partnerships to provide affordable housing opportunities to ensure the betterment of our members through addressing various housing needs and bridge current gaps in the housing sector.

### 2.3 Housing Beliefs and Principles

It is the belief of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation that housing is recognized as a social determinant of health and wellness. Lack of housing or poor-quality housing can negatively affect an individual's physical and mental wellbeing. Our mission is based on the beliefs that:

- Housing is a Human Right
- Proper housing and shelter are basic human requirement(s) to living
- As an Indigenous organization, it is our responsibility to support our members and ensure that our communities are self-sustaining and supportive of one another
- No person(s) should go without adequate, safe housing

The future of housing for the Qalipu Mi'kmaq is bright, as it will meet the needs of our communities regardless of their individual situations. QFN housing development strategy plan will be responsive in supporting access to accommodations that are affordable and safe, with opportunities that promote home ownership as a means of financial independence and security.

QFN will improve our housing situation by building/buying, owning rental properties to create the jobs and business opportunities that further the possibilities of quality housing options. QFN will draw on our collective communal wealth and renewable resources to maximize our collective financial resources and minimize the impact on our natural environment.

Housing for our People is about placing an importance on youth, families, and seniors to strengthen our community, continue the growth of our culture, and keep us connected to who we are.

## 3.0 Goals and Objectives of the QFN Housing Strategy

All strategies and plans must strike a balance between planning and doing. Research and data collection are important in terms of ensuring that the decision to set priorities and allocate resources are based on empirical and verified data.

### 3.1 Housing Resources

**Goal:** The QFN will connect members with resources and supports that are responsive to their identified housing needs.

**Objectives:**

- Develop a handbook of housing related community resources and make it available to the membership.
- Facilitate access to housing programs and services.
- Continue to seek resources for, and offer, the Elma'timk Emergency Housing Support Program.
- Identify Home Repair and Renovations Programs available to the QFN and seek additional financial resources.
- Assess capacity of the Health and Wellness Department to develop and implement the housing strategy.
- Explore the need and rationale for a separate Standing Committee on Housing separate from Health and Wellness.
- Measure the success of the Housing Strategy on an annual basis.
- Host an annual Housing Forum.

### 3.2 Policies and Procedures

**Goal:** The QFN will develop a framework for the development of policies and procedures to guide program design, delivery and evaluation.

**Objectives:**

- Develop Policies and Procedures for the development and delivery of housing programs and services.
- Ensure that each individual program and service clearly articulates the need that it is addressing and incorporates goals, objectives and an evaluation design to measure impact and success.
- Standardize design processes for program development and delivery.
- Reach a determination on how the housing strategy apply to members who live outside the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Review all new proposed programs and services with the Qalipu senior management team to identify areas of potential integration and collaboration.

### 3.3 Community Outreach

**Goal:** The QFN will develop a process of comprehensive communication and engagement with the Qalipu membership to increase awareness of financial assistance opportunities, services and supports available through the QFN Housing Program.

**Objectives:**

- Create a profile of each of the groups targeted under this strategy.
- Identify the communication needs of each target group of the Qalipu membership.
- Craft and refine messages for each of the programs and services provided under the housing strategy.
- Tailor messaging across appropriate channels.
- Build capacity of community leadership to facilitate program access.
- Measure impact of the community outreach.

### 3.4 Partnerships

**Goal:** The QFN will develop and communicate with a collaborative network of partners that need to be engaged in support of successful implementation of the Housing Strategy.

**Objectives:**

- Conduct a stakeholder engagement analysis for the housing strategy.
- Develop communication tools and approaches for effective ongoing engagement.
- Develop partnerships with existing Qalipu Housing providers regarding housing options for groups with multiple barriers.
- Ongoing engagement with nongovernmental housing organizations to ensure coordination and maximum effectiveness.
- Cultivate ongoing collaborative working relationships with provincial and national Indigenous Housing Sector organizations to exchange knowledge, build capacity and develop joint solutions.
- Participate in ongoing collaborative working relationships with the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs and the Assembly of First Nations to advocate for Indigenous housing solutions.
- Explore a partnership with Federal and Provincial representatives to act as an Advisory Committee to drive the strategy.

### 3.5 Research and Planning

**Goal:** The QFN will build a solid foundation for the QFN Housing Strategy through a comprehensive understanding of member housing needs.



**Objectives:**

- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the housing needs of the Qalipu membership.
- Develop an Ongoing Survey Process to update individual and community housing needs.
- Prepare a housing development plan for each ward that identifies priorities and incorporates public housing and private sector partnership options.
- Improve our understanding of the housing market in the various wards.
- Identify areas of greatest housing needs and determine if the appropriate approach is private or public.
- Develop a list of key skilled Qalipu members that would be of value to the implementation of the Housing Strategy.
- Enhance Indigenous Housing Expertise through training and employment opportunities associated with the implementation of the Housing Strategy.
- Document best practices in other similar jurisdictions and evaluate how they may apply to QFN.

### 3.6 Residential Property Development – Private Sector

**Goal:** The QFN will collaborate with the private sector to develop appropriate housing solutions for Qalipu members.

**Objectives:**

- Prepare a discussion paper on potential private sector engagement in providing housing solutions
- Develop an MOU with Qalipu Development Corporation regarding evaluation and referral of housing business opportunities.
- Provide developers with a Findings Report for accommodations demand in each ward based on the comprehensive needs assessment.

### 3.7 Residential Property Development – Public Sector

**Goal:** The QFN will bridge current gaps in the affordable housing sector through the acquisition and/or development of publicly owned housing assets.

**Objectives:**

- Provide affordable housing opportunities
- Evaluate investment opportunities
- Enhance the QFN financial capacity to develop additional housing units.



### 3.8 Client Service Priorities

**Goal:** The QFN will provide Qalipu members access to housing programs and services that meet their needs for safe, appropriate, and affordable housing.

**Objectives:**

- Ensure individuals have an opportunity to remain in their homes and avoid having to relocate.
- Work with clients to create housing plans that respond to their individual situations (current & future).
- Maintain strong social networks and community relations among seniors and community members.
- Provide support to individuals in preparing applications to Housing Programs.
- Connect clients to those support service that help stabilize their individual social, mental and economic health and wellbeing.
- Develop projects and additional programs to promote and advance the potential for home ownership for community members, especially first-time homebuyers and single parent families.
- Work with other Qalipu service providers and agencies to develop initiatives that leverage resources that reduce repair costs to clients.

## Appendix

### Background

The Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band (QFN) was officially formed on September 22, 2011, through an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI). QFN is comprised of over 67 traditional Mi'kmaq communities across Newfoundland and Labrador. This agreement officially recognizes QFN as a band under the Indian Act, and currently has an excess of 23,000 members representing the largest landless band in Atlantic Canada.

QFN has experienced significant capacity growth since its formation. Over the past ten (10) years there has been continuous development of the operational structure of QFN's administration which in turn supports the programs and services available to its members. QFN has offices in Grand Falls-Windsor, Glenwood, St. George's, Stephenville, and Corner Brook to support the membership and community.

In late October 2018, a working Housing Committee was formed to better understand the needs and concerns of QFN membership to guide future direction and efforts with regards to housing and accommodations. QFN's role is to find partnerships, solutions and opportunities that will meet the needs of our membership and communities.

To facilitate discussion and possible solutions, the housing committee conducted a review of programs and services and conducted its own housing and accommodations survey (2019 and updated 2020). There were multiple staff planning and discussions sessions around the Housing Program. Additional feedback and input were gathered from an engagement session QFN Council in December 2020.

The surveys, discussions, and consultations resulted in a Draft Housing Program document that detailed the 'Who, What, Where and How' of the Qalipu First Nation Housing Strategy. This document then grew into the Draft Housing Development Strategy Plan 2022-2027.

QFN 2022 Housing Development Strategic Plan (HDSP) is a five-year plan that will fully support the current and long-term housing needs of our band members.

### Housing History

In 2009, before the formation of QFN, Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI) agreed with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) on terms regarding an off reserve aboriginal housing trust proposal. Based on the consensus reached by the group, FNI was in receipt of \$1,025,000.00 (41% of available funding) with a total of \$2,500,000.00 being allocated to FNI and Labrador Metis Association, Miawpukek First Nation, and other off reserve aboriginal people, including Innu and Inuit (delivered by NLHC).

The focus of the outlined program was to provide housing repair and renovations to members who were living on a fixed income (maximum combined annual household income of \$35,000). Applications were reviewed and eligibility determined by a standing housing review committee. Eligible applicants were provided up to \$8,000.00 to support required repairs and renovations. Housing inspections were conducted by a member of FNI council and necessary repairs were recorded and prioritized. With priorities and policies in place, a reimbursement structured funding program was in place. Follow up inspections were conducted to assure completion of each renovation project.

Housing repair and renovations were conducted from 2009 and 2010. With a high demand and large volume of applications received, approximately 130 households benefited from the program. Due to lack of band ran programs members were required to use provincial or federal ran programs, a substantial number of applications were denied program funding support.

In 2021, QFN secured funding to offer Elma'timk: To Go Home – an Emergency Housing Support Program. All categories for the Program closed as of March 15, 2022, with applications surpassing funding capacity.

The need for this programming under its categories of Emergency Short Term Accommodations, Shelter Diversion and Prevention, and Emergency Housing Repair and Maintenance was evident and thoroughly recorded. The Housing Division under the department of Qalipu First Nation Health and Wellness will continue to seek additional funding for this program and similar related opportunities for our members.

QFN has also successfully secured funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation to undertake possible residential housing development(s) including:

- Analysis of need and demand for potential projects;
- Special purpose surveys,
- Preliminary financial feasibility,
- Business plan and
- Incorporation

This is funding supports residential development in Corner Brook. As of January 2022, QFN has explored two possible residential development; including a renovation property and a new construction. Both properties were not feasible at the current time, and QFN continues to seek opportunities to advance its residential housing goals.