MUNHA
Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association

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Executive Policy Committee Meeting
Monday, March 14, 2011

Re: HRIR cuts in 2011/12 will hurt Aboriginal housing groups

The decision to reduce the level of funding in the Housing Rehabilitation and Investment Reserve by $500,000 at the Property and Development Committee meeting of March 10th is a huge concern to the Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association (MUNHA) and the nine (9) non-profit Winnipeg housing groups it serves.

About our organization

MUNHA is an association representing Aboriginal non-profit organizations across the province – 9 within the City of Winnipeg – with primary or secondary mandates to provide affordable housing to low-income Aboriginal families. MUNHA provides a variety of service and coordination supports to its membership, including advocacy and capacity development activities. The organization works towards a collective and well-informed approach to addressing the increasing social housing needs of Aboriginal families – through strategic collaborations and networking activities and regular consultation with its membership.

HRIR funding: uses and outcomes

The funding received from the City's HRIR fund has allowed Aboriginal housing groups to leverage other funding, thereby increasing organizational and financial capacity, and add/upgrade an existing housing inventory to better serve this city's growing Aboriginal population. This is a particularly significant endeavor for our community, which now has a vacancy rate of 0.8% and an Aboriginal population that is growing at a faster rate than the non-Aboriginal population. The 2006 Census reported an Aboriginal population of just over 68,000 and recent studies indicate this number will reach 92,000 by 2026. Furthermore, 43% of Aboriginal families – or 4 in 10 - live below the low-income cut-off ($33,216) indicators provided by Statistics Canada.

The areas affected by this motion are those which face disproportionate crime and poverty rates and development and revitalization activities must continue. The efforts of MUNHA groups to maintain existing properties and develop new inventory in these areas also support the renewal activities of 5 neighborhood groups affected by the reduction in HRIR funding levels. For example, funding through the HRIR can be used to refurbish the exteriors of some homes, which enhances the overall attractiveness of the neighborhood. The completion of one project has impact on one house to be sure, but the impact is carried further to the entire street and throughout the neighborhood. As a result, other families decide to repair their own exteriors, while others consider moving to the area. Thus, the projects undertaken independently support a significant collective responsibility to improve and renew a safe and affordable inner city that families can thrive and be proud of.

We would like to thank the City for its commitment in the past to our housing efforts. On behalf of low income Aboriginal families, the Aboriginal housing organizations that serve them and a unified network of housing groups in the inner city, MUNHA is encouraging the EPC to reject the motion to reduce the HRIR fund by $500,000.