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Decide if You Need a Written Policy

The key things to consider before deciding to write a First Nation housing policy.

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A written housing policy can provide clear and consistent guidelines and direction about on-reserve housing projects. But not every community needs one. Here are some things to think about before you start developing a housing policy.

Do you need a written First Nation housing policy?

To help you decide if you need a written policy, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there questions being asked over and over again by community members? For example, one common question might be, "What do I need to do to get a new house?"

- Are staff making housing-related decisions without having anything to guide those decisions?
- Are all community members being treated fairly and consistently? It's important that you have the same expectations of all housing occupants. Make sure some families aren't being held to a higher standard than others.

In short, you first look at who needs direction and what that direction should be. You also determine if there are unwritten rules that could be clarified or formalized in writing. Consider that you may not have to start from scratch, because an existing policy may fill the need. Or perhaps there's another community's housing policy that can be modified to meet your needs.

Keep your housing policy realistic

Any housing policy must be realistic. This means you must be able to fully implement the policy. Your housing policy will have a better chance of being implemented if:

- your chief, council and staff are committed to having it developed
- those affected by the policy will be willing to follow it
- you have the funding to carry out the policy
- you have the staff to implement the policy

Know what the goals are for your housing policy

If you decide that a new or revised written policy is needed, you'll then have to focus on its specific objectives. Determine the concrete goals and then decide what the policy should say. Policies should give clear, consistent direction to decision makers (such as chief and council) and staff.

Be consistent with First Nation needs

Your housing policy should fit with the overall values of your community, its housing department and community members. It must also be consistent with the law and other policies, standards and requirements of your community.

Get approval to develop the policy

Finally, leadership, housing staff and community members need to decide it's OK for a written policy to be developed. Make sure you get their support before you start writing it. When seeking the go-ahead, be prepared to describe how the community will benefit from having a written housing policy.

For more information, please contact your [First Nation Housing Specialist](#).

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