

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



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March 17, 2020

Hon. Mitzi Dean
BC Minister of Children and Family Development
Via email only: MCF.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Hon. Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development
Via email only: Ahmed.Hussen@parl.gc.ca

Shayne Ramsay
BC Housing CEO
Via email only: sramsay@bchousing.org

RE: Canada-BC Youth Housing Supplement – Request to Extend
Application Deadline

Dear Minister Hussen, Minister Dean and Mr. Ramsey,

We are writing to express our support for the recently announced Canada-BC Youth Housing Supplement, and to urge you to extend the application deadlines and criteria to ensure the youth in BC who could most benefit from this supplement are informed and have an opportunity to submit an application.

By resolutions passed at the BC Assembly of First Nations, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit, First Nations leadership in BC have called for the development of an Indigenous youth housing strategy and action plan. Recognizing that Indigenous youth who have aged out of the child welfare system are at an increased vulnerability for homelessness, and that this has been amplified by the COVID-19 crisis, we have deemed this as an urgent issue requiring immediate attention.

We were pleased to see the announcement regarding the Canada-BC Youth Housing Supplement but have concerns with the March 17, 2021 application deadline given the supplement was not announced until March 9, 2021. We were extremely disappointed to hear despite advocacy from the Ministry of Children and Family Development and BC Housing, Canada opposed an extension. In doing so, vulnerable youth who could critically benefit from this supplement will be missed. This is furthered by the requirement that youth who apply for the supplement have been employed in the past year.

Young people who age out of the child welfare system frequently do so without external resources and supports and lacking in critical life skills. It is common for these young people to be transitioned onto adult social

assistance on their 19th birthday, rather than being equipped to live financially independent. Excluding these youth from a subsidy that has the potential to be critical to them maintaining housing further marginalizes a cohort of youth who regularly fall through the cracks of these systems.

We urge you to expand this supplement to be inclusive of all former youth in care, regardless of employment status, and to extend the application deadline beyond March 17th, 2021 until at least May 30th, 2021.

Further, we would like to see this supplement made permanent and included as part of a broader youth homelessness strategy which recognizes the specific and increased vulnerabilities of Indigenous youth and former youth in care.

We look forward to your timely response on this issue.

Sincerely,
FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



Cheryl Casimer



Robert Phillips



Lydia Hwitsum

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Don Tom



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Terry Teegee

