

Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative celebrates its first project completion – Pikangikum Safe Village

Nov. 3, 2021

PIKANGIKUM FIRST NATION, ON, Nov. 3, 2021 - The Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative (IHII) congratulates all those involved in the development and construction of Pikangikum's 'Community Safe House' – the first IHII project to be completed. The Grand Opening was held in the community in October 2021.

This project will provide residence-based social services to vulnerable members within the community of Pikangikum in Ontario:

- Pikangikum First Nation has built an eight residential unit 'Community Safe Village' that provides safe, transitional, emergency housing with professional and culturally sensitive support for community members escaping violence. The facility includes six hotel units accessible from a separate entrance for those visiting the community, to generate revenue to support the operation and maintenance of the Community Safe Village.

The Innovation Initiative's Indigenous Steering Committee, composed of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation experts in infrastructure and housing, chose 24 projects out of 342 submissions to participate in the first phase of the Initiative. In the Accelerator phase, project teams received funding and support to develop their ideas.

The Pikangikum project was one of the first projects to be approved to move to the implementation phase and is now the first to complete construction.

IHII aims to support the voices and ideas of Indigenous Peoples directly and complement the Government of Canada's commitment to close current socio-economic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Supporting Indigenous-led innovative approaches and new ideas will help spark changes that can lead to better housing and social and economic conditions. The Initiative is part of the Privy Council Office's Impact Canada family of challenges and initiatives that engage Canadians on developing innovative solutions for their communities.

Quotes

"The Pikangikum Community Safe Village (Safe House) will be a place of healing and empowerment, a sanctuary for the vulnerable to lessen the effects of generational trauma. The Safe House will change the lives of the people who for too long have been seeking traditional healing and have unfortunately succumbed to the hopelessness and despair that leads to suicides. We thank Chief Dean Owen and his Council for the support they have given us to build this facility...it takes a village."

Vernon Kejick and Kim Sigurdson
Innovators and Project Coordinators for the Pikangikum Community Safe Village

“On behalf of the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative (IHII) Indigenous Steering Committee, I congratulate Pikangikum First Nation on the opening of its new Community Safe Village – an innovative and unique project that provides a safe space that combines emergency housing with an adjoining revenue-generating inn for visitors to the community, the latter of which will help offset the cost of operations.”

Dawn Madahbee Leach, Indigenous Steering Committee Member

"It is very exciting that Community Safe Village in Pikangikum First Nation is now opening to serve members of the community. This project brings critically important housing to the community of Pikangikum. This project is just one of the 24 Indigenous housing projects supported through the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative, which provides support for the development of Indigenous housing projects in communities throughout Canada. Cando recognizes the urgent need for safe and healthy housing for Indigenous people as well as the critical role new housing development can have on community economic development."

Ray Wanuch

Executive Director

Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando)

Quick facts

- The Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative is a partnership between Indigenous Services Canada, Infrastructure Canada, and the Privy Council Office's [Impact and Innovation Unit](#).
- In April 2019, the Government of Canada launched the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative to support innovative Indigenous-led housing ideas.
- The Initiative is led, from start to finish, by an Indigenous Steering Committee. The Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Initiative, with advice and support from ISC.
- The project at Pikangikum First Nation in Ontario was approved by the Initiative's Indigenous Steering Committee to move forward into the construction phase in November 2020.
- The Pikangikum project received just over \$195,000 during the Accelerator phase and \$1.25 million in implementation funding through IHII.

