

# Manitoba Tipi Mitawa Program

## Homeownership Improving the Quality of Life For Manitoba First Nations

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Nations people who live in urban centres in Manitoba will have a greater opportunity to own their homes and improve their lives this year, thanks to an innovative homeownership program believed to be the first of its kind in Canada.

The Manitoba Tipi Mitawa Program represents a unique housing partnership between the Manitoba Real Estate Association (MREA) and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs designed to help improve the quality of life of First Nations people living off of reserves.

“By supporting First Nations families with investments in their first home, we are giving Manitobans a stake in their communities,” said Family Services and Housing Minister Gord Mackintosh. “While it is important to offer affordable rental accommodations, it is also important to make homeownership a choice.”

“The Government of Canada is committed to making affordable housing more available for Aboriginal families in Manitoba and across Canada”, said Rod Bruinooog, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. “This initiative will make more homes available for First Nations people living in Manitoba's cities and serve as a model for First Nations communities across the country who are looking for new ways to help their members enjoy greater access to homeownership.”

The province is investing \$150,000 for down payment assistance and \$250,000 in mortgage assistance through the program. Last year, the provincial government announced \$42 million for the Een Dah Aung (My Home) programs for Aboriginal people under HOMEWorks! as part of a \$188 million four-pillar housing strategy for people with low to moderate incomes.

Manitoba Tipi Mitawa will assist low to moderate income First Nations families transition into a homeownership option by converting rental subsidies into mortgage subsidies and providing Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance to potential homeowners. This project builds on partnerships with The Government of Canada, Aboriginal Councils, Aboriginal Lending institutions, private and non-profit housing organizations.

It will also offer training in how to take care of a first home and even a chance to train as real estate agents in the future, MREA spokesperson Harry DeLeeuw said today.

“When REALTORS® look at the socioeconomic statistics we understand the link between a growing urban Aboriginal population and the disparities in the quality of life between First Nations and the rest of the population. We know that an entire community benefits and becomes more stable when everyone has the opportunity to buy a home and watch that home grow in value,” said DeLeeuw.

For Grand Chief Ron Evans of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs the new housing program is a way to close the gap between First Nations living in urban centres in Manitoba and other Manitobans. The feature Evans likes most is that this housing program is borderless and First Nations homeowners can buy their first homes in any part of the city or town they live in.

“This collaboration today allows First Nations the opportunity to choose where they live and by extension how they live. It levels the playing field for us and our children,” said Evans.

Alisha Bigelow, the first applicant of Manitoba Tipi Mitawa, has been living in an apartment with her two teenage children for six years and is relieved she may get support to buy her first home in her favorite part of Winnipeg - West Kildonan.

“What I love about the idea of having our own home is that we can fix it up how we want it to look and the kids can have their friends over and be proud that they have their own place,” said Bigelow who works full time, but struggles to make ends meet raising two children on her own.

For more details about the Tipi Mitawa Program see the attached background information and FAQ or contact:

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