

Shelter Funding Methodology for the Family Violence Prevention Program Final Research Report

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I. Introduction

1.1 Family Violence Prevention Program Background

The Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) provides First Nations with funding for community-based projects to address social and health problems related to family violence. Family violence is “a broad concept that includes the abuse of children, youth, spouses and Elders. It includes physical assault, intimidation, mental or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, deprivation and financial exploitation”¹. The goals of the FVPP are to reduce family violence and result in a more secure family environment for children and all residents on-reserve².

The FVPP consists of two key components:

- ◆ *A Shelter Component*, through which INAC provides operational funds to First Nations’ shelters and reimburses provincially-funded shelters at per diem rates for services used by First Nations people who are ordinarily resident on reserve; and
- ◆ *Prevention Projects*, aimed at reducing family violence in First Nation communities, which include public awareness and education campaigns, conferences, workshops, stress and anger management seminars, support groups and community needs assessments.

In 1988, the federal government launched a four-year, \$40-million Family Violence Initiative, including a \$22 million Project Haven program by CMHC to create additional shelter units for battered women and children. To help First Nation communities, a budget of over \$1 million was jointly administered by INAC and Health Canada, with the help of a Native Advisory Committee. The committee reviewed proposals and prepared recommendations for family violence projects.

In 1991, a second four-year Family Violence Initiative was launched. As part of the new initiative, INAC received \$22 million for community-based services on reserves. INAC provided operational funding for 20 shelters. When Cabinet authority funding to the Family Violence Initiative expired in 1995, INAC continued to fund a Family Violence Prevention Program.

In 1997, the federal government announced a new Family Violence Initiative, of which INAC’s current FVPP was one component. From 1997 to 2000, INAC and CMHC built ten new family violence emergency shelters on reserves. Capital funding was provided by CMHC and operational costs were funded by INAC.

¹ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (2004). *Family Violence Prevention Program National Manual*. pp. 8.

² Indian and Northern Affairs Canada – FVPP Website. Retrieved February 2006 from http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/fvp_e.html.

In 2003-2004, INAC funded approximately 335 family violence prevention projects in selected First Nation communities. It provided annual operational funding to 35 shelters across Canada, servicing 4,500 First Nations people on-reserve.

A recent evaluation of the FVPP drew the following conclusions:

1. *Family violence prevention services in First Nation communities are relevant and there is a continued rationale for such an intervention;*
2. *Overall roles and responsibilities of those involved in the Family Violence Prevention Program need to be re-examined with the aim of strengthening the overall management of the program;*
3. *The funding allocation methodology for family violence projects needs to be reassessed; and*
4. *The Family Violence Prevention Program requires increased monitoring to allow for better measurement of results.³*

1.2 Overview of the Research

1.2.1 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Operational funding for shelters has become a major area of concern for INAC, because shelter directors have expressed concerns about being able to operate effectively at current funding levels. The primary purpose of this research is to develop a funding formula for FVPP shelters that meets regional needs within a national framework. The project also attempted to identify implications of provinces billing back for off-reserve shelter services provided to First Nations people ordinarily resident on reserve.

1.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The specific research questions that guided this study are listed below.

1. What supports do shelters need to operate effectively? Specifically:
 - a) What types of resources are needed (e.g., operating expenses, staff, information, physical space, community support, management structure)?
 - b) What are the annual financial costs associated with these resources?
 - c) What factors affect operating costs?
 - d) How do management structure and funding flow-paths impact the level of funding needed?

³ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (June, 2005). *Evaluation of the Family Violence Prevention Program for First Nations.*

2. What happens if shelters do not have adequate supports?
3. How are provincial shelters funded?
4. What are the costs of providing off-reserve shelter services to First Nations people ordinarily resident on reserve?

1.2.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The shelter funding methodology conclusions and recommendations reported in this paper were developed through the activities listed below.

- ◆ *Literature review*: articles, texts, and census information were reviewed to determine core services that shelters should provide, the types of skills required to be a shelter worker, and typical salary levels for shelter staff.
- ◆ *Telephone Interviews with INAC regional representatives*. Every INAC region was included in the interviews. INAC staff were asked about regional issues, the best model to use for the new funding formula, and the elements that should be included in the formula.
- ◆ *Telephone interviews with provincial and territorial government representatives* knowledgeable about shelter funding in their jurisdiction. All provinces/territories were represented in the interviews except for two (New Brunswick and Yukon), which were difficult to contact. Provinces and territories were asked to describe their funding formulae and funding mechanisms, including accountability requirements. They were also asked to provide an estimate of costs if they were to bill back for shelter use by Aboriginal people normally resident on-reserve.
- ◆ *Telephone interviews with shelter operators, in addition to AFN, NWAC, and NACAFV members*. A total of 12 (of 35) INAC shelter operators were interviewed, including one provincially only funded shelter. Shelters were asked to discuss the adequacy of their funding and the ways in which they dealt with funding shortfalls, the best model to use for the new funding formula, and the elements that should be included in the formula.

A draft funding formula framework was developed based on the findings from the literature review and interviews. The draft funding formula was presented at a national meeting on June 26, 2006. The meeting was attended by INAC regional, AFN, NWAC, and NACAFV representatives, as well as some shelter directors from across the country.

1.2.4 STUDY LIMITATIONS

The requirement to undertake a study of this nature at this point in time was fueled by political concerns on several fronts. If INAC funding continued at its current rate, in the very near future, some shelters would need to close their doors permanently. This would not only result in a loss of capital investment on INAC's part but a vital resource and needed services to those communities. The timeline for the research was one-month from planning to implementation and final reporting. The deadline was met and a funding formula presented but not without some limitations. This report therefore, recommends that a more in-depth review should be completed (within the next two-years) and include the following research methods, among others strategies identified by INAC.

- 1) Investigate the validity of the hypothesis that increasing the funding level in INAC shelters for a two-year period mitigated the issues associated with underfunding and resulted in increased occupancy at the shelters.
- 2) Survey all shelters funded by INAC and determine if any of the following factors should be considered in the funding formula implemented by INAC:
 - a. Utilization rates
 - b. Staff qualifications
 - c. Reach of services (e.g., number served, off-/on-reserve residents)
 - d. Networking reach (e.g., types of agencies, locations)