

An Overview of the Alberta On-reserve Shelters

The following are the six on-reserve shelters located in Alberta:

1. Bigstone Cree Nation Women's Emergency Shelter, Wabasca, Alberta
2. Eagle's Nest Stoney Family Shelter, Morley, Alberta
3. Ermineskin Women's Shelter Society, Hobbema, Alberta
4. Kainai Women's Wellness Lodge, Blood reserve, Alberta
5. Paspew House, Fort Chipewyan, Alberta
6. Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter, Enilda, Alberta

In 2004, there were five On-reserve Shelters which formed a Committee that meets on a quarterly basis to discuss shelter issues. The Committee consists of the Directors of the Shelters and their Board members. Currently the Chair is Janet Gladue, Director of the Bigstone Cree Women's Emergency Shelter.

In 2009, the Kainai Women's Wellness Lodge opened its shelter doors on the Blood Reserve in Southern Alberta. They have been invited to join the On-reserve Committee which is currently pending acceptance.

Bigstone Cree, Eagle's Nest, Ermineskin, Paspew House and Sucker Creek Shelters are members of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS). The Kainai Women's Wellness Lodge has expressed an interest in joining ACWS.

With assistance of ACWS, the On-reserve Shelters have developed the following plans:

- Development of a Log Frame by the on-reserve shelter organizations and ACWS regarding services for families entering these shelters – completed in November, 2007;
- Development of a Log Frame by the on-reserve shelter organizations and ACWS regarding regional office to provide services to all Alberta on-reserve shelters.

In keeping up with standards set in the Johnston report, all on-reserve Shelters have set up a training plan to increase skills with the shelter staff. At present, all the shelters have staff enrolled into the Women's Shelter Crisis Worker program through Portage College. Other training consist of:

- Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell Danger Assessment (at least one staff in each shelter is certified)
- Executive Director Leadership Courses (UofA and Banff Centre) on-going
- Trauma Training for Front-line Staff
- Shelter Best Practices
- Aboriginal training
- Cultural Diversity
- Family Group Conferencing
- Circle of Courage
- Little Hands, Little Ears
- Children Exposed to Family Violence
- HOMES data base (All of the on-reserve shelters have expressed interested in collecting data using the Outcome Tracker).
- Standard First Aid

All of the shelters have a Violence Prevention program which they provide awareness and prevention to their communities:

- Men's Groups
- Children's Groups
- Women's Groups
- Traditional Parenting
- Women's Retreat
- Youth Conferences
- Family Violence Prevention Workshops
- Awareness Presentations at Schools
- Violence Prevention Walks
- Round Dances
- Brochures
- Websites
- Promotional items, i.e. bags, keychains, notebooks, pens

Recommendations for Next Steps

Recommendations:

- Second stage housing for On-Reserve Clients
- Increase funding to reflect the Johnston Report including
 1. Funding to support Performance Based Monitoring
 2. Strategic Plan training
 3. Strategic Plan development for On-Reserve Shelters
 4. Board Development and Board Governance training
 5. Update Shelter Policies and Procedures

Service Enhancement Resulting from Increased Funding

The increase in funding to shelters has allowed the following:

- Shelters became more inviting, offering families a more nurturing environment to heal from family violence
- Shelters renovated in order to offer services such as Child Support and Outreach, better laundry facilities and increased security through the purchase of security cameras and a security door.
- Shelters enabled to offer Child Support, Outreach and counseling, and items such as personal items and basic hygiene in addition to basic services
- Shelters purchased new, safer transportation, critical to supporting women's safety
- Staffing stability achieved. Prior to funding staff were hired on a part time basis. Shelters can now offer a wage scale based on education & experience
- Staff training is happening. 15 students have been attending Portage College over the past year and a half which will provide them with a certificate in Crisis Counselling. The students were able to attend a week long workshop in Edmonton and laptops were purchased in order to complete the course. Other training opportunities are now available.
- Family violence education/prevention workshops are now provided. Examples include: Group sessions, Suicide prevention, Traditional Parenting, Mediation & Conflict Resolution, Healthy Relationships, How To Parent Powerful Healthy Children, Traditional Teachings, Women's & Mens Groups, Mother & Daughter Workshops, Personal Empowerment as well as family bonding time through activities such as therapeutic horse back riding and family bbq's.

Overall, the quality of services provided for families who utilize the services at the shelter has improved dramatically reflecting implementation of shelter best practices as evidenced above.

Shelter Locations

