

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Conclusions

- The plight of on-reserve Shelters has been long and lonely, and has involved situations of under-funding where legal issues rise.
- Violence against Aboriginal women, in particularly those living on-reserve, is an urgent matter and a critical threat to the vitality of Aboriginal communities in Canada.
- On-reserve shelters serve a vital role in:
 - protecting and preventing Aboriginal women's involvement in violent situations.
 - supporting their broader community as a functional and sustainable autonomous entity.
 - demonstrating that violence against Aboriginal women matters, is a priority, and that there is a safe and predictable haven in which women and children in-need can flee.
- It is important to make certain that the operating budgets for the Shelters keep pace with the cost of living and provincial wages (or the continuing benefits of the 2007 increase will disappear).
- INAC has fallen behind on a number of fronts:
 - Providing funding that allows Shelters to meet minimum standards for service provision.
 - Reducing and eliminating the gap that exists in staff salaries and staffing compliments between On-Reserve and provincial shelters.
 - Re-examining the FVPP overall roles and responsibilities with the interest of strengthening the overall program management.
 - Implementing and improving the measurement of results through increased monitoring and evaluation of its administration of the FVPP.
- That the unified movement of Alberta Shelters is logical and an urgent matter that is necessary to begin to address the prejudice provided to Aboriginal women through the inadequate funding of on-reserve shelters.

7.2. Recommendations

- That as vital services to the well-being of Aboriginal communities, on-reserve shelters must receive sufficient funding. They must not be operated at a funding level that suggests on-reserve Aboriginal women fleeing violence are second rate citizens when it comes to needed services. Article 125(a) Beijing Platform for Action (1989), of which Canada is a signatory, requires well-funded shelters and relief support for girls and women subject to violence. In addition, the agreement between Canada and Alberta requires that on reserve citizens receive comparable services to those offered to all Alberta citizens living off reserve.
- That the Government of Canada immediately address the:
 - Management of the FVPP and the assignment of the roles and responsibilities assigned.
 - INAC's ability to adequately fund the on-reserve shelters at a level that meets minimum standards.
 - FVPP's current utilization of measures of results and adherence to evaluation standards as set by the Canadian Evaluation Society.
- That the Government of Canada immediately funds on-reserve shelters to a level that:
 - Meets, at the very minimum, parity with provincial shelters, in terms of staff salaries and staffing complements.
 - Demonstrates, within a short timeframe, that minimal standards are met, as set-out in the *Shelter Funding Methodology for the Family Violence Prevention Program*, prepared by Johnston Research Inc. (31, July 2006).
 - Increases annually to meet increases in the cost-of-living.
- That the Government of Canada engage the Alberta On-Reserve Shelter Committee in a series of meetings to
 - a) Look at mechanisms for shelter evaluation and funding in light of INAC's upcoming authority renewal as it relates to competent delivery of funding and accountability of all parties.
 - b) Develop and implement an immediate strategy to address the long-standing issues identified in this paper.

These meetings need to involve key decision makers, which are not limited to INAC, and includes Health Canada, Justice Canada, Heritage Canada, Human Resources and Development Canada, and Service Canada.