



INDIGENOUS RENTERS

LANDLORD TOOLKIT



Winnipeg is located within Treaty No. 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinabe (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene, and Dakota, and is the Birthplace of the Métis Nation and the Heart of the Métis Nation Homeland.

Introduction

This Landlord Tool kit was created to address the different and specific needs of Indigenous renters. This toolkit is meant to assist and shed light on the various aspects that Landlords & Caretakers may experience when working with Indigenous families renting their units & apartments.

Call to Action # 20

In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.

Call to Action # 57

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills- based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.



What is this Toolkit about?

This toolkit was developed to address issues encountered by many Indigenous renters within Winnipeg's city limits. This toolkit aims to address and assist Canada's largest urban Indigenous population by addressing the different needs and issues that affect their ability to attain affordable and safe housing. The toolkit will provide a historical perspective of Indigenous people regarding the relationship that has evolved since first contact with colonial settlers.

This toolkit will highlight the history of Indigenous people and the stereotypes and viewpoints of some landlords when renting to Indigenous people. The toolkit will also provide detailed information regarding Indigenous people and what to expect regarding traditional practices that Indigenous people have been practicing for thousands of years.

"Reconciliation requires that a new vision, based on a commitment to mutual respect, be developed."

Senator Murray Sinclair,
Chair of the Truth and
Reconciliation
Commission of Canada.

Who is this toolkit aimed at?

This toolkit was created to give private landlords, rental agencies, subsidized housing providers, and non-profit housing agencies a greater understanding of the issues faced when being an Indigenous person that is renting in Winnipeg for the first time. It aims to provide the housing provider with a greater understanding of the history of Indigenous people and to ensure that the housing provider is aware of why these issues have occurred and how they can play a role in reconciliation regarding housing.

The greater general public and other service providers can utilize this toolkit when working with Indigenous families. Creating more awareness about the colonial impacts and its ongoing effects on Indigenous people will assist with housing and other social determinants of health.

Benefits of the Landlord Toolkit

The most prevalent benefit that the toolkit is hoping to achieve is to build more productive relationships between the landlord and the Indigenous renter(s). The landlord will better understand the Indigenous family system and the historical impacts of colonization.

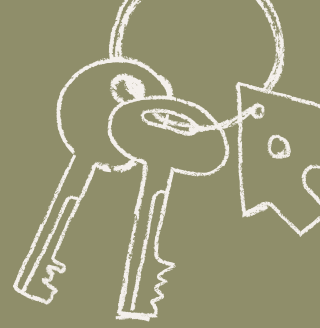
Understanding and addressing these past colonial events will give the landlord a perspective into the post-traumatic stress plaguing the Indigenous community. The tools presented will also give the landlord a greater understanding that Indigenous people are at different levels of healing in their unique journey.

Another benefit this toolkit will forecast & bring to light is that "Indigenous people are not all the same." There are a variety of differences that Indigenous people have within their cultural construct that many non-Indigenous people are unaware of. These differences include language, cultural practices, location of upbringing, religious beliefs, societal influences, and so many others that the average Canadian is unaware of. On top of these differences is the level of "healing" that every Indigenous person is going through as an inter-generational survivor of colonial genocide attempts.

Another advantage of this toolkit is that it could be used in everyday interactions with Indigenous people throughout Winnipeg and Canada as a country. The devastating impacts of the residential school system and the colonization continue to be felt by Indigenous people today. The number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system directly impacts the nation-state's attempts to assimilate Indigenous people by banning their culture and languages. The truth is now out there for Canadian society to learn from. The Reconciliation piece is not so quickly completed and can take many forms of development.



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1.1 Brief History of Indigenous People

1831- Mohawk Indian residential school is the first to open in Brantford, Ontario.

1876- The Indian Act was created that would give the government exclusive rights to develop and enact legislation regarding Indians and Indian lands. The Act establishes and oversees all aspects of life, including housing. See [21 Things You May Not Have Known about the Indian Act](#).

1883- Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald authorizes & enforces the creation of residential schools across Canada with mandates to "Kill the Indian in the Child."

1885- Amendment to Indian Act - all traditional ceremonies and practices are banned & outlawed & punishable with imprisonment.

1907- Medical inspector for Indian Affairs, Dr. P.H. Bryce, reports that health conditions in residential schools are "a national crime."

1920- Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, makes residential school compulsory for Indigenous children ages 7-15. The RCMP enforced forcible apprehension.

1951- Revisions made to the Indian Act allowed women to participate in band democracy, and prohibitions on traditional practices and ceremonies were removed. Indigenous people can now leave the reserve without permission from the Indian Affairs agent.

1958- Indian Affairs regional inspectors recommend the abolishment of residential schools.

1961- Amendment to the Indian Act- Status Indians can vote without giving up their status.

1950s-60s - The First Nations nutrition experiments were conducted in Canada by Department of Pensions and National Health (now Health Canada) in the 1940s and 1950s. The experiments were conducted on at least 1,300 Indigenous people across Canada; approximately 1,000 were children.

1950s-80s - The era of the 'Sixties Scoop' was the practice of removing children from Indigenous communities without their families' consent.

1996 - Last Residential School Closed

1.2 - The history of Indigenous housing both on & off reserve.

The Indian Act of 1876 granted the Canadian government control over many aspects of Indigenous Peoples' lives, including the management of housing, health services, the environment, and other resources on reserves. Having no control over the aspects of housing on reserve left Indigenous people with little to no control over their future.

As a traditionally nomadic society, permanent housing at one location was a new and foreign concept forced to be accepted by many Indigenous people.

Following WWII, numerous First Nation soldiers relocated to urban regions because they were forced to relinquish their status to serve in the Canadian Forces. They were not able to return to their reserves, further breaking the family unit.

Furthermore, the Indian Act underwent a modification in 1951, which exempted Indigenous individuals (previously referred to as "Indians") from seeking permission and obtaining a pass to leave their Reserves.

This oppressive system was enforced by the RCMP and, combined with the evolving economies within First Nations communities, resulted in an increasing number of Indigenous people moving to urban and non-Reserve areas to seek better opportunities for employment, education, and housing.

Unfortunately, because of cultural, linguistic, social and economic differences and racism, most Indigenous peoples were relegated to the worst housing in the cities.

In the mid-1960s, the federal government, through the Indian Affairs Branch, which was part of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, took a progressive step and implemented an Off-Reserve Housing Program in 1966.

The criteria required that a purchaser must have a good credit rating. Initially, they set \$16,000 as the maximum income a family could make in one year to qualify. This limitation remained in place for the program's life, and by the mid-1980s, only the lowliest paid worker was making less than \$16,000 a year. Given this reality, many families were excluded from applying for the program. This resulted in little take up of the program, which was terminated in 1985 for that very reason.

1.3 – Traditional customs practiced by Indigenous people within their homes.

It is crucial to acknowledge and respect the diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds of Indigenous people. It should be noted that not all Indigenous individuals hold the same beliefs, and some may not hold any at all. When renting to an Indigenous person, it is crucial to be open-minded and prepared to work with those who practice traditional customs, such as the smudging ceremony, which may be unfamiliar to landlords or caretakers.

Sacred smoke from burning medicinal or sacred plants is an aspect of many cultures and religions worldwide. It is a practice common to Indigenous Peoples and is called smudging. Many, but not all, Indigenous cultures in Canada smudge but may have different beliefs associated with the smoke and other ceremonies and protocols. Indigenous people use smudging their houses to ward off negative energy that may reside in the home brought in from negative people and experiences.

1.4 – Transitioning from living on reserve to living off-reserve in an urban setting

In 1951, the Indian Act was amended so that Indigenous persons were no longer required to ask permission and obtain a pass to leave their reserves. This 'Pass System' was illegal, yet enforced by RCMP. This was one factor, along with the changing economies on reserves, that led to more and more First Nations people moving into urban and other non-Reserve areas for better opportunities for employment, education and housing. Unfortunately, due to cultural, linguistic, social, and economic disparities, as well as racism, the majority of Indigenous peoples were confined to substandard housing in urban areas.

The media's portrayal of Indigenous people through their living conditions on reserves perpetuates harmful stereotypes. The general public is often only shown the current state of housing, which depicts Indigenous people living in run-down and unliveable shacks.

When Indigenous people search for rental properties in urban areas, they often face the untrue stereotype that they do not take care of their living spaces. This stereotype must be eradicated to promote a more inclusive and fair society.

It's important to acknowledge that Indigenous people renting for the first time in an urban area have unique challenges not typically encountered by non-Indigenous individuals in the same situation. These challenges include racism, stereotyping, prejudice, limited resources, intergenerational trauma, and culture shock, which can hinder a smooth transition to city life. When interacting with first-time Indigenous tenants, being mindful of these factors is essential.

1.5 - Understanding traditional living arrangements within the Indigenous family system

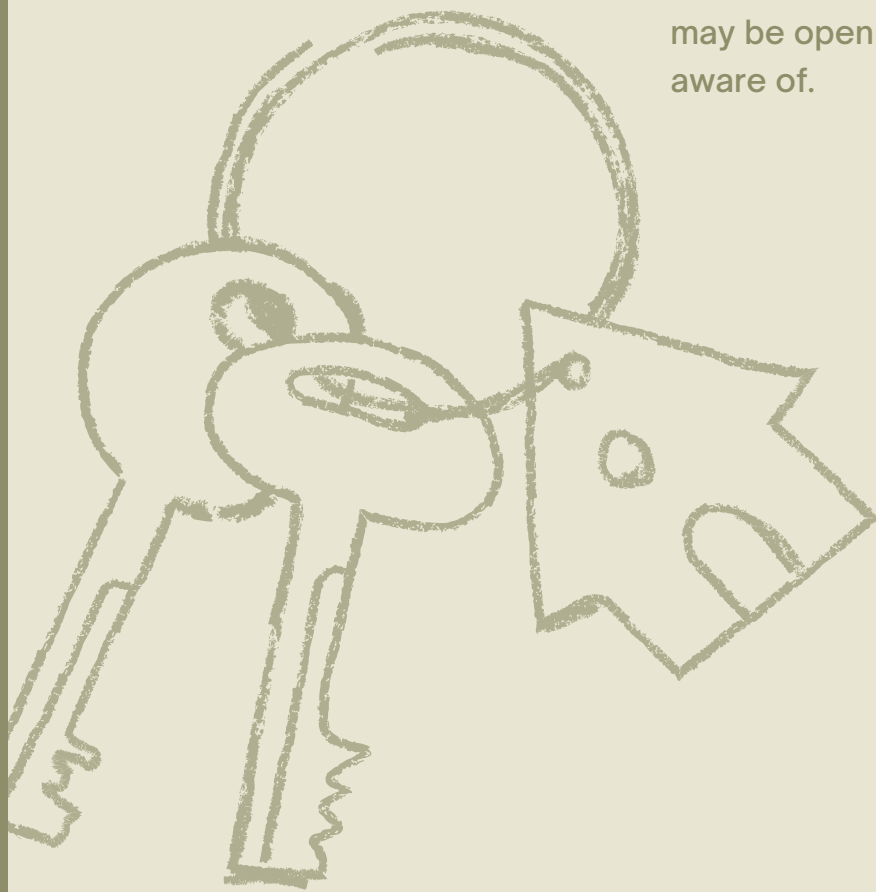
Traditional living arrangements amongst Indigenous people are still practiced and are family oriented.

Historical traditional knowledge tells us that families had always lived close to each other and assisted one another when times were trying. Before colonization, families would stay in the same shelters close to one another, enabling them to build a strong family unit that would allow them to build trust and strengthen the family ties needed to survive in such harsh conditions and environments.

These family ties created in the past are still practiced and maintained to this day despite the failed attempts of colonization.

Indigenous people strongly believe in helping family members whenever and however necessary. This may be why Indigenous people are so willing to let the family stay in their homes while they are visiting or starting off for the first time here in Winnipeg. Although these long-term "visits or stays" may seem like the tenant is taking advantage of the rented space, it is a source of family vitality that keeps family ties together and allows the Indigenous tenant to assist their family member through a difficult transition.

A landlord or caretaker experiencing this situation can address it responsibly by discussing with the family their options. One of the options that can be made is to offer the family another unit that may be open that the landlord is aware of.



1.6 - Contemporary issues that are affecting Indigenous people when renting in an urban/city (CFS, Addictions, mental health, IDs)

Several different issues are faced by Indigenous people when they are first-time renters in Winnipeg. Many of these issues were caused by the impacts of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other colonial assimilation tactics. Many survivors grew up without role models for healthy relationships, parenting and family life. The impact of the lack of loving attachments was profound.

These ongoing colonial tactics and how they continue to affect Indigenous people are often called "intergenerational trauma." This trauma is felt in some way or another by every Indigenous person that you may encounter in your lifetime.

This ongoing trauma has caused a lot of social factors that work against Indigenous people, and housing is one of them. The necessities needed to attain housing in an urban environment are often obstacles for Indigenous people when first leaving their First Nation. Living in a First Nation without any rental history is the most common obstacle.

Another would be the lack of financial support to pay the damage and the first month's rent to provide to the landlord or rental agency. Some Indigenous people may also be unaware of how to fill out an application or even attain a rental application, another prevalent obstacle.

These obstacles can be shared for all individuals, not just Indigenous people, but can you imagine having even more barriers to deal with that would prevent you from attaining housing? The additional obstacles Indigenous people have are the issues caused by intergenerational trauma, such as different kinds of past abuse, past or current CFS involvement, addictions, mental health issues, and more. As a landlord or caretaker, awareness of these issues can give you a deeper understanding and awareness of the Indigenous person wanting to rent a unit from you or your company.

Contact Us

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resources

*1 <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/a-definition-of-smudging>

*2 Historical Background: The Indian Act and the Indian Residential Schools | Facing History & Ourselves.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/en-ca/resource-library/historical-background-indian-act-indian-residential-schools>

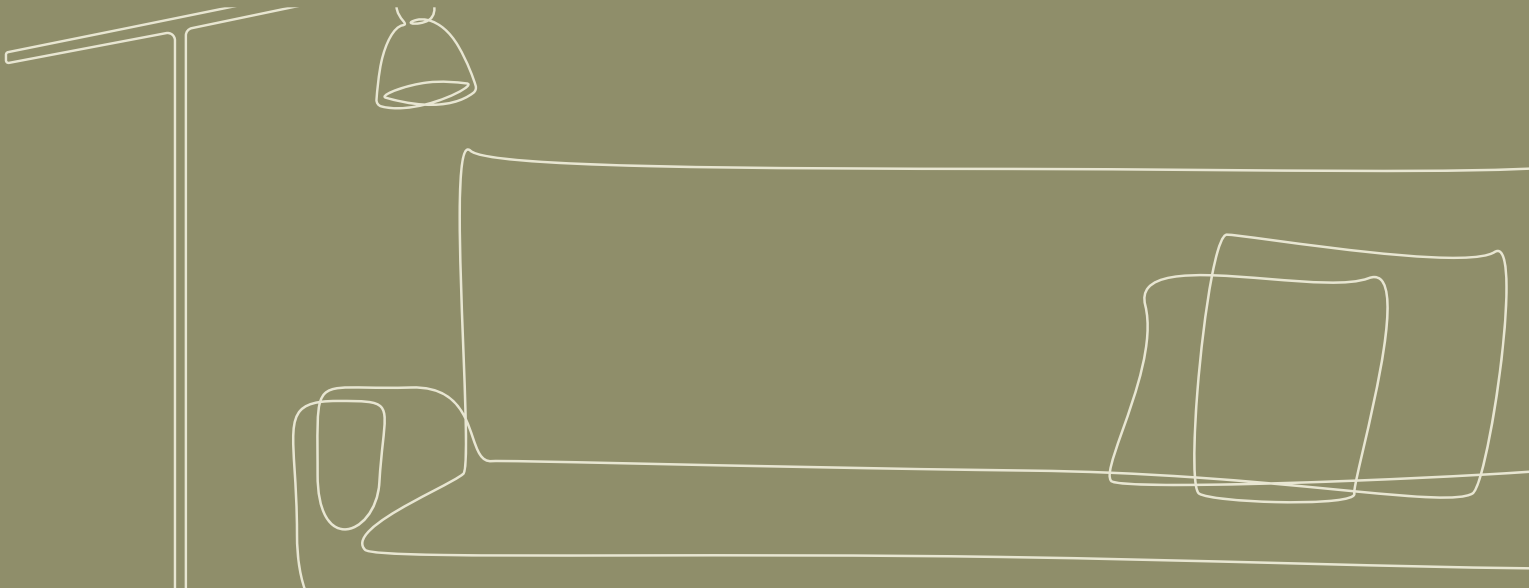
*3

https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/CAAN_Aboriginal-housing-in-Canada_2010-1.pdf

*4 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220921/dq220921a-eng.htm>

*5 <https://abo-peoples.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Reconciliation-Toolkit.pdf>

Housing at SNA uses the housing first model and approaches the housing challenges with a holistic lens. Individuals are assisted in finding housing, keeping it, maintaining it, and becoming a part of the community. The task often entails working with or in the following areas: EIA advocacy, RTB rules and regulations, home improvement grants, mediation, safety, promoting new housing developments in the neighbourhood, employment programs, volunteer programs, rooming houses, bed bug remediation, health, connecting community to resource... and many others. It has been over ten years that the housing committee along with various community members have worked on housing projects in Spence!



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