

Working Together in a Spirit of Reconciliation

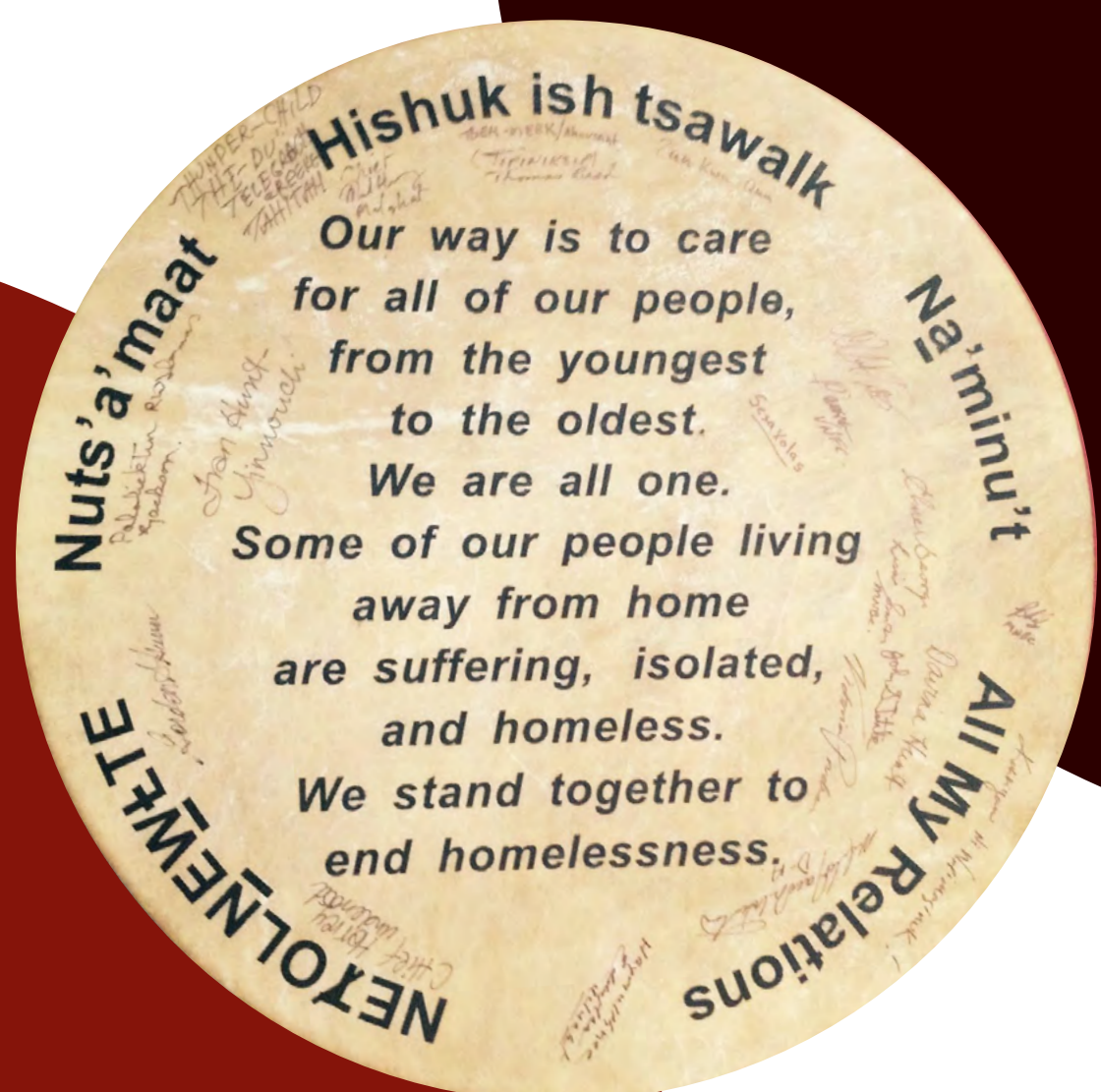


**Aboriginal Coalition
to End Homelessness**



“Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination without discrimination, to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights; to improve their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of housing, sanitation, health and social security; to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development, including the right to be actively involved in developing and determining housing programs and, as far as possible, to administer, as well as finding the ways and means of funding such programs, through their own institutions.”

~ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007



About Us

The Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society's (ACEH) sole focus is to support Indigenous people experiencing homelessness.

The organization's goal is to end homelessness through networking and sharing lessons learned, by extending partnerships, and most importantly, by starting with the voices and identified needs of the Indigenous Street Community. The ACEH has established island-wide connections.

The Work of the ACEH is critical because there is not another Indigenous-led organization on Vancouver Island that has 'Indigenous homelessness' as its sole focus. ACEH is strategically aligned and guided by the expressed needs of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness.



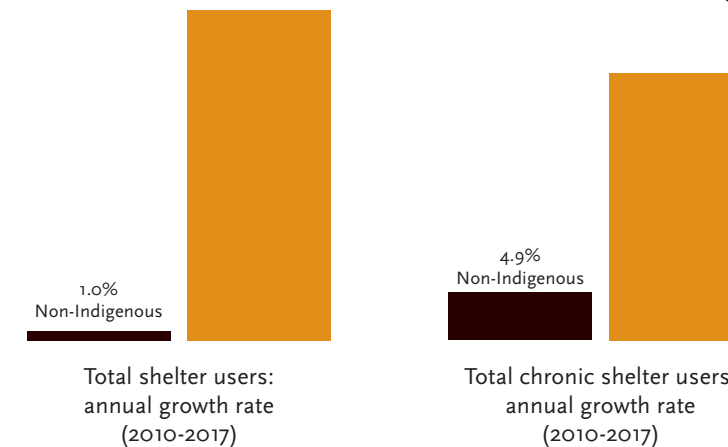
Aboriginal Homelessness impacts everyone

Indigenous Peoples account for 4.1% of total Victoria CMA populations, but total 12% of all shelter users and 21% of chronic shelter users.^{iv}

There are many historical factors leading to Indigenous homelessness: legacy of residential schools, the lingering impact of the 60's scoop, the modern day child welfare system, limited housing on reserve, poverty, urbanization, systemic oppression, structural discrimination and cultural genocide, to name a few.

All of these manifest as hopelessness, marginalization and inter-generational trauma. The residue persists: Indigenous people are disproportionately represented in the Canadian justice system, child welfare system, and amongst the homeless population, and Indigenous youth are dying at almost double the rate of non-indigenous youth.ⁱ

The economic cost of homelessness is staggering. According to a 2013 report, Canadian homelessness costs society \$7 billion each yearⁱⁱ. In B.C. alone, it costs 33% more to provide health care, criminal justice and social services to a homeless person than to a socially housed, unemployed individual.ⁱⁱⁱ

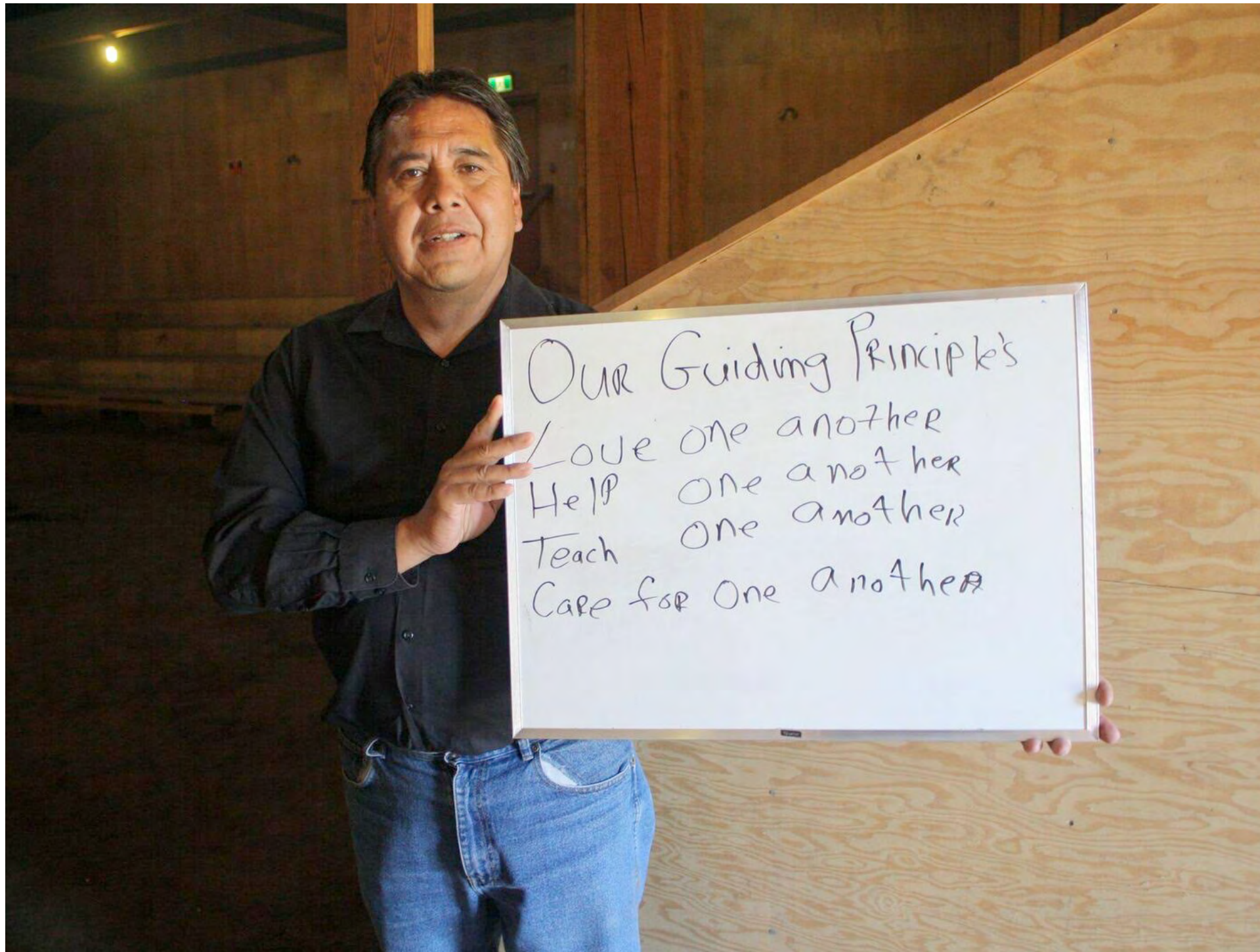


ⁱ "Coroner, First Nations urge B.C. to act on high number of youth deaths" (Nov. 15, 2017) Times Colonist

ⁱⁱ Gaetz, Stephen; Donaldson, Jesse; Richter, Tim; & Gulliver, Tanya (2013): The State of Homelessness in Canada 2013. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ Eberle, Margaret; Kraus, Deborah; Serge, Luba; Pomeroy, Steve & Hulchanski, David (2000) Homelessness in British Columbia Volume 5.

^{iv} Data gathered by the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homeless identified the following, based on information provided by one local shelter in Victoria between 2010/11 and 2016/17



Indigenous Homelessness requires an Indigenous response

“Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews.”

~Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012

The recent creation of a definition of Indigenous Homelessness recognize 12 dimensions:^v

- Historic Displacement Homelessness
- Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness
- Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness
- Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness
- Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness
- Overcrowding Homelessness
- Relocation and Mobility Homelessness
- Going Home Homelessness

- Nowhere to Go Homelessness
- Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness
- Emergency Crisis Homelessness
- Climatic Refugee Homelessness

The ACEH is laying the foundation for systems change through evidence-based research, pilot program findings, and by sharing leading practice and knowledge to inform program and service development and delivery Vancouver Island-wide.

^v Thistle, J. (2017.) Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press



Our strategic framework is based on the metaphor of a Big House

Each of the four corner posts represents one of the core strategies that guide us. All are equal in urgency and importance and together provide the structure for Indigenous housing in our community. The fire at the centre of the House provides the warmth that unites us in this work.

Shelter, Housing, Homes

From shelter to temporary housing to permanent homes, there is a shortage of available housing for Indigenous peoples on Vancouver Island. The goal of this strategy is to get Indigenous youth, adults, elders and families into homes within a safe community.

Governance, Policy, Resources

Engaged leadership (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous), policy changes and appropriate funding are essential to changing the mindset around homelessness and housing for Indigenous peoples. We are working to shift perceptions and motivate systemic change.

Support Services

This strategy aims to ensure that holistic, safe and culturally relevant support services are available to help Indigenous individuals and families secure and maintain housing and transition out of homelessness.

Community Relations

It will take the whole community to make effective change for Indigenous housing. In Victoria and across Vancouver Island, we are working to build a community that is inclusive and cooperative in order to create meaningful change.



Core Funding Need

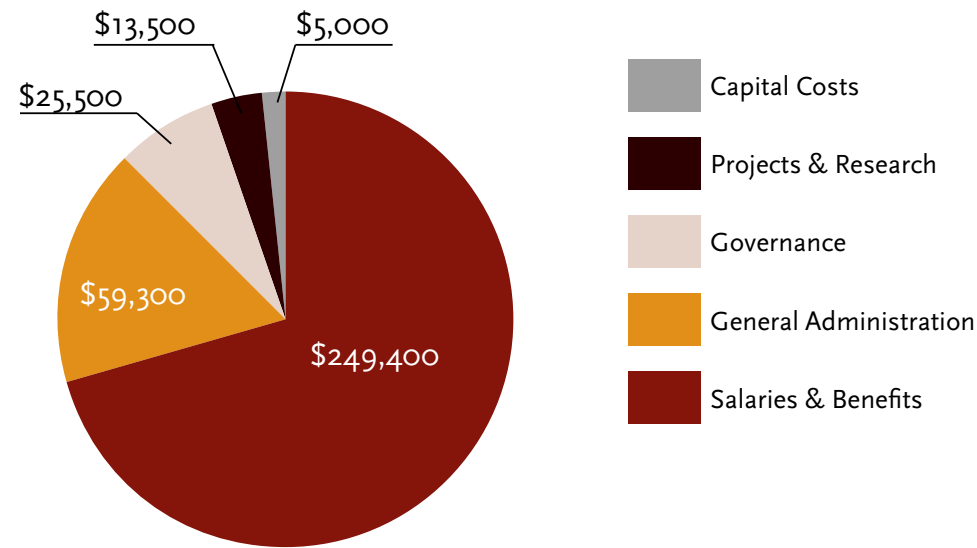
The disproportionate number of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness across Vancouver Island continues to grow and the projections are daunting.

Current strategies, organizations and policies have been ineffective. We need to ask why.

The reason is systemic and structural. Transformation must come from both bottom up and top down approaches and must ensure Indigenous peoples' voices are being heard in a meaningful way.

The ACEH currently operates on a budget of \$182,797. This amount does not reflect the annual resources required to support ongoing core operations.

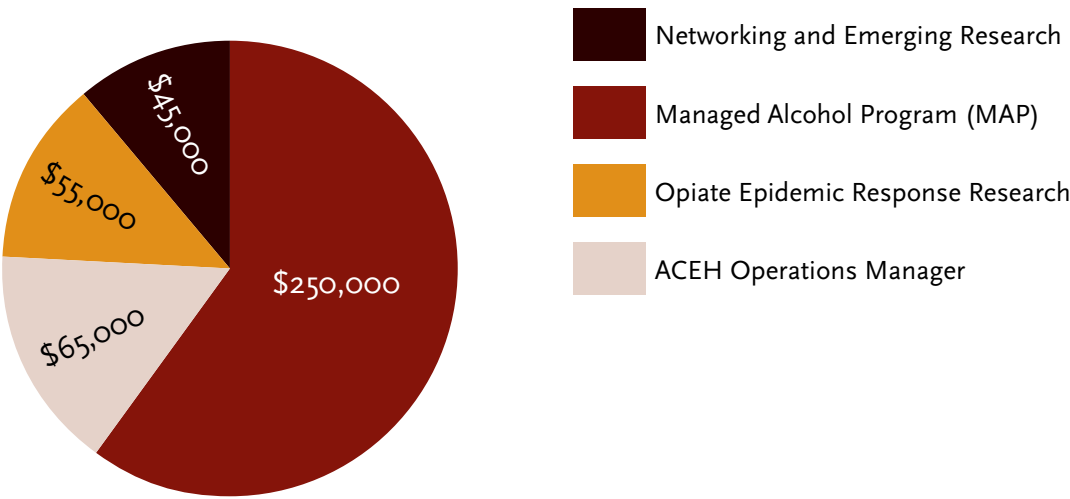
The Executive Director, in consultation with the Board of Directors, has estimated an annual operations budget of approximately \$350,000 per year:



Future core funding required: \$352,700 / year

Current Priorities and Programs

In addition to our core funding needs on the previous page, the ACEH is seeking to raise funds for four priority programs.



Total Program Funding Required: \$415,000

Priority: Crisis response – engage health agencies to identify opportunities to address the disproportionate impacts of the opiate epidemic on Indigenous peoples

Program: Opiate Epidemic Response Research – Indigenous Population

As the use of opiates is prevalent within the Indigenous homeless population, and increasing the rate of participation in prevention and treatment initiatives is vital to saving the lives of homeless Indigenous community members, the ACEH would like to determine if there are ways to ‘indigenize’ opioid support programming in Victoria. The ACEH, in conjunction with key service providers, is conducting research to:

- Determine the level of Indigenous participation in initiatives; and
- Determine how to modify current and/or create new initiatives designed to increase the participation of Indigenous homeless people in both opiate crisis intervention and long-term permanent individual and collective solutions.

The ACEH requires \$55,000 to conduct evidence-based research with the following outcomes:

1. Conduct an environmental scan on current services/programs;
2. Survey current Indigenous homeless population;
3. Literature review on inventory of best clinical practices;
4. Consultation with service providers, Elders and Indigenous organizations; and
5. Opioid response systems design work, including tool kit.

Priority: Long Term Quality of Care Change
Program: Managed Alcohol Program (MAP)

A significant portion of the Indigenous Street Community faces challenges with alcoholism, chronic alcoholism and non-beverage alcohol intake. Alcohol addiction is one of the primary reasons Indigenous homeless peoples have difficulty with activities of daily living and participation in support services and programs. The ACEH Executive Director is involved with a MAP Indigenous Advisory Committee, with members from across Canada. Committee representatives have shared MAP successes, particularly Indigenous program models governed from an Indigenous worldview.

MAPs are harm reduction services involving the medical administration of regulated doses of alcohol within housing/residence program for

individuals who are chronically homeless and struggling with severe alcohol addiction, often including non-beverage alcohol use (e.g. mouthwash and rubbing alcohol). Research on MAPs demonstrates that participants often reduce beverage and non-beverage alcohol use, experience health improvements such as decreased withdrawal seizures and liver injury, utilize emergency health care and police services less often, maintain long term housing, and have more opportunities to reconnect with estranged family and Indigenous culture.

The ACEH, in partnership with the Victoria Cool Aid Society (VCAS), and with research support from the Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC), is seeking to implement a MAP pilot, conduct assessment and

report on lessons learned. Housing capital for this project is currently supported by VCAS.

The ACEH requires \$250,000 to pilot a MAP and implement necessary clinical and cultural supports, with goals to

1. Promote cultural identity through participation in traditional and spiritual practices, as part of the program framework;
2. Reduce non-beverage alcohol use and/or heavy beverage alcohol use through the medical administration of alcohol at reduced volumes;
3. Provide stable and low-barrier supportive housing; and
4. Facilitate access to primary, mental health, and addictions care.

Priority: Research – locally and Island-wide
Program: Networking and Emerging Research

The ACEH is physically located in Victoria, BC. It has a governance board with representatives from the three Indigenous tribal groups on Vancouver Island, as well as Indigenous organizations. The ACEH spearheaded baseline data gathering and other research projects and has shared research outcomes to support communities across Vancouver Island.

Baseline information gathering has been conducted from Port Hardy to Victoria, along with four urban communities in between. The information has proven vital to proper planning and identification of ancestry and home communities. For example, of the 100 surveys completed in Victoria, 48% of respondents are from one of the three Island tribal groups, with

19% being from a local BC First Nation. In addition, the ACEH conducted surveys and analysis regarding access to cultural supports in the City of Victoria for the Indigenous homeless population, as well as health and wellness surveys.

The ACEH requires **\$45,000** to build on the information gathered to date, in order to

- 1. Synthesize the data/analysis to determine priorities and actions;
- 2. Bring partners together to collaborate on an island-wide approach and information sharing regarding evidence-based leading practices; and
- 3. Determine emerging research needs and conduct research.

Priority: Organization sustainability
Program: ACEH Operations Manager



While core funding is being sought through federal, provincial and municipal governments and other potential funders, there is an immediate need to support the Executive Director with the increasing workload associated with the rising profile of the ACEH.

The ACEH requires **\$65,000** for an Operations Manager to

- 1. Provide supervision and management of operational activities; and
- 2. Support project coordination.



“When we talk of change, I offer some caution: Watch for things that are labeled or celebrated as reconciliation, but don’t come with any concrete action or change. When you read or hear about a reconciliation project, ask yourself, who leads this? What does this change? Keep in mind that reconciliation is not about repairing the symptoms of broken systems, rather it is about fixing the systems themselves.”

~ Carey Newman,
artist and creator of ‘The Witness Blanket’



THE ACEH LOGO WAS CREATED BY EVAN JAMES (RAVEN), A COWICHAN FIRST NATION ARTIST WHO HAS EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS FIRST HAND. RAVEN IS CURRENTLY HOUSED THROUGH THE PRIORITY ONE PROGRAM, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE ACEH, ISLAND HEALTH, THE GREATER VICTORIA COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS, AND THE VICTORIA COOL AID SOCIETY.