



**DRAFT**

**BUILD TOGETHER: A ROADMAP FOR SUPPORTING THE MOBILIZATION, EMPOWERMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF NOVA SCOTIA'S COMMUNITY HOUSING SECTOR**

**Strengthening Nova Scotia's Community Housing Sector through Collaboration**

There is a desire for greater collaboration at the regional level throughout Nova Scotia to reduce competition, increase efficiencies, and leverage relationships to find housing solutions appropriate to the scale and character of the communities served by the community housing sector. Further, there is a growing recognition of the importance of provincial level coordination for a stronger policy voice and engagement with other jurisdictions, and to improve equitable access to resources to ensure no regions are left behind. The *Build Together Roadmap* proposes regional and provincial entities that work together to support Nova Scotia's community housing sector.

## Nova Scotia Community Housing Association

A key element of the *Build Together Roadmap* is the formation of a **Nova Scotia Community Housing Association (NSCHA)** to support the mobilization, empowerment, and sustainability of Nova Scotia's Community Housing Sector. The NSCHA, a non-profit organization governed by a board of directors, is comprised of members who are formal (housing providers) and informal (groups, networks, coalitions) community housing organizations. The NSCHA will form strategic partnerships at the provincial level to support the work of the sector, and it will convene and support regional housing networks to foster coordination and collaboration throughout the province.

The NSCHA's responsibilities include:

- Adopting and promoting the values and beliefs<sup>1</sup> articulated through the *Build Together* project,
- Advancing policy issues, including those illuminated by regional housing networks,
- Advocating for the desired changes<sup>2</sup> to the community housing sector documented in the *Build Together* project,
- Collaborating with government,
- Convening regional housing networks, including first voice and underrepresented group advisors,
- Coordinating programs and services,
- Creating a Management Information System (MIS),
- Developing and implementing a communications strategy,
- Forming strategic provincial partnerships,
- Identifying and communicating funding program information,
- Liaising with other provincial housing associations nation-wide,
- Providing capacity building opportunities within the sector, and
- Reaching out to community housing organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> As articulated throughout the *Build Together* project, Nova Scotia's community housing sector believes in: diversity, equity, and inclusion, including First Voice, in the community housing sector; equitable access and opportunity for both rural and urban community housing organizations; ending racism and stigma that limits access to appropriate housing; housing as a human right; and providing navigation and support services to people in housing need.

<sup>2</sup> Based on 239 responses (online survey, focus group meeting, online engagement sessions, interviews), the following desired changes to Nova Scotia's community housing sector were noted: capacity building - 34%, provincial organization and visibility of the sector - 22%, funding - 17%, inclusion of all races, first voice, and human rights – 16%, and policy development – 11%.

## Community Housing Organizations

**Community Housing Organizations** are comprised of co-op and other non-profit housing providers as well as informal housing groups, networks, and coalitions, and will form the membership of the Nova Scotia Community Housing Association. These organizations carry out affordable housing initiatives (research, advocacy, raise awareness, and develop and manage housing).

## Regional Housing Networks

**Regional Housing Networks (RHN)** are groups of organizations that come together in geographic areas across the province to support the creation of affordable housing options for people who are most in need. RHN not only represent geographic areas but also Mi'kmaw and Indigenous and African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent communities and are comprised of numerous and varied stakeholders whose mandates intersect with housing (2SLGBTQQIAAP, Persons with Disability, Women, Youth, Persons who were Previously Incarcerated, Seniors, People Living with Mental Illness and / or Addictions, Recent Immigrants, Newcomers or Refugees) as well as first voice, elders, service providers, municipal and provincial government, poverty reduction groups, health promoters, universities and colleges, economic development agencies, funding partners, and of course, informal and formal community housing groups. Regions of the province may be grouped as follows:

1. Mi'kmaw and Indigenous (provincial scope)
2. African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent (provincial scope)
3. Cape Breton, Victoria
4. Inverness, Richmond, Antigonish, Guysborough
5. Pictou, Colchester, Cumberland, Hants
6. Yarmouth, Digby, Shelburne
7. Annapolis, Queens, Lunenburg, Kings
8. Halifax Centre
9. Dartmouth, Eastern Shore, Bedford, Sackville

Regional Housing Networks are supported by Nova Scotia Community Housing Association (NSCHA) staff members (complement to be determined by resource availability) who are responsible for:

- Advancing capacity building within the sector (local, regional, provincial),
- Advancing policy issues,
- Contributing to provincial discussions related to the community housing sector,
- Convening county or local community housing organization meetings, as needed,
- Convening cross-regional topical experts, lived experience, and underrepresented group advisory circles,
- Convening RHN meetings (provincial for Mi'kmaw and Indigenous and African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent),
- Coordinating and supporting regional advocacy efforts,
- Disseminating funding program information and supporting funding applications, if possible,
- Fostering connections between community housing organizations and RHN,
- Networking with local housing organizations to identify successes, where support is needed, and opportunities for collaboration,
- Supporting research projects and initiatives,
- Working with communities to raise awareness about housing issues in the region, and
- Working with Municipalities, the Province of NS, and Planning Commissions to determine land availability for community housing projects.

The functions of Regional Housing Networks include:

- Contributing data, input, feedback (housing issues, successes, policy suggestions) to the NSCHA to create a provincial profile and awareness of community housing in Nova Scotia,
- Developing regional partnerships,
- Leveraging resources and supports,
- Raising awareness about regional housing issues, challenges, opportunities, and solutions, and
- Sharing information about local housing issues and activities.

## Regional Housing Network Members:

- First Voice (people in housing need)
- Elders
- Community (co-op and other non-profit), including Mi'kmaw and Indigenous, African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent, Housing Groups (formal and informal)
- Underrepresented Groups (2SLGBTQQAAP, Persons with Disability, Women, Youth, Persons who were Previously Incarcerated, Seniors, People Living with Mental Illness and / or Addictions, Recent Immigrants, Newcomers or Refugees)
- Municipal and Provincial Government
- Services Providers, e.g., Wrap Around and Navigation Services
- Health Promoters
- Poverty Reduction Groups
- Universities and colleges
- Funding partners
- Economic development agencies, for example, Regional Enterprise Networks

## Strategic Provincial Partnerships

A key element to this roadmap is the formation of **Strategic Provincial Partnerships** to support the work of the community housing sector in Nova Scotia. The purpose of forming these partnerships is to support the:

- Delivery of shared programs and services,
- Provision of organizational and technical expertise,
- Collaborative approach to finding housing solutions,
- Advancement of sectoral research, funding, capacity building, wrap around and navigation services, and
- Acquisition of land for community housing development.

#### Members of Provincial Strategic Housing Partnership:

- Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada - Atlantic
- Mi'kmaw and Indigenous, African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent, 2SLGBTQQIAAP, Persons with Disability, Women, Youth, Persons who were Previously Incarcerated, Seniors, People Living with Mental Illness and / or Addictions, Recent Immigrants, Newcomers or Refugee communities or groups
- Public Health, NS Health - Health Promoters
- Universities and colleges
- Government departments, non-profit service providers, coalitions
- Municipalities (economic development agencies, RENS)
- Funding partners (CMHC, Housing NS, The Centre, foundations, charities, private sector, other government departments)

#### Resourcing the Nova Scotia Community Housing Association

Strengthening Nova Scotia's community housing sector through collaboration, the basis of the *Build Together Roadmap*, will be heavily reliant upon the formation of Regional Housing Networks and Strategic Provincial Partnerships not only to engage a critical mass of community housing and other organizations contributing to housing solutions, but also to leverage support for the Nova Scotia Community Housing Association (NSCHA). Using a collective impact model<sup>3</sup> will make it possible to achieve more together than apart. Hopefully, it will also optimize the benefit that can be realized from available resources. Adopting the *Build Together Roadmap* will require significant funding from the Province of Nova Scotia as well as from other funding partners – the Community Housing Transformation Centre has been supportive of the *Build Together: Strengthening the Community Housing Sector in Nova Scotia* initiative and has indicated it will consider providing additional support. The level of funding required from start-up to full operations may vary, and as the sector evolves and grows so too will the role of a NSCHA. If support for creating a NSCHA is affirmed, the next step in this process will be to secure funding.

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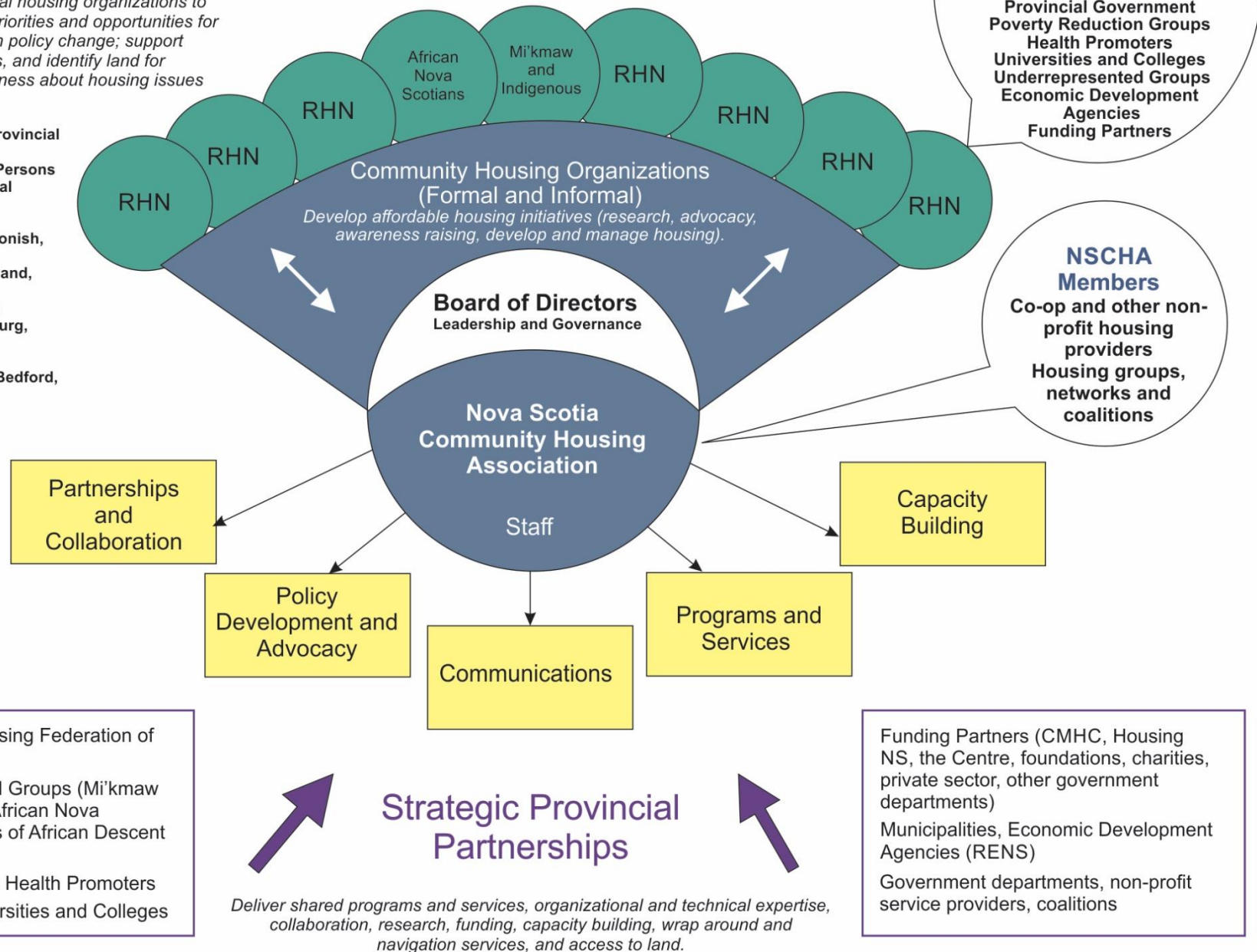
<sup>3</sup> To learn more about a collective impact model, please visit <https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact> or [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact#](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact#)

# Draft Nova Scotia Community Housing Association Model

## Regional Housing Networks (RHN)

Connect and network with local housing organizations to identify successes; develop priorities and opportunities for collaboration; provide input on policy change; support research, funding applications, and identify land for housing projects; raise awareness about housing issues and contribute to solutions.

- Mi'kmaw and Indigenous (provincial network)
- African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent (provincial network)
- Cape Breton, Victoria
- Inverness, Richmond, Antigonish, Guysborough
- Pictou, Colchester, Cumberland, Hants
- Yarmouth, Digby, Shelburne
- Annapolis, Queens, Lunenburg, Kings
- Halifax Centre
- Dartmouth, Eastern Shore, Bedford, Sackville



### Regional Housing Network Members

- First Voice
- Elders
- Service Providers
- Community Housing Orgs
- Municipal Government
- Provincial Government
- Poverty Reduction Groups
- Health Promoters
- Universities and Colleges
- Underrepresented Groups
- Economic Development Agencies
- Funding Partners

### NSCHA Members

- Co-op and other non-profit housing providers
- Housing groups, networks and coalitions

## Strategic Provincial Partnerships

Deliver shared programs and services, organizational and technical expertise, collaboration, research, funding, capacity building, wrap around and navigation services, and access to land.

- Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada-Atlantic
- Underrepresented Groups (Mi'kmaw and Indigenous, African Nova Scotians, Persons of African Descent and others)
- Public Health, NS Health Promoters
- CLARI and Universities and Colleges

- Funding Partners (CMHC, Housing NS, the Centre, foundations, charities, private sector, other government departments)
- Municipalities, Economic Development Agencies (RENS)
- Government departments, non-profit service providers, coalitions

**Build Together**  
Desired Changes  
to the Community  
Housing Sector



*Establish diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, build relationships with underrepresented groups, and meaningfully engage first voice*

*Establish interim board of directors and create non-profit provincial organization*

*Share Information and build capacity*

*Establish Management Information System (MIS)*

*Recruit and Hire staff*

*Reach out to potential CHS members*

*Develop Strategic Provincial Partnerships*

*Host Founding Conference and AGM*

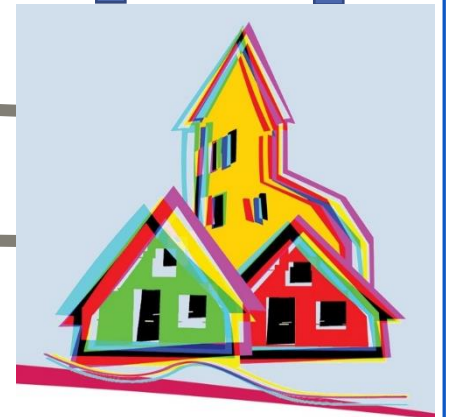
*Develop Advocacy and Policy Development Plan*

*Establish Regional Housing Networks*

*Launch programs and services*

*Evaluate Progress: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning*

**Strengthened  
Community  
Housing Sector  
in Nova Scotia**



January 2022

March 2022

May 2022

September 2022

December 2022