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## **RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY**

### Western Research Centre

#### **Name of Project:**

Does Subsidized Housing Aid Aboriginal Transition into the Urban Environment? A Front-Line Service-Delivery Perspective from Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

#### **Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:**

In 2012, Treaty 7 Urban Aboriginal Housing Authority (hereinafter Treaty 7 Housing), of Lethbridge, Alberta, initiated a homebuyer's education project to advance its clients' knowledge of the home buying process. In May 2012 the first phase concluded with several public workshops. During this project Treaty 7 Housing identified several internal limitations in its client intake policy, its recruitment strategies, its post-intake oversight, and in preparing clients to secure non-Treaty 7 Housing accommodations in a timely fashion. In lay terms, what Treaty 7 Housing administrators do not know is as follows: 1) what are the challenges confronting its clients upon moving into the city; 2) what do the clients hope to achieve with Treaty 7 Housing (i.e., is it viewed as less transitional housing and more permanent accommodations?); and, 3) why do current clients express apprehension about leaving Treaty 7 Housing? The key questions driving this research are as follows: how can Treaty 7 Housing administrators ease client rural-urban transition while alleviating anxiety associated with leaving subsidized housing? And how can programming be fashioned that effectively prepares folks for private home ownership or renting? With these ideas in mind the following project is proposed: a qualitative exploration of the barriers to Aboriginal urban acclimation as experienced by Treaty 7 Housing clients with the intention of improving Treaty 7 Housing staff's ability to respond to its clients needs without alienating them as they are readied for home ownership/rental capacity.

#### **Name of Principal Investigator:**

Yale Belanger

#### **Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:**

Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority

#### **Engagement objectives:**

- To empower local urban Aboriginal people by engaging them in research that will help improve the relationship between government services and urban Aboriginal families.



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- To develop a more nuanced approach to interpreting the Aboriginal experience; better understand the interrelationship between the issues associated with moving to the city; and the concomitant impact on urban service delivery and programming.
- To help improve Treaty 7 Housing administrators' ability to ease its clients' urban acclimation.
- To help improve our collective knowledge of the issues Aboriginal individuals confront when moving from rural to urban centers, which will assist Treaty 7 Housing staff in improving existing programming
- To evaluate municipal, provincial and federal policy issues associated with Aboriginal rural-urban transition.
- To help guide Treaty 7 Housing administrators in the development of internal educational programming to prepare individuals to leave subsidized housing and to facilitate their entry into the mainstream rental and/or homeownership market.
- To build and strengthen the urban Aboriginal community's research capacity.

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