



Memorandum

Re: Review of Existing Literature Related to Poverty Reduction in B.C. Métis Communities & Primary Research Results

Attention:

Elizabeth Siggers, MNBC
Dillon McLellan, MNBC
Melanie Walker, MNBC
Kanad Pankaj, MNBC

From:

Towagh Behr, Director of Research
Kwusen Research & Media Ltd.

Date:

March 27, 2024

1. BACKGROUND

Kwusen Research & Media Ltd. (Kwusen) has been engaged by Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) to work collaboratively with the Métis Nation B.C. (MNBC) on the Poverty Reduction Recommendations Project (the Project). Between April 2023 and June 2023, Kwusen reviewed relevant literature (see Appendix A for a bibliography) provided by MNBC and prepared a summary of key findings and key recommendations based on this review. Kwusen also identified a research gap in the available data that we anticipated could be addressed within the time/resources available for the current Project:

- None of the reports reviewed for this memorandum focused specifically on the needs of Métis people who are experiencing homelessness.¹ Although the Housing Needs Assessment survey allowed survey respondents to identify as “currently homeless,” the report did not provide additional detail about the housing needs of those who chose this option. Based on the information available, it is not clear what types of programs/supports would assist Métis people who are currently homeless in B.C. find suitable housing, as well as education, employment, social/cultural support, etc.

To address this gap, Kwusen suggested that obtaining the following information would be particularly helpful:

1. What MNBC programs/supports are currently being accessed by MNBC Citizens experiencing homelessness? What barriers impact access to these

¹ According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, homelessness may include a range of living situations, including 1) Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation; 2) Emergency Sheltered, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence; 3) Provisionally Accommodated, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenures, and finally 4) At Risk of Homelessness, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.



- programs/supports?
2. What provincial programs/supports are currently being accessed by Métis people experiencing homelessness? What barriers impact access to these programs/supports?
 3. What types of programs/supports offered by other organizations (i.e., non-profits, local governments, etc.) are currently being accessed by Métis people experiencing homelessness? What barriers impact access to these programs/supports?
 4. What kind of programs/supports that are not currently be available should be implemented by MNBC, the province, and/or other organizations to address homelessness amongst Métis people in B.C.? How can MNBC, the province, and/or other organizations ensure that these programs/supports are readily accessible to those experiencing homelessness?

Based on the above recommendations, MNBC's Ministry of Housing and Homelessness (the Ministry) delivered surveys and conducted interviews with Métis people who have experienced housing insecurity and/or homelessness. Kwusen assisted with developing the survey and interview guide, as well as led additional interviews with staff from the Ministry to obtain the perspectives and knowledge of services providers.

Section 6 of the following memorandum reports on survey and interview methodology, while Section 7 provides a summary of key findings. Based on the findings of this research, an updated list of recommendations is provided in Section 8. In addition, the results of a GBA+ Housing Survey conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Homelessness and provided to Kwusen in August 2023 are summarized in Section 5.

Note that a preliminary version of this memorandum was submitted to MNBC in September 2023. The current version includes minor updates that reflect the results of additional surveys and interviews that took place before the end of December 2023. The survey has now been closed and no further interviews are planned at this time.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW METHODOLOGY

Although all sources reviewed for the memorandum provide important information about the socio-economic status and well-being of Métis people in B.C., the following reports offered the most Métis-specific and actionable findings and recommendations. A brief summary of the methodology used by each source is also included below. Most sources combined quantitative research (surveys and statistical analysis) with qualitative research (focus groups, interviews, and other types of engagement with Métis people, MNBC staff/leadership, and key service providers).

- **Taanishi Kiiya? Miyayow Métis Saantii Pi Miyooayaan Didaan B.C. Métis Public Health Surveillance Program Baseline Report (2021)**
 - Primary Research Methodology
 - Review of Métis-controlled database that holds information on a data cohort of 14,515 MNBC Citizens who have consented to have their data included in the Métis Public Health Surveillance Program.
 - Review/incorporation of data from other sources, including the McCreary Centre Society's B.C. Adolescent Health Survey, Statistics Canada's Community Health Survey, and other relevant data/literature.
- **Voice of the Métis: Housing Needs Assessment Métis Nation British Columbia**



(2022)

- Primary Research Methodology
 - Delivery of the MNBC Housing Needs Survey to self-identified Métis households in B.C. Mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions.
 - 2,059 complete responses received from Métis households.
 - Analysis of survey results at the provincial, regional, household, and individual level in relation to three core housing indicators: affordability,² adequacy,³ suitability,⁴ as well as their housing satisfaction.
- K-12 School Food Survey Project Summary Report (2023)
 - Primary Research Methodology
 - Delivery of a K-12 School Food Survey to self-identified Métis households in B.C. Mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions.
 - Survey results captured data for 523 Métis families and their children.
 - Survey results considered in relation to other reports from MNBC, Statistics Canada, and academic sources.
- Métis Nation British Columbia Métis Elders and Seniors Supportive Care Assessment (2023)
 - Primary Research Methodology
 - Desktop research; regional focus groups; engagement with health care workers; and virtual one-on-one interviews with 26 Elders/seniors/caregivers, 15 healthcare workers, and 6 MNBC staff.
 - Validation sessions with Métis Elders, seniors, and MNBC staff on the findings of the study and the draft report.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from the literature reviewed for this memorandum are presented below in Table 1, organized by the following themes: Housing, K-12 Food Security, Health (Youth), and Health (Elders).⁵ They are primarily derived from the reports listed above.⁶

Table 1: Literature Review Key Findings by Theme

Issue	Findings
Housing	Métis households in B.C. face greater core housing need than non-Indigenous households (Métis 17%; non-Indigenous 15%).
	There is greater housing need for Métis living in urban settings, especially in the Lower Mainland.
	Métis households live in unaffordable, inadequate, and unsuitable housing at higher rates than the general population.

² The household does not spend more than 30% of its pre-tax income on shelter costs.

³ The household's dwelling is not in need of major repairs.

⁴ There are enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household.

⁵ Note that health-related findings included in Table 1 are those most relevant to economic outcomes/poverty reduction (i.e., findings related to levels of physical activity are not included in Table 1).

⁶ The Critical Social Infrastructure and Facilities Master Plan is another useful source (provided to Kwusen in draft form), with recommendations for specific infrastructure improvements for each MNBC Chartered Community. Kwusen understands that MNBC is preparing a Strategic Plan that will align the results of the Critical Social Infrastructure and Facilities Master Plan with other MNBC priorities. As such, the Plan is not considered in detail in this memorandum. Overall, the findings/recommendations of the Plan overlap with the findings/recommendations presented in the other reports provided to MNBC.



	<p>Housing need disproportionately impacts some demographics, including single parent households, seniors, low-income households, those with disabilities, youth, and individuals of a gender other than man or woman.</p> <p>Barriers to home ownership/access to suitable housing include prohibitive real estate/rental costs and difficulties saving for a down payment.</p>
K-12 Food Security	<p>The costs of school lunches are burdensome for Métis families with school aged children (K-12).</p> <p>The high cost of groceries is the greatest food-related barrier for Métis families.</p> <p>Stigma associated with school food programs may also be leading to a lack of participation by some Métis families.</p> <p>School food programs are generally perceived as serving food that does not meet the nutritional needs of Métis children. Métis families would like to see greater incorporation of traditional Métis foods into programs.</p>
Health (Youth)	<p>Métis youth who have familial experience of residential schools are more likely to have experienced other risk factors/harms (i.e., physical abuse).</p> <p>Métis youth are more likely than non-Métis youth to have been in government care. Métis youth are also more likely to have engaged in substance use.</p> <p>Métis youth with government care experiences are more likely to attempt suicide (this rate decreases amongst those who have supportive adults in their lives).</p> <p>Youth with supportive adults (at home, in school, extra-curricular, community worker, etc.) in their lives have better mental, emotional, and physical health and well-being than youth who do not have a relationship with a supportive adult. Youth who have support and adequate access to mental and physical health resources have better overall health than youth who do not have access to these supports and resources.</p> <p>Youth who participate in cultural activities are more likely to feel connection with their community and report good or excellent mental health.</p>
Health (Elders)	<p>Métis Elders currently faces several barriers to accessing care, including economic barriers, physical barriers (rural), racism and trauma (including mistrust of the healthcare system and lack of cultural awareness), and healthcare capacity (particularly a lack of culturally relevant/respectful services and care centers).</p> <p>Lack of Métis representation in decision-making bodies and lack of adequate funding are contributing to poorer health outcomes for Elders/seniors.</p> <p>There is a shortage of Métis healthcare workers.</p> <p>Connections to community, land, traditions, and culture, as well as access to Métis medicines, are not adequately integrated into healthcare for Métis Elders/seniors.</p>



	Maintaining familial connections is important for Elders in care. Familial and community support improves advocacy for Elders within the healthcare system.
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4. LITERATURE REVIEW KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The sources reviewed for this memorandum offer several actionable recommendations, which have been summarized and organized by theme⁷ in Table 2 below. Note that only those recommendations that are most directly relevant to poverty reduction are included Table 2.

Table 2: Literature Review Key Recommendations

Issue	Recommendations
Housing⁸	Development of social housing, including housing cooperatives and tiny homes, as well as housing run by and for Métis.
	Provision of aid and assistance for Métis seeking home ownership, including first-time home buyers programs and down payment assistance.
	Provision of rent assistance/subsidies for renters facing rising costs.
	Development of housing programs and supports that are specific to Métis culture and identity, including educational and community programs/spaces that reflect cultural practices/values (gardens, smudging, community gathering spaces).
	Development of housing infrastructure that suits the specific accessibility needs of Elders/seniors, including elevators and handrails, as well as funding for renovation/retrofitting. Social housing that includes accessible living spaces is also recommended.
K-12 Food Security⁹	Continued and expanded financial support for Métis-specific food programs, including expanding those already offered by MNBC to all schools in the Province; subsidized food shipping costs from urban centres to rural areas; and increased education/awareness about nutrition and traditional foods.
	Collaboration between Health Services, the Ministry of Education, and MNBC to create/expand small-scale food programs.
	Collaboration between the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food and MNBC to create/expand food security programs.
	Collaboration between the B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and MNBC to increase fresh food access in Métis communities.
Health (Elders)	Collaboration between provincial/local governments, healthcare organizations, and MNBC to improve Métis representation in decision-making bodies; improve/streamline communication

⁷ Note that the themes are slightly different than Table 1, as there were few recommendations specific to healthcare for Métis youth.

⁸ For further detailed information about these recommendations, see pages 100-114 in the Housing Needs Assessment Report. See also the summary of the Ma Nijki Home Renovation Program, the Métis Housing Rent Support Program, and the First Time Homebuyer Program on page 5 of the Preliminary Report for the Critical Social Infrastructure and Facilities Master Plan.

⁹ For further detailed information about these recommendations, see pages 13-15 in the K-12 Project Summary Report.



	between stakeholders; and ensure adequate funding is provided for culturally relevant care. ¹⁰
	Improved Métis access to supportive and continuous care. ¹¹
	Recruitment, retention, and support for Métis healthcare workers. ¹²
Health (General)	Inter-and intra-government cooperation to streamline and improve health services for Métis people in B.C. ¹³
	Development of Métis-specific plans and strategies designed to address Métis healthcare gaps and incorporate Métis culture/traditions into healthcare delivery. ¹⁴
	Development of data collection practices that are in keeping with Métis data governance standards. ¹⁵

5. GBA+ HOUSING SURVEY RESULTS

The GBA+ Housing Survey was administered by MNBC’s Ministry of Housing and Homelessness from November 2022 to August 2023. The survey included demographic questions about the age, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, dependants, and income of individuals who participated, as well as questions about their housing situations, and any housing programs they have utilized currently and/or in the past. The survey also included questions about how housing support programs have helped participants, and what additional supports or programs could be beneficial to participants dealing with housing insecurity or homelessness. Key findings from the survey are summarized below.

Demographic Results

Most of the 198 survey participants are living in the Lower Mainland region, followed by the Vancouver Island and Powell River region, and the Thompson Okanagan region. As was described in the “Voice of the Métis: Housing Needs Assessment Métis Nation British Columbia” Report (2022), the Lower Mainland region has higher housing costs, and a greater shortage of affordable housing than other regions in BC.

Table 3: GBA+ Housing Survey Demographics

Region of Habitation	Percentage of Survey Participants
Lower Mainland - Region 2	34.87%
Vancouver Island and Powell River – Region 1	25%
Thompson Okanagan - Region 3	19.74%
Kootenay – Region 4	6.58%
North Central – Region 5	5.92%
Northern B.C. – Region 6	3.95%
Northern B.C. – Region 7	1.97%

¹⁰ See pages 36-39 and 40-41 in the Métis Elders and Seniors Supportive Care Assessment Report for further detailed information.

¹¹ See pages 39-40 in the Métis Elders and Seniors Supportive Care Assessment Report for further detailed information.

¹² See page 42 in the Métis Elders and Seniors Supportive Care Assessment for further detailed information.

¹³ See pages 108-109 of the Métis Public Health Surveillance Program Baseline Report for further detailed information, including a list of provincial/regional ministries and health authorities that could support this recommendation.

¹⁴ See pages 110-112 of the Métis Public Health Surveillance Program Baseline Report for further detailed information, including a list of provincial/regional ministries and health authorities that could support this recommendation.

¹⁵ See page 113 of the Métis Public Health Surveillance Program Baseline Report for further detailed information, including a list of provincial/regional ministries and health authorities that could support this recommendation.



Most of the participants identified as women (64.63%) or men (31.97%). However, there was some gender diversity among participants, including “other” (1.36%), two-spirit (0.68%), gender fluid (0.68%), and trans male (0.86%). A majority of survey participants identified as straight (72.3%), while some of the participants identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual or queer (together 17.57%). The age range of participants varied, with the oldest participant born in 1936, and the youngest born in 2002.

Nearly all the survey participants (7 preferred not to disclose), were living with some form of physical, mental, or emotional disability or impairment. The most prevalent disabilities were pain related (20.05%), mental health (17.89%), and mobility (12.74%). Over half of the participants were not living with dependents (56.57%); approximately one quarter were living with dependents (25.71%); and a small percentage were living with adult children (1.35%). Some respondents also expressed in comments that they were financially supporting young adult children. Most survey participants had some sort of housing, whether owned or rented. However, a few were sleeping outside (1.35%), living in vehicles/mobile homes (1.35%), or couch surfing (0.68%).

Discrimination

Most participants stated that they had not been discriminated against when looking for housing because of their gender or sexual orientation (80.56%). However, some participants had experienced discrimination when looking for housing (16.67%) for gender or other reasons. Of the 24 participants who have faced discrimination when looking for housing, most were single, divorced, separated, or widowed women (16), although, some were married women (1), single trans-men (1), single gender fluid, single men (2), or married men (2). Of the participants who have faced discrimination, 7 of them are living with dependents (mostly single women). Nearly half of the participants who have faced discrimination are currently living in inadequate housing (10). One participant expressed¹⁶ that they currently live in unsafe housing and have faced discrimination against them and their child on multiple occasions.

I tried for 7 months [to get housing], but people would find out I had a toddler and they would change their mind. I tried multiple different types of housing, [from] roommate to single house to basement to top of house, everything would go wonderful until they find out I have a toddler and then something would change their mind. Sometimes it'll be honest and say it was because I had a baby, other times they would blame me on some ridiculous thing. I am now in unsafe housing because I couldn't get anything else.

Nearly all the of the 24 participants who have been discriminated against when looking for housing are earning less than \$36,000 per year (21).

Income and Housing Support Utilization

Over half of survey participants were low to moderate income earners, making less than \$36,000 annually. Only a few of the participants earn over \$63,000 a year. Most participants pay more than 30% of their gross household income towards rent (71.13%).

Table 4: GBA+ Housing Survey Income Levels

Annual Income Level	Percentage of Survey Participants
Less than \$36,000	58.5%
\$36,000 to \$44,999	14.29%

¹⁶ Note that any quotes from the GBA+ Housing Survey are only from those survey respondents who indicated that their anonymized responses could be used in survey reporting.



\$45,000 to \$53,999	12.24%
\$54,000 to \$62,999	4.76%
\$63,000 to \$71,999	2.04%
\$72,000 to \$80,999	1.36%
Over \$81,000	1.36%

All but 7 of those surveyed had participated in some form of housing support program. Of the 6 programs noted in the survey, the Métis Rent Supplement Program was the most utilised (51.63%), followed by the Ma Niki Home Renovation Program (21.20%), Covid-19 Emergency Fund (12.5%), Reaching Home Housing Supports (4.89%), and the now cancelled Utilities Support Program (4.35%). Those that utilised housing support programs emphasized that the programs contributed to their ability to keep up with increasing costs of living:

The Métis rent supplement has been a blessing in that it has allowed me to stay in my home as costs increase but my income does not keep up.

As many of the individuals surveyed have limited financial means, rent support has allowed them to access services that would otherwise be unattainable. Participants who have utilized the program require assistance to afford rent on a fixed income, especially considering personal financial and physical circumstances that limit their ability to cover costly living expenses:

I am very thankful for the Métis rent supplement program. Rent is extremely high, and my income is very low. I hope the supplement program continues as I have been unable to find enough hours and work due to my chronic pain and physical restrictions.

Survey participants who have utilized the Ma Niki Home Renovation Program are similarly satisfied with how the program has improved their living situation and allowed them to remain in their own homes for longer:

We now have safe access to our home via a covered ramp. We also have a heat pump for comfort in summer and winter which is so important to us as elderly people.

Ma Niki Home Renovations program enabled me to update my ensuite with removal of my bathtub and install a walk-in shower as I have mobility issues and would not have been able to afford the upgrade.

The upgrades to member homes have also helped them keep heating and electrical costs down by improving energy efficiency:

We had a new furnace and AC installed in Sept 2022, I believe it has been one of the best decisions we have made, made possible by the generosity of the MNBC Housing program/renovations. This new furnace is so quiet in comparison to the old one and so much more efficient. It has decreased our hydro consumption by about 13% in comparison to the old furnace in the same time frame.

For some survey participants who have utilized the Reaching Home Housing Supports Program, the Program provided assistance with educational goals during the COVID-19 pandemic:



I returned to school in 2021. I was a waitress my entire life with barely an 8th grade education. I didn't know what I was going to do when COVID hit and I did not have any options. MNBC sponsored me to start my post-secondary journey... MNBC has helped me tremendously to obtain an education and maintain a roof over my head. I am so grateful. Thank you.

Overall, survey responses regarding MNBC's programs were overwhelmingly positive. For the individuals who struggled to access support services, their main issues were related to communication and feeling "lost in the system." Others expressed frustration in their inability to qualify for some of the programs, particularly related to health care funding. Some of the survey participants suggested expanding upon existing programs, such as providing down payment support for home buyers, expanding educational support, and providing grants to help homeowners with cost-of-living expenses. Some participants also expressed interest in Métis specific housing.

The following section reports on the primary research conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Homelessness with assistance from Kwusen in September 2023.

6. PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

After reviewing the gap analysis memo and Kwusen's recommendations, MNBC determined that delivering both an online survey and conducting phone interviews would be feasible. Kwusen prepared a draft survey, interview guide, and informed consent form for MNBC to review in August 2023. MNBC provided feedback, which was incorporated into finalized versions of the survey, guide, and consent form. Further information about the methodology for survey/interview delivery is provided below:

- Beginning in early September, the Ministry of Housing and Homelessness reached out to Métis people utilizing the Reaching Home program and other MNBC programs to request volunteer survey participants, as well as volunteers for interviews. Both survey participants and interview participants were offered honorarium. To avoid collecting redundant data, participants were asked to either fill out the survey or participate in an interview, but not both.
- Surveys were delivered online via SurveyMonkey.
- MNBC staff conducted the interviews over phone or video conference call. With the interviewee's permission, the interviews were recorded. Interviewees were asked to either sign an informed consent form or provide their verbal consent on the interview recording.
- In addition to surveys and interviews with Métis people accessing MNBC's programs, Kwusen staff conducted interviews with 3 staff from the Ministry of Housing and Homelessness. Staff provided their informed consent, and their interviews were recorded.

The survey was closed for new submissions in December 2023, and all new responses have been reviewed and added to the Primary Research Results section below. The results of three additional interviews have also been included below.

7. PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS

This section provides an overview of the key results of the surveys and interviews. It should be noted that the primary research conducted for this memorandum is based on an a very small



sample of Métis people experiencing housing insecurity, homelessness, or other barriers to well-being. However, the similarity of the observations and knowledge shared during independent interviews and surveys suggests that these concerns are likely to be widely held and may be reflective of the broader Métis experience in B.C.

7.1. SURVEYS

To date, 26 surveys have been completed by Métis people contacted by the Ministry of Housing and Homelessness. Given the relatively small number of completed surveys, the results below are primarily described qualitatively instead of quantitatively.

Basic Demographic Information

Most of the survey respondents are from the Lower Mainland (Region 2), Thompson/Okanagan (Region 3), or the Vancouver Island/Powell River (Region 1). There were also some respondents from the North Central Region (Region 5) and Kootenay areas (Region 4). As such, Métis people in the Northeast and Northwestern areas (Regions 6 and 7) of the Province are underrepresented in survey results, which has also been the case in several of the other studies reviewed for this memorandum.

An almost equal number of respondents identify as women or men (46.15%), while two respondents identify as Two-Spirit. Most respondents were born between 1960 and 1999. Over 65% of respondents have one or more dependents living with them, indicating that the housing issues they are experiencing are on a household, not just individual, level.

Past and Current Housing Situation

Respondents were asked to select statements that best reflect their past (within 5 years) housing situation and their current housing situation. The results of these questions in relation to each other are described below:

Table 5: Past and Current Housing Situations

Past 5 Years	Current	# of Responses
I have mostly lived in stable and safe housing	I live in safe and stable housing	10
I have mostly lived in varied circumstances (i.e., sleeping in a tent or outside, couch surfing, or a shelter)	I sleep in a variety of situations (i.e., couch surfing, sleeping outside or in a tent or shelter)	4
I have mostly lived in temporary or unstable housing (i.e., transitional housing or short-term rentals)	I live in safe and stable housing	4
I have mostly lived in stable and safe housing	I live in temporary or unstable housing (i.e., you have housing but may need to leave soon)	4
I have mostly lived in temporary or unstable housing (i.e., transitional housing or short-term rentals)	I live in temporary or unstable housing (i.e., you have housing but may need to leave soon)	3



I have mostly lived in stable and safe housing	I sleep in a variety of situations (i.e., couch surfing, sleeping outside or in a tent or shelter)	1
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The following findings on respondent housing situations are particularly relevant:

- All but four of the respondents who currently live in safe and stable housing rely on some form of subsidy/program to maintain that housing, including the MNBC Reaching Home program, the MNBC rent supplement program, disability income, and B.C. Housing Rent Assistance Program (RAP).
- Four of the respondents who are currently housed indicated that their housing is inadequate for their needs. Of the respondents who are currently living in inadequate housing, three respondents noted that they do not have enough room for their family, with one respondent commenting that they live with extended family in a house that does not have enough bedrooms or bathrooms. Three respondents shared that they are unable to afford necessary household items (i.e., furnishings, kitchen equipment). Two respondents noted that their home is not equipped for the climate that they live in (i.e., no air conditioning/heat). One respondent also stated that their housing requires repairs/maintenance that their landlord or property owner will not complete.
- Respondents who indicated that their current housing is unstable/temporary identified rent affordability and the potential for eviction as the main reasons for this instability.
- Respondents who are currently sleeping in varied circumstances reported that they are couch surfing, sleeping outside, sleeping in their vehicle, and/or are sleeping at an overnight or extended stay shelter.

Program/Services Use & Feedback

Respondents were asked to provide qualitative feedback on MNBC programs, including the Ma Niki Home Renovation Program, Métis Rent Supplement Program, Emergency Funding (COVID-19), and Reaching Home Housing Supports.¹⁷ 21 of the 26 respondents have utilized at least one of these programs, with the majority utilizing the Reaching Home Housing Support program (80.95%) followed by the Métis Rent Supplement Program (42.86%). Feedback on the programs was generally positive, with several respondents reporting that MNBC programs have helped them avoid eviction and obtain affordable housing. Two respondents shared their frustrations in communications with MNBC Housing staff (i.e., not hearing back after reaching out about programs and misunderstandings), and one respondent suggested that issues with their MNBC citizenship were the cause of their current housing insecurity. Despite these few issues, most were very happy with the MNBC programs, and many respondents added additional comments to the survey thanking MNBC staff for their support and dedication.

Respondents were also asked if they have utilized non-MNBC programs/supports, and to provide feedback on these programs/supports if so. As the majority (over 60%) have not utilized a non-MNBC program, feedback was limited compared to the previous question. Two of the respondents who did provide feedback noted that they have struggled to find programs they are eligible for

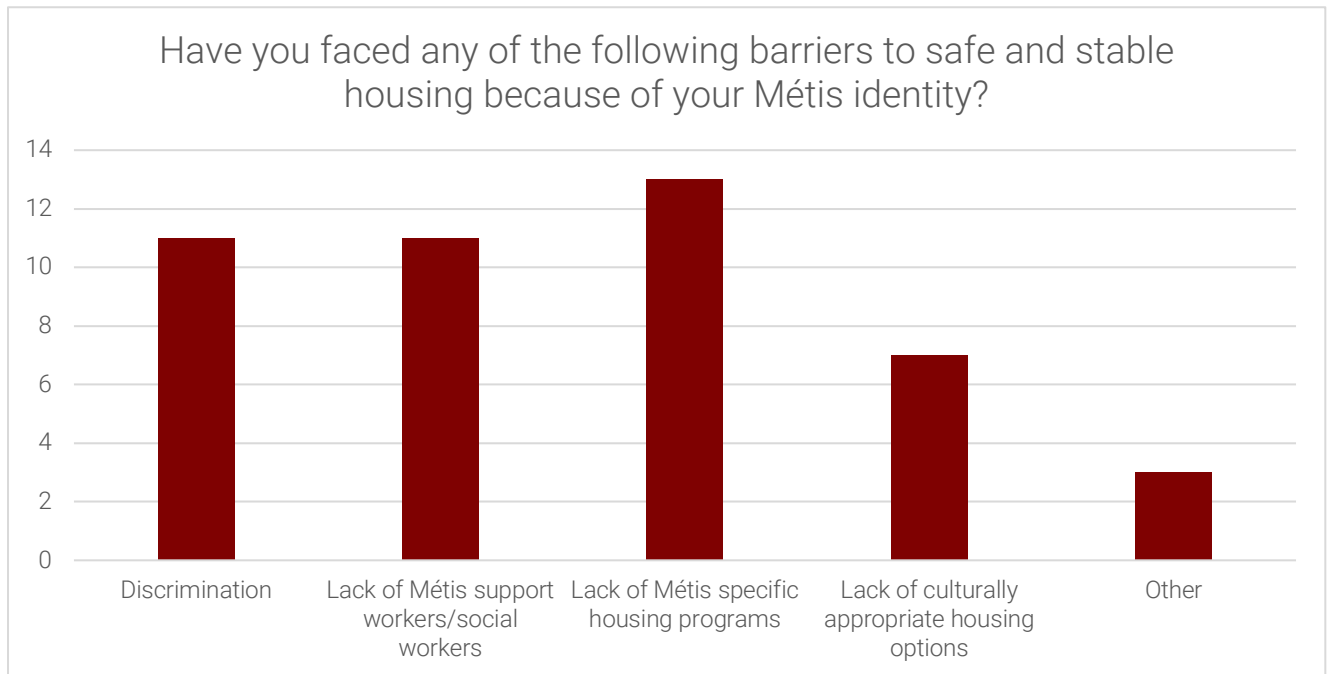
¹⁷ The now discontinued Utilities Support program was included as an option, but no respondents selected it.



outside of MNBC. One respondent stated that the non-MNBC programs they have participated in do not meet their needs.

Métis Experiences

One survey question asked respondents to identify any Métis-specific barriers they have faced when seeking safe and stable housing. All but two of the survey respondents identified at least one Métis-specific barrier to obtaining housing, as shown in the chart below. "Other" responses include "I have not faced anything due to identity," "Lack of support for Métis people without a status card," "My family is large which makes it harder to find a place for my family," and "Not enough housing options or supports to help."

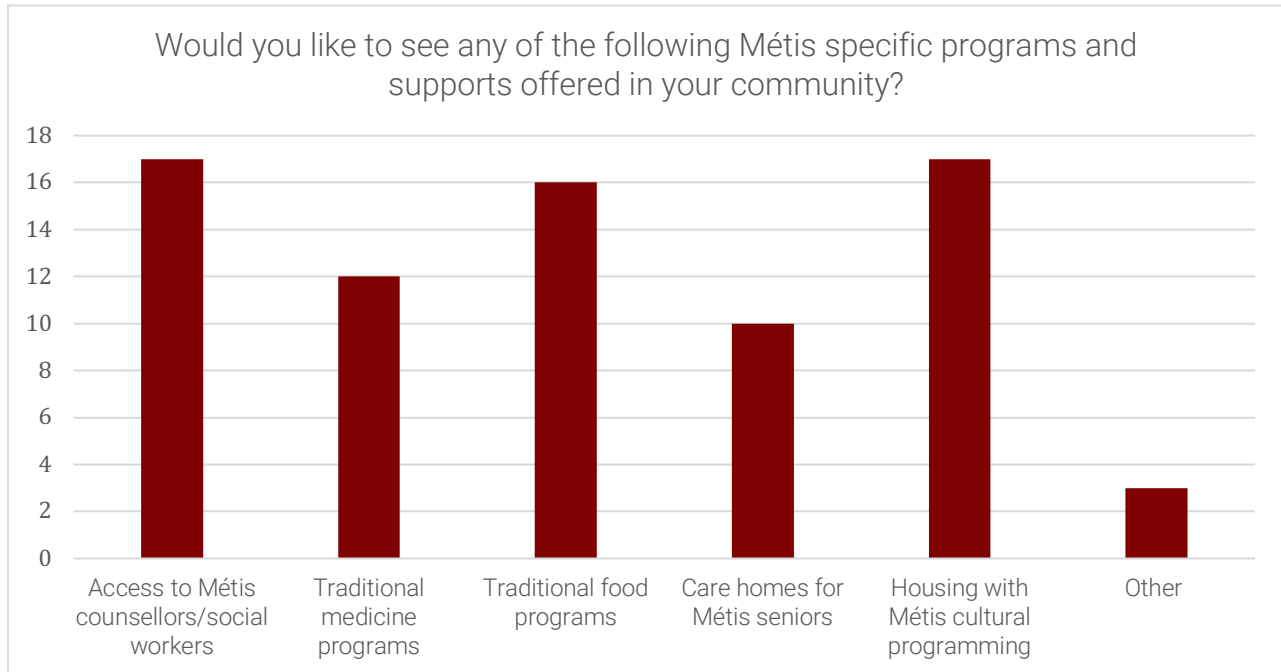


Respondents were also asked to choose from a list of Métis specific programs/supports. The results for this question are shown in the chart below. Most respondents chose more than one option. The fact that each option (excluding "other") was chosen by at least 10 respondents indicates a high level of interest in the implementation of Métis-specific services. "Other" responses include the following:

- "I would love to know more of the Metis culture as I was denied his information growing up and dealing with child and family services as a child & adult."
- "Would be great to do gatherings of all the local Métis residents in our community and have events and barbeques, [as well as] start a support program so if you're in need of something or help we can reach out to our family members in the community and help each other out."
- "I believe with more Provincial & Federal funding combined with the MNBC positivity, more people like myself will step forward and access help and guidance that [they] may not be doing so currently. I myself am a very proud [person] that after meeting with members was completely unashamed of asking for assistance."
- "I feel most importantly affordable needs to be based on income, it seems to be the only fair way to have a safe home to raise children. Also, for myself as a senior to



- have safe housing.”
- “I do believe there are Métis seniors that will greatly benefit from a seniors housing facilities, especially low income”
- “Mîcôwin [Food] program was VERY helpful.”



As discussed in the following section, many of the themes that arose from the surveys were also reflected in the interviews.

7.2. INTERVIEWS

To date, 11 interviews have been conducted with Métis people contacted by the Ministry of Housing and Homelessness. The key concerns expressed during the interviews are summarized below.

Housing-Specific Concerns

Respondents reported several challenges to accessing safe and stable housing. Needs and circumstances are varied, but the overall themes described below were reported by several interviewees, indicating that they are widely shared experiences.

Housing Affordability

Respondents raised housing affordability as a primary concern in nearly every interview. This was a particularly prevalent concern amongst those living in the Lower Mainland/southern Vancouver Island regions (as has been the case in other studies reviewed for this memorandum), but respondents in all regions faced similar barriers, including but not limited to the following: prohibitive security and pet deposits; rapidly rising rental costs, which motivate landlords to “renovict” their tenants; competitive rental markets that make it difficult for people with variable or no incomes to obtain a rental; and difficulties saving for down payments. Many respondents have experienced more than one of these issues.

Housing/Neighbourhood Suitability



Respondents reported difficulties finding housing and neighbourhoods that are suitable for their needs. Several respondents were particularly concerned about the safety and comfort of their children, noting that the housing options available to them were often located in unsafe neighbourhoods. Other respondents with children reported feeling unsafe in their housing due to disputes with other tenants that were not addressed by their landlord. One respondent with children with special needs further noted that they require detached housing where noise (such as a child throwing an object) will not disturb neighbours or result in police checks.

Other Concerns

In addition to housing-specific concerns, respondents reported several additional issues that have impacted their employment, access to services, and overall well-being.

Program Accessibility/Sustainability

Most of the respondents interviewed for the Project have accessed at least one social assistance program, whether through MNBC, a provincial service provider (i.e., BC Housing), or both. Nearly all respondents reported at least one barrier to accessing and sustaining their access to these programs, with a greater number describing issues with provincial service providers. The issues they identify include but are not limited to the following: lack of awareness of available programs; program application barriers, such as online-only applications that are problematic for applicants who are not comfortable navigating online systems; program funding that is reliant on maintaining a certain income, meaning that respondents who begin to earn above this income are unable to maintain the funding even if they still cannot afford housing and other necessities; barriers to receiving the funding, such as being unable to provide direct deposit information; and exhaustion caused by navigating multiple programs from different service providers who often require the same information to be submitted repeatedly. Respondents living in rural areas expressed concern about a lack of services available to them compared to urban areas, particularly when moving from an urban area to a rural area which was more affordable for them.

Health

Health challenges were raised consistently by interviewees, whether in relation to their own needs or the needs of dependents. Respondents reported difficulties accessing consistent care, including long waits for appointments and inconsistent availability for some health care services, particularly for those with autism and other special needs. Others noted that physical disabilities, including chronic pain, have prevented them from working full-time. The cascading impacts of these health-related issues have impacted respondents' housing, income, and overall well-being.

COVID-19

Respondents reported that COVID-19 closures and mandates significantly impacted their access to services and ability to secure shelter or housing. The closures of public showers, outhouses, shelters, and several food sharing options significantly impacted respondents who relied on these services. Others reported that job markets shifted after the pandemic, making it more difficult for them to obtain employment in their field. COVID-19 vaccination mandates were also restrictive for those who chose not to be vaccinated and affected interpersonal relationships in shared housing.

Métis Experiences



In addition to the concerns described above, respondents described several issues and barriers that are specific to their identity as Métis people. As summarized below, the key elements identified by respondents in relation to their Métis experiences are intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, discrimination, and a lack of culturally appropriate supports and services.

Intergenerational Trauma and Systemic Racism

Respondents reported that the intergenerational traumas caused by colonization and forced assimilation have impacted their interpersonal relationships and connections to Métis community and culture. One respondent shared an account of the effects of racism on her grandmother, who was bullied so severely for her Indigenous identity that she tried to assimilate her family as much as possible into non-Indigenous society. Others noted that systemic racism in educational institutions and workplaces continues to impact Métis people seeking education and employment today, which in turn increases rates of homelessness. Some respondents noted that while Métis people can sometimes pass for being non-Indigenous and therefore limit their exposure to racial stereotypes, they nevertheless experience pervasive barriers and challenges, including but not limited to higher rates of incarceration and addiction.

Discrimination

Multiple respondents have experienced discrimination and/or had family members who have been discriminated against when seeking housing, employment, or services. One respondent recalled a family member, who is both visibly Indigenous and a substance user, being repeatedly denied housing. Their family member is now experiencing homelessness. Others noted that, as Métis people, they are denied access to services available to other Indigenous people, but face discrimination and other barriers when attempting to access non-Indigenous resources.

Lack of Métis-Specific Supports/Services

Some respondents reported a general lack of Métis-specific services and support. One respondent felt that Métis culture is generally misunderstood by service providers, who are operating at low capacity and can be judgemental or unkind. Others have struggled to find housing that allows them to practice cultural activities: for example, respondents reported that smudging is often equated with smoking, meaning they are unable to smudge in their residences. They suggested a number of solutions to these issues that are discussed further in Section 8.

Successes

Although respondents primarily focused on the barriers and issues they have experienced when accessing resources, supports, and housing, they also shared stories of successes, particularly in relation to MNBC-delivered programs. Several noted that MNBC offered greater ease of access to programs than provincial services, as well as responsive and supportive staff who made them feel safe. One respondent has referred a family member to MNBC's services. Overall, several respondents shared that MNBC's Ministry of Housing and Homelessness services are integral to their access to housing, income assistance, and other forms of support.

7.3. MNBC STAFF INTERVIEWS

Kwusen staff conducted videoconference interviews with three Ministry of Housing and Homelessness staff who volunteered to participate in the Project. As MNBC service providers who work closely with those accessing many of MNBC's social assistance programs, as well as



provincial assistance programs, their perspectives and knowledge provide important insight into the experiences of Métis people facing housing insecurity, homelessness, underemployment or unemployment, and other barriers to well-being. Many of the issues they identified are the same as those reported in the surveys and interviews.

Table 6: Issues/Concerns from MNBC Staff Interviews

Theme	Issues/Concerns
Lack of Preventative Measures & Consistent/Long-Term Support	Temporary or “band-aid” solutions (i.e., short-term subsidy programs) that do not address long-term underlying issues, such as mental health
	Lack of preventative programs that would keep people in their current housing, instead of assisting them after they are unhoused
	Difficulty addressing cyclical/related issues, such as mental health issues causing unemployment, which in turn can lead to homelessness
Service Fragmentation	Multiple service providers providing overlapping services without communication/cohesion
	Underfunding/lack of sustainability amongst programs, leading to inconsistent delivery
Barriers to Housing Access/Housing Transition	General issues with housing affordability, both in the rental and home ownership markets
	Competitive rental markets that make it less likely for applicants who rely on social assistance or have mental or physical special needs to obtain housing
	Barriers to transitioning people from sleeping rough or in shelters to supportive housing, in part because of a lack of supportive housing and in part due to rules and restrictions that may make supportive housing undesirable
	Difficulties transitioning people from rent supplements to home ownership, especially with rising housing prices
Barriers to Accessing Supportive Services/Programs	Lack of support workers who can assist people with navigating the system, including filling out multiple applications (particularly through online interfaces that some applicants may have difficulty accessing), completing tax forms, and generally advocating for the needs of applicants
	Difficulties accessing program funds (i.e., taking multiple buses to pick up a cheque or being unable to provide the information needed for a direct deposit)



	Challenges to providing province-wide program delivery, particularly for rural/remote communities
Staff Burnout/Capacity issues	Shortage of frontline workers and outreach workers
	Burnout and exhaustion amongst staff dealing with heavy workloads and high-stress environments
	Lack of in-organization counselling resources for frontline workers
Rigid Program Requirements/Rules	Regulations/rules that may not account for the needs of people experiencing mental health crises
	Maximum income caps and other program eligibility requirements that do not reflect actual living costs (i.e., after reaching a certain income, people may no longer be eligible for support, even though they are still experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, etc.)
Information Gaps	Gaps in knowledge about Métis people experiencing homelessness, i.e., which communities need additional resources because they have higher numbers of homeless Métis people

Although the interviews focused primarily on identifying the barriers/issues faced by service providers and Métis people utilizing their services, MNBC staff also identified several strengths to MNBC’s programming, including strong internal communication within and between MNBC Ministries; the ability of MNBC staff to refer clients to other services offered by MNBC, such as skills development; and their ability to modify programs to support people on a provincial scale.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the course of the interviews and surveys, community members and MNBC staff suggested several measures that could address or mitigate some of the concerns summarized in preceding sections of this memo. These suggestions are grouped by theme in the table below.

Table 7: Recommendations from Surveys/Interviews

Theme	Suggested Solutions
Métis-Specific Programs/Supports/Solutions	1. Multigenerational housing (one respondent cited the KIKÉKYELC development, which provides supportive housing to Indigenous youth and Indigenous Elders, as an example)
	Métis-specific housing websites where Métis people could search for housing or post housing opportunities
	2. Métis or Indigenous housing options that support cultural practices, such as smudging (as discussed previously in Section 7.2,



	<p>respondents expressed frustration with not being able to smudge in apartments)</p> <p>3. Cultural programming/resources and opportunities for cultural immersion, including access to traditional medicines and traditional foods, language classes, art classes, etc.</p> <p>4. Construction of Métis wellness centres/community centres/friendship centres</p> <p>5. Increased collaboration amongst B.C. Métis organizations/associations</p> <p>6. Targeted additional research (i.e., developing better identifiers for Métis populations during point in time counts; additional interviews focused on understanding the specific barriers faced by Métis people)</p>
Housing Solutions	<p>7. Provide micro-housing options (one respondent pointed out that micro-housing may be faster to construct than apartment buildings)</p> <p>8. Addressing the need for detached or semi-detached housing for families, such as families with children with autism or other special needs who require quiet spaces</p> <p>9. Support/funding for renters and others who require legal assistance due to eviction, disputes over rent increases, etc.</p> <p>10. Support for renters who require assistance communicating with landlords, arranging viewings, etc.</p>
Improvements to Program Access/Ease of Use	<p>11. Reducing barriers to receiving program funds (i.e., providing alternative options for applicants who cannot easily provide direct deposit information)</p> <p>12. Reducing barriers to applying for programs/services (i.e., providing alternatives to or assistance with online applications)</p> <p>13. Quick dispersal of funds once an application has been approved, particularly for people who are applying to an apartment and may require a damage deposit to secure it</p> <p>14. Increased dissemination of information about programs so that people are aware of what resource are available to them (both MNBC and non-MNBC programs)</p> <p>15. Streamlined application processes that reduce the number of applications people must submit to receive funding</p>



Flexible Programs/Supports	16. Greater recognition of the underlying issues (i.e., mental health challenges, trauma) that may prevent someone from being able to apply for or utilize supports
	17. Flexible approaches that “meet people where they are at”
Staff Capacity/Availability	18. Additional funding for hiring outreach workers to support Métis people navigating the system
	19. Support for MNBC staff experiencing exhaustion, burnout, and “vicarious trauma,” including in-organization counselling services and resiliency training

9. CLOSURE

The results of the literature review, surveys, and interviews support the following key findings:

- A lack of affordable housing is one of the most prominent issues identified in both the existing literature reviewed for this memorandum and the interviews/surveys conducted for the Project. Many of the other issues raised in the interviews and surveys (i.e., difficulties obtaining employment or education, safety issues, etc.) are directly related to housing insecurity.
- MNBC’s services, particularly the MNBC rent supplement program, were repeatedly identified as the main contributors to obtaining and/or maintaining safe and stable housing. Respondents generally had an easier time accessing MNBC’s programs than provincial services. Several respondents would like to see MNBC’s programs expanded.
- While feedback on the accessibility of MNBC’s programs was generally positive, most survey and interview respondents have experienced at least one barrier to accessing and/or maintaining access to income assistance, rent supplements, or other forms of assistance/support. The main barriers include difficulties filling out applications; lack of communication between service providers, meaning applicants must fill out multiple applications and repeatedly communicate their needs; gaps between transitional housing supports and long-term/stable housing supports; and exhaustion from navigating the system. MNBC staff identified similar issues, as well as noted that frontline workers often experience burnout and exhaustion, leading to greater staff turnover rates.
- While the above issues are reflective of some of the common challenges faced by people and service providers across B.C., some Métis people are facing barriers to accessing social assistance programs, obtaining safe and suitable housing, and maintaining their overall well-being that are specific to their Métis identity. These barriers include the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma and systemic racism, discrimination, lack of Métis-specific services and cultural supports/programs, and gaps in services that make it difficult for Métis people to access both Indigenous and non-Indigenous services.
- Respondents expressed strong interest in Métis-specific solutions that address not only housing and income gaps, but also provide cultural, emotional, and community support. These types of supports are generally perceived as currently lacking but



integral to addressing the needs of Métis people.

While some additional Métis specific research would be beneficial (see the preceding Table 7 for suggestions), the commonalities between the issues identified in the literature, interviews, and surveys suggest that many of the challenges facing Métis people in B.C. are already clearly identifiable. Additional provincial funding and support for MNBC's existing programs, as well as for program expansion, increased support for MNBC staff, pilot testing of housing solutions, and increased cultural programming, would address many of the issues summarized in this memorandum. Kwusen anticipates that MNBC and the Province will approach next steps in keeping with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (DRIPA).



APPENDIX A: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Big River Analytics Ltd. 2022. "The Voice of the Métis: Housing Needs Assessment Métis Nation British Columbia." Métis Nation British Columbia.

The 2022 MNBC Housing Needs Assessment is based on the MBC Housing Needs Survey, which was delivered to MNBC citizens in 2021. The Assessment uses the Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) definition of "core housing need," particularly as it relates to housing affordability (whether housing costs exceed 30% of the household income), and housing adequacy or suitability (whether the home meets the needs of those residing in it). MNBC also assessed housing satisfaction. The findings of the Assessment demonstrate that Métis households in B.C. are in greater core housing need than non-Indigenous households. Métis households in southern B.C. have greater housing affordability and adequacy needs, and Métis households in northern B.C. have greater suitability needs. The assessment also found that single-parent households, renters, youth, those with disabilities, or those who identify as a gender other than male, or female tend to have greater housing need. The recommendations most relevant to overcoming these housing needs are included in the previous Table 2.

David Nairne & Associates. 2023. "Critical Social Infrastructure and Facilities Master Plan 2023-2032: Preliminary Report (Draft)." Métis Nation British Columbia.

The 2023 MNBC Critical Social Infrastructure and Facilities Master Plan outlines the expected needs of MNBC for the coming 10 years. This report utilizes information gathered from MNBC Citizens, self-identified Métis people in B.C., and MNBC staff/leadership. The findings in the report indicate that it will cost approximately \$820 million per year for the next 10 years to meet the housing and infrastructure needs of the 98,000 Métis residing in B.C. The report's recommendations include funding for housing related programs and supports, including first time home buyer support, renovation budgets to improve housing adequacy, and rent supplements to assist those without affordable housing. The recommendations also include several options to improve infrastructure and provide appropriate services and spaces for Métis in B.C., including improvements to or the construction of health, education and cultural facilities.

Firelight Group. 2023. "Métis Nation British Columbia Métis Elders and Seniors Supportive Care Assessment." Métis Nation British Columbia.

The Métis Nation of British Columbia Métis Elders and Senior Supportive Care Assessment reviewed the needs of Métis Elders and seniors in B.C., as well as the current state of supportive services available to them, then provided an assessment of the gaps in these services. The report findings indicate that Métis Elders and seniors require supportive care that is community-based and culturally relevant; takes place in their own homes (for as long as possible); utilizes both traditional and western medicines; and helps them maintain connections to their families, communities, and Métis traditions. The recommendations most relevant to Métis Elder and senior supportive care needs are included in the previous Table 2.

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, Women of the Métis Nation. 2020. "Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, Women of the Métis Nation: 2020-2025 Strategic Plan."

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan outlines the prior and continuing work of the Woman of the Métis Nation, including the Women of the Métis Nation Perspectives report; the Interim Report: MMIWG



Implementation Framework; Métis Perspectives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and LGBTQ2S+ People; and many others. Violence and abuse prevention have been a primary focus of the LMO since 2010, and much of their work focuses on empowering and supporting Métis women in B.C. The strategic plan lays out several priorities to ensure representation and equality for women within MNBC, Canada, and internationally, including relationship building, participation in various levels of governance, and positioning Métis women as caretakers of Métis traditional knowledge. The future goals of LMO include the continuation of current efforts to support Métis women in B.C., and the development or redevelopment of platforms that inform the Métis community of ongoing efforts and objectives.

Martin-Ferres, S., J. Tourand, C. Moon, N. Sunday, and A. Smith. 2022. "Raven's Children V: A Profile of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Youth Health in B.C." McCreary Centre Society.

The Raven's Children report assesses the needs of Métis, First Nation and Inuit children in B.C. based on the findings of the McCreary's B.C. Adolescent Health Survey (B.C. AHS) conducted in 2018. The findings of the report highlight the role of residential schools in ongoing trauma, with results indicating that Indigenous youth who have family experiences of residential schools often have poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. It should be noted that the AHS is not an Indigenous-specific survey and did not include questions about other colonial practices/institutions that may impact Indigenous youth.

Métis Nation British Columbia. 2020 Métis Women British Columbia (MWBC) Strategic Plan: 2020-2026.

The 2020-2026 Métis Strategic Plan builds on previous research (including a previous Needs Assessment and community engagement) on several priority areas for Métis women: Education; Economic Development and Employment; Health and Wellness; Housing; Food Security and Poverty; Culture, Language, and Heritage; Children and Families; Métis Rights, Land Use and Harvesting; Relationship between MWBC and MNBC; and Women's Safety (4). The Plan lays out a number of short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals that reflect MWBC's principles of Communication, Governance, Culture, and Advocacy. Although not directly related to poverty reduction, the Plan offers high-level objectives that would support improved economic outcomes and well-being for Métis women. The most relevant are the short/medium/long term goals for Advocacy, which include advocating for increased training and support for youth and improved access to transportation, health care, childcare, and education.

Métis Nation British Columbia, and Office of the Provincial Health Officer. 2021. "Taanishi Kiiya? Miiyayow Métis Saantii Pi Miyooayaan Didaan B.C.: Métis Public Health Surveillance Program Baseline Report, 2021."

The Métis Public Health Surveillance Program Baseline Report focuses on the health of Métis people in B.C., based on a database with information about 14,515 MNBC Citizens who have consented to have their data included in the Métis Public Health Surveillance Program, as well as other sources like the B.C. Adolescent Health Survey, the Canadian Community Health Survey, and Canadian Census. The report outlines the determinants of Métis health and wellness and summarizes data on Métis youth, adults, and communities. Relevant findings in this report are largely summarized in the preceding Table 1. Métis people tend to be in lower income brackets, have greater housing needs than non-Indigenous people, and have specific health and wellness needs. The main recommendations outlined in this report are summarized in the previous Table 2.



Petersen, Lauren, Summen Nagra, Merrhea Teixeira, and Blae Hansen. 2023. "K-12 School Food Survey Project Summary Report." Métis Nation British Columbia.

This report highlights the current food needs of Métis families with school aged children, based on a survey conducted by MNBC in the fall of 2022. The findings demonstrate that many Métis families struggle with the high cost of foods and access to culturally relevant food programs in B.C. schools. The recommendations most relevant to this study are included in the previous Table 2 and include school food programs and education that incorporates traditional foods and nutrition specific to Métis, food support for Métis families in financial need, and de-stigmatization of school food programs.

Smith, A., C. Poon, S. Martin-Ferris, and M.K. Beggs. 2019. "Ta Saantii Deu/Neso: A Profile of Métis Youth Health in B.C." Vancouver, B.C.: McCreary Centre Society.

The Profile of Métis youth in B.C. is similar to the previously discussed "Raven's Children" report but focuses specifically on Métis youth data from the McCreary's B.C. Adolescent Health Survey (B.C. AHS). The report presents key findings based on the AHS data, including a health profile of Métis youth, a summary of risks to healthy development for youth, and a summary of factors that can support the healthy development of Métis youth.



APPENDIX B: LIMITATIONS/GAPS IN SOURCES

Some of the sources reviewed for this memo explicitly identified limitations/gaps in their research. They are summarized below.

Voice of the Métis: Housing Needs Assessment Métis Nation British Columbia (2022)

- No survey data is available for two out of the three housing support programs currently offered by MNBC. The other two programs did not exist at the time of survey delivery.
- Survey data reports on the utilities assistance program offered during COVID-19, which no longer exists (it has been incorporated into the broader rent supplement program).
- Survey over-sampled MNBC citizens (79%) relative to non-citizens (21%)

Métis Nation British Columbia Métis Elders and Seniors Supportive Care Assessment (2023)

- Lack of Métis-specific literature related to supportive care for Elders/seniors.
- Lower engagement with healthcare workers in group sessions due to COVID-19 (virtual individual interviews were conducted instead).

K-12 School Food Survey Project Summary Report (2023)

- Low survey response levels to the K-12 School Food Survey in Northern B.C. This may have skewed the survey results to be more demonstrative of urban Métis households than rural Métis households.
- Further investigation needed to understand why Métis families are not utilizing food programs at expected rates. Report authors speculated this may be because of social stigma associated with food programs, but further research would be required to confirm this.