nichi

November 20 2025 (Virtual)

NATIONAL HOUSING DAY CONFERENCE:

Rural Development Network

Conference Overview

As part of ongoing efforts to keep NICHI members informed of relevant national conversations, including conversations where rural housing considerations are a significant focus, NICHI attended the National Housing Day Conference, hosted virtually by the Rural Development Network (RDN) on November 20. The event brought together housing innovators, community leaders, and practitioners from across Canada and beyond to explore practical and emerging solutions to persistent housing challenges, with a particular focus on affordability, housing supply, and community-driven approaches.

The Rural Development Network is a non-profit organization that works with rural, remote, and Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada. RDN collaborates with communities and partners to identify and bring focus to rural issues, build local capacity, and develop innovative, rural-based solutions to social and economic challenges.

Key Themes and Takeaways

The conference featured seven speakers and panellists, each sharing perspectives and examples drawn from their current work in the housing sector. Discussions centred on innovative models and practical strategies currently being implemented to improve affordability and increase housing supply, with an emphasis on approaches that can be adapted across community types.

This included:

- **Community Land Trusts (CLTs)**: Featured long-term affordability, community ownership, and protection from speculative market pressures.
- **Co-operative Housing**: Focused on stable, affordable housing options with strong governance and long-tern sustainability.
- **Tiny Homes and Modular Builds:** Examined alternative construction approaches that reduce build timelines and offer scalable solutions for urgent housing needs.
- **Funding Models**: Highlighted creative financing strategies, including blended funding and cross-sector partnerships, to support sustainable housing projects.

Community Land Trusts

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are non-profit organizations that acquire and hold land to ensure long-term housing affordability and community control. By separating land ownership from housing ownership, CLTs protect homes from speculative market pressures while fostering stable, community-led development.

Examples discussed at the conference included:

- **Temiskaming District Community Land Trust** (Northern Ontario): Partnering with NICHI member the National Indigenous Women's Housing and Homelessness Network to explore CLTs as a tool to provide culturally safe, long-term housing solutions for Indigenous women in northern and rural Ontario.
- **Lune Valley Community Land Trust** (UK): Demonstrated the success of CLTs in creating permanently affordable housing while strengthening community governance and engagement.

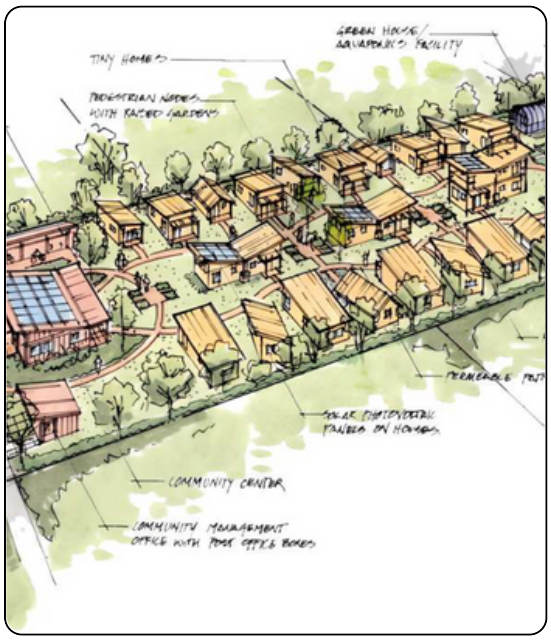
These cases illustrate how CLTs can be adapted across contexts to support both affordability and community-led development. Learn more about Community Land Trusts here

Co-operative Housing: Affordable, Sustainable, Community-Focused

Co-operative housing is a resident-led model where members collectively own and manage their housing, ensuring long-term affordability, stability, and community control.

- **Co-operative First** highlighted the current Canadian co-op housing landscape, noting challenges such as rising operating costs, inflation, and regulatory pressures, while emphasizing that co-operative housing is well positioned to address these pressures through non-profit ownership, shared governance, and long-term affordability. They also pointed to opportunities to expand co-op developments and strengthen sector-wide supports to scale this model nationally.
- **The Tiny Home Association** shared insights on manufactured and modular housing, emphasizing how co-ops and shared ownership models can address the housing crisis by preserving affordability and moving away from profit-driven approaches. Discussions highlighted the benefits of self-management, sustainable design, and community-focused amenities, including energy-efficient buildings, community gardens, and local food systems, which foster both environmental and social resilience.

Together, these examples illustrate how co-operative housing can provide not only affordable homes but also sustainable, community-oriented living solutions that resist speculative pressures and prioritize residents' long-term well-being. Learn more here: Co-operative Housing First and Tiny Homes Association.



Modular and Prefabricated Housing

Modular and prefabricated homes offer flexible, scalable solutions to address urgent housing needs while reducing construction timelines.

- **ROHE Homes** highlighted their approach: modules are delivered at lock-up, reducing on-site construction time; units are transportable for location flexibility; and a four-week prefabrication cycle (minimum 1,000 sq. ft.) enables faster deployment than conventional builds. Prefab units can be configured in multiple layouts, using standardized, high-efficiency components to ensure quality and consistency. Case-studies included projects in Squamish, B.C and further plans for Rural and Northern areas. Learn more here: Rohe Homes
- **The Tiny Home Association** highlighted manufactured housing as a way to achieve speed and scale, built indoors and installed in under a week. They are developing standardized small modular home communities focused on affordability, sustainability, and safety, independent of local wage averages. Homes feature single/couple units, renewable energy, community hubs, gardens, coworking spaces, and other shared amenities, meeting or exceeding building codes while promoting pride of ownership.

Together, these approaches demonstrate how modular, prefabricated, and tiny homes alongside community land trusts and co-operative housing can rapidly expand affordable, sustainable, and community-oriented living, reflecting the integrated solutions emphasized at the conference.

Funding Models

The conference featured financing solutions designed to accelerate affordable housing, highlighting Partners for Affordable Housing and Tapestry Community Capital.

- **Partners for Affordable Housing** mobilizes public, private, and philanthropic capital to advance housing projects, provide wraparound support, and connect funding to local needs through their Front Door platform. Their model helps move developments from vision to viable solutions while supporting tenants and communities.
- **Tapestry Community Capital** helps non-profits, charities, and co-ops access community financing to scale social and environmental impact. They have raised over $120 million for projects including affordable housing, renewable energy, and arts spaces. Tapestry's approach emphasizes inclusivity, flexibility, and community ownership, enabling investors to support projects they care about while fostering sustainable, locally led development.
- Learn more here: Partners for Affordable Housing and Tapestry

Keeping Members Informed

As part of NICHI's policy and advocacy work, we attend national conferences and forums to monitor emerging issues, trends, and policy directions affecting Indigenous housing. This summary highlights key takeaways from RDNs National Housing Day Conference to support members' awareness and planning.

Questions or follow-up? Reach NICHIs Policy Analyst at smichaud@nichihousing.com or 343-500-3347 ext. 501

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