



*Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k*

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Housing Unit gets a fresh start

For immediate release

**(Kahnawake – 29, Kentenhkó:wa/November 2021)** The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke's Housing Unit wishes to inform the community that it is embarking on a plan to address issues that have caused delays in the implementation of important new Housing initiatives. Many of the challenges currently faced by the Housing Unit were caused by the fraudulent activity uncovered in 2018.

"The past events have had a huge negative impact on the entire Housing Unit operation," said Ratsénhaienhs Ryan Montour, who is the lead on the Housing file for the MCK. "We are pleased to advise the community that there is a new team that has been assembled to address our issues. The new Director of Housing Areti Malliarou has started her duties, Executive Director Onerahtókha (Karlíe) Marquis is now fully up-to-speed, and we have new Ratsénhaienhs on the file rolling up our sleeves to ensure we collectively get the job done."

One of the biggest hurdles is that there are a significant number of tenants of the social housing facilities who are deeply in arrears. Currently, there is over \$103,000 in unpaid rents at the Multi-Dwellings, with approximately \$15,000 per month being added to that deficit. These arrears have no relation to the afore-mentioned fraud – since all debts accumulated previous to 2018 were forgiven.

Subsequently, the tenants who do not pay rent keep other families from accessing potential housing opportunities in the Territory. Therefore, new protocols are being developed to ensure future arrears will no longer be an issue.

"Kahnawa'kehró:nón need to understand that **we simply cannot build much-needed new housing units if we don't address the issues of non-payment,**" Ratsénhaienhs Montour continued. "With that in mind, finding solutions has become our top priority. The Housing Unit will continue to find every way possible to assist tenants who may have problems with their budgeting."

Additionally, the Housing Unit will be conducting new surveys of community members, including all current tenants, to gain insight into needs, issues, and potential solutions for the future. The first surveys will begin later this week.

"We believe that most people are responsible and want to contribute to the strong family unit, so it's our job to assist them," concluded Ratsénhaienhs Montour. "We have a new vision and a new commitment. We all care, and we'll all work together to succeed."

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