

NWT ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITIES

# 2023 ADVOCACY DAYS

# HOUSING



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# HOUSING

## KEY FACTS:

- GNWT spends 25x more per capita than other provinces
- 31.7% of NWT people have a housing problem
- 19% of NWT households are in core housing need.
- NWT Housing Corporation report waiting lists for units in excess of 400 applicants
- Overcrowding – Relative to the rest of Canada more NWT residents live in more crowded conditions and in housing more in need of major repair.
- NWT communities are underfunded by \$40 million annually, a shortfall of 37% for operating costs, infrastructure, and water & sewer.
- NWT community governments own facilities and infrastructure valued at over \$2.6 Billion
- Investment in community infrastructure has remained the same – \$28 million since 2007.

## HOMELESSNESS

Key contributors to homelessness in NWT is the inability to pay for housing and addiction rates that are double the national average. As a percentage of population, Yellowknife has the highest homeless population in Canada. Within the homeless population, 9 out of every 10 persons self-identifies as Indigenous and more than two-thirds of homeless persons in Yellowknife are from a different NWT community.

CITY	HOMELESS POPULATION AS A % OF TOTAL POPULATION
Calgary	0.2%
Edmonton	0.1%
Metro Vancouver	0.1%
Whitehorse	0.9%
<b>Yellowknife</b>	<b>1.7%</b>

*\*Figures based on 2018 Point-in-Time Counts*

## INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING

- The dire state of housing inadequacy requires extra-ordinary allocation of federal funds to overcome the deficit in the housing supply. A long-term federal funding commitment for housing is critical to address the unmet housing needs of NWT residents.
- Affordable housing agreements must be flexible and respect provincial and territorial jurisdictions, chronic homelessness and inadequacy of housing must be eliminated through proven strategies; tax incentives or other measures must be used to stimulate new rental and affordable housing construction; and, special, territorial funding transfers are required to preserve and renovate existing social housing units.

## HOUSING MARKET AND CHALLENGES\*

The NWT has limited private market rental options, especially in smaller communities. Combined with low vacancy rates, there is a serious need for more market rental units.

Compared to the national average (63.7%), the ownership rate in NWT is 53.7% – there are limited incentives and investment in private housing due to limited resale in smaller communities, high operating costs, and absence of a housing services sector.

The NWT's vast and remote landscape faces many unique challenges to the provision of housing. Long and cold winters mean that housing has to be built to a higher standard than what is required in the south, and we have a shorter time window to build in. Transportation logistics also drastically increases the cost of construction, transportation, and renovation.

*There are also challenges with respect to:*

- The lack of housing markets in most communities
- High incidence of adequacy (need for major repair) problems
- Aging infrastructure
- Requiring more rigorous building standards
- Rural and remote communities without all-season road access
- Limited construction and repair capacity
- Climate change effects such as permafrost degradation and soil erosion

*\*NWT Housing Action Plan: 2019-2022*

## NWTAC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Require extra-ordinary allocation of federal funds to overcome the deficit in the housing supply. A long-term federal funding commitment for housing is critical to address the unmet housing needs of NWT residents.
- Affordable housing agreements must be flexible and respect provincial and territorial jurisdictions, chronic homelessness and inadequacy of housing must be eliminated through proven strategies; tax incentives or other measures must be used to stimulate new rental and affordable housing construction; and, special, territorial funding transfers are required to preserve and renovate existing social housing units.

## HOUSEHOLDS IN CORE NEED

In the majority of NWT communities, heavy reliance upon public housing is required as a result of high unemployment and the lack of a private housing market. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) spends roughly 25 times more per capita on housing than does a typical Canadian province. The percentage of households in core need (households with a housing problem and income below the Core Need Income Threshold) stands at 12% in communities considered to have a private housing market, and 42% in non-market communities. The NWT Housing Corporation routinely reports waiting lists for housing units in excess of 400 applicants.

Progress on overcoming the deficit in affordable, adequate and available housing in the NWT cannot be achieved without a renewed federal commitment to funding the construction and renewal of social housing, through the National Housing Strategy. Although some progress has been made on this front, increased investments are still required.

Well in excess of 50% of housing is over-crowded and insufficient, which impacts education outcomes, access to employment, justice, and a great many other social determinants of health.

Investment in housing as part of the economic stimulus for recovery is critical and it is likely to create work opportunities within the individual communities and it is critical to attract workers to the NWT.



# NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL  
POPULATION  
**44,469**

**33** Communities from  
Kakisa of **54** residents to  
Yellowknife of **20,960**

**1,183,000** km<sup>2</sup>

Official Languages **11**

Residents  
who are Aboriginal  
**50.3%**

Homes  
without  
Internet  
**20.3%**

GDP  
**\$ 3,745**  
million

HIGHEST FOOD PRICE INDEX

**Colville Lake 2X**  
Yellowknife

**67.3%**  
Employment Rate

**10**  
of 33 communities receive  
telecoms by satellite

**1**  
Senate Seat  
**1**  
House Seat

**31.7%**  
Households with Housing  
Problem

**19.8%**  
in Core Housing Need