



CANADIAN COALITION FOR
PUBLIC HEALTH
IN THE 21st CENTURY

PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS

Core Housing Need

Canada needs a federal government that is committed to sustained investment in public health across the country. The Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century calls on the next federal government to invest in strategies and programs that support strong healthy people in Canada regardless of their economic and social status.

A higher standard for Canadian families

About 11% of Canadian households are in [core housing need](#), with affordability being the single greatest contributor. The proportion of people in core housing need, however, varies by region and population, with greatest concern associated with those living in the North, Indigenous communities, and major urban centres such as Toronto and Vancouver. There is a direct link between the availability of adequate, affordable housing and the health of the population. The Federal government has taken steps to address the housing needs of Canadians through its [National Housing Strategy](#) which has a goal of, over the next decade, removing: "...530,000 families from housing need, cut chronic homelessness by 50% and change the face of housing in Canada forever." Steps must to be taken to ensure that these promises are met.

It's time for Canada to do better.

Call to action

The Coalition is calling on the next federal government to continue leadership in working with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples' governance organizations to:

- Fully implement the National Housing Strategy and housing policies that address all aspects of core housing need throughout the country;
- Support the Indigenous Housing Strategy such that it is developed and implemented by Indigenous Peoples and reflects their needs; and
- Provide adequate funding to respond specifically to those populations and regions that are in the greatest core housing need, while fostering equitable approaches to meet the developing needs in the rest of the country.

Why it matters

There is a [relationship between health outcomes, and the availability, affordability and quality of housing](#). Poor housing conditions have been linked to: increased morbidity from infectious diseases, including respiratory illness; poor mental health; chronic illness; and injury. For example, damp and mouldy housing is associated with asthma and other respiratory conditions, while overcrowding can lead to the spread of infectious disease, and may adversely affect mental wellness. Poor sanitation can result in gastrointestinal illness. Similarly, individuals with low income will spend a greater proportion of

A Higher Standard for All Canadians

their income on housing, while living in substandard residences. As a result, injuries may occur due to these substandard conditions and a lack of resources to repair them. Unaffordable housing also leaves limited funds to spend on healthy living or non-insured medical expenses.

The national housing strategy allows for collaboration among provinces and territories, municipalities, Indigenous Peoples' governmental organizations, and the private sector to tailor solutions to meet the [needs of specific regions and populations](#). However, we must ensure that the solution is equitable and addresses all aspects of core housing need for all populations and regions in Canada.

In 2006, 12.7% of households in Canada were identified as being in [core housing need](#) compared to an estimate of 12.5% in 2011 and 11% in 2016. Those in greatest need included: 26.4% of renters, 50.4% of low-income households, 26.2% of single parents, 21.6% of one-person households, and 29.6% of recent immigrants. This need is not distributed equally throughout the country, or between populations. It is greatest in Nunavut, where 39.2% of the population live in core housing need, and is generally higher in Canada's North. [Of those living in the North](#), 63.5% in core housing need did not meet the suitability standard. Core housing need is also greater among Indigenous populations – both on- and off-reserve – than among non-Indigenous groups. Nationally, the housing standard most commonly unmet is affordability. In 2011, of those who fell into core housing need, 73.3% were below the housing affordability standard. The [National Housing Strategy Survey](#) identified affordability as one of the most important housing challenges.

Questions for the candidates

1. Do you support safe, affordable and appropriate housing for all Canadians?
2. Is your party committed to maintaining and enhancing the National Housing Strategy?
3. What will your party do to improve the core housing need for Canadians?
4. What will your party do to improve the core housing of Indigenous Peoples?
5. What specific steps will your party take to comply with the Calls for Justice related to housing in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls?

Resources

- [CCPH21 Position Statement: Core Housing Need](#)
- [Housing Services Corporation: Canada's Social and Affordable Housing Landscape](#)

About the Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century

The Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century (CCPH21) is a national network of 21 non-profit organizations, professional associations, health charities and research organizations that share the common goal to improve and sustain the health of Canadians. CCPH21 advocates for public policy to ensure that adequate public health functions are in place and information is made available to protect and promote health, and prevent disease and injury. CCPH21 aims to help all stakeholders work together for the future of public health by generating ideas and potential policy directions for discussion among both the public and decision-makers.

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