



# Housing Need in Metropolitan Areas, 1991 Canada's Aboriginal Peoples

## Introduction

In 1991, about 70 per cent of Canada's Aboriginal population lived off reserves, mainly in urban areas. In this highlight, housing conditions for Native households residing in Canada's Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) are examined and compared to non-Native housing conditions. Native households are those in which people of Aboriginal origin maintain the household.

### *The Measurement of Housing Need*

All information on CMA housing conditions and need is based on the 1991 Census. It provides the information required to calculate core housing need and a sample large enough to ensure CMA data reliability across the country.

Housing conditions are assessed to identify households living below standards for affordability, adequacy or suitability. Households whose housing does not meet one or more standards *and* whose income is insufficient to afford rental housing which does meet standards are considered to be in core housing need.

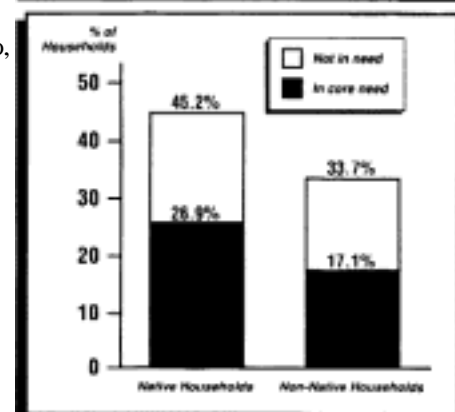
Housing conditions are profiled only for housed Native and non-Native households. Data are not available for Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal persons who, at census time, resided in collective dwellings such as rooming houses or were homeless.

## Findings

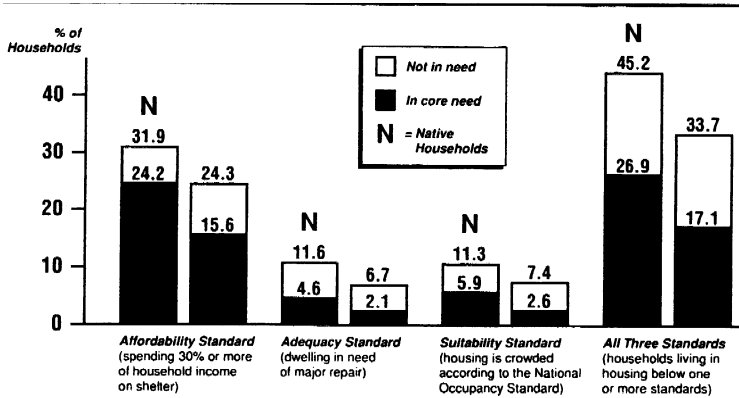
### *The Overall Picture*

Today, almost 60 per cent of off-reserve Native households live in metropolitan areas. This compares to 66 per cent of non-Native households. And, despite progress in their housing conditions, these Native households are still one-third more likely to live below housing standards than non-Native households.

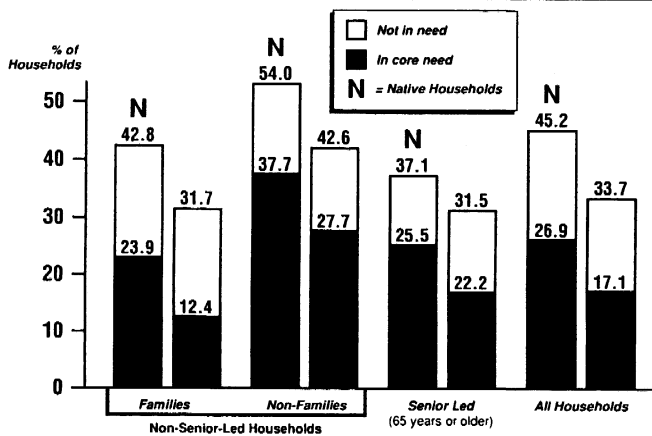
Figure 1: Percentage of Households Living in Housing Below Standards, Showing Those in Core Housing Need, Metropolitan Canada, 1991 – Native compared to Non-Native Households



**Figure 2: Percentages of Native and Non-Native Households Living in Housing Below Standards, Showing Those in Core Housing Need, Metropolitan Canada 1991**



**Figure 3: Percentages of Native and Non-Native Households Living in Housing Below Standards, Showing Those in Core Housing Need, Metropolitan Canada 1991**



Moreover, they are far more likely than non-Native households to lack sufficient income to obtain adequate, suitable rental accommodation in their CMAs without having to pay 30 per cent or more of their gross household income. As a result, they are almost 60 per cent more likely to be in core housing need than non-Native households (Figures 1 and 2).

Native households face the same challenge in metropolitan housing markets as non-Native households: to find affordable housing that is suitable in size and adequate in condition. For both, housing affordability is the biggest hurdle. However, Native households find it much more difficult to find suitable and adequate dwellings than non-Native households, and indeed to meet every aspect of the housing challenge.

Native households are much more prone than non-Native households to live in dwellings that are crowded or in need of major repairs: they are 2.2 times as likely to be in core housing need because of adequacy problems, and 2.3 times as likely because of suitability problems. At the same time, they are also 1.5 times as likely to be in need because of affordability problems.

All types of Native households experience higher levels of housing need than non-Native households. Native senior-led households are 1.1 times as likely as their non-Native counterparts to be in need. Native non-family households, led by singles living alone or sharing with others, are 1.4 times as likely, while Native family households are almost twice as likely. The difference is largest for family households, partly as a result of a greater tendency for Native than non-Native families to be lone parents, thereby increasing their susceptibility to housing need (Figure 3).

### Urban Profiks

While Native households generally find it more difficult than non-Native households to obtain metropolitan housing which meets standards, the degree of difficulty they experience varies systematically across the country (Table 1).

Native households residing in western metropolitan areas are more likely:

- to live in housing below standards, and,
- once living below standards, to be in core housing need.

This is the case whether they are compared to their western non-Native counterparts or to their eastern Native counterparts.

**Table 1: Housing Conditions for Native and Non-Native Households  
– Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), 1991 Census –**

METROPOLITAN AREA	LIVING BELOW STANDARDS		IN CORE HOUSING NEED	
	NATIVE	NON-NATIVE	NATIVE	NON-NATIVE
<b>ATLANTIC CANADA</b>				
St. John's	200	40.0	29.9	* 16.5
Halifax	1,000	39.9	30.9	600 22.2 16.9
Saint John	400	45.4	29.5	200 26.4 15.8
<b>CENTRAL CANADA</b>				
Trois-Rivières	400	41.0	31.2	200 20.8 17.6
Chicoutimi-Jonquières	300	36.4	28.6	13.4
Quebec	1,000	34.1	30.0	400 14.5 15.8
Sherbrooke	300	28.5	33.4	200 19.0 18.0
Montreal	7,900	38.8	36.9	3,700 18.0 20.3
Ottawa-Hull	4,700	34.3	29.1	2,200 15.7 14.0
Oshawa	800	39.2	32.3	400 17.4 13.4
Toronto	7,300	43.4	38.2	3,300 19.3 16.7
Hamilton	2,000	46.6	31.7	900 21.6 13.5
St. Catharines-Niagara	1,500	44.9	29.2	800 23.0 13.4
Kitchener	1,000	45.8	31.2	400 16.7 12.7
London	1,300	42.8	30.4	700 23.5 14.9
Windsor	1,200	40.5	29.3	700 22.4 14.9
Sudbury	1,100	42.0	30.9	600 22.2 14.5
Thunder Bay	1,000	45.7	26.2	600 27.7 12.2
<b>WESTERN CANADA</b>				
Winnipeg	8,900	56.2	31.0	6,400 40.8 15.8
Regina	2,200	55.8	24.5	1,800 46.2 15.5
Saskatoon	2,600	58.4	27.0	2,300 51.6 18.9
Calgary	3,800	44.0	29.2	2,300 25.9 14.5
Edmonton	7,100	49.6	29.5	4,800 33.2 14.4
Vancouver	8,800	50.0	35.1	6,200 35.6 21.5
Victoria	1,800	48.4	31.9	1,100 31.0 17.8
<b>ALL METRO AREAS</b>				
	~B~LOQ	45.2	~	40.800 26.9 17.1

*Estimates of households are rounded and presented in hundreds; estimates of less than 200 are not provided. Percentages are based on estimates before rounding. Estimates, based on data provided by a 1 in 5 sample of households which receives the census-long questionnaire, are subject to sampling error.*

While half of all Native households residing in western CMAs live in housing below standards, only 30 per cent of non-Native households do. A comparison of Native housing conditions between western and eastern CMAs reveals that western Native households are particularly likely to be living in housing below standards. For example, only 4 in 10 Native households live in housing meeting all standards in Saskatoon, compared to 6 in 10 in Toronto.

The data also indicate that Native households living below standards are 50 per cent more susceptible to core housing need if they live in western CMAs. As a result, Native households residing in western CMAs are twice as likely to be in core housing need as native households in eastern CMAs. Indeed, in Saskatoon one in two Native households is in core housing need. Saskatoon Native households are 2.5 to 3 times as likely as their non-Native counterparts to be in core need. Their likelihood of being in core need is also two times the average experienced by Native households in Canada's metropolitan areas. Regina and Winnipeg Native households also experience high incidences of housing need.

## Conclusion

Native housing conditions fall considerably short of non-Native conditions in metropolitan areas, with the gap being greatest in western CMAs. Very high concentrations of metropolitan Native housing need exist, especially in Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg. This finding is particularly relevant given the continuing urbanization of Canada's Aboriginal population.

This issue of Research and Development Highlights has been produced as a result of work carried out in the Research Division of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). As one part of a concerted research program to better understand Aboriginal hous-

ing conditions in Canada today, the highlight focuses on a statistical profile of housing need amongst Native households living in Canada's metropolitan areas. More comprehensive examinations of housing conditions experienced by Aboriginal peoples across the country will be provided in forthcoming CMHC research reports.

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CMHC carries out and finances a broad range of research on the social, economic and technical aspects of housing. This CMHC Research and Development Highlights issue is one of a series intended to inform you briefly of the nature and scope of these activities.

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