

Standing Committee on Social Development

Housing and Homelessness Prevention

June 8, 2022



www.yellowknife.ca



CITY OF
YELLOWKNIFE

Snap Shot of Yellowknife

Absolute Homelessness: 338 individuals – 2018.

Emergency Shelter: Issue is not enough adequate day/overnight shelter space for men, women and families

Transitional Housing: Other than the Baily House, Lynn's Place and Spruce Bough there is no designated transitional housing in Yellowknife

Supportive Housing: No permanent supportive housing options for high acuity individuals/families experiencing homelessness in Yellowknife.

Social housing:

- There is no information available about the Yellowknife Social Housing waitlist
- Individuals/families that are on income assistance must re-check in every 6 months to ensure they are still on the waitlist so they don't get cut off income assistance
- There is no transparency as to how individuals/families are prioritized for public/social housing in Yellowknife
- There is an expectation that for individuals who are either at risk of homelessness or who haven't had the best rental histories to have their leases in the names of NGOs – this isn't sustainable for either the NGO nor the renter (no rental history).

How can the govt improve programs and supports?

Non-Market Housing Side of the Spectrum:

- Housing First Funding
- Aspen Apartment
- Funding for the full non-market housing spectrum
- Coordinated Approach
- Income Assistance Challenges
- Implement and Fund:
 - “An Action Plan to Reduce Poverty in the NWT 2019-2022”
 - “Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Action Plan”



OUR ACTIONS

- Develop Community Housing Plans for every NWT community.
- Conduct a Seniors Housing Planning Study.
- Enhance the Seniors Home Heating Subsidy
- Implement New Home Program
- Access the federal government’s Co-Investment Fund.
- Develop a GNWT Homelessness Strategic Plan.
- Develop a Rapid Rehousing program, which aims to assist NGOs in providing housing stability actions that removes households and individuals from homelessness.
- Co-design a portable housing benefit program with the federal government.
- Design and implement a flexible partnership tool to support Indigenous and community governments in their housing aspirations.
- Develop Hands-on Maintenance Training for Homeowners.

Housing First

- Housing First programs provide housing options AND wrap-around supports that are flexible and tailored to participant needs and strengths.
- Each program participant has a dedicated support worker who helps them navigate resources, maintain housing stability, access health and addictions supports, employment, etc.
- Participants are active partners in the process and self-direct their goals, while contributing a portion of their income towards rent.

Housing First

- In Yellowknife, through Federal funding (\$901,000), we have:
 - Housing First for Adults (\$376,000/year)
 - Housing First for Youth (\$175,000/year)
 - Housing First for Families (\$350,000/year)
- Note: Our funding ends March 31, 2024. TBD on whether the Federal Govt will renew the program and funding to Yellowknife.

Housing First Current Challenges

- Accessing supports outside of the program, particularly **mental health, addictions, and other services**: Efforts are made and the desire exists from the program to broker services as much as needed however there are challenges within the community in accessing the supports due to long wait lists, resistance to working with a more complex population, and others.
- **Staff Capacity**: There has been little opportunity to assist the clients in working on client-driven goals about moving forward but instead, the priority remains as day-to-day survival and “firefighting.”
- **Need additional funding** to allow for increased staffing capacity to not only address the caseload ratio challenge but to allow for more effective support and focus on life goals and participant dreams.
- Because of a lack of manpower, the staff is often working after hours on call and are likely experiencing forms of vicarious trauma as they have little relief from the rigors of their participants struggles. Participant’s interview expressed **concern for the staff** related to how much they have to deal with, and the staff expressed being worn out yet not feeling as though they can step away as often as needed.

Housing First Programs Review

- Current challenges in a nutshell: They are underfunded, over worked, and under trained.

Managing or ending homelessness?

Shelter, jail, hospital: \$66,000 to \$120,000 per year

VS.

Housing with supports: \$13,000 and \$18,000

Aspen Apartments

- Work with the Federal Government and a local NGO to transform Aspen Apartments into non-market housing.
- 36 Units

To End Homelessness in Yellowknife (as of 2017)

Table 3 Projected Changes in Homeless-Serving System by 2026



Coordinated Approach

- A coordinated approach for **funding, policy, and planning across government** is needed to support ending homelessness goals across the territories – including a Coordinated Access System.
- Conduct a detailed review of salaries, benefits, and working conditions for homeless-serving non-profit sector agencies.
- Integrated Case Management: Open up to referrals from NGO's (service providers)

Coordinated Approach

- A critical consideration for the territorial response is to address concerns raised regarding the discharging practices, lack of adequate transition planning from correctional, child welfare, and health systems into homelessness.
- A commitment to zero discharge into homelessness from government services, including social housing, should be supported.

Coordinated Approach

- A review should address concerns about access barriers to social housing, and the inadequacies of the current income assistance benefit levels to keep up with housing costs.
- Administrative burdens on recipients increase instability when resulting in social assistance cut-offs; these practices should be reviewed and remedied accordingly.

Income Assistance Challenges

- The amount of monthly social assistance is inadequate to meet living costs, leaving people with little income for basic needs, including food.
- Practices around cutting certain people off income assistance or screening them out of social housing increases their likelihood to fall into homelessness as well.

Resources to Include in your Review

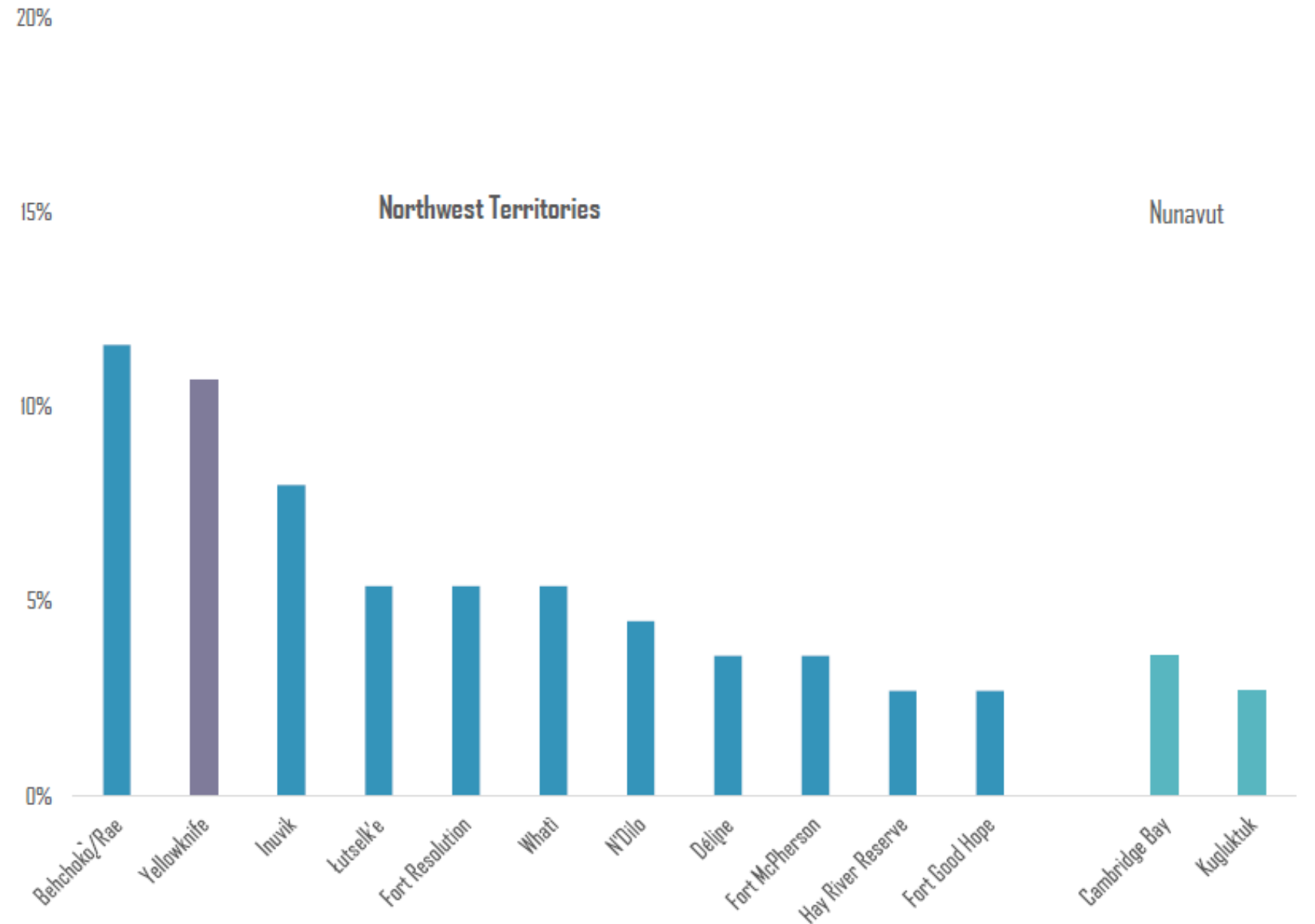
- GNWT:
 - An Action Plan to Reduce Poverty in the NWT 2019-2022
 - Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Action Plan
 - *In partnership with key stakeholders, including the NGO sector, identify transitional housing options and aftercare programming options (including estimated costing) for individuals completing facility-based addictions treatment programs. (HSS) (2020-2021)*
- *“Responding to homelessness in Yellowknife: Pushing the ocean back with a spoon.”* – Nick Falvo
- *“The Municipal Role in Housing” Who Does What Series* – Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, and University of Toronto
- *“You don’t have to live here”*: Why housing messages are backfiring and 10 things we can do about it – Frameworks Institute

Home Community for Residents Experiencing Homelessness

Common reasons for people to move to Yellowknife:

1. Access to services;
2. Seeking to escape trauma in their home communities; and
3. Overall improvement in well-being for themselves and their children.

While employment and education opportunities act as a pulling factor to Yellowknife, Core Housing Need and a lack of infrastructure in smaller communities often pushes men and women at risk of homelessness from their home communities.



Housing in Yellowknife

Figure 4 – Market Affordability in Yellowknife, 2018



Sources: Statistics Canada and CMHC

Note: The cost of renting a 1BR is considered by the CHN benchmark to be affordable to families making \$60,680 per year, renting a 2BR unit is affordable to families earning \$69,760 per year, buying a condominium is affordable to families with income of \$86,333 per year and owning a single-detached home is affordable to families earning \$103,194 per year.

Core Housing Needs

Housing Problems, by Community Northwest Territories, 2019

	Total Households	Not Adequate Total	Not Affordable Total	Not Suitable Total
Northwest Territories	14,760	2,965	3,182	1,318
Yellowknife Area	7,208	790	2,105	478

Notes:

Source: 2019 NWT Community Survey

A house is considered to have a housing problem if it has an affordability, adequacy or suitability issue.

Affordable housing is defined as shelter costs (e.g. rent or mortgage payments, utilities, heat, insurance & property taxes) being less than 30% of household income.

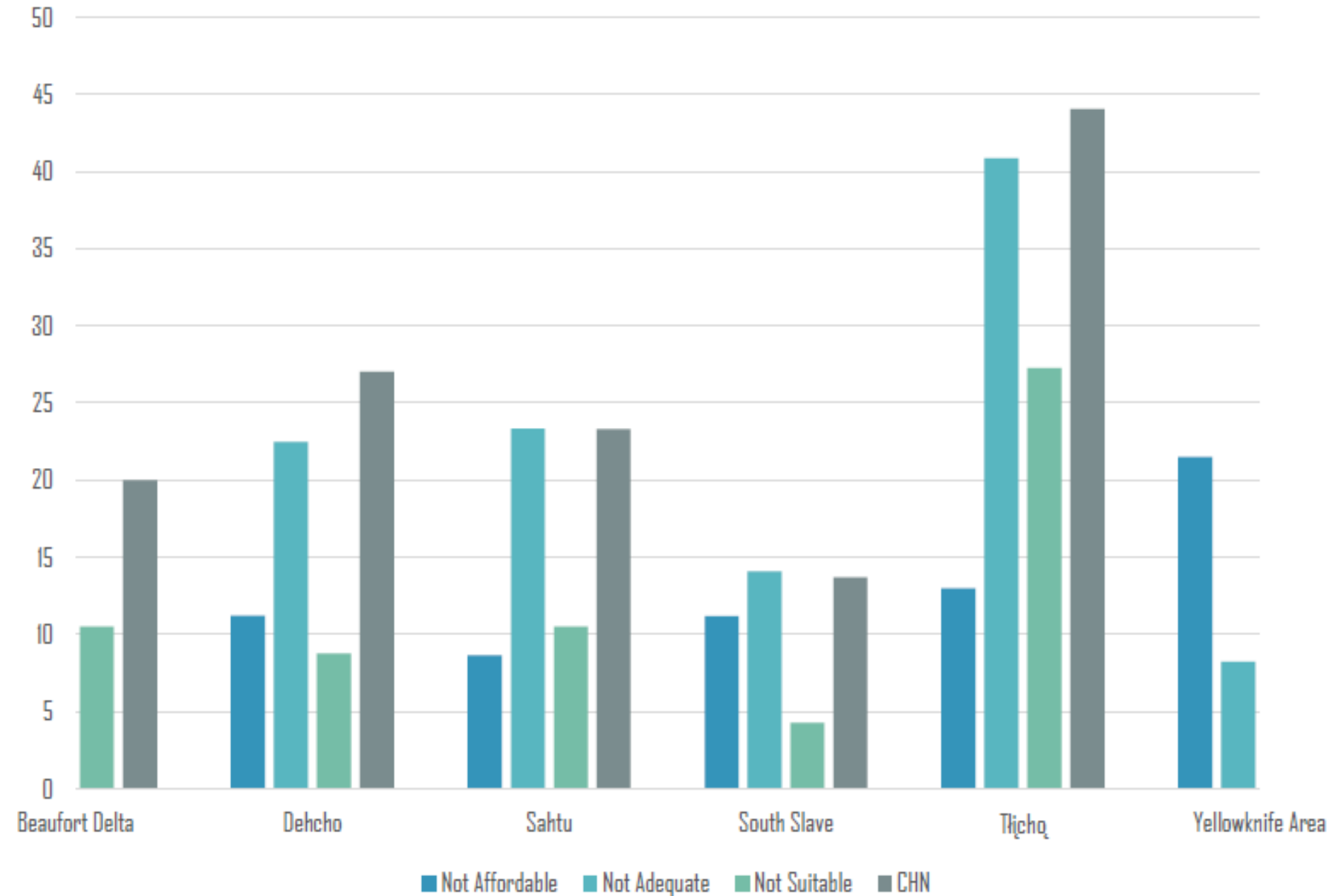
Adequate housing must have running water and must not require major repairs.

Suitability is defined as having the appropriate number of bedrooms for the characteristics and number of occupants (as determined by the National Occupancy Standard requirements).

Core Housing Needs

- Housing adequacy (housing in need of major repairs) and suitability (overcrowding) are notably higher in smaller communities compared to Yellowknife.
- Yellowknife certainly faces these challenges as well, but overall, **affordability** is the greatest factor in its Core Housing Need.

Figure 3 Percent of Households in Core Housing Need (CHN) in NWT Regions ²⁵



Core Housing Needs

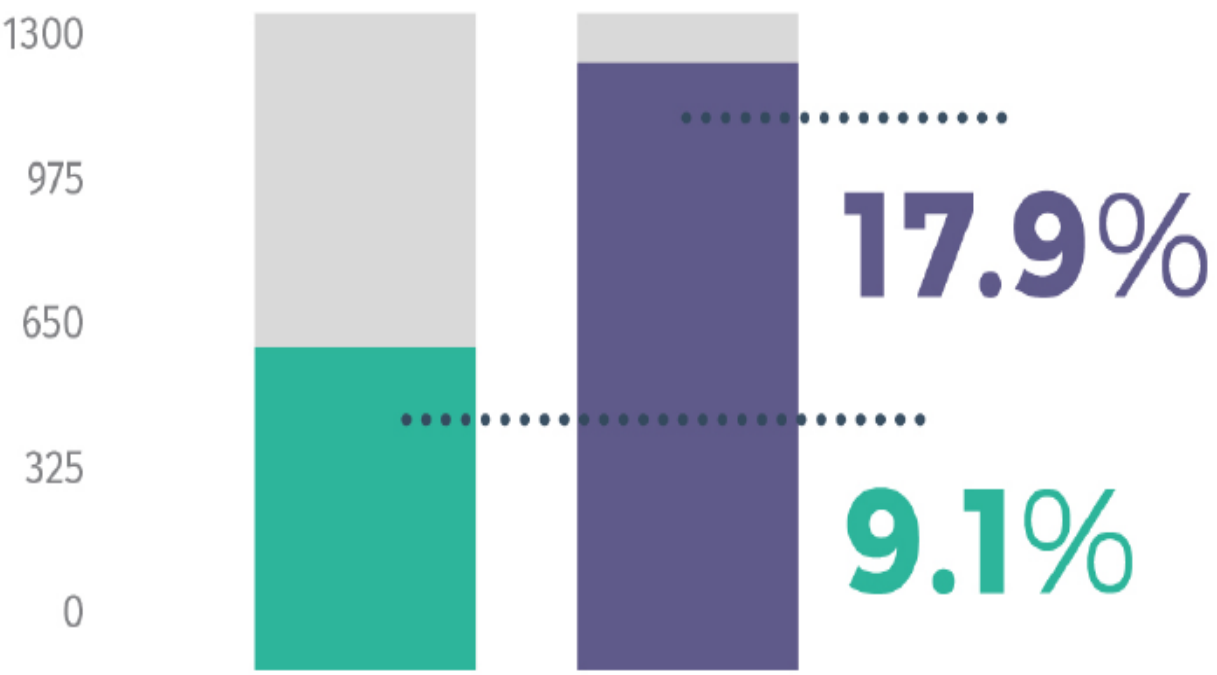
Core Housing Need has improved in rural areas, but doubled in Yellowknife due to affordability issues.

From 2009 to 2014 progress was made in housing conditions in smaller non-market and market communities, and Core Housing Need dropped from 42% to 32%, and from 16% to 13% respectively.

However, these improvements were countered by a doubling in Core Housing Need in Yellowknife from 9% to 18% between 2009 and 2014.

NWT BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2009 & 2014 HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

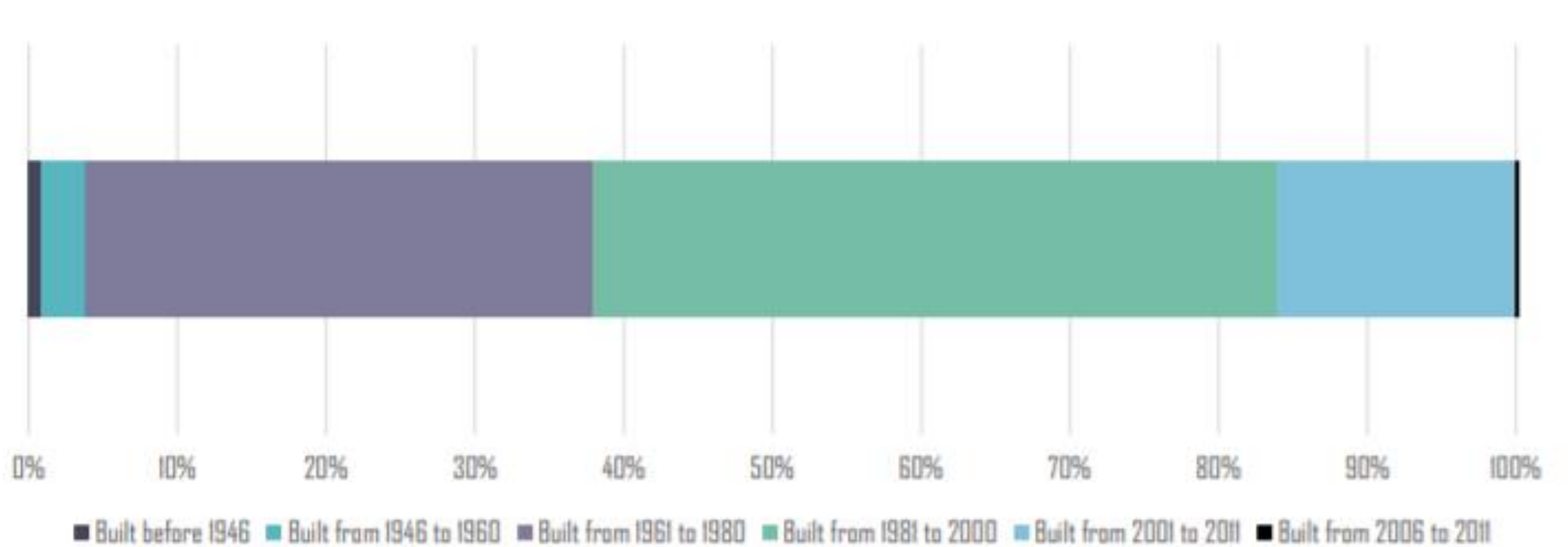
Households in Core Housing Need



Yellowknife's housing stock is aging and in need of repair.

Nearly 35% of the entire housing stock was built prior to 1980, and another 45% was added in during the 1980s and 1990s. Many houses are therefore reaching the age where major structural components will need to be replaced, often at a high cost in order to bring the dwellings up to current codes.

Figure 13 Percent of Private Dwellings in Yellowknife by Year of Construction⁴³



Yellowknife's housing stock is **not diversified**; rental construction is **declining**.



Home Base Yellowknife

June 06, 2022



Jose Carlos Esteban



About Home Base YK...

Home Base Yellowknife was **formerly known as The SideDoor Ministries** (SideDoor). The name will officially change in June 2022 due to **necessary changes voiced by youth** and other community members in Yellowknife. We provide support to any youth 12-24 experiencing homelessness.

History

The Side Door Ministries was formed in 1995 and has provided various supports to youth in the city since then.

Side Door was a Christian youth ministry that existed to instill values, character, and community to empower Northern youth to find fulfillment by providing a safe haven and practical supports.

Strategic Plan

The new board met in the winter of 2021 and worked on a **Strategic Plan** with the following Goals and Objectives:

- **Community:** Maintain a culturally inclusive, safe and collaborative relationship with people and groups within our community.
- **Team:** Ensure a safe and supportive work environment where staff are continually inspired and committed to empowering youth.
- **Youth:** Provide safe and supportive programs to meet the unique needs of youth.
- **Organization:** Home Base YK strives to be a fiscally responsible organization based on transparency and trust.

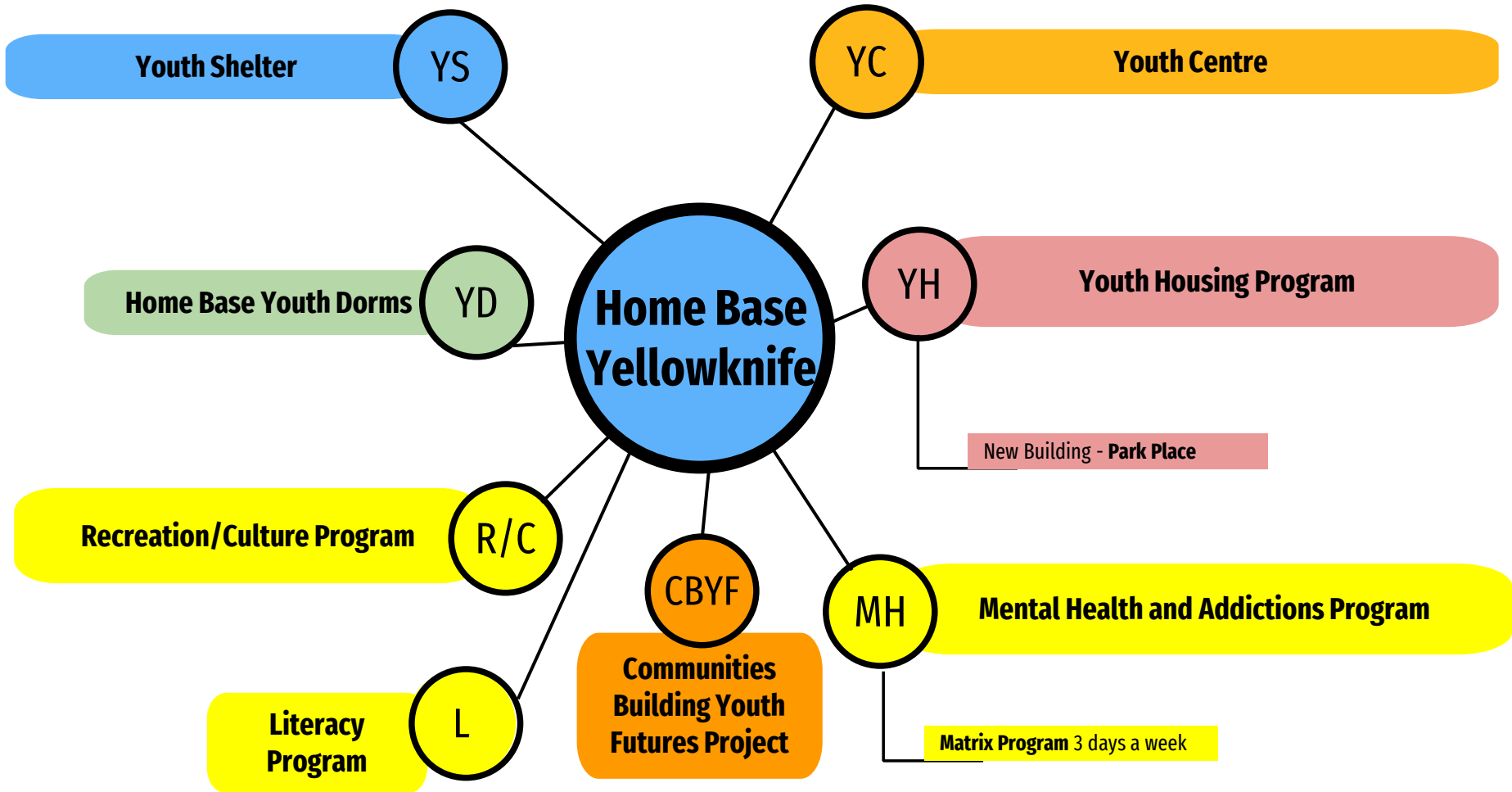
Mission & Vision

Mission:

Home Base YK provides **housing** and **support** to youth in Yellowknife in order for them to achieve **life-long success**.

Vision:

No youth left out.



Youth Shelter

The **Youth Shelter** is located at 5114 52nd Street. It is open from 8pm until noon, 7 days a week.

We offer:

- Food
- Warm bed
- Shower
- Support

Home Base Dorms

The **Dorms** are located in the same building as the Shelter. It is open and staffed 24/7. There are 10 dorms in pods style living with shared kitchen, dining and entertainment spaces.

Youth Housing Project

The **Youth Housing Project** is a support for youth in the community that are experiencing homelessness and have some skills to live semi-independently.

- Purchased Park Place in 2021
- Seeking funding for a new build

Youth Centre

The Youth Centre is located at 4903 - 50th Street. It is open from noon until 8 pm for youth. We provide a safe space for youth that includes:

- Food
- Games
- Exercise equipment
- Laundry
- Showers
- Access to electronics and internet

Recreation/Culture Program

The Recreation/Culture Program provides opportunity for any youth accessing our programs to attend events.

Literacy Program

A staff is dedicated to provide literacy support to youth accessing any of our programs.

Mental Health and Addictions Program

There is a staff person that is dedicated to supporting Mental Health and Addictions. Matrix groups tailored for youth are available three times a week.



Communities Building Youth Futures Yellowknife

A project funded by the Tamarack Institute and
Government of Canada

Project Aims Overall

Better **support** youth who face **barriers to graduate** from high school.

Improve the lives of youth who **transition from high school** to post-secondary, training, and employment.

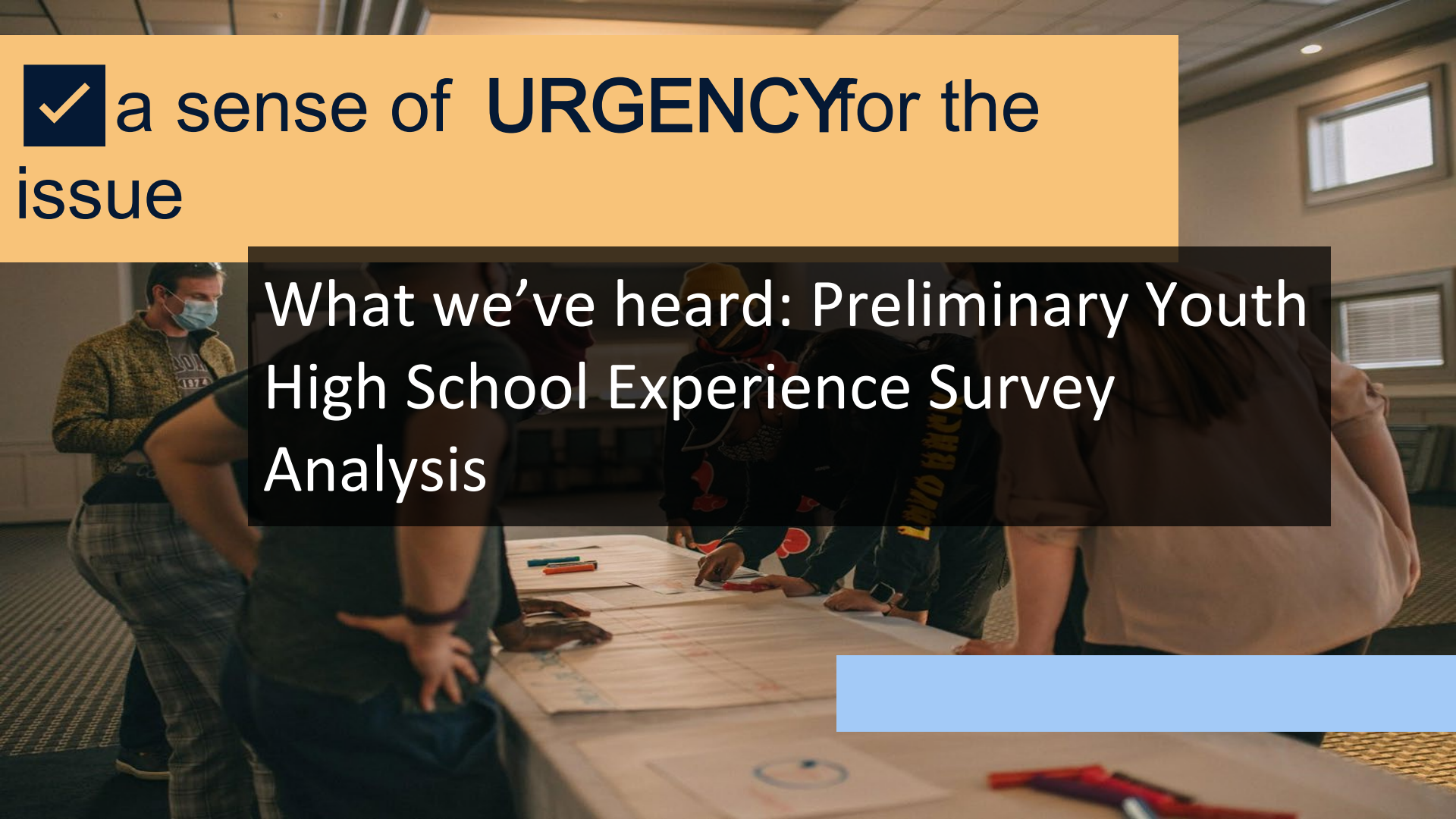
Improve engagement of youth.

Increase the number of community and national **partnerships** to support the reach and scale of the initiatives.



✓ a sense of **URGENCY** for the issue

What we've heard: Preliminary Youth High School Experience Survey Analysis



What we learned...

1. Youth enjoy high school because of the **social aspect**, the **learning opportunities**, and the **extracurriculars**. However, they do not enjoy high school because of the **lack of supportive learning environment** and the lack of **mental health** and wellness supports.
2. Better **mental health** and **social supports** would support youth in overcoming their barriers to completing high school along with a more **supportive and inclusive** learning environment.
3. The prospect of a **brighter future** and the **opportunities** that come with having a completed high school education **motivate youth** to want to complete their high school education.
4. To keep youth engaged with the education system, leveraging what youth enjoy most about school and providing supports to overcome barriers are important.

Thank you for your time!

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BCH Indigenous Housing

Michael Sadler

Director, Indigenous Relations

BC Housing

June 8, 2022

2017 Building BC Announcement

- \$6.7 Billion over ten years (Community Housing Fund, Indigenous Housing Fund, Supportive Housing Fund and Women's Transition Housing Fund)
- BC Housing announces all funding programs will be open to First Nations to support on Reserve housing, a first for a province in Canada
- Overwhelming response to the program in the first intake, most Indigenous housing providers and FNs apply under IHF, approximately \$220 million is committed, 24 IHF projects, 12 on reserve.

Indigenous Housing Fund

- \$200k per unit grant, subsidized take out mortgage
- Elders, Families, Women and Children, Singles
- On or off reserve
- Open to Indigenous Housing Providers or First Nations
- Operational Funding and Asset Management

Building on Reserve presents BC Housing with new Challenges

- Land Tenure – Crown land
- Operational considerations
- Building Design
- Asset Management

BCH Addressing Indigenous Housing Needs

- Women and Children in Care – 5 projects specifically designed to reduce the number of children in care
- Supportive Housing – addressing Homelessness and Risk of Homelessness
- Asset Management
- Operations

Building Design

- Single Family versus High Density
- Unit size
- Cultural Considerations
- Sustainability, resiliency, efficiency

Asset Management – 6 MOUs with FN Groups

- Condition Assessments
- Capital Planning
- Capital Planning Tools(e.g. Asset Planner)
- Funding
- Reconditioning