



# **NWT Housing Action Plan**

## **2019-2022**

**The CMHC – Northwest Territories Bilateral Agreement under the 2017  
National Housing Strategy**

**March 3, 2020**



## Introduction

As part of the Government of the Northwest Territories' (NWT) partnership with the Government of Canada under the National Housing Strategy, both parties agreed to develop an action plan that indicates how strategic housing funding invested by the two governments will be spent. This action plan describes how the investment will address housing need, support vulnerable target groups and how success will be measured. The targets and outcomes provided in this plan are a result of mutual agreement between Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) including indicators and expected results.

This action plan covers the period 2019-2020 to 2021-2022. Over this 3-year period, the NWTHC will be expending \$27.6 million in funding from the Governments of Canada and NWT to assist 1,585 households focusing on the following priorities:

1. Maintain increase/existing social housing stock
2. Repair/replace existing stock
3. Homeownership repair programs

The attached tables illustrate how the NWTHC and CMHC will meet targets and effect positive housing outcomes.

The National Housing Strategy is a commitment by Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments to work towards a shared vision where:

*Canadians have housing that meets their needs and they can afford. Affordable housing is a cornerstone of sustainable and inclusive communities and a Canadian economy where we can prosper and thrive.*

## Background

On November 15, 2018, the Governments of Canada and the NWT reached a bilateral agreement under the National Housing Strategy to cost-share initiatives that prioritize affordable housing. The 10-year agreement will invest nearly \$140 million to protect, renew and expand social and community housing, and support the NWT's priorities related to housing repair, construction, and affordability. Over the 10-year period, the federal government is contributing \$87.7 million. The NWT is providing a cost-match of approximately of \$51.7 million.

As a component of the agreement, the NWTHC, in consultation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) committed to developing and publishing a 3-year Action Plan beginning in Fiscal Year 2019-2020 outlining how the NWTHC will use CMHC funding and Cost-Matched NWTHC funding under this Agreement towards achieving outcomes and set targets for indicators and expected results.

This Action Plan details how the NWTHC will meet the requirements of the bilateral agreement and will align with the principles and outcomes set out in the agreement.

The National Housing Strategy respects the following key principles:

People

- Every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable home
- Housing investments must prioritize those most in need, including: women and children fleeing family violence; seniors; Indigenous peoples; visible minorities; people with disabilities; those dealing with mental health and addiction issues; veterans; and young adults
- Housing policy should be grounded in the principles of inclusion, participation, accountability, and non-discrimination

Communities

- Housing programs should align with public investments in job creation, skills training, transit, early learning, healthcare, and cultural and recreational infrastructure
- Housing investments should support Canada's climate change agenda and commitment to accessible communities
- Communities should be empowered to develop and implement local solutions to housing challenges

Partnership

- Good housing policy requires transparent and accountable partnership between the federal government, provinces, territories, municipalities, the social and private sectors, and people with lived experience of housing need
- The community housing sector must be prioritized, protected and grown

The action plan for the NWT is also based on priorities identified under the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's (NWT HC) Strategic Framework, *Building for the Future: Northern Solutions for Northern Housing* and the NWT HC's Strategic Renewal. This strategic direction identifies a shared vision and goals for housing in the NWT that is responsive to our residents' needs and seeks to strengthen housing in the NWT through partnerships with Indigenous and community governments.

Through working in partnership with residents, housing stakeholders and all orders of government, the NWT HC endeavours to advance the following goals:

- Ensure a sufficient supply of adequate, suitable and affordable housing to address the housing needs of NWT residents.
- Promote personal responsibility and accountability for housing.
- Provide homeownership and rental programs and services that are effective and appropriate.
- Help address homelessness through supporting the infrastructure needs of emergency shelters and transitional housing.
- Acquire housing in an effective and efficient manner for program delivery through appropriate designs, land planning and acquisition, and appropriate construction standards.
- Enhance the long term sustainability of NWT HC housing assets through on-going maintenance and repairs and implementing energy efficiency technologies.

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The partnership between the NWT HC and CMHC involves investment through the following initiatives:

1) Canada Community Housing Initiative

Under this initiative, funding must be used solely in respect of Community Housing, which is housing that includes but is not limited to, housing that is owned and operated by non-profit housing corporations and housing co-operatives; housing owned directly or indirectly by territorial governments; private sector housing, or Social Housing. Funding will protect, regenerate and expand Community Housing and to reduce housing, having regard to NWT needs and priorities.

In addition, this Initiative requires the preservation of Urban Native Social Housing Units to ensure that there is no net loss of units and retained units will be improved through repair, capital replacement as well as through adequate affordability support, all as determined by NWT HC.

The NWT HC and CMHC cost-share this initiative equally. Each party is contributing \$43 million each for a total of \$86 million over the period 2019-20 to 2027-28.

2) NWT Priorities Housing Initiative

This initiative involves funding that has the flexibility to support the regional needs and priorities within the NWT.

The NWT HC and CMHC cost-share this initiative equally, contributing \$8.7 million each for a total of \$17.4 million from 2019-20 to 2027-28.

3) NWT Housing Initiative

This fund provides for flexibility to address housing issues related to the North, specifically the NWT. This funding has no cost-matching element. CMHC is providing \$36 million under this initiative over 10 years, 2018-19 to 2027-28.

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## The NWT Context

### *The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation*

Since its creation in 1974, the mandate of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) has been to ensure there are opportunities for NWT residents to access affordable, adequate and suitable housing. More than forty years ago, programming primarily focused on the management of Public Housing units transferred from the federal government and home purchase programming. In the twenty-year stretch from 1974 to 1994, the NWTHC constructed approximately 6,000 homes across what was then the NWT, which included Nunavut (about 3,000 homes in today's NWT). From the mid-90s and later, federal funding through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for the construction of new social housing was discontinued. New construction that occurred since the discontinuation of federal funding consisted mainly of Public Housing replacement funded solely by the NWTHC, market and HELP (Homeownership Entry Level Program) rentals, and private homeownership units (but at a decreased delivery level from previous).

From the period 2007 – 2017, the NWTHC delivered \$350 million in major and minor capital programming. Major capital projects include replacement of old single detached Public Housing with multi-unit, energy-efficient complexes, the construction of market rental housing, and major repair and renovation to Public Housing. Minor capital projects include repair and renovation to privately-owned houses, private rental subsidies and minor repairs to Public Housing.

A large portion of current NWT housing (over 30%) was constructed or had its construction supported by the NWTHC. The NWTHC models a 50-year life for housing units based on major retrofits at the 20-year and 35-year mark. These periods of required capital renewal coincide closely with the last 15 years of significant capital investment by the NWTHC. The impact on overall core need levels should the NWTHC have not invested in strategic capital projects has not been measured, but given the need for these investments based on the age profile of NWT housing, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that a significant rise in core need incidence may have occurred.

### *Housing Markets and Demographics*

The current population of the NWT is estimated to be approximately 44,000 with roughly half of the population living in Yellowknife. Indigenous people comprise 51% of the population of the NWT.

There are 33 communities in the NWT. Many are reliant on winter-roads and summer barging operations to get housing materials into the communities.

In the Northwest Territories, there are limited private market rental options, especially in smaller communities. This, combined with historically low vacancy rates (an average rate of 2.9%), has resulted in a need for more market rental units.

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There are limited incentives towards homeownership and investment in private housing due to actual and/or perceived limited equity growth, limited resale options in smaller communities, high operating costs, and the absence of a housing services sector.

The ownership rate stood at 53.7% in 2016 (Census). The corresponding national rate was 67.8% in 2016.

Yellowknife has private market rental options along with well-established homeownership options. Particular challenges for Yellowknife is affordability in the private market. There is a total of 1,667 private apartment units in the city as of October 2018 (2018 CMHC Rental Market Report – Yellowknife). The average rent in Yellowknife is \$1,614 per month, compared to the national average of \$987 per month. This is despite the fact that Yellowknife's rental vacancy rate is double the national average, increasing to 4.9%, from 3.5% a year earlier.

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

### ***Core Housing Need***

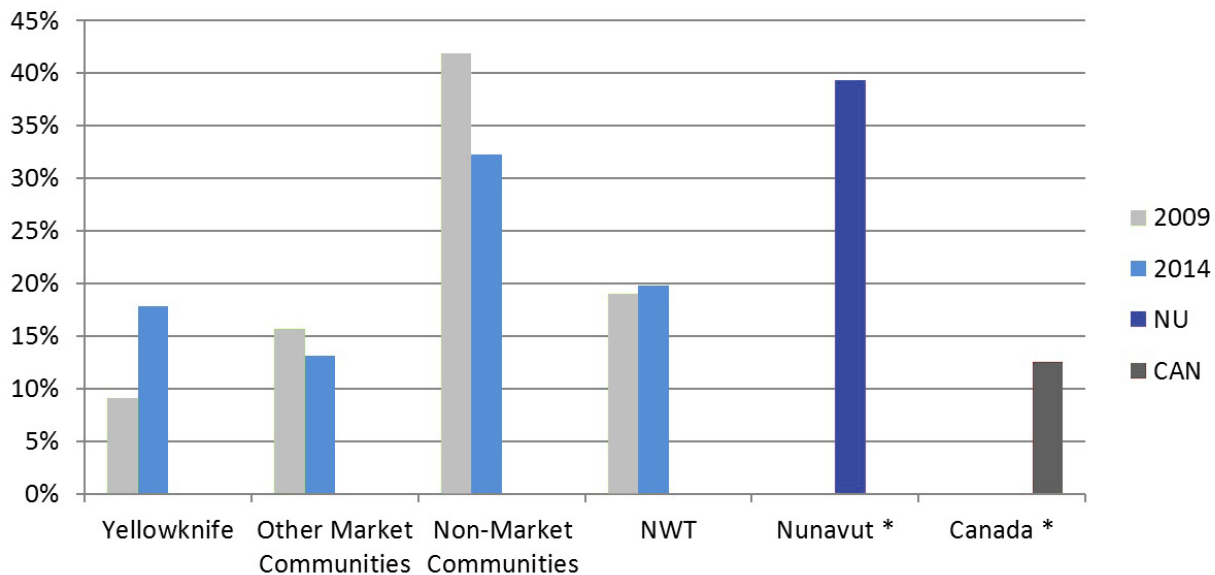
A common measure nationally of housing demand especially for social housing is core housing need. A household is defined to be in core housing need if it fails to meet one or more of the following standards: adequacy, suitability, and affordability and a total household income below the Core Need Income Threshold (CNIT). The CNIT is an income limit for each community that represents the amount of income a household must have to be able to afford the cost of owning and operating a home without government assistance.

Adequate housing must have running water, an indoor toilet, bathing and washing facilities 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. Affordable housing costs less than 30% of household income where shelter costs include utilities, water, heat, insurance, property taxes land lease costs and rent or mortgage payments.

The NWT community survey is conducted every 5 years by the NWT Bureau of Statistics; the housing component provides information on the core housing need in communities. This data allows the NWT HC to accurately compare housing needs among communities, or special groups, such as seniors, singles, homeowners and renters.

Results from the 2014 NWT Community Survey (Figure 1) indicate that while overall core housing need has remained relatively stable compared to 2009 (19.8% in 2014; 19.0% in 2009), there has been considerable progress in improving housing conditions in smaller non-market communities. Core need in non-market communities dropped from 41.9% to 32.3%. Core need in other market communities also saw improvements in core need from 15.7% to 13.1%. The gains in these communities were countered by a rise in core need in Yellowknife from 9.1% to 17.8% between 2009 and 2014.

Figure 1: Incidence of Core Need by Community Type and Jurisdiction



Source: 2014 Community Need Survey  
 \* 2011 National Census

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Most of the core housing need in Yellowknife and other market communities is for households experiencing affordability problems. In rural and remote communities, the most common housing problem for core need households is adequacy or condition of their dwelling.

It should be noted that one of the major variables that impacts core need is household income. As household income rises, in general, core need decreases. Inversely, as household income decreases, core need increases. Core need is directly correlated with income and the state of the economy. In general, downturns in the economy especially in the resource sector, which comprises a significant portion of the NWT's GDP, increase core need. Improvement in core need can be achieved through better educational outcomes, labour market development, economic development and improved infrastructure.

Updated core need information will be available in early 2020 from the 2019 NWT Community Survey.

### ***Target Groups***

Many NWT residents have difficulty finding and affording housing that meets their needs. The National Housing Strategy will address the housing needs of vulnerable Canadians. Some NWT target groups include seniors, persons with disabilities, homeless persons, vulnerable women and girls and single-parent families.

### **Seniors**

Housing for seniors will continue to be a major priority for the NWTHC. Since 2004, the NWT population has increased by just 1% in total, while the population 60 years of age and older has increased by 53% (NWT Bureau of Statistics). The aging population has had impacts in the Public Housing program as a greater proportion of the Public Housing units are being occupied by seniors.

The NWT has a total of 14,980 households, with 5,442 (36%) belonging to maintainers aged 55 and older. The average household size for residents aged 55 and older is 2.1. The majority of residents aged 55 and older, within the Territory, own their home and have an average income (after tax) of \$64,674. Most residents average income (after tax) declines by approximately 33% when residents are aged 65 and older. One-thousand seven-hundred and ten (1,710) households (31%) with resident maintainers aged 55 and older have indicated that they have housing problems associated with their homes not being adequate, suitable, or affordable, or a combination of all.

Over the next 10 or 11 years, the seniors population of the NWT will increase approximately by 3,866 people (71%) by the year 2028. The majority of the projected seniors population growth is expected to occur within the city of Yellowknife, which is projected to increase approximately by 2,800 people (111%) by the year 2028 (2018 NWTHC Seniors Planning Study).

The NWTHC has responded, in part, to this increasing demand by targeting specific units for seniors



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and by constructing facilities with independent housing for seniors and space for program delivery to seniors in a number of communities. All new builds for the NWT HC are utilize the visitable design philosophy. Visitable design is an accessibility approach that involves minimum accessibility criteria of a no-step entryway, a bathroom on the main floor and wider doorways on the main floor. The NWT HC has also created a retrofit program specific to seniors homeownership households intended to help them make their dwellings more durable and energy-efficient.

### Persons with Disabilities

Canadian statistics indicate that for persons 15 years of age and over, some 14% reported a disability. The NWT Disability Strategic Framework recognizes and adopts the conceptual definition and framework set out by the World Health Organization stating that “disability is an umbrella term for impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between the individual (with a health condition) and the individual’s contextual factors (environmental and personal factors).” Impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions referring to:

- Impairment – a problem in body function or structure such as significant deviation or loss
- Activity limitations – difficulties an individual may have in executing activities
- Participation restrictions – problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations.

In 2015, the NWT HC adopted a policy to further reinforce its commitment to delivering Public Housing that is adequate, suitable, and affordable and that accommodates the needs of persons with disabilities. Addressing the housing needs of persons with disabilities requires close collaboration with health professionals to determine the appropriate accommodation. Challenges are compounded in rural and remote communities due to availability of materials, technological expertise, specialized medical support and overall high costs of construction and goods.

### Homeless Persons

Homelessness has many wide ranging, complex and concurrent contributing factors. The GNWT, through various departments, including the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Department of Justice and the NWT Housing Corporation, provide a range of resources to address homelessness in communities across the NWT. In larger centres, such as Yellowknife, homeless people might be staying in overnight emergency shelters, they might be couchsurfing, and in some cases unsheltered or in a housing situation that does not meet health and safety standards. In rural and remote communities, homelessness is commonly exhibited as couchsurfing, but also there are instances of people living in conditions that are not safe and healthy.

Data estimating homelessness is incomplete, however, a City of Yellowknife study (10-Year Plan to End Homelessness) estimates that almost 1,650 people or roughly 10% of the population are risk of or are transitionally homelessness in Yellowknife.

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In terms of overcrowding or couchsurfing, the 2014 NWT Community Survey indicated that approximately 4% of NWT households were in core need due to overcrowding. This is as high as 10% in rural and remote communities.

### Single Parents

According to the 2016 Census, more than 1 in 5 Census families (does not include one-person households) are lone-parent families. This figure is up to 40% in a number of NWT communities. The implications for schooling, day care, housing, food and clothing are significant for these lone-parent families. The Public Housing Program has been an important and significant support to lone-parent families as they seek housing stability to achieve their aspirations.

### Vulnerable Women and Girls

There are unique housing needs for vulnerable women and girls, especially in terms of ensuring appropriate safety and security considerations are incorporated into the design. The NWTHC has partnered with NGO proponents in the past to ensure programs such as emergency overnight shelters, victims of family violence shelters, Housing First, rapid rehousing, transitional housing and independent housing are available and viable options for vulnerable women and girls.

The NWTHC is continuing to develop housing options appropriate for vulnerable women and girls including the development of congregate, but independent living spaces that provide enhanced security and on-site support services. The NWTHC is also committed to ensuring that at least 50% of Public Housing units support women and girls.

### ***Engagement***

Grounding housing delivery in the needs and considerations of stakeholders is critical for the development of a credible plan. These stakeholders include NWT residents, Indigenous governments, community leadership, private industry and non-governmental organizations. The NWTHC has taken a multi-pronged approach to ensure that feedback is being incorporated into housing planning; measures such as annual capital planning consultation, the 2017 Housing Engagement Survey, the 2018 Seniors Planning Study, the 2019 NWT Community Survey, the 2019 Northern Housing Summit, engagement on a GNWT Homelessness Strategy and the establishment of community housing plans for every community.

Through the development of its annual capital plan, NWTHC senior management meet with community leaders and residents to determine the needs and priorities of each community. Meetings also occur with Local Housing Organizations, NWTHC's community agents. These discussions help to determine the need for capital replacement and repair in NWTHC-owned housing as well as homeownership repair.

In 2017, the NWTHC sought feedback from NWT residents through the 2017 Housing Engagement Survey in order to renew its strategic actions and to help to focus short-term and mid-term investments as the NWTHC strove to meet the housing aspirations of NWT residents. A total of 1,464

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surveys were completed, which in relation to the approximate 15,000 households in the NWT represents a very successful engagement with people and communities. Some broad themes emerged from the survey. Most residents felt that the territory would benefit from more Public Housing. Improving the accessibility and delivery of homeownership programming was also popular. This programming includes homeownership purchase support, home repair, and lease-to-own programs. Respondents also indicated strong support for integrated approaches to address homelessness, identifying partnerships as key to achieving successful outcomes. Nearly 10% of survey respondents identified themselves as homeless. Families, elders and persons with disabilities were prioritized by respondents as needing housing assistance. There was also strong support for partnering with Indigenous governments and organizations to advance their housing aspirations, especially in the area of information transfer and sharing knowledge.

Supporting seniors to age-in-place is one of the NWTHC's key priorities. In 2018, the NWTHC examined the supply and demand for seniors housing in every NWT community through a Seniors Planning Study. This study helped to quantify the growing challenge of addressing seniors housing need and provides a resource for investors including all orders of government to plan for new seniors housing development.

Early in 2019, the NWT Bureau of Statistics conducted its NWT Community Survey, a comprehensive household survey that is conducted every 5 years in every NWT community. The NWT Community Survey has a strong housing component and the NWTHC uses data from the survey to calculate core housing need in each community.

To engage with community leaders and housing stakeholders regarding opportunities from the National Housing Strategy and the NWTHC partnering programming and to inform further decision-making and actions around Strategic Renewal, a Northern Housing Summit in Inuvik, NWT was convened in April 2019. The main objectives of the Summit include:

1. Communicate housing investment opportunities to housing stakeholders
2. Provide a collaborative housing forum for partnership-building
3. Present an array of community design and capacity-building tools
4. Allow for networking and the formation of community and stakeholder relationships

GNWT homelessness supports are delivered by a number of different GNWT agencies and departments. Communication and alignment of activities are generally addressed through cross-collaborative tables such as interdepartmental working groups. The NWTHC is reviewing all GNWT homelessness programming with a view towards increasing policy and program alignment and the creation of a GNWT Homelessness Strategy. Homelessness stakeholders have been engaged to determine opportunities for improvement.

Lastly, the NWTHC has embarked on a transformational planning exercise involving the development of 33 community housing plans, one for each NWT community. These plans will help guide and support strategic development and investment intended to address housing needs. The NWTHC is working with individual communities through facilitators from each community to engage appropriate stakeholders to participate in local housing forums in each community to share information, develop partnerships, and establish a strategic planning direction. After the plans are

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developed, the NWT HC is committed to monitoring the plans and supporting communities to update their plans.

### ***Social Housing Transformation***

The reality of social housing in the NWT is that with challenging economic and labour opportunities in many communities, deep subsidized rental housing will continue to be a significant contributor to the housing stability of a large portion of NWT residents. This stability affords residents the certainty and predictability to raise their families, participate in the labour market, care for their elders, improve their education or other aspirations.

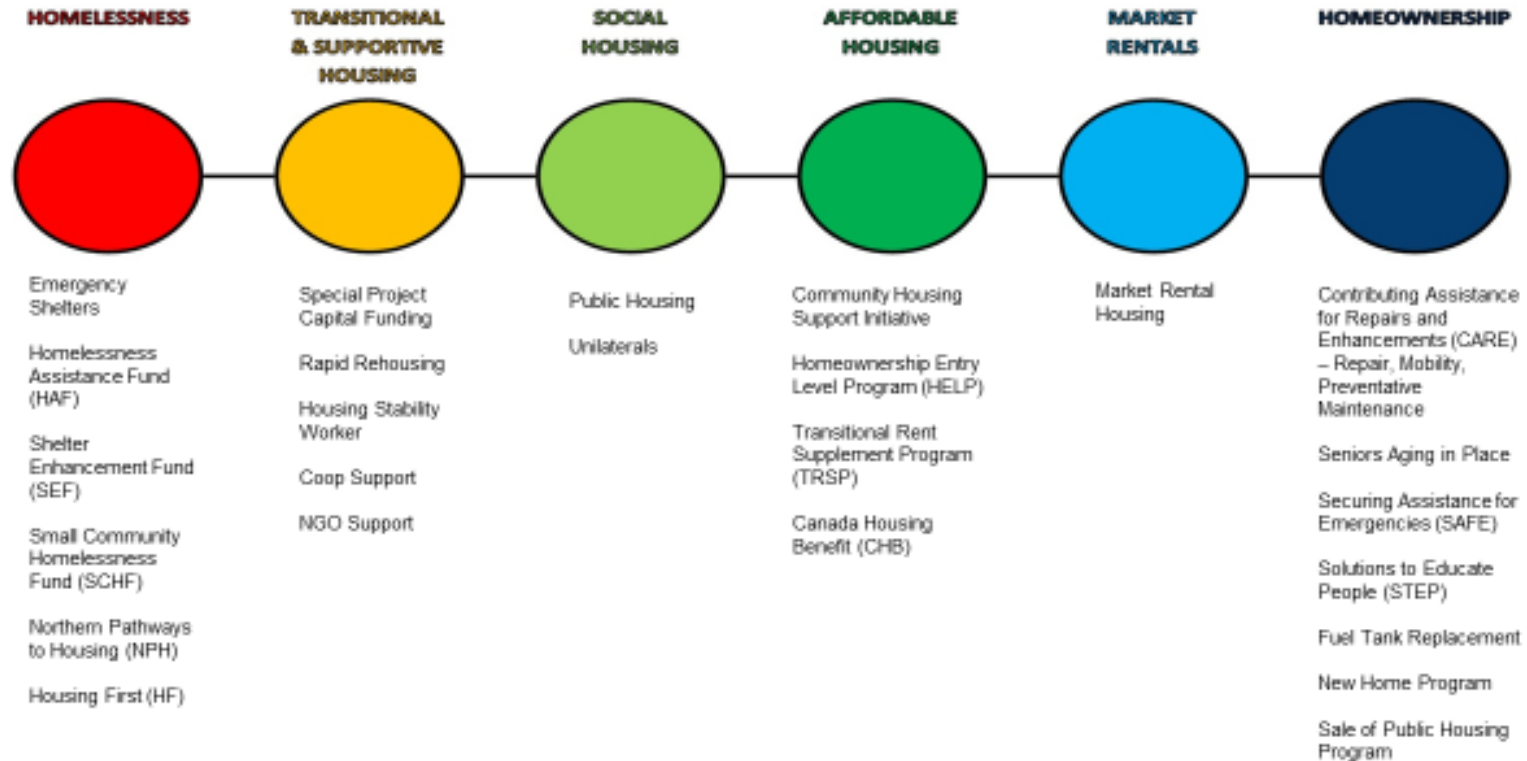
Rising costs in the delivery of the Public Housing system in the NWT need to continue to be mitigated. Some of these mitigation measures that the NWT HC is actively implementing include construction of multi-unit buildings as opposed to single detached, incorporation of energy-efficiency features and the use of alternative energy, disposition of high energy use assets, building local capacity and the promotion of apprenticeships, and providing more choices along the housing continuum including affordable rental options, lease-to-own, and homeownership.

### ***Social Inclusion***

The NWT HC, in alignment with priorities under the National Housing Strategy, will continue to foster and deliver housing that promotes social inclusion and the building of inclusive communities. Housing projects have the power to bring people together to learn from each other, but also to help address long-standing multi-generational trauma. Nowhere is this approach more evident than in the design and delivery of seniors independent nine-plexes in small Indigenous NWT communities. The NWT HC over the past few years has constructed 5 seniors nine-plexes with accessibility features incorporated throughout to provide elders with a safe and secure housing solution that promotes aging-in-place. An open gathering space, included in the design as a result of Indigenous engagement through a design charrette, can be used for health and wellness programming, but also can function as a centre-point for the community. The open space promotes meeting with and celebrating our elders, who are the knowledge keepers of so much of the cultural history of the community. Such a gathering may include elder-youth interactions and meet-and-greet nights facilitating multi-generational culture and language transfer.

Through the development of individual community housing plans as noted earlier, the NWT HC supports communities in envisioning and creating healthy communities where housing is appropriately considered in the context of key community supports and infrastructure such as schools, health centres, and shopping.

## NWTHC Programs at a Glance



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# Priorities for Action Plan 2019-2022

**Priority 1: Maintain Increase/Social Housing Supply**

**224 units - \$2.3 million**

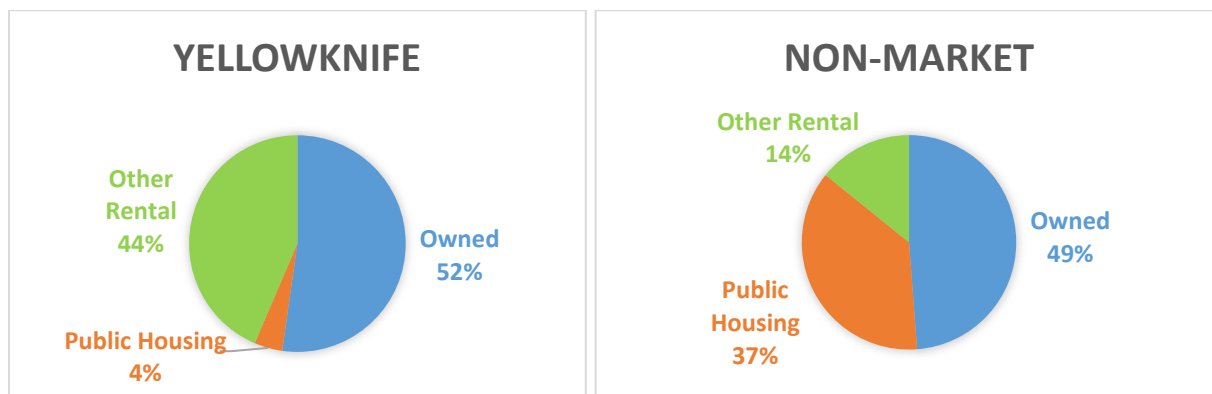
For 2019-22, the NWT HC is allocating \$2.3 million under the NWT Priority Housing Initiative to maintain and support the provision of an existing 194 social housing units and expand the number of affordable homes by 30 units.

Nearly 1 in 6 households (2,418 units) in the NWT live in deep subsidized rent-geared-to-income public housing. The majority of these residents have very low income. The GNWT considers its Public Housing program as one of the fundamental supports in its social safety net. In a jurisdiction that has several times the national average in rates of addiction, infectious disease, low educational attainment and suicide among other social ills, our government understands that no other social challenges can begin to be addressed on without the stability of safe, secure and quality housing. This is why the GNWT spends 6 times more per capita on housing than the national average.

For the most part, with the exception of Yellowknife and to a smaller extent, regional centres, NWT communities have underdeveloped rental and homeownership markets (see Figure 2).

As noted previously, Public Housing represents one in six households overall in the NWT. In small non-market communities, Public Housing comprises nearly four out of every ten households.

Figure 2: Yellowknife and Non-Market Communities by Housing Tenure



Due to the limited capacity of government and non-government housing support agencies, housing projects in most NWT communities are either the result of complete and unilateral NWT HC support or involve the NWT HC as a primary partner in the project. Additionally, the NWT HC through its Local Housing Organization (LHO) partners are involved in direct delivery of housing in nearly all communities. There are 23 Local Housing Organizations that are contracted by the NWT HC to

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administer the over 2,400 Public Housing units as well as an additional 400 affordable and market housing units.

Public Housing levels have remained unchanged over the last 20 years. However, the proportion of overall Public Housing units to the total number of occupied dwellings in the NWT has decreased from nearly 20% (1 in 5) in 1996 to 16% (1 in 6) in 2016. The NWTHC is focused on continuing to expand housing options across the housing continuum to ensure that there are housing choices for NWT residents beyond Public Housing.

As noted above in terms of the transformation of social housing, as economic opportunities and labour markets improve there will be natural shift towards other forms of housing. Social housing continues to be a primary support for many NWT households, especially in smaller communities, providing them with the stability to raise their families, participate in the labour market, care for their elders or improve their education. The emphasis on this priority reflects the importance of the social housing system for NWT residents.



## Priority 2: Repairing and replacing existing social housing stock

**\$14.5 million**  
**168 units**

Under this three-year action plan, the NWT Priorities Housing Initiative and the Canada Community Housing Initiative will contribute a total of \$14.5 million. The NWT Priorities Housing Initiative will contribute \$4.2 million and the Canada Community Housing Initiative will contribute \$12.1 million for planned housing stock preservation investments that will improve or construct 168 units.

Social housing, often referred to also as Public Housing or Community Housing, represents a primary source of housing stability for a large proportion of the NWT households. Some 2,859 households (see Table 1) in 2016 resided in some form of rent-assisted housing representing 19% of the total 14,980 households (Census 2016) in the NWT or nearly 1 in 5 households. In rural and remote communities where social housing is exclusively delivered by the NWTHC, the Public Housing Program supports nearly 4 out of every 10 households (37%, 2014 NWT Community Survey).

Table 1: Social Housing Units in the Northwest Territories

Type of Social Housing	Number of Units
NWTHC Public Housing	2,418
NWTHC Affordable Rental Housing	221
NGOs and Non-Profits*	220
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,859</b>

\* Includes Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, transitional housing, housing co-operatives and other rent-geared-to-income.

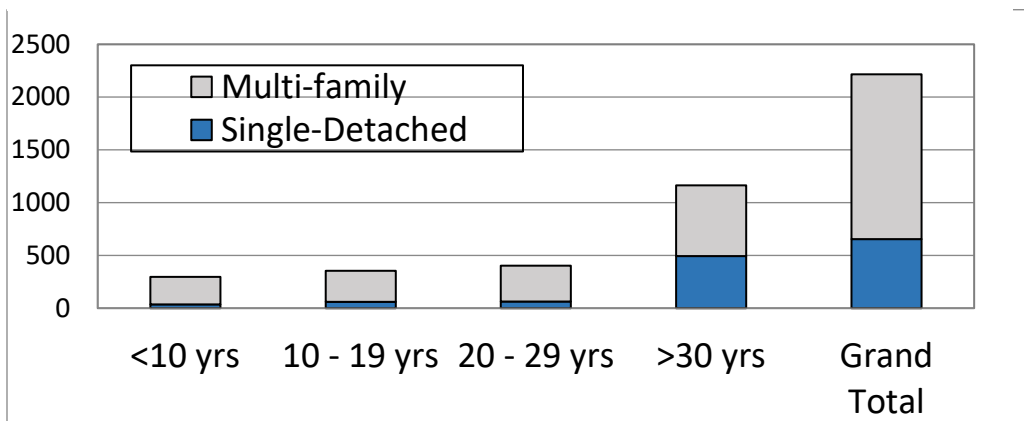
Much of the social housing stock between the 1970's and 2000 were single-detached dwellings. The NWTHC's inventory of approximately 2,200 owned Public Housing units is aging rapidly. Of NWTHC owned assets, 52% are over 30 years old. This means that over half of NWTHC assets will require replacement within the next 20 years.

In recent times, nearly all new social housing replacement is in the multi-family configuration. This has resulted in gains in economies of scale through common mechanical systems and energy-efficiency through incorporation of technologies such as solar panels and biomass. Now, nearly 70% of units in the Public Housing program are in a multi-family building.

**Table 2: Public Housing Units by Age Grouping and Building Configuration**

Age Distribution	<10 yrs	10 - 19 yrs	20 - 29 yrs	>30 yrs	Grand Total
Single-Detached	36	60	63	495	654
Multi-family	261	295	339	668	1563
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>1163</b>	<b>2217</b>
	<b>13%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>52%</b>	

**Figure 3: Public Housing Units by Age Grouping and Building Configuration**



The NWT HC has identified the repair and replacement of existing social housing as a key priority under this action plan. Public Housing comprises approximately 1 in 6 households (2,400 units) in the NWT with that ratio rising to as high as 4 in 10 households in rural and remote communities. Public housing in the NWT, which often has a deep subsidy, is vitally important for residents in meeting their aspirations whether they be starting a family, training and education upgrading, caring for elders or addressing social problems. Public Housing provides these households with predictable and transparent housing that affords them the stability to reach their life goals. The NWT HC views the long-term sustainability of the Public Housing system as one of its primary priorities. Through the repair of Public Housing Units, the NWT HC can ensure that units become more durable and extend their useful lives.

#### *Extension of Useful Life*

Along with ongoing maintenance, to address the protection and modernization needs of the social housing stock, the NWT HC uses a retrofit and replacement approach based on the lifespan and condition of the unit. To extend the useful life of a unit the NWT HC plans for major retrofits (up to 60% of the replacement cost) at typically the 20-year and 35-year mark for the age of a unit. This allows for usefulness of a unit to extend to 50 years, which given the harsh climate of the NWT,

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represents excellent longevity. The replacement of these units is typically required after 50 years of operating life.

### *Energy Efficiency*

In replacing units that are no longer economically feasible to operate or repair, the NWT HC not only changes the age profile (Table 2 and Figure 3 show that more than half (52%) of Public Housing units are older than 30 years) of its units towards newer construction, but also improve the environmental footprint of units. Newer units can incorporate energy-efficient upgrades or utilize alternative energy sources. All new designs conform to EnerGuide for New Houses (EGNH) to be 25% more energy efficient than the requirements identified in the National Energy Code of Canada.

### *Exceeding National Building Code*

Additionally, building in the NWT often means constructing units to a standard that exceeds building codes in other jurisdictions or nationally. All new NWT Housing Corporation design and construction must comply with the authorities having jurisdiction for the project. This includes but is not limited to the latest edition of National Building Code of Canada, the Canadian Electrical Code, Office of The Fire Marshal, GNWT, Territorial Regulations, Local Bylaws and all other applicable Codes and Standards.

### *Accessibility*

The replacement of units also provides the NWT HC with the opportunity to incorporate features that support residents with mobility challenges. In terms of accessibility, the NWT HC incorporates the following minimum visitable design features:

- a. A No-Step Entrance Area provides an exterior landing entrance area with a minimum clear area of 5'-0" x 5'-0"; a landing area that is firm and slip resistant; a landing that has a slope in any direction of no more than 1:50 (2%); a no-step entrance at the entry door with a low profile threshold (1/4" or less); and a minimum 36" clear width of the entrance door.
- b. Wider doorways on all main floor doors (minimum 32" clear doorway opening) to ensure a clear 32" opening the minimum door width needs to be 34" (2'-10"). The NWT HC uses a 36" door as a 34" door is not a common size and is more costly to acquire.
- c. A bathroom on the main floor.
- d. Other Features include, reinforced bathroom walls (blocking installed in locations for future installation of grab bars during the original construction); levered door handles; single-lever kitchen and bathroom faucets; raised electrical outlets (18" from floor); lowered climate controls; lowered light switches (48" from floor).

## Priority 3: Supporting Homeownership Repair Programs

**162 units - \$8.2 million**

Expanding homeownership options for NWT residents is another critical priority that is being supported under this three year action. Providing housing options beyond social housing allows higher income earners to explore other housing options and reduce demand for deeply subsidized rental units across the territory. To assist this goal, the NWTHC has identified \$8.2 million to support homeownership initiatives over 3 years.

In Non-Market Communities, the expansion of homeownership has historically been hampered by a number of factors:

- a. There does not exist a private resale market in the vast majority of NWT communities.
- b. A related factor is that banks are averse to providing mortgages in rural and remote communities, especially where land tenure can sometimes be uncertain.
- c. Constructing a new home can be prohibitively expensive where construction costs can be significantly higher than southern jurisdictions.
- d. It is difficult finding construction contractors in small communities to construct private homes. Capacity to complete projects can be a concern where there are skilled labour shortages.
- e. Projects may need to take a multi-year approach due to transportation logistics and challenges, e.g. low water levels may limit barge re-supply into communities.
- f. Homeowners that are able to obtain a house will likely find that insuring their home may be very expensive if possible at all.
- g. Maintenance and repair contractors are rare.
- h. Obtaining materials for repair or maintenance likely means transporting them from Yellowknife or from southern jurisdictions.

These factors have resulted in homeownership rates in the NWT of 51.4% (2014 NWT Community Survey) of households, which are considerably lower than the national average of 69% (2011 National Household Survey).

The NWTHC has embarked on initiatives that aim to provide more support to residents in smaller communities that have the resources to be homeowners. This includes exploration of the provision of repair and maintenance services through NWTHC community agents, Local Housing Organizations. Additionally, the NWTHC will be piloting increasing access to building materials to private homeowners that want to conduct repairs to their home or conduct basic maintenance. Additionally, to support residents conducting their own repairs, the NWTHC is designing new home maintenance and repair educational courses with a component involving a hands-on module. To further support homeownership, the NWTHC has launched new lease-to-own programming to provide more housing choice in small communities and to support residents who want to move from Public Housing to homeownership.

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Adequacy problems involve households that live in dwellings that are in poor condition and require major repair. According to the 2014 NWT Community Survey, some 7.8% (1,149) of NWT households had an adequacy problem. In non-market communities, this problem is even more pronounced, afflicting 21.3% of households or 1 in 5 households.

Major health and safety deficiencies to a house, which the NWT HC defines as Priority 1 repair issues include problems related to structural soundness, the electrical system, fire safety, the heating system, the plumbing and drainage system and environmental factors. More than half of households (53.7% or 617 households) with an adequacy owned their own home.

The modelled estimate for a major repair is \$100,000 - \$150,000.

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## Investment Summary

Through the three funding areas: the NWT Priority Housing Initiative, the Canada Community Housing Initiative and the NWT Housing Initiative, the NWT HC and CMHC intend to assist over the 3-year period 2019-2022, some 1,575 households with an investment of \$27.6 million focusing in the priority areas of:

1. Maintain Social Housing
2. Repairing and replacing existing social housing stock
3. Supporting homeownership repair programs

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SCHEDULE C: ACTION PLAN**

**3) a) Targets and Outcomes for Expected Results Overall**

Outcome	Expected Results	Target (Units)									
		Year 1 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 2 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 3 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 3 Cumulative Total Target and Funding (\$M)		Cumulative 2019/20 - 2027/28 Target (\$M)	
Maintain / increase social housing supply	Units continue to be offered in social housing <sup>1</sup>	30	0.3	78	0.7	86	1.3	194	2.3	602	30.8
	100 unit (8%) expansion of affordable / rent assisted units <sup>2</sup>	16	-	7	-	7	-	30	-	100	-
	No Net loss of Urban Native Social Housing units available to low-income households <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	1.9
Repair / replace existing stock	At least 27% of existing social housing units repaired or replaced <sup>4</sup>	80	4.6	44	4.5	44	5.4	168	14.5	312	64.7
	Retained Urban Native Social Housing units are repaired to good condition <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	0.2
Home Ownership Repairs Programs	Private homeowners (including seniors) able to repair/ preserve their own home <sup>5</sup>	54	2.7	54	2.7	54	2.7	162	8.2	494	24.7
Admin Fee	as per the agreement	-	0.9	-	0.9	-	1.0	-	2.8	-	13.5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>1,585</b>	<b>135.8</b>

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**Supporting Notes:**

(1) Over the next nine years (2019-2020 to 2027-2028), 602 social housing units in the NWT will no longer be funded under the Social Housing Agreement (SHA). The NWT Housing Corporation (NWT HC) will utilize funding provided under this agreement to mitigate the continued annual decline of CMHC funding for social housing operations to preserve these 602 units and maintain the current level of SHA funded units at 1156. This cumulative nine year investment is approximately \$30.8M.

(2) Recognizing that the NWT HC is currently maintaining approximately 2400 social housing units in the NWT, an expansion already well above the current 1156 SHA funded units, the NWT HC is unable to assume additional on-going operations and maintenance (O&M) funding obligations associated with a further expansion of public housing units. Recognizing this limitation, the NWT HC will utilize housing partnerships with indigenous and community governments, the private sector and other partners to achieve a 100 unit expansion of available affordable / rent assisted housing units in the NWT. This expansion represents an approximate 8% increase over and above the 1156 SHA funded units. The NWT HC's existing Community Housing Support Initiative Program and funding support from CMHC's National Co-Investment Fund program (including the \$60 million carve out for the NWT) will be utilized to achieve this targeted outcome.

(3) The NWT HC will continue to preserve the 75 units under the Urban Native Program by utilizing funding under the bilateral agreement to mitigate the continued annual decline of CMHC operations funding for the North Slave Housing Corporation in Yellowknife. CMHC operational funding for these units will begin to decline in 2023-2024. This cumulative investment is approximately \$1.9M.

(4) Given the aforementioned O&M funding limitations and the priority to preserve existing NWT public housing units, in lieu of the national 15% housing unit expansion target, the NWT HC will target a 8% (100 housing unit) expansion through housing partnerships and add a further 7% investment to the national 20% target to preserve (repair and replace) existing public housing units. In addition to these investments, a further \$200K will be allocated for the preservation of the 75 Urban Native affordable housing units. This cumulative nine year investment is approximately \$64.7M.

(5) The NWT HC will invest \$24.7 million over the next nine years to support the delivery of homeownership repair programs for private homeowners across the Northwest Territories. These investments will target vulnerable populations, such as seniors, low income households and persons with disabilities.



**3) b) Expected number of households for which Housing Need will be addressed by Initiative**

Initiative	Target (Households)				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	3 Year Cumulative Total	2019/20 - 2027/28 Target
Northwest Territories Priorities Housing Initiative	105	47	30	182	137
Northern Housing for the Territories Initiative	46	85	93	224	769
Canada Community Housing Initiative	29	51	68	148	679
Canada Housing Benefit (1)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>1,585</b>

*(1) Targets for Canada Housing Benefit to be added following co-development*

#### 4) a) Planned Cost-Matching per Initiative

Initiative	Planned Cost-Matching			
	Year 1 (\$M) (1)	Year 2 (\$M)	Year 3 (\$M)	Year 4 (\$M)
Northwest Territories Priorities Housing Initiative	1.938	1.242	1.051	1.046
Canada Community Housing Initiative	0.531	1.353	2.363	3.371
Canada Housing Benefit (1)	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

*(1) Planned Cost-Matching for Canada Housing Benefit to be added following co-development*

4) b) Planned funding and indicators to achieve overall targets over the three-year planning period

Indicator: Number of households for which Housing Need is addressed	Target (Households)									
	Year 1 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 2 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 3 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 3 Cumulative Total Target and Funding (\$M)		2019/20 - 2027/28 Target	
	#	(\$M)	#	(\$M)	#	(\$M)	#	(\$M)	Units	(\$M)
New Construction	0.0	0.0	4.0	2.2	4.0	1.6	8.0	3.8	82.0	47.0
Repaired/ Renewed <sup>1</sup>	80.0	4.6	40.0	2.3	40.0	3.8	160.0	10.7	240.0	17.9
<u>Affordability Assistance<sup>2</sup></u>	46.0	0.3	85.0	0.7	93.0	1.3	224.0	2.3	769.0	32.7
Affordability Assistance to the households	54.0	2.7	54.0	2.7	54.0	2.7	162.0	8.2	494.0	24.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>180.0</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>183.0</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>191.0</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>554.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>1,585.0</b>	<b>122.3</b>

Indicator: Housing units considered accessible <sup>3</sup>	Target (Units)									
	Year 1 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 2 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 3 Target and Funding (\$M)		Year 3 Cumulative Total Target and Funding (\$M)		2019/20 - 2027/28 Target	
	Units	(\$M)	Units	(\$M)	Units	(\$M)	Units	(\$M)	Units	(\$M)
New	0.0	0.0	4.0	2.2	4.0	1.6	8.0	3.8	82.0	47.0
Repaired/ Renewed	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>47.0</b>

(1) Includes repair/replacement investments to preserve existing public housing units and Urban Native affordable housing units

(2) Includes operational funding to preserve public housing and Urban Native affordable housing units and the expansion of affordable housing units in the NWT through housing partnerships.

(3) Considered accessible as per the local / national building code. The NWTHC incorporates the following minimum visitable design features in its new construction: 1) A no-step entrance area, 2) wider doorways, 3) a bathroom on the main floor and 4) other features such as levered door handles, reinforced bathroom handles, single lever kitchen and bathroom faucets, raised electrical outlets, lowered climate controls, lowered light switches.