

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The Connection between Poverty and Housing - July 2022

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM



Source: CMHC - Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation



A collaboration between Eastern Zone Community Health Boards and Mental Health and Addictions Health Promotion team.

Did You Know?

Housing is a social determinant of health, which can improve individual lives and lead to positive health outcomes.

Poverty is the underlying cause of most housing affordability challenges.

Living in unsafe, unstable and crowded living conditions equals poor mental health outcomes.

Women are almost 70% of public housing tenants and 60% of rent supplement clients in Nova Scotia.

Housing is unaffordable when housing costs are 30% or more of a household's income and when there is no affordable housing available to purchase and rent in the community where people choose to live.

Individuals who experience housing insecurity or homelessness are at greater risk for substance abuse, suicide and social isolation and lower life expectancy.

"The housing crisis is real, and Nova Scotians expect us to act," said Premier Tim Houston. "We'll do what needs to be done to make sure Nova Scotians can afford a place to call home. We will not wait."

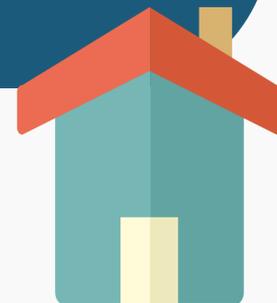
Almost a quarter of Nova Scotia residents (22%) spent between 30-50% of their annual household incomes on housing.

Many parts of Nova Scotia are facing a housing crisis, with low vacancy rates, high and increasing rental rates, increasing housing insecurity and homelessness.

Why should we care about Housing?

Affordable housing is a basic human need, essential infrastructure for our province, and a strategic sector for our society and economy.

Affordable, safe housing is crucial for a healthy society, quality of life, attracting new residents, social equity and growing the economy.



What is the cost of Housing Insecurity?

Poverty is costing Nova Scotia \$2 billion per year in economic loss, \$279 million in excess public services cost, and \$231 million in foregone revenue.

Housing interventions can both improve health and make better use of expenditures on public healthcare.

Housing insecurity and homelessness results in higher need for emergency and in-patient hospital care, which is substantially higher than the cost to rent an apartment.

Who is most at risk?

- Seniors
- Racialized Groups
- Persons with disabilities
- People experiencing family/gender violence
- Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

- Children and youth experiencing neglect, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.
- Persons with severe and persistent mental illness, addictions, substance use and/or behavioural issues.
- Persons facing eviction due to present housing market.
- People with precarious employment or sudden unemployment
- Division of Households due to separation and divorce.

What Can be Done?

Increase income assistance payments regularly according to the cost of living, taking into account housing/rental increases and food inflation.

Develop responsive policy to ensure that access is universal. Targeted measures are needed for people who have been systematically marginalized.

Make significant investments to maintain and build public housing as well as other non-market housing (non-profit and cooperative) and invest in housing supports and services.

Sources:

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