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PAUKTUUTIT
INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA

Advancing Federal Action on Inuit-Led Housing and Shelter Solutions for Inuit Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse Inuit, and their Families

KEY MESSAGES

- **Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit face a housing crisis that demands urgent federal action.** Chronic overcrowding, inadequate emergency and transitional shelters, and decades of underinvestment have created structural vulnerabilities that directly compromise the safety, health, and dignity of Inuit women, girls, gender-diverse Inuit and their families across Inuit Nunangat and in urban centres.
- **This is not a gap in knowledge – it is a failure of investment and policy coherence.** Housing insecurity among Inuit women and families is a direct result of underinvestment and fragmented policy approaches. The Government of Canada has both the jurisdictional authority and fiduciary responsibility to act, with existing commitments under the [National Housing Strategy](#),¹ the [Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee](#),² and the [National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#).³
- **Inuit-led research is pointing the way, but federal funding must follow.** [Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada](#)'s national Housing and Shelters Research and Advocacy Initiative, grounded in Inuit Data Sovereignty and aligned with the [National Inuit Strategy on Research](#),⁴ identifies urgent federal actions needed to close funding gaps, stabilize service delivery, and implement distinctions-based, Inuit-led housing solutions.
- **Targeted, long-term federal investment will advance safety, dignity, and self-determination.** Closing the housing infrastructure gap for Inuit women, girls, gender-diverse Inuit and their families requires sustained, distinctions-based federal investment in housing solutions, not short-term project funding.

¹ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (n.d.). National Housing Strategy. Government of Canada. <https://www.placetocallhome.ca>

² Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. (n.d.). Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. Government of Canada. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1499711968320/1529105436687#s3>

³ Women and Gender Equality Canada. (2022). National action plan to end gender-based violence. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/intergovernmental-collaboration/national-action-plan-end-gender-based-violence.html>

⁴ Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2018). National Inuit Strategy on Research. https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ITK_NISR-Report_English_low_res.pdf

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Crisis

Inuit women, girls, gender-diverse Inuit, and their families face acute housing insecurity across Inuit Nunangat and urban centres.

The lack of safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate housing is a historical crisis rooted in forced settlement – one that continues to place immense social and economic strain on Inuit communities, widening inequalities and causing severe repercussions for Inuit women. Chronic overcrowding not only harms physical and mental health but also increases the risk of violence, leaving many without safe alternatives.

By the Numbers

- 52.9% of Inuit across Inuit Nunangat live in overcrowded housing.⁵
- 32.7% of Inuit live in homes requiring major repairs.⁶
- Inuit women are six times more likely than non-Indigenous women to live in unsuitable housing.⁷
- ~59% of Inuit communities lack emergency shelters, leaving those escaping violence without a safe refuge.⁸
- There was a 21% improvement in community well-being scores when Inuit leadership in housing increased between 1981 and 2021, demonstrating that Inuit-led solutions work.⁹

Federal Context and Commitments

The Government of Canada has committed to advancing reconciliation through distinctions-based approaches, reducing gender-based violence, expanding affordable housing under the *National Housing Strategy*,¹⁰ and supporting Inuit self-determination and data sovereignty.

Despite these commitments, Inuit Women continue to experience disproportionate housing insecurity.

Key federal policy gaps include:

- No stable, multi-year funding for Inuit women's shelter organizations.
- Insufficient support across the full housing continuum – from crisis response to permanent housing.
- A lack of Inuit women-specific policy streams.
- Housing programs are not consistently integrated with wraparound supports (mental health services, income security, childcare, and violence prevention).

Evidence Base: “Housing is Our Right in Inuit Nunangat”

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada is leading a national Housing and Shelters Research and Advocacy Initiative. It is grounded in Inuit Data Sovereignty and aligned with the *National Inuit Strategy on Research*.¹¹ The initiative

⁵ Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (2025). Housing is Our Right in Inuit Nunangat. Retrieved from <https://pauktuutit.ca/advocacy/housing/housing-is-our-right-in-inuit-nunangat/>

⁶ Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (2025). Housing is Our Right in Inuit Nunangat. Retrieved from <https://pauktuutit.ca/advocacy/housing/housing-is-our-right-in-inuit-nunangat/>

⁷ Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (2024). Unique Challenges Faced by Inuit Women in Urban Centres Regarding Housing and Homelessness. Retrieved from <https://pauktuutit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Unique-Challenges-Faced-by-Inuit-Women-in-Urban-Centres-Regarding-Housing-and-Homelessness-EN.pdf>

⁸ Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (2024). Planning for the Future: The Reality Inuit Women Face When Seeking Shelter from Domestic Violence. Retrieved from https://pauktuutit.ca/wp-content/uploads/Pauktuutit_FLG_Planning-for-the-Future-Report_Revised_9APR2024.pdf

⁹ Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (2025). Housing is Our Right in Inuit Nunangat. Retrieved from <https://pauktuutit.ca/advocacy/housing/housing-is-our-right-in-inuit-nunangat/>

¹⁰ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (n.d.). National Housing Strategy. Government of Canada. <https://www.placetocallhome.ca>

¹¹ Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2018). National Inuit Strategy on Research. https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ITK_NISR-Report_English_low_res.pdf

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has received ethics approvals in all four regions of Inuit Nunangat and is conducted in collaboration with Inuit Treaty Organizations. Research components include:

- A structural and systematic review of housing inequities affecting Inuit women and their families.
- Comparative circumpolar case studies of Indigenous-led housing solutions.
- A housing continuum study examining lived experiences navigating crisis, transitional and permanent housing.

Emerging evidence confirms that housing insecurity is not solely an infrastructure issue; it is a systems issue requiring integrated federal policy reform. These findings will inform Pauktuutit's five-year advocacy strategy.

Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) for Housing and Infrastructure

As a signatory to the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP), Canada has an obligation to incorporate its provisions into all federal laws. Article 21 affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to improvement of their economic and social conditions, including in the area of housing, with particular attention to the rights and special needs of Indigenous women, youth, and children.¹² Safety is a fundamental right, and Canada must honour it.

¹² United Nations. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 21(1). United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/295. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish a Dedicated Inuit Women’s Housing and Shelter Fund.** The Government of Canada must create a distinctions-based, federally administered funding stream specifically for Inuit Women’s housing and shelter initiatives, co-developed with Inuit Women’s Organizations.

The Fund must include multi-year operational support, capital investments for shelters and transitional housing, and flexibility for community-led design. It must also support unique housing models, such as supportive housing with integrated services, as well as ensure that federal program parameters reflect the realities of northern construction costs and infrastructure conditions.

- **Expand Emergency and Transitional Shelter Capacity for Inuit Women and their Families.** Federal and territorial governments must urgently increase the availability of emergency and transitional shelters designed to meet the specific safety and cultural needs of Inuit women, girls, gender-diverse Inuit, and their families.

Investments must address both the shortage of physical infrastructure and the operational funding required to sustain service delivery over the long term, consistent with the [National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#).¹³

- **Implement Distinctions-Based, Inuit-Led Housing Solutions.** The Government of Canada must move away from pan-Indigenous housing solutions across Inuit Nunangat and urban centres. Policy and program design, implementation, and evaluation must be led by Inuit—including Inuit women’s organizations—with federal funding structured to support community-level delivery, organizational capacity, and long-term sustainability.
- **Align Federal Housing Investment with Inuit Data Sovereignty and Research.** Federal housing policy and investment decisions must be informed by Inuit-led research, including the findings of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada’s national Housing and Shelters Research and Advocacy Initiative. Data collection, policy and program design, and evaluation must align with the [National Inuit Strategy on Research](#)¹⁴ and respect Inuit Data Sovereignty principles, ensuring that federal action is grounded in community-identified needs, rather than externally imposed priorities.
- **Fulfil Existing Obligations Through Accountable, Long-Term Investment.** The Government of Canada must establish clear accountability mechanisms to track and publicly report on progress against housing-related commitments under the [National Housing Strategy](#),¹⁵ [Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee](#),¹⁶ and the [National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#).¹⁷ Implementation timelines, funding milestones, and outcome targets must be developed in partnership with Inuit women’s organizations. Sustained investment must replace the cycle of underfunding and project-based fixes.

¹³ Women and Gender Equality Canada. (2022). National action plan to end gender-based violence. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/intergovernmental-collaboration/national-action-plan-end-gender-based-violence.html>

¹⁴ Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2018). National Inuit Strategy on Research. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ITK_NISR-Report_English_low_res.pdf

¹⁵ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (n.d.). National Housing Strategy. Government of Canada. <https://www.placetocallhome.ca>

¹⁶ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. (n.d.). Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. Government of Canada. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1499711968320/1529105436687#s3>

¹⁷ Women and Gender Equality Canada. (2022). National action plan to end gender-based violence. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/intergovernmental-collaboration/national-action-plan-end-gender-based-violence.html>

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