

Housing 2021 Census

Today, Statistics Canada released information on housing (from the 2021 Census) such as tenure, dwelling age and condition, key housing problems¹, and core need².

Housing Tenure and Monthly Shelter Costs

In 2021, 8,135 of the 15,205 dwellings in the NWT were owned, translating to a home ownership rate of just under 54%. Overall household monthly shelter costs³ were \$1,550 in the Northwest Territories, a 10% increase from 2016. For comparison, median shelter costs in Canada were \$1,160 in 2021, a 14% increase from 2016. Shelter costs tend to be lower for rented households as they include subsidized housing.

**Table 1 Household Tenure by Shelter Costs
Northwest Territories, 2021**

	Households		Monthly Median Shelter Costs	
	(#)	(%)	(\$)	Change from 2016
All Households	15,205	100.0	\$1,550	\$146
Owner	8,135	53.5	\$1,740	\$159
Renter	7,020	46.2	\$1,450	\$152
Dwelling provided by local government, First Nation or Indian band	50	0.3	n.a.	n.a.

¹'n.a.' means data is not available

Age and Condition of Dwelling

While not included in monthly shelter costs, dwelling upkeep and repair may be an additional expense incurred by occupants. Overall, just over 2,800 dwellings needed major repairs while 5,180 needed minor repairs and 7,225 needed regular maintenance.

¹ Key housing problems include:

Adequacy - households that are in need of major repairs.

Affordability - households that spend 30% or more of their income on shelter costs.

Suitability - households that don't have the appropriate number of bedrooms for the characteristics and number of occupants

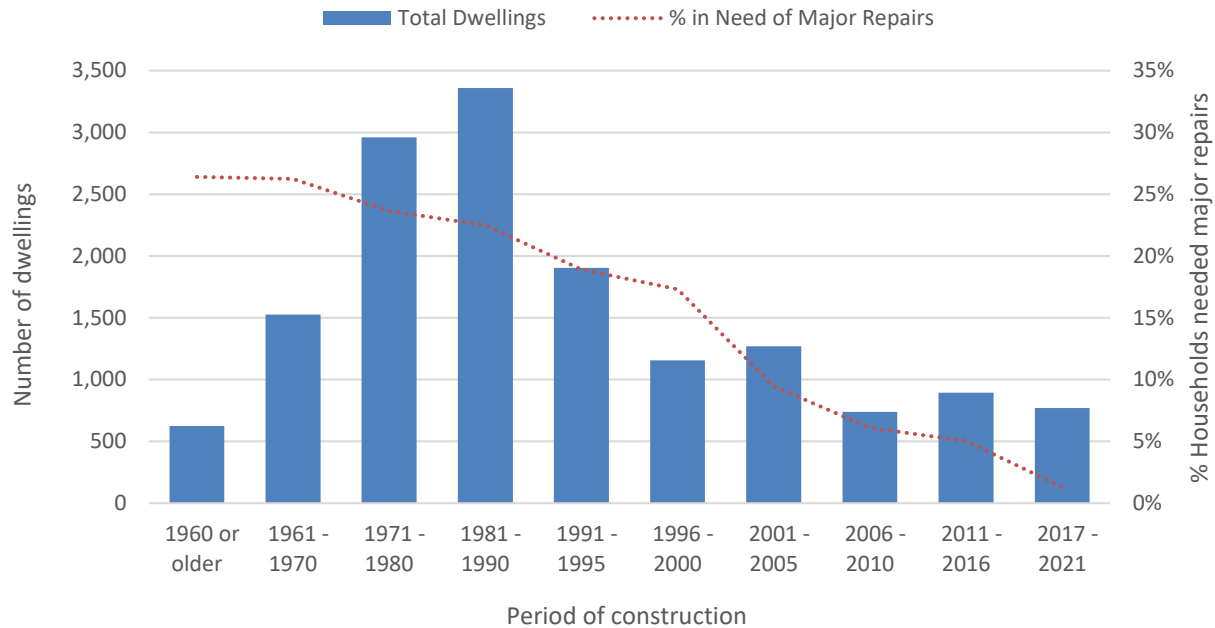
² A household is considered in core need if it has at least one housing problem and its household income is below the core need income threshold.

³ Depending on whether the dwelling is owned or rented, shelter costs include mortgage payments, rent, property taxes, condo fees and utilities.



The need for major repairs tends to increase with dwelling age. In 2021, over 55% of NWT dwellings were built in 1990 or before, with almost 24% of them in need of major repairs.

Figure 1 Period of Construction and Percent in Need of Major Repairs Northwest Territories, 2021



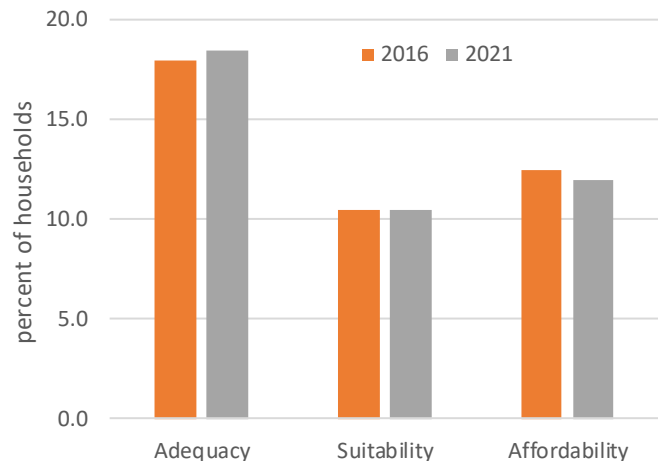
Housing Problem

- Adequacy Problem: households that are in need of major repairs.
- Affordability Problem: households that spends 30% or more of their income on shelter costs
- Suitability Problem: households that don't have the appropriate number of bedrooms for the characteristics and number of occupants.

A household is considered to have a housing problem if it is not adequate, not affordable, or not suitable. In 2021, over 5,445 households (36%) had at least one housing problem, a slight increase from 2016. The predominant housing problem in the NWT was adequacy (18%) a slight increase from 2016.

In contrast, affordability slightly declined to just under 12% of households. The decline in affordability problems may be a result of the impacts of COVID-19 benefits. Fewer houses had suitability issues with just under 1,600 households not having the appropriate number of bedrooms for the characteristics and number of occupants.

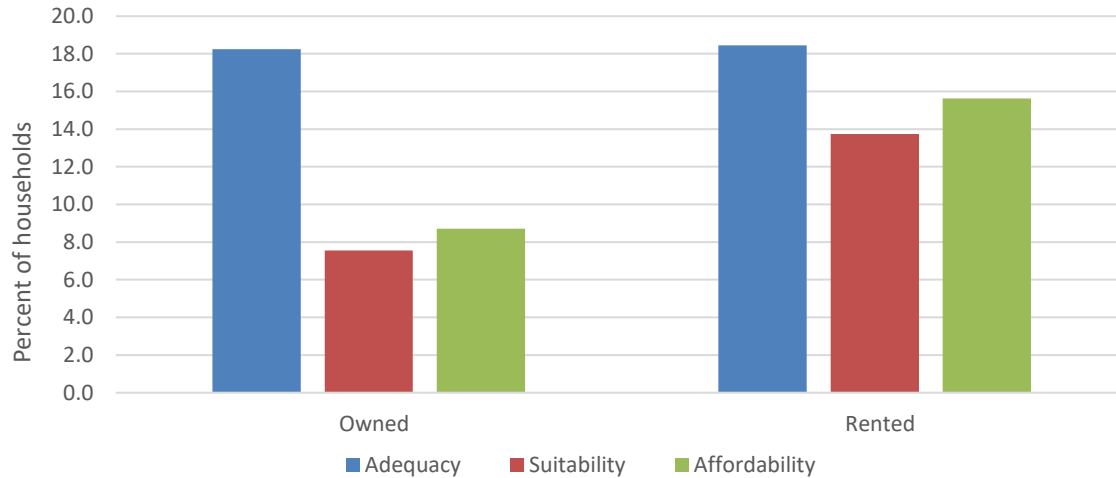
Figure 2 Percent of Households by Housing Problem Northwest Territories, 2021



Adequacy (major repairs) tends to be the main housing problem outside the regional centres, while affordability issues tend to be more prevalent in the regional centers.

Owned and rented households had similar rates of adequacy problems in 2021, while suitability and affordability issues are generally greater among rented dwellings.

Figure 3 Percentage of Household with a Housing Problem by Tenure Northwest Territories, 2021

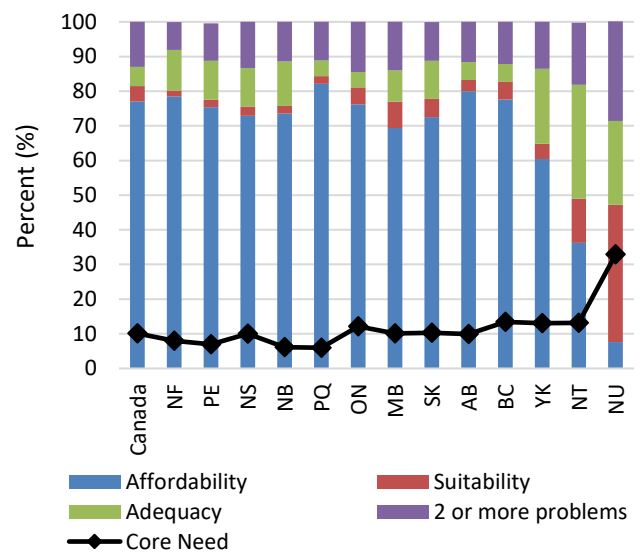


Across Canada, the prevalent housing issue was affordability with 20.9% of households having this specific issue. Other than Nunavut and NWT, affordability was the main housing issue in all the jurisdictions.

Core Housing Need

A household is considered in core need if it has at least one housing problem and its household income is below the core need income threshold⁴. Over 13% of households in the Northwest Territories were in core need, the third highest rate after Nunavut (32.9%) and British Columbia (13.4%). Just over 10% of Canadian households were in core need in 2021. Of those in core need, 18% of NWT households had multiple housing problems, proportionally more than all other jurisdiction other than Nunavut.

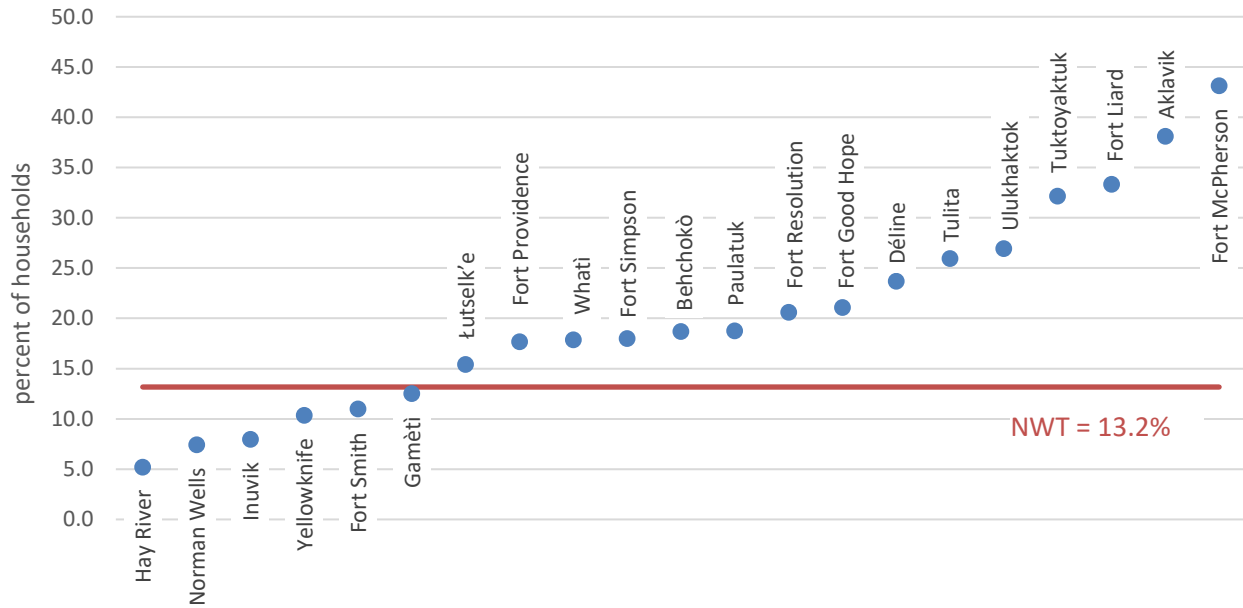
Figure 4 Percentage of Core Need Households By Problem, 2021



⁴ In 2021, 14,890 households were examined for core need. Only private, non-farm, non-reserve households with income greater than zero are assessed for core need.

Out of 21 NWT communities where information on core need was available⁵, Hay River had the lowest rate at 5% while Fort McPherson had the highest at 43%.

Figure 5 Percentage of Households in Core Need Northwest Territories, 2021



There appears to be an issue in the distribution between subsidized and non-subsidized rented households in the 2021 Census data for the Northwest Territories. The NWT Bureau of Statistics is contacting Statistics Canada to investigate further.

Planned Release Dates for 2021 Census Information

October 26, 2022 Immigration, Place of Birth and Citizenship
Ethnocultural and Religious Diversity
Mobility and Migration

November 30, 2022 Education, Labour
Language of Work, Commuting
Instruction in the Official Minority Language

Note: The release dates may change.

For more information, please visit the NWT Bureau of Statistics website at <http://www.statsnwt.ca> or call (867) 767-9169.

⁵ Income data for communities with population sizes under certain threshold is suppressed for confidentiality.