

Literature Reviews On Housing Needs: Developmental Disabilities, 2019

The goal of Canada's new National Housing Strategy (NHS) is to ensure Canadians across the country have access to affordable housing that meets their needs. In order to understand the needs of some populations in vulnerable situations, CMHC has conducted research about the challenges and barriers that they experience, as well as any solutions successfully implemented in Canada.

Project Overview

CMHC commissioned a literature review examining the diverse needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in order to inform NHS programs. The literature search focused on Canada, but researchers extended the search to international sources where relevant. This review covers the following key elements:

- identified housing needs (housing features, home supports, locational features, other needs specific to each group) and the extent to which these needs are met/unmet;
- challenges and barriers in accessing suitable housing;
- intersectionality with other identities (e.g., race, gender, age, family status, indigeneity, health, location); and
- the potential and proven solutions for meeting housing needs.

Key Findings

Developmental disabilities include a range of conditions that can affect any of the following: cognitive functioning, intellectual development, emotional development, or physical functioning. Since the nature of developmental disabilities varies, so do the specific needs of those with these disabilities. Regardless, the literature identifies common themes regarding housing-related needs and challenges and a few solutions that have worked well across the country.

- A.** In Canada, an estimated 13,200 adults with developmental disabilities live with parents or other family members because of a lack of resources or community supports.
- Many parents who are caring for their intellectually-disabled adult children have no one in line to take over their care responsibilities when they are no longer able to do so.
 - More than 75% of adult Canadians with intellectual disabilities who do not live with their families are living in poverty and are at a very high risk of homelessness.

About CMHC Research Insights

Research insights are summaries of our research reports.

These insights:

- identify a housing research issue, gap or need
- provide an overview of the research project undertaken to address it
- present major findings of the research

The research presented in this series explore the areas of Housing Need, Housing Finance, Housing Supply and Outcomes of the National Housing Strategy.

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B. Challenges in learning, communicating, forming relationships with others, and adapting to social norms.

- As a result, these individuals experience the double-burden of low income and high expenses due to the complexity of their social and medical needs.
- Individuals with these challenges experience greater difficulty in navigating fragmented service systems, accessing housing and community-based services, and maintaining independent housing status.

C. Increased levels of poverty and social exclusion.

- Individuals with developmental disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse than the general population, and face discriminatory views about their ability to live independently and contribute to society.
- Landlords are less willing to rent to people with developmental disabilities.
- In addition, discrimination leads to unequal choice in the rental market, where individuals with developmental disabilities have access only to units that are overpriced, poorly-maintained, or undesirable in some other way.

D. Transitions to adulthood.

Youth with developmental disabilities face difficulties in transitioning from pediatric services and systems of care into adult service systems.

- Due to **long wait lists for funding for supportive housing**, developmentally disabled youth experience a gap in support once they reach adulthood.

E. The literature provides evidence of a variety of Canadian governmental (federal, as well as provincial) and non-governmental housing initiatives,

as well as international housing initiatives currently in place to address the housing issues faced by those with developmental disabilities. The following programs also link housing to social assistance to support autonomous living for individuals challenged with developmental disabilities:

- CMHC's National Housing Co-Investment fund has included the creation of 2,400 affordable units for people with developmental disabilities.
- The Province of Nova Scotia is working to improve its Disability Support Program, and to create more small-option homes for people with developmental disabilities who have been living in institutions.

- Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward Island has begun a new housing project called Vision 20-20, which aims to provide housing for vulnerable groups, including refugees, veterans, and families affected by disabilities.
- The Cribwolf Foundation has proposed construction of a community-central multi-unit residential building for adults aged 21 and older with intellectual and/or other developmental disabilities.

Fast Facts

- Roughly 1.1% of Canadians aged 15 and older (315,470 people) have been diagnosed with a developmental disability.
 - Almost 25,000 Canadians with significant developmental disabilities are in core housing need.
 - There is a substantially higher proportion of individuals challenged by developmental disabilities among homeless populations than among the general population.
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Implications for the Housing Industry

- Developmental disabilities frequently occur with other disabilities, including physical disabilities; designers may need to consider additional, overlapping accessibility housing features.
- Persons challenged by developmental disabilities can be successfully housed in individual accommodations, group homes, or shared-living arrangements with appropriate supports in place.
- A Housing First approach could apply to those with developmental disabilities, if the additional supports offered through Housing First are designed to meet the specific, individual needs of this population.
- Information about the prevalence of these disabilities among those in housing need is limited, as is information about the housing-related wants and needs of this population. There is also an opportunity to examine how the challenges faced by this group intersect with challenges caused by other vulnerability factors (for example, sexual and gender expression, newcomer status, age, or racialized identity).

For Further Reading

Developing socially inclusive affordable housing, 2020

https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/archive/publications_3/69693_w_acc.pdf

Profile of the housing conditions of Canadians aged 15 years and older with an emotional/psychological disability, 2010

<https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/archive/publications/rhse-penrse/67039.pdf>

Housing persons with an intellectual disability in intentional communities : identifying relevant physical and governance structures : final report, 2009

<https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/archive/publications/rhse-penrse/66464.pdf>

Housing for adults with intellectual disabilities, 2006

<https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/archive/publications/rhse-penrse/65011.pdf>

Housing discrimination in Canada: the state of knowledge, 2002

https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/archive/research_5/housing_discrimination_in_canada.pdf

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Full Report

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https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/archive/research_6/rr_69757.pdf

This report is part of a series on *Housing Needs Literature Reviews*. In this series, we examine the housing needs for various populations to inform National Housing Strategy programs.

- Racialized Individuals and Communities
- Veterans
- LGBTQ2+ Communities
- Developmental Disabilities
- Newcomers and Refugees
- Youth Exiting Care

Our goal is to uncover the challenges and barriers they experience, as well as any solutions successfully implemented in Canada.

CMHC helps Canadians meet their housing needs

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