

Northern Fact Sheet

There are various definitions associated with Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural and northern areas. Throughout the engagement for the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, we expect definitions about Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural and northern areas should be led and agreed to by Indigenous Peoples.

However, for the purpose of these fact sheets, the phrase “urban, rural and northern” (URN) is used to refer to geographic areas where Indigenous Peoples reside outside of First Nation reserves and communities in modern treaty or self-governing territory, Inuit Nunangat, Métis Settlement regions and historic Métis communities.

Statistics Canada defines a census metropolitan area (CMA) as having a total population of at least 100,000 people with at least half of this population living in the core area of the CMA. A census agglomeration (CA) is defined as having a core population of between 10,000 and 100,000 people. A non-CMA/CA is any area that is outside of the CMA or CA area.

For this fact sheet, those living in URN areas are divided into three geographic regions:

1. Urban refers to those living in CMAs.
2. Rural refers to those living outside the Territories, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, and not in a CMA.
3. North includes both:
 - Inuit Nunangat – Inuit homelands encompassing all of Nunavut as well as the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the NWT the ISR; Nunavik in Northern Quebec; Nunatsiavut in Labrador; and
 - North outside of Inuit Nunangat – Territories outside of Inuit Nunangat (Yukon and NWT without ISR and excluding reserves and self-governing/modern treaty territories). Only those living outside of Inuit Nunangat are considered to be living in URN areas.

* In the Northwest Territories, there are four final agreements for the Déline; Gwich'in; Sahtu Dene and Métis; and Tlicho (excluding the Inuvialuit Final Agreement). In Yukon, there are eleven First Nations with final agreements: Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun; Teslin Tlingit Council; Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation; Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation; Selkirk First Nation; Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; Ta'an Kwäch'än Council; Kluane First Nation; Kwanlin Dün First Nation; and Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

Highlights

- Spanning 4 time zones and bordered by the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, Canada's North encompasses almost 40% of Canada's land mass. Permafrost punctuates both the subarctic boreal forest and the high arctic tundra.
- The northern territories are home to 116,560 people, of which 52% are Indigenous.
- In this fact sheet, the North is described in terms of the housing needs and conditions of two regions: Inuit Nunangat ([map](#)) – which is the focus of the [Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy](#) and the North outside of Inuit Nunangat.
- In this fact sheet, the North outside of Inuit Nunangat excludes modern treaty and self-government agreement holders. In the NWT, there are four final agreements (excluding the Inuvialuit Final Agreement). In Yukon there are eleven First Nations with final agreements. URN in this context would be members living outside of those territories. The data for those living outside is difficult to disaggregate and represent.
- Inuit predominantly reside in Inuit Nunangat, while most northern First Nations peoples and Métis reside outside of Inuit Nunangat. ([Figure 1](#))
- Non-Indigenous populations are highest in the territorial capitals and a small number of economic hubs. ([Figure 2](#))
- In the North outside of Inuit Nunangat:
 - The Indigenous population represents 33% of the total population of 74,650.
 - The 44 communities beyond the capitals are small with 86% of communities having populations less than 1,000 and 61% having populations less than 500.
- Across the North, a greater proportion of Indigenous Peoples are living in housing that is below standard when compared to urban and rural Indigenous populations in the South. ([Figure 3](#))
- Between 2016 and 2021, the incidence of core housing need decreased across the North, except for Inuit living in the capitals of Yellowknife and Whitehorse. ([Figure 4c](#))
 - The incidence of core housing need for Inuit living within Inuit Nunangat ([Figure 4a](#)) is double that of those living outside of Inuit Nunangat. ([Figure 4b](#))
- Outside of Inuit Nunangat, non-Indigenous populations experience overcrowding at a level similar to the Canadian average while Indigenous populations experience overcrowding at a higher rate, which rises even higher in the communities outside of the territorial capitals. ([Figure 5](#))
- In the northern region outside of Inuit Nunangat, the need for major repairs is highest for First Nations and Métis, especially in the communities outside of the territorial capitals. Age of housing stock, repair costs, and lack of construction materials and expertise may partly explain this finding. ([Figure 6](#))
- The percentage of people living in unaffordable housing within Inuit Nunangat and the northern region outside of Inuit Nunangat is below the Canadian average, and this is true for Indigenous (Inuit, Métis or First Nations) and non-Indigenous populations. Higher rates of homeownership and subsidized rental units are possible causes for the increased affordability. For example, in the regions outside of Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories, 41% to 58% of all households are either homeowners without a mortgage or tenants living in subsidised rental. <https://www.statsnwt.ca/Housing/housing-conditions/Housing%20Results%20-%202021%20Census.xlsx> ([Figure 7](#))
- Core housing need across the North is largely the result of challenges related to housing adequacy (i.e., housing in need of repair) and suitability (i.e., overcrowded housing), and less a result of affordability challenges. ([Figure 8](#))
- In the North outside of Inuit Nunangat ([Figure 9](#)):
 - While low, reported incidence of unaffordability is highest for both owners and renters in the territorial capitals.
 - Housing repair needs are highest for homeowners, particularly those living in the communities outside of the territorial capitals.
 - Reported incidence of overcrowding is higher for renters and lower for owners in the territorial capitals.
- Housing provision in the North is unique as publicly funded housing corporations have historically been the primary social housing providers.
- Canada holds a nation-to-nation relationship with modern treaty and self-government holders. The delivery of housing can look different across their territories.
- A mix of land ownership impacts both land development and homeownership. This is affected by ongoing land claims negotiations in NWT and parts of Yukon.
- Overall, homeownership is affected by such issues as land tenure, harsh climate, access to home insurance, lack of infrastructure, high labour costs and utility prices, and uncertain market demand and resale value.

Figure 1 – Percentage of Inuit, Métis, First Nation and Non-Indigenous Populations Living in the North, 2021

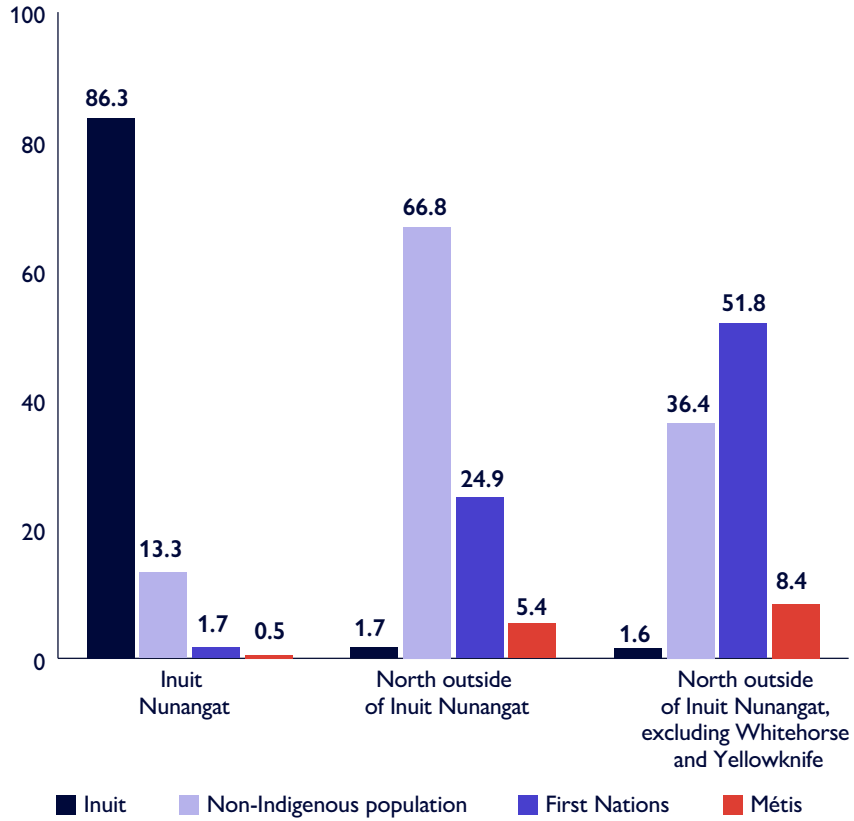
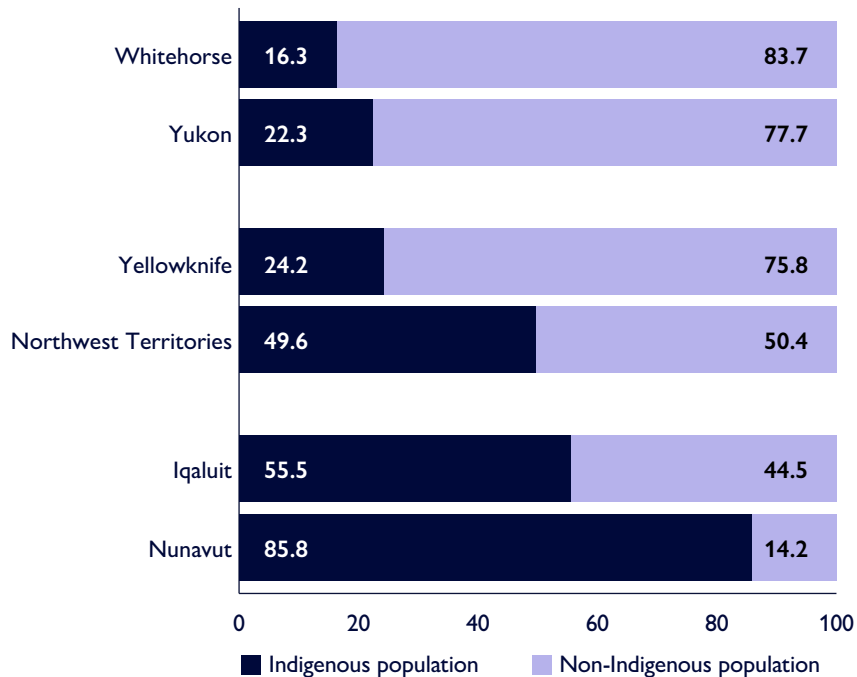


Figure 2 – Percentage of Indigenous Peoples in the Territories and Territorial Capitals, 2021



Below housing standard refers to the population (as opposed to household) that is below at least one standard of Adequacy, Affordability or Suitability. Due to a lack of housing options in the North, below housing standard is used here instead of [Core Housing Need](#).

Adequate housing is reported by residents as not requiring any major repairs.

Affordable dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income.

Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to [National Occupancy Standard](#) (NOS) requirements.

Figure 3 – Indigenous Population and Percentage Below Housing Standard, 2021

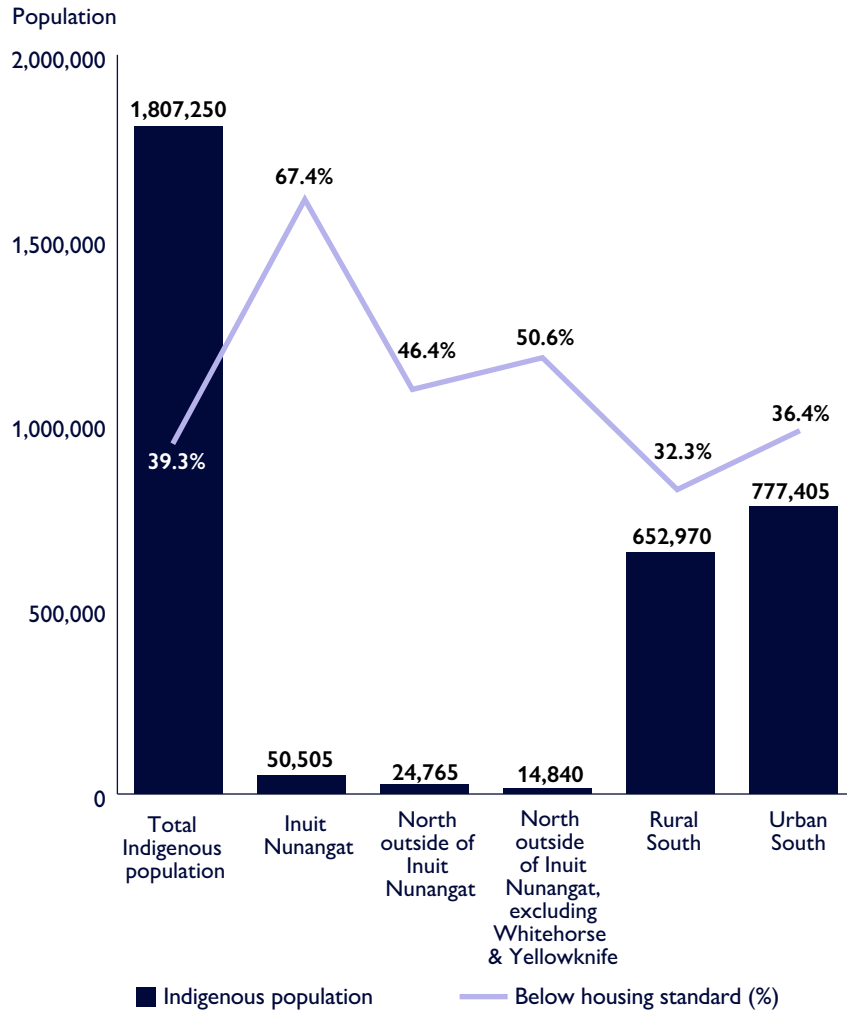
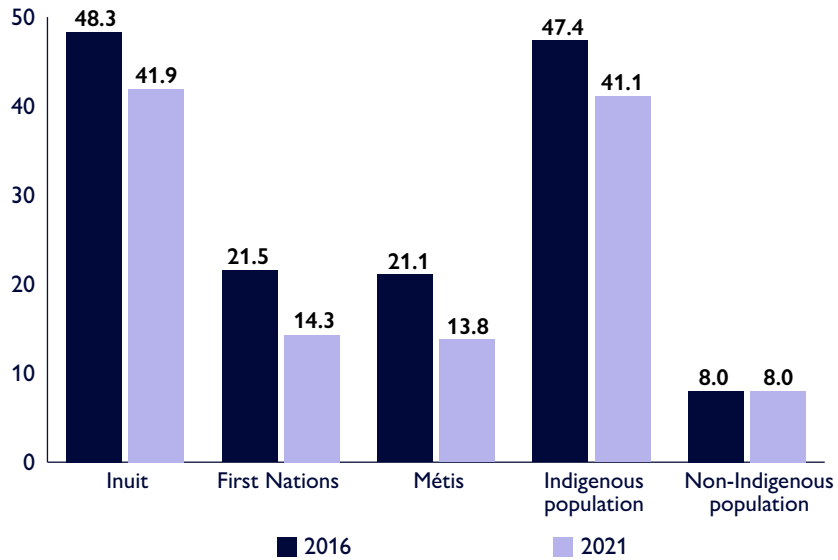


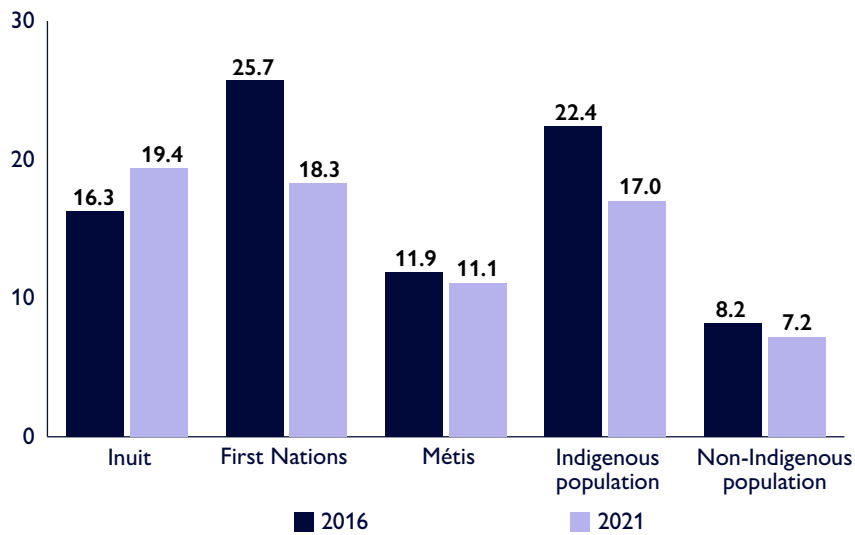
Figure 4a – Percentage of Indigenous Populations Living in Inuit Nunangat in Core Housing Need in 2016 and 2021



Note:

- Not all households are assessed for core housing need (CHN). Only non-farm, off-reserve households with income > 0 and shelter-to-income ratios (STIR) < 100% are assessed for core housing need.
- Percentages of Indigenous populations by identity only include respondents who identified as a single identity.

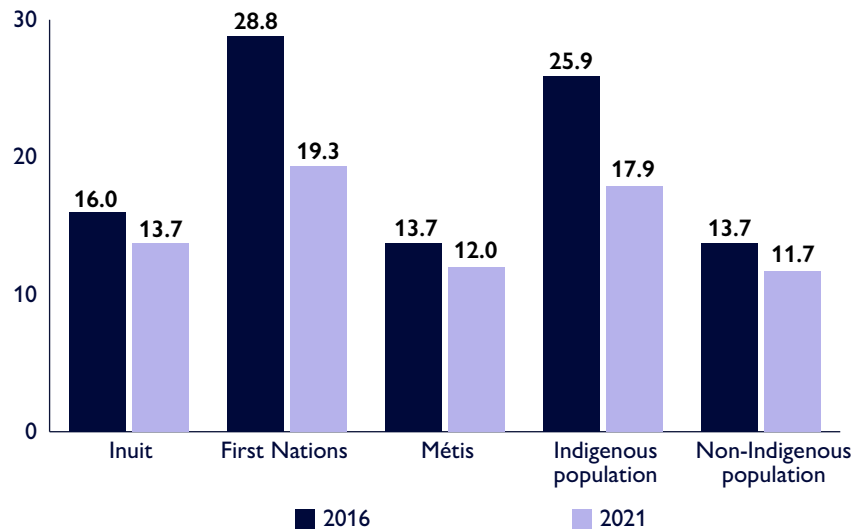
Figure 4b – Percentage of Indigenous Populations in the North living Outside of Inuit Nunangat in Core Housing Need in 2016 and 2021



Note:

- Not all households are assessed for core housing need (CHN). Only non-farm, off-reserve households with income > 0 and shelter-to-income ratios (STIR) < 100% are assessed for core housing need.
- Percentages of Indigenous populations by identity only include respondents who identified as a single identity.

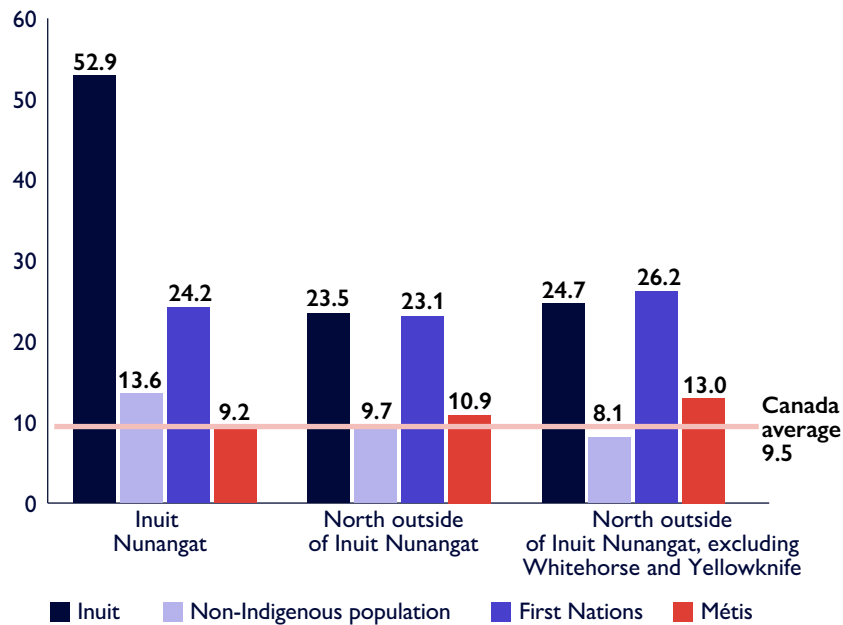
Figure 4c – Percentage of Indigenous Populations in the North Living Outside of Inuit Nunangat Excluding Whitehorse and Yellowknife in Core Housing Need in 2016 and 2021



Note:

- Not all households are assessed for core housing need (CHN). Only non-farm, off-reserve households with income > 0 and shelter-to-income ratios (STIR) < 100% are assessed for core housing need.
- Percentages of Indigenous populations by identity only include respondents who identified as a single identity.

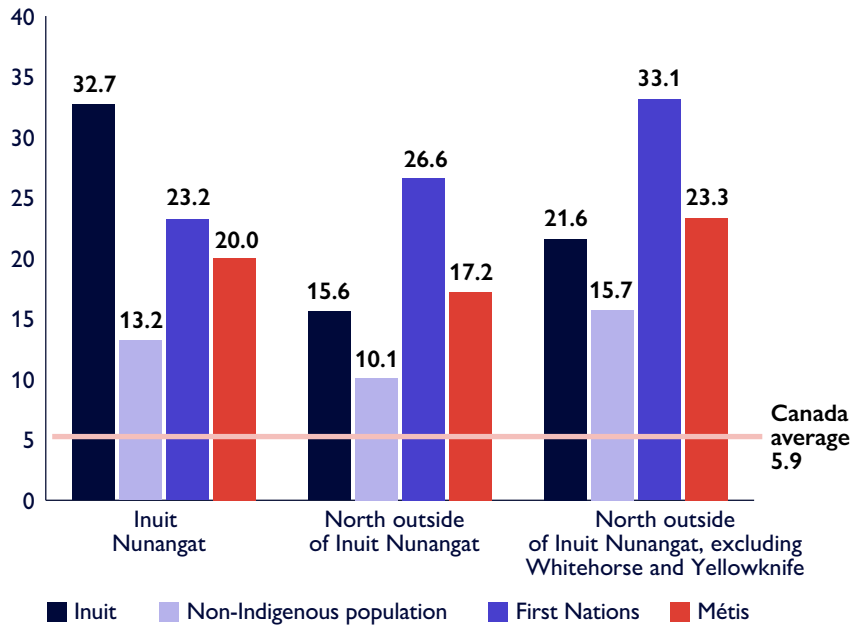
Figure 5 – Percentage of Inuit, Métis, First Nations and Non-Indigenous Populations Living in Crowded Dwellings, 2021



Note:

- Percentages of Indigenous populations by identity only include respondents who identified as a single identity.

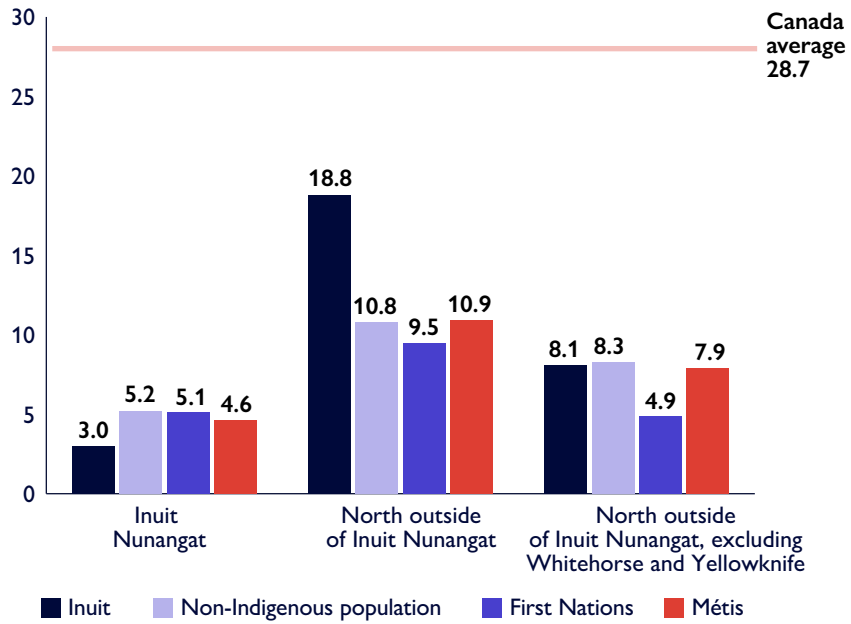
Figure 6 – Percentage of Inuit, Métis, First Nation and Non-Indigenous Populations Living in Dwellings Requiring Major Repairs, 2021



Note:

– Percentages of Indigenous Peoples by identity only include respondents who identified as a single identity.

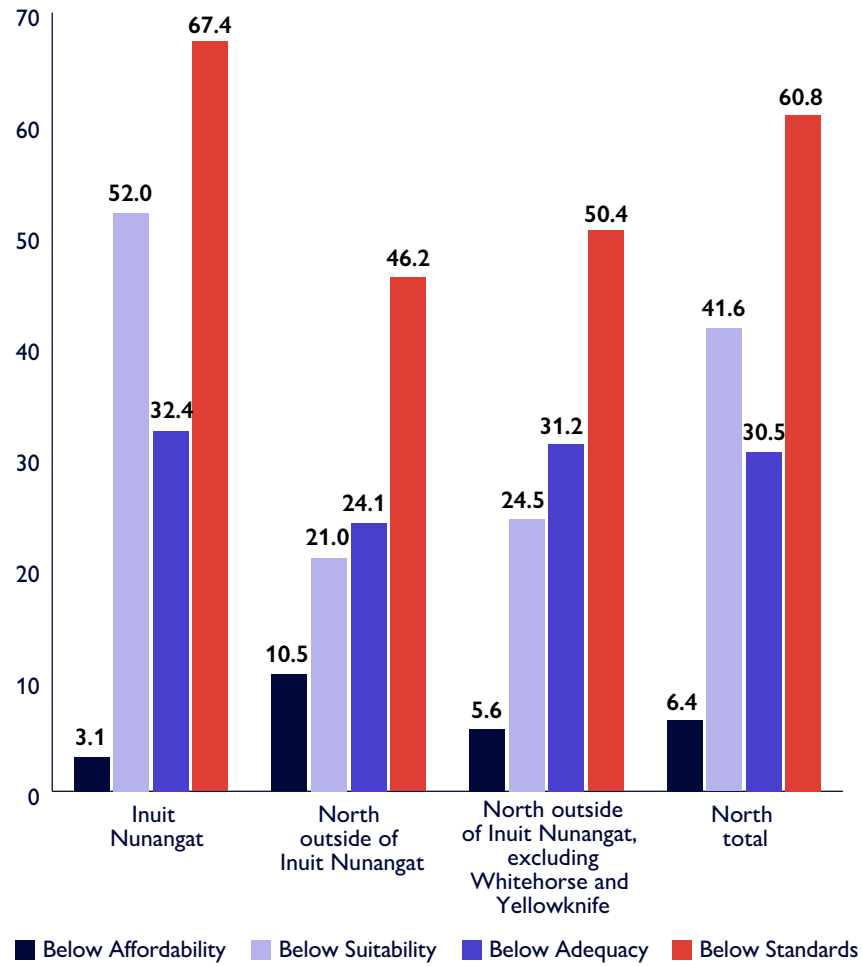
Figure 7 – Percentage of Inuit, Métis, First Nation and Non-Indigenous Populations Living in Unaffordable Dwellings, 2021



Note:

– Percentages of Indigenous Peoples by identity only include respondents who identified as a single identity.

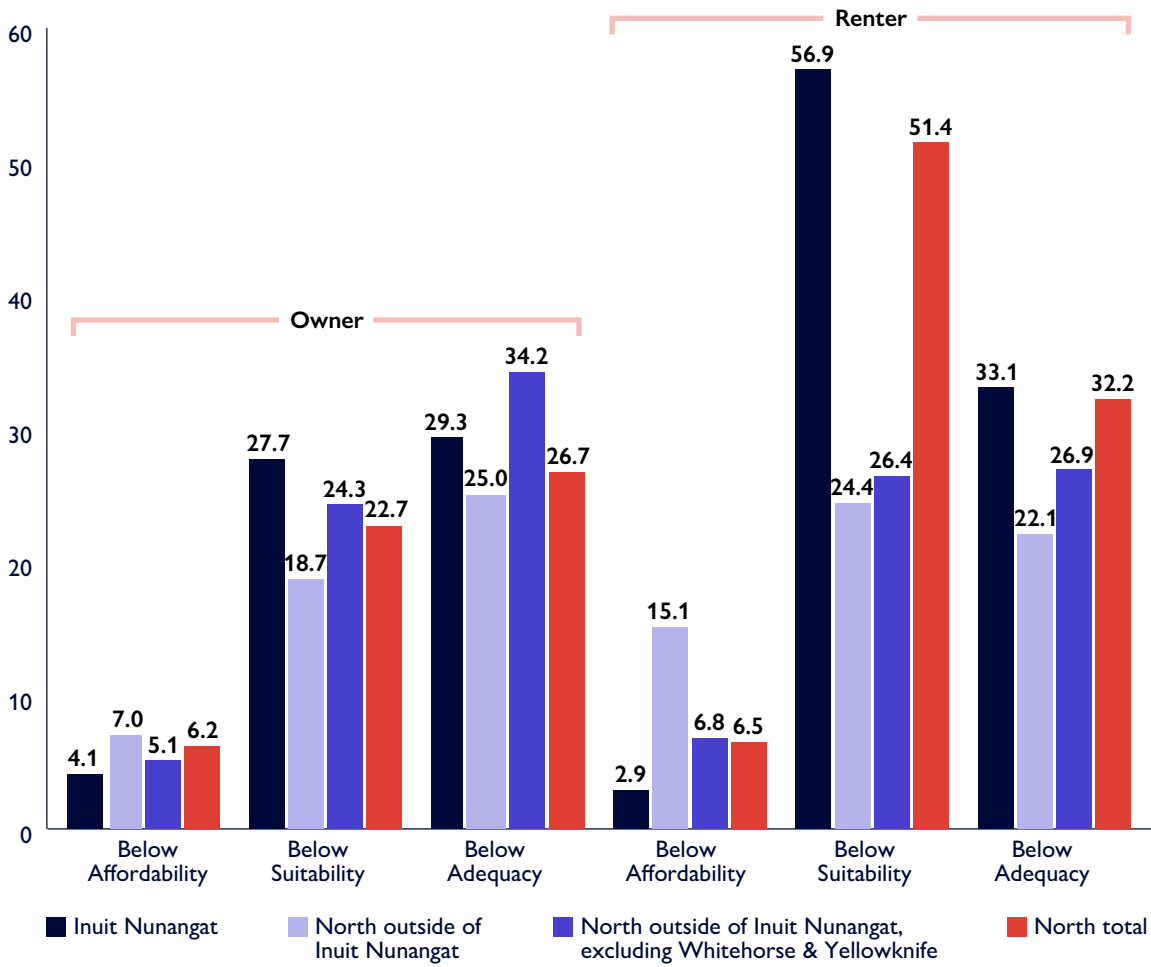
Figure 8 – Percentage of Northern Indigenous Populations Below Housing Standards, 2021



Note:

- The sum of Indigenous populations below each individual housing standard will be greater than the total below standards due to individuals falling below more than one housing standard.
- Percentages of Indigenous populations by identity only include respondents who identified as a single identity.

Figure 9 – Percentage of Northern Indigenous Populations Below Housing Standards by Tenure, 2021



70138 20230103-009A