

Rural 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:

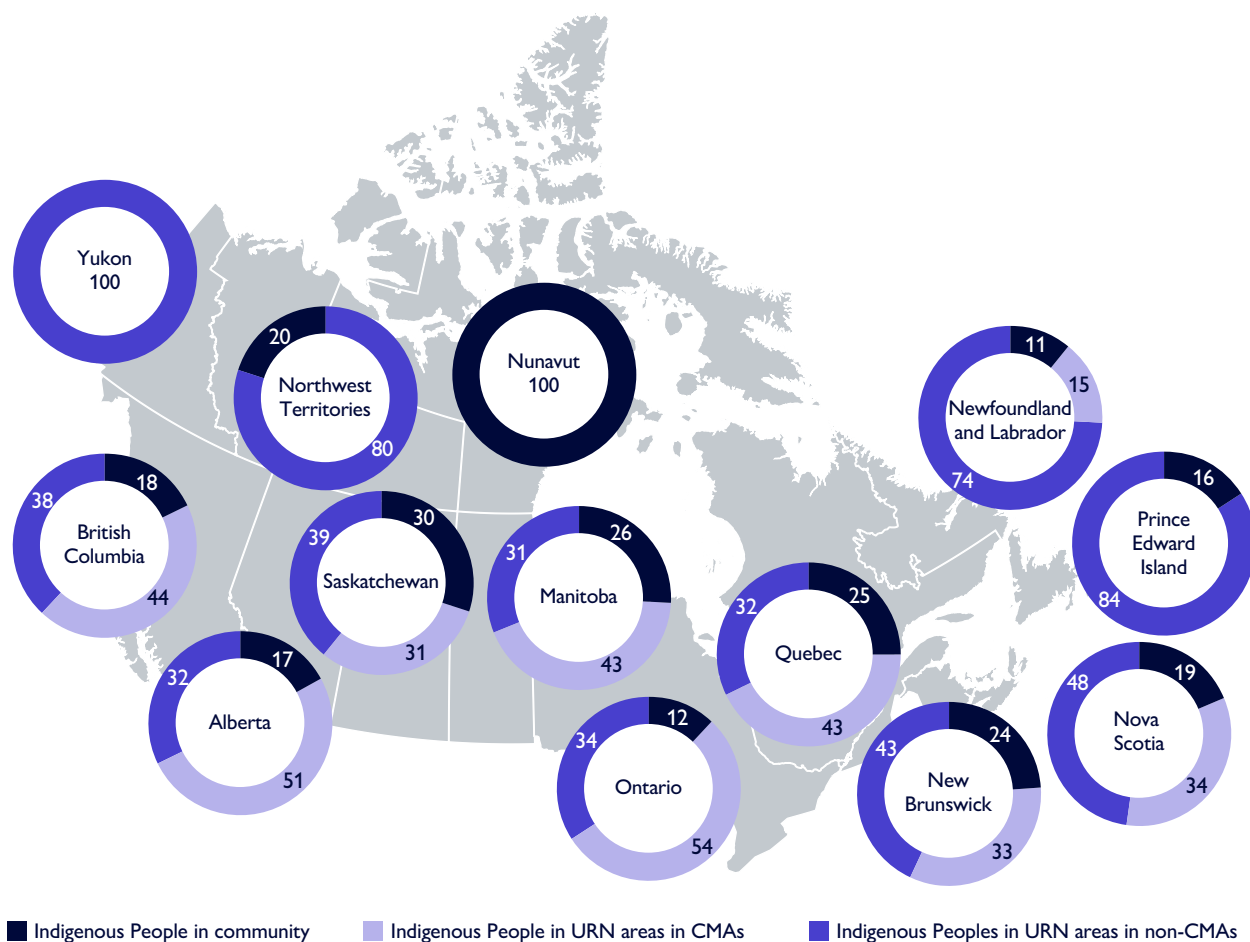
1. Urban refers to those living in CMAs.
2. Rural refers to those living outside the Territories, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, and not in a CMA.
3. North includes both:
 - Inuit Nunangat – Inuit homelands encompassing all of Nunavut as well as the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the NWT (ISR); Nunavik in Northern Quebec; Nunatsiavut in Labrador; and
 - North outside of Inuit Nunangat – Territories outside of Inuit Nunangat (Yukon and NWT without the 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.

Highlights

- For the purposes of this fact sheet, “rural” refers to any southern community (smaller than a census metropolitan area), that is located outside of Inuit Nunangat, on-reserve First Nation communities, Métis settlements, and self-governing and modern treaty territories.
- The Atlantic provinces have the highest percentage of Indigenous Peoples living in rural areas. (Figure 1)
- The overall growth rate for Indigenous Peoples across Canada was 8% between 2016 and 2021.¹ During this period the Indigenous population living in rural areas grew by 2.7%, while the Indigenous population living in CMAs grew by 19.8%. (Table 1)
- Indigenous Peoples are almost evenly split between urban and rural areas though there is some regional disparity. Sixty per cent of the Indigenous population in rural areas lives in centres outside of CAs. (Table 2)
- Of the smaller communities (CAs) in Canada, Prince Albert and Prince George have the largest Indigenous populations, which are predominantly First Nations and Métis. (Table 3)
 - The number of Inuit living in CAs is quite small as compared to First Nations and Métis.
 - The CAs with the largest Inuit populations are Wood Buffalo and Corner Brook.
- The percentage of Indigenous Peoples in rural areas living below standards is higher than for non-Indigenous people in these areas. (Figure 2)
 - There is little difference in terms of affordability among the populations (Indigenous and non-Indigenous).
 - Inuit, Métis, and First Nations experience higher rates of overcrowding (i.e., housing below suitability standards) as compared to non-Indigenous people. First Nations overcrowding is 3 times that of non-Indigenous people. This discrepancy is markedly higher than in urban areas.
 - The need for major repairs (i.e., below adequacy standards) is nearly twice as high for Indigenous Peoples when compared to non-Indigenous people.
- While the percentage of Indigenous Peoples in core housing need in rural areas has decreased between 2016 and 2021, it is still more than double that of non-Indigenous people in these areas. (Figure 3)
- The western provinces have markedly higher rates of core housing need among both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people. (Table 4)
- Among the 10 CAs with the largest Indigenous populations, rates of core housing need for Indigenous Peoples are highest in Brandon, MB, Thompson, MB, and Prince Albert, SK. (Figure 4)
- When compared to Indigenous rural homeowners, Indigenous rural renters experience higher levels of affordability issues, overcrowding, and need for major repairs. (Figure 5)
 - When compared to Indigenous households in large urban centres, Indigenous owners and renters living in rural areas are less likely to face affordability challenges but more likely to live in housing that requires major repairs.

¹ These numbers differ from the Statistics Canada publication *Indigenous population living in large urban centres* due to their adjustments in geographical boundaries between census years. In addition, population numbers do not account for those in urban reserves.

Figure 1 – Where Indigenous Peoples Live in Canada by Province or Territory, 2021 (%)


 Table 1 – Indigenous Population Growth Rate from 2016 to 2021 by Region¹

	Indigenous population	Growth rate
Total Indigenous population across Canada	1,807,250	8.0%
Indigenous population in community (Reserve, Settlement, Inuit Nunangat)	376,870	-3.0%
– Reserve	322,805	-4.9%
– Settlement	3,560	-23.4%
– Inuit Nunangat	50,505	3.3%
Indigenous population in URN	1,430,375	11.3%
Indigenous population in CMAs, excluding reserves	777,405	19.8%
– First Nations (CMA)	398,935	21.9%
– Métis (CMA)	334,335	14.9%
– Inuit (CMA)	10,750	29.1%
Indigenous population in rural areas (excluding reserves, North)	628,210	2.7%
Indigenous population in the North (excluding Inuit Nunangat)	24,760	0.6%

Note:

– Indigenous population by identity only includes respondents who identified as a single identity, which will be lower than the Indigenous total population.

Table 2 – Indigenous Population Living in Urban and Rural Areas, 2021

Province	Indigenous population	In 100,000+ CMA (%)	In 10,000 - 100,000 CA (%)	In Non-CMA/CA under 10,000 (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	41,595	16.9	23.7	59.3
Prince Edward Island	2,860	0.0	61.0	39.0
Nova Scotia	42,575	41.3	16.0	42.6
New Brunswick	25,415	43.2	14.7	42.1
Quebec	154,225	57.5	12.0	30.5
Ontario	356,890	61.4	17.3	21.2
Manitoba	175,165	58.0	11.3	30.7
Saskatchewan	132,920	44.3	24.1	31.6
Alberta	237,510	61.6	12.9	25.5
British Columbia	237,135	53.6	29.1	17.3
Total Provinces	1,406,290	55.3	18.1	26.7

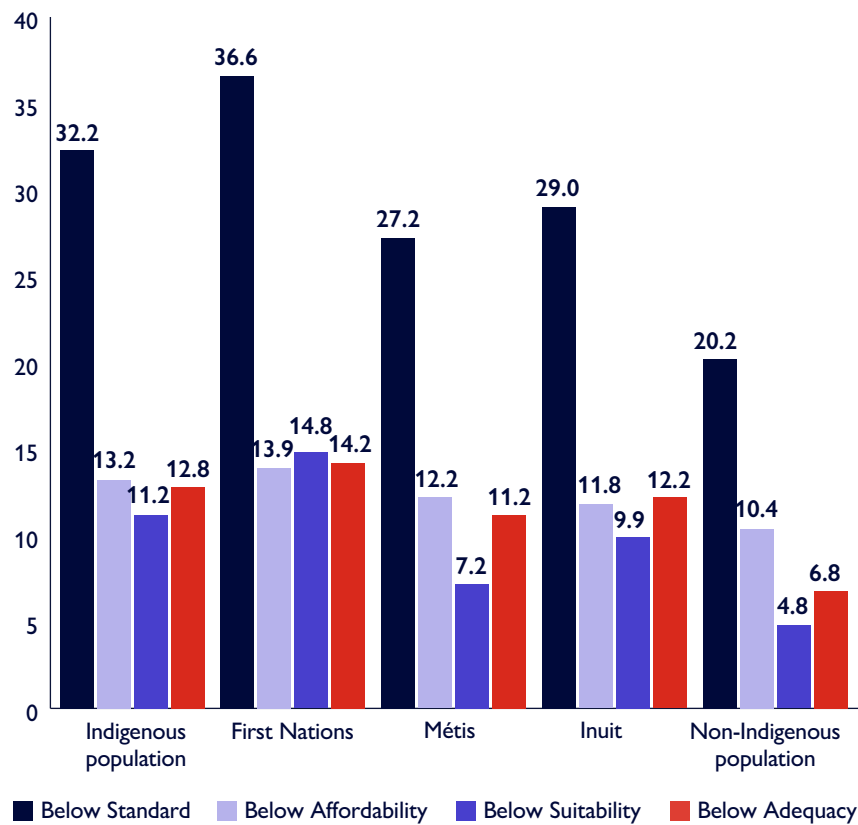
Table 3 – CAs with the Largest Indigenous Populations, 2021

	Indigenous population	First Nations	Métis	Inuit	Non-Indigenous
All CAs	263,425	145,395	104,275	3,560	3,365,620
Prince Albert, SK	17,825	9,855	7,670	25	25,195
Prince George, BC	13,020	7,250	5,260	70	74,815
Sault Ste. Marie, ON	8,865	4,975	3,570	50	65,490
Wood Buffalo, AB	8,130	4,355	3,170	280	63,645
Corner Brook, NL	7,810	6,315	465	210	21,165
Grande Prairie, AB	7,370	3,060	3,965	85	55,805
Brandon, MB	7,240	3,985	3,000	20	45,510
North Bay, ON	7,205	4,135	2,700	60	62,970
Timmins, ON	5,990	2,640	3,150	55	34,320
Thompson, MB	5,860	4,825	900	-	7,025

Note:

– Indigenous population by identity only includes respondents who identified as a single identity.

Figure 2 – Percentage of Indigenous Populations Living Below Housing Standards in CAs and Non-CMAs/CAs, 2021



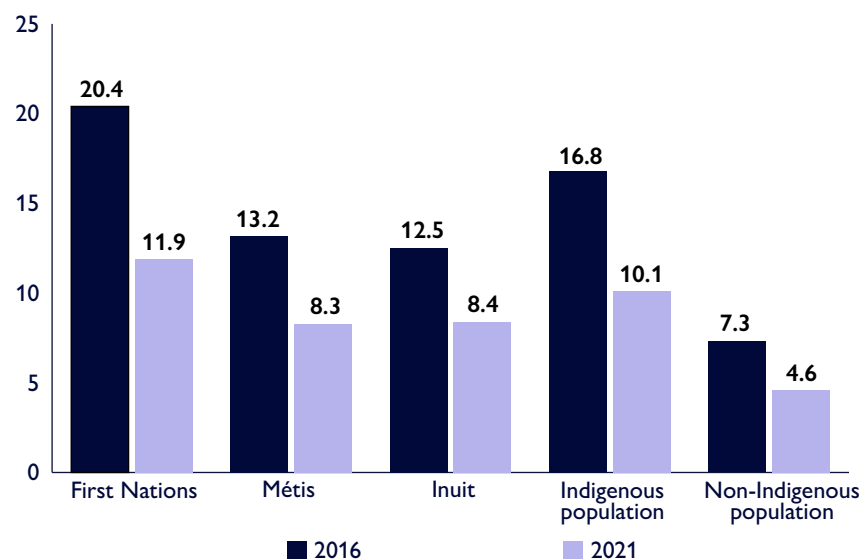
Note:

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

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 rural areas, Below Housing Standard is used here instead of [core housing need](#). Adequate housing is reported by residents as not requiring any major repairs.

Adequate 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 – Percentage of Rural Indigenous Populations 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.

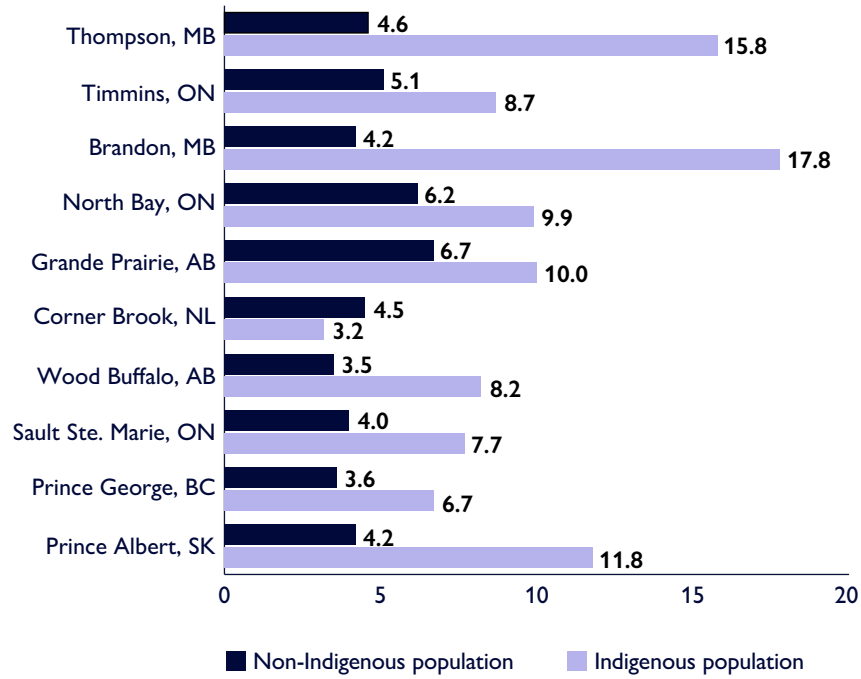
Table 4 – Indigenous Population in Core Housing Need in Rural Centres (<100,000) by Province, 2021

Province	All population			Indigenous population			Non-Indigenous population		
	Assessed for CHN	Population in CHN	Incidence (%)	Assessed for CHN	Population in CHN	Incidence (%)	Assessed for CHN	Population in CHN	Incidence (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	286,320	13,325	4.7	32,060	1,570	4.9	254,265	11,745	4.6
Prince Edward Island	146,045	6,760	4.6	2,650	175	6.6	143,395	6,590	4.6
Nova Scotia	476,780	26,975	5.7	24,015	1,620	6.7	452,765	25,355	5.6
New Brunswick	357,865	12,670	3.5	13,810	770	5.6	344,055	11,900	3.5
Quebec	1,425,445	35,675	2.5	44,420	2,540	5.7	1,381,020	33,140	2.4
Ontario	2,286,605	113,565	5.0	131,895	10,605	8.0	2,154,705	102,960	4.8
Manitoba	398,450	27,660	6.9	70,850	9,550	13.5	327,600	18,105	5.5
Saskatchewan	440,615	37,635	8.5	70,965	10,565	14.9	369,650	27,065	7.3
Alberta	981,470	69,350	7.1	90,020	11,060	12.3	891,450	58,295	6.5
British Columbia	1,093,230	71,955	6.6	106,155	10,855	10.2	987,080	61,100	6.2

Note:

- Not all households are assessed for core housing need (CHN). Only non-farm, off-reserve households with income > 0 and shelter-to-income ratio (STIR) < 100% are assessed for core housing need.

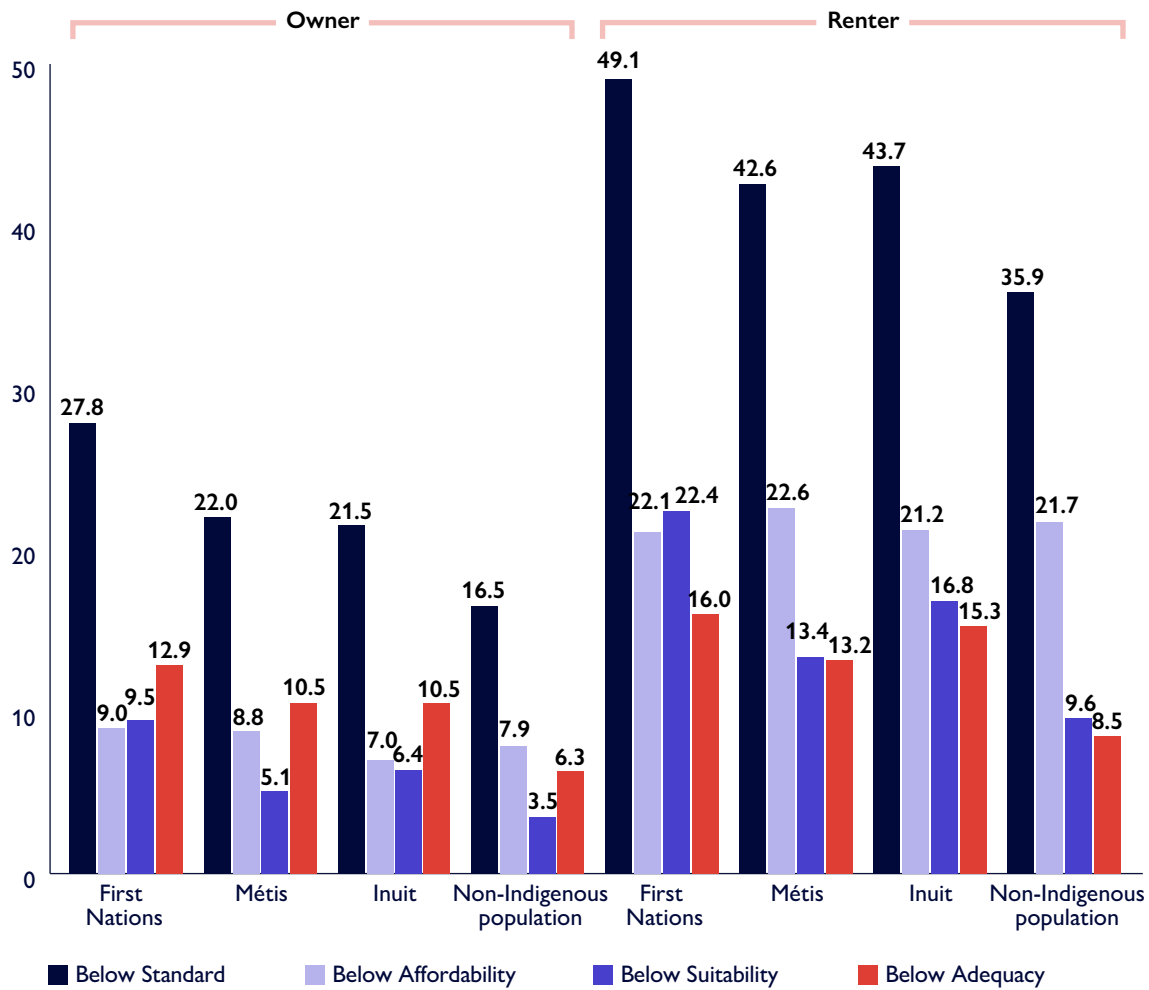
Figure 4 – Percentage of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Population in Core Housing Need Living in the 10 CAs with the Largest Indigenous Populations, 2021



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 Rural Indigenous Populations (CAs & Non-CMAs/CAs) Below Housing Standards by Tenure, 2021



Note:

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

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