

First results from the Canadian Housing Survey, 2018

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The place we call home, whether it be a small high-rise flat downtown or a large house on the edge of town, is one of the defining features of our lives.

The housing landscape in Canada has changed markedly over the past decade. There has been a shift in housing stock, with the construction of multi-family dwellings growing at a much faster pace than that of single family homes.

Housing prices in Vancouver and Toronto have risen for most of the decade, followed by a pause in the wake of government legislation. Subsequently, prices in Toronto have started to trend back up.

In Calgary and Edmonton, housing prices have fallen following the drop in oil prices in 2014. Housing prices in Montréal have trended upward in recent months.

To learn more about the evolving housing market across the country, the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey asked Canadians about their home, their neighbourhood and their housing hopes for the future.

The results tell us whether Canadians feel they have housing that meets their needs. Over four in five Canadian households indicated that they were satisfied with their neighbourhood and home. About half of households said they had moved within the past five years or hoped to do so within the next five years. Over half a million households reported living in social and affordable housing.

Canadian Housing Survey

Today, on National Housing Day, Statistics Canada is releasing its first set of results from the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey (CHS).

The CHS is a new survey sponsored by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation that will run biennially until 2028 in every province and territory. The survey will collect new information on dwelling and neighbourhood satisfaction, first-time homebuyers and housing affordability, as well as many other important dwelling and household characteristics.

The CHS also provides data on households living in social and affordable housing. Data from the survey will measure whether Canadians have housing that meets their needs and that they can afford.

Most Canadian households are satisfied with their neighbourhood and dwelling

Most Canadian households (85.6%) were satisfied or very satisfied with their neighbourhood in 2018, but the level of satisfaction varied depending on where they lived. Among Canada's 10 largest census metropolitan areas (CMAs), for example, satisfaction with their neighbourhood ranged from 82.2% of households in Toronto to 92.5% in Québec.

Most households (82.6%) were also satisfied with their dwelling. Households in the two largest and most expensive CMAs of Toronto and Vancouver reported the lowest level of satisfaction with their dwelling (both at 77.0%), while households in Québec (87.8%) were most likely to be satisfied.

A whole lot of moving going on

Canada is a nation of movers. About half of Canadian households have either moved within the past five years or intend to do so within the next five.



Just over one-third of households (35.0%) had moved within the five years prior to the survey. Households in Nunavut (46.0%) were the mostly likely to have moved within the past five years, while households in Newfoundland and Labrador (23.0%) were the least likely to have done so.

The most common reason for moving—reported by 9.7% of households—was to upgrade to a better quality home. This was followed by moving to a more desirable neighbourhood (7.0%), becoming a homeowner (6.4%), moving because of a change in household size (6.3%) or to lower housing costs (5.0%).

Looking forward, about one-fifth of Canadian households intend to move in the next five years, ranging from 12.8% of households in Newfoundland and Labrador to 29.0% of households in the Northwest Territories.

Over half a million Canadian households are living in social and affordable housing

Social and affordable housing provides assistance to low or moderate income households. Over 1 in 10 renters (13.5%) nationally—or 628,700 Canadian households—were living in social and affordable housing in 2018.

Nationally, three-quarters of renter households in Nunavut (75.0%) were living in social and affordable housing in 2018, almost double the proportion in the Northwest Territories (38.0%) and more than seven times that in Quebec (10.2%).

Over one quarter of a million Canadian households report having at least one member of the household on a waiting list for social and affordable housing

Waitlist for social and affordable housing

The Canadian Housing Survey (CHS) is the first Statistics Canada survey to measure social and affordable housing waitlist statistics across the country. This information was collected by asking households whether someone was on a waitlist at the time the survey was conducted (from November 2018 to March 2019). Waitlist statistics from the CHS are based on the self-reported status of the respondent and are not based on administrative data from housing waitlist systems.

Waitlist statistics from the CHS were compared to administrative statistics based on waitlist systems when available. Estimates from the CHS are similar, for many provinces and territories, to estimates derived from housing waitlist systems. Some differences exist, for the following possible reasons:

- 1) Not all housing providers are part of the waitlist system, or they have their own system that is not included in the waitlist system statistics.
- 2) The time period on which the estimates are based may be different.
- 3) Waitlist system statistics may be based on applicants or people, which is not always equivalent to the number of households.
- 4) Households may not be aware they are on a waitlist—such as in the case where an application is made on their behalf by a social worker.
- 5) Estimates from the CHS have a margin of error because it is a sample survey.

Over one quarter of a million households, representing 1.9% or 283,800 Canadian households, had at least one member on a waiting list for social and affordable housing. Of these households, almost two-thirds (60.9%) or 172,800 households were on a waiting list for two years or longer.

One-fifth of Canadian households on a waiting list for social and affordable housing were already in a subsidized dwelling. That is, they were on a waiting list for a different subsidized dwelling from the one they were currently living in, or some members of the household were on a waiting list for a subsidized dwelling of their own.

Almost one-quarter of households in Nunavut (24.0%) had at least one member on a waiting list for social and affordable housing, followed by 5.8% of households in the Northwest Territories. Newfoundland and Labrador (0.5%) reported the lowest level of households on a waiting list.

Almost one-tenth of renter households report living in an unsuitable dwelling and almost one-tenth report living in an inadequate dwelling

Two common standards used to identify housing needs are whether the size of the dwelling is suitable for the household and whether the condition of the dwelling is adequate.

Almost three-quarters of a million Canadian households (5.1% or 747,100) reported living in a dwelling that was not suitable for them. That is, their dwelling did not have enough bedrooms for the occupants, according to the National Occupancy Standard.

Renter households (9.5%) were over three times more likely than owner households (3.0%) to be living in unsuitable dwellings. Among the 10 largest CMAs, households in Toronto (10.8%) were the most likely to live in unsuitable dwellings, while households in Québec (3.5%) were the least likely to do so.

When looking at adequacy of dwellings, just over one million or 7.1% of Canadian households (1,052,900) reported that their dwellings were in need of major repairs. Renter households (8.5%) were slightly more likely than owner households (6.5%) to live in a dwelling that required major repairs.

Among Canada's 10 largest CMAs, households in Montréal—one of Canada's oldest cities—were the most likely to report requiring major repairs, while households in Calgary (4.4%) were least likely to do so.

Households in social and affordable housing and other renter households have comparable rates of living in unsuitable dwellings and in dwellings requiring major repairs, with almost one-tenth reporting each of these conditions.

Note to readers

Dwelling and neighbourhood satisfaction of the reference person

The 2018 Canadian Housing Survey (CHS) asked the household's respondent to rate their overall satisfaction on a five-point scale: "Very satisfied," "satisfied," "neither satisfied or dissatisfied," "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied." This study described a household as satisfied if household's respondent rate the satisfaction as "very satisfied" or "satisfied."

Note that one person ('the reference person' in each sampled household) was asked to complete the questionnaire. The reference person is the household member that is responsible for housing decisions. In cases where members share responsibility for housing decisions, one person was chosen to be the reference person. Therefore, answers to the neighbourhood and dwelling satisfaction questions represent the perspective of the reference person and not all household members' satisfaction.

Housing suitability

'Housing suitability' refers to whether a private household is living in suitable accommodations according to the National Occupancy Standard (NOS); that is, whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household. Housing suitability and the NOS on which it is based were developed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation through consultations with provincial housing agencies. For more information on the NOS, please refer to [Release Plan and Concepts Overview: 2018 Canadian Housing Survey](#).

Northwest Territories

The CHS data for the Northwest Territories (NWT) is obtained through a partnership with NWT Bureau of Statistics. Instead of collecting data through the CHS, data for NWT are obtained from the 2019 NWT Community Survey—which collects housing information similar to the information collected on the CHS.

Available tables: [46-10-0024-01](#) and [46-10-0042-01](#) to [46-10-0044-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5269](#).

For more information on definitions and concepts, please refer to [Release Plan and Concepts Overview: 2018 Canadian Housing Survey](#).

The article "[Canadians' satisfaction with their housing: Highlights from the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey](#)" is now available.

The article "[Satisfaction of Canadian households with their neighbourhood: Highlights from the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey](#)" is now available.

The infographic "[Results from the new Canadian Housing Survey, 2018](#)" is now available.

Additional data are available upon request.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).