

Angiraqattaqtitsiniq

Helping find a good place to call home

Government of Nunavut's Status of Housing report 2020

Prepared by the
Nunavut Housing
Corporation

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Igluliuqatigiilaugta

"Let's Build a Home Together"



Opening Remarks

Message from the Minister



As the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC), I am aware that the housing crisis touches all of us in some way. Whether speaking with my colleagues in the legislature about issues such as economic development or tuberculosis, or with Nunavummiut in communities, I know that housing is a priority for everyone.

Through the Blueprint for Action on Housing, we are coming together as a government to advance made-in-Nunavut solutions to our housing crisis. This is a major step towards developing effective approaches to ensure all Nunavummiut have a place to call home. If we are going to fix the housing crisis, we will need to find real, workable and creative solutions. We can only achieve this if we work together.

As a government, we are making progress. We now have a nine-year funding agreement with the federal government so we can build much-needed public housing. We are improving existing programs such as the Homeownership Programs to respond to the current needs of Nunavummiut. Government departments are also developing new programs and policies to support skills development in the construction industry, allocate resources more effectively, and provide support to at-risk and vulnerable members of our communities.

We remain committed to building our work with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, as outlined later in this report. These values have guided and shaped the strategic priorities, actions and objectives set out in the Government of Nunavut's (GN's) housing strategy *Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let's Build a Home Together*. Values like Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respecting others, relationships, and caring for people), Ikajuqtigiinniq (working together for a common cause) and Aajiiqatigiinniq (decision-making through discussion and consensus) continue to guide our work moving forward.

Nunavummiut are known to be innovative and resourceful. To complement government programs and policies, we are supporting new shelters and pilot projects to house vulnerable community members, using more energy efficient infrastructure, and improving the design of public housing to accommodate elders and individuals with mobility problems.

We know how important housing is to you. This report highlights the actions your government has been taking to address the housing crisis. This report also outlines the next steps we are committed to, including sharing more updates with Nunavummiut.

Sincerely,

Hon. Patterk Netser

Minister Responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation

Message from the NHC President



It is my honour, as the President of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, to present the first Status of Housing report.

With our colleagues, we are putting our government-wide housing strategy, *Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let's Build a Home Together*, into action. We share a vision of working in step with each other and the activities described in this report show the commitment made by all government departments to address Nunavut's housing crisis.

There has been progress in many areas of the housing action plan, called the Blueprint for Action on Housing. I am personally proud to highlight the Corporation's completion of its second successful year of clean financial audits. This achievement is a direct result of collaboration with the Local Housing Organizations in the interest of

accountability and transparency. But along with the successes, there have been challenges, and we describe them in this report too.

While we continue to make steady progress on our housing action plan, there is still much more work to do. The Government of Nunavut has a renewed way forward to tackle the housing crisis, but we can't do it alone. We know there are good ideas out there and many unique perspectives on how to overcome our housing challenges. This diversity is a strength and can help create solutions that work in our northern environment and for our communities.

Our progress, as outlined in this Status of Housing report, would not have been possible without the contribution of one of our founding members of the Nunavut Housing Corporation's Board of Directors, Mr. Bob Leonard, who passed away in March 2020. Since being appointed in 2011, he humbly served and led the Board with his skills and knowledge as a long-term Nunavut resident and respected community leader. He brought to the Board valuable insight from almost 50 years of experience in the construction industry in Nunavut.

Mr. Leonard contributed to the needs of his community and all of Nunavut through serving several terms as the Mayor of Arviat, and his work with municipalities and other business sectors through various private and public roles. On behalf of NHC, I want to thank him for his stewardship and significant contributions – he will be missed.

I have immense gratitude for my colleagues and partners, like Mr. Leonard, who care about tackling our housing crisis in this territory. I look forward to seeing what we can do together and what we can achieve in the years to come for housing in Nunavut.

Sincerely,

Terry Audla

President, Nunavut Housing Corporation



Nunavut Housing Corporation sends their gratitude for the years of service from Mr. Leonard, pictured here (right) with Mr. Audla

Contents

Lay of the Land 5

Our Igluliuqatigiilauqta Journey 8

Our Steps Forward and Challenges with Housing 10

Strengthening our Path 18

Looking Ahead..... 20

Staying Connected 23



Lay of the Land

We are still in a housing crisis.

Many Nunavummiut still need homes. The current demand for public housing exceeds what is available in all 25 communities. Right now, there are few housing alternatives to government subsidized housing such as public housing. Because of this, many people in public housing that have good incomes are stuck – they're not able to shift into the private rental market or homeownership.

There are an estimated 3,545 households in need of housing. Even though the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) maintains 5,582 public housing units and builds about 80 new units every year, this comes nowhere near meeting the demand. About 37% of Nunavut's population is in "core housing need", meaning their homes require major repairs, are inappropriate in size, and/or are unaffordable¹.

We know addressing housing will have impacts far into the future. Our population is increasing with a high birth rate, and our Elder population is expected to double by 2043.

Living in the north means our housing challenges are unique.

Around 70% of the housing available in Nunavut is public housing.

We know what works in the south for addressing housing challenges doesn't always work here. Homes need to be built to weather our northern climate while also being energy efficient to save costs and protect our environment. For example, our experience shows that building five-plexes is more economical right now than tiny homes and modular homes.

We also know that there are many barriers to home ownership, from the high cost of purchasing and maintaining a home, to accessing financial services, to the ability to build credit to secure a mortgage.



¹ Core housing need based on 2016 Census, Statistics Canada

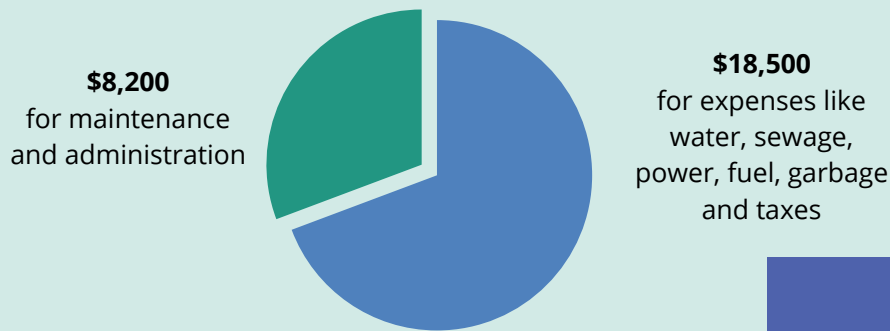
There are many factors that contribute to the high cost of building and maintaining housing in Nunavut.

Nunavut's climate and geography presents unique challenges to the construction industry. It is expensive to obtain developed land available for new construction. We have a lack of infrastructure for heat, sewage, water and power and they are expensive. The territory's 25 communities are remote, with no road or rail access which means that all construction materials must be transported on the annual summer sealift or by air.

As a result, the cost of materials is a lot higher than elsewhere in Canada.

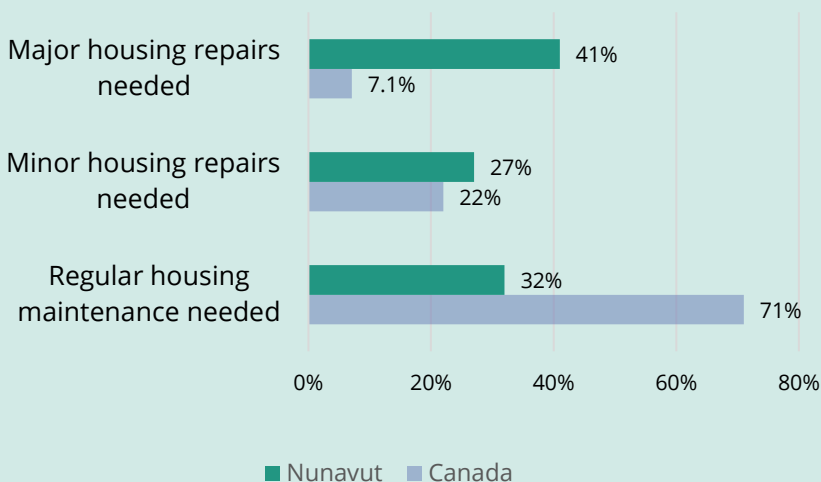
HOUSING COSTS: DID YOU KNOW?

Each public housing unit costs about \$26,700 a year to service and maintain, which includes:



Comparing our housing repair needs

This graph shows how we need more major housing repairs in Nunavut. Around 34% of Inuit live in homes in need of major repairs.



What does this mean?

Maintenance and repairs are expensive and can take money away for new housing across Nunavut.

Part of our work is to reduce the costs of housing and eliminate the barriers that limit housing development and maintenance.

If we work together to take care of our public housing, we can spend less on maintenance. This leaves more money to build new housing.

Addressing our housing crisis is a priority – it is crucial for the health of our communities and families.

Housing is an essential part of a healthy family and a healthy community. Homes need to be comfortable for families to spend extended amounts of time out of the cold. Parents need a place to call home so they can provide for their family. Children need room to play and do their homework.

Overcrowding is an issue in Nunavut. Around 35% of all homes are overcrowded and aren't the appropriate size for families², and 56% of Inuit live in overcrowded homes³. This affects people beyond the lack of space. We know unsuitable housing is a significant risk factor for tuberculosis, another crisis we are fighting in Nunavut. We also know when families are able to move into suitable homes, they experience improvements to overall health and well-being, including reducing stress and asthma⁴.

We are making progress and creating our own made-in-Nunavut solutions.

We need to continue strengthening our partnerships and collaboration between all levels of government, GN departments, Inuit organizations, communities, and the private sector to improve our housing situation.

We are coming together as a territory to address our housing crisis and this is helping us secure stable long-term funding. Over the next nine years, we will continue making progress with the \$265 million in funding from the National Housing Strategy and the \$9 million Canada Housing Benefit from the federal government.

One thing is certain - we need to continue working together to improve our housing situation.

"The Inuit have always survived by working together. If we want to survive, we have to do things together. If we want to give [Nunavummiut] a home, give them a dignified life, we have to do this together."

- Patsy Kuksuk, Executive Director of Programs, Nunavut Housing Corporation



What's in this report?

This report summarizes some of the progress we've made in the last few years, as well as some challenges to overcome, and next steps that will help keep you up to date. We are also sharing some success stories showing how partnerships have helped us put ideas into action.

² National Housing Survey 2018, Statistics Canada

³ Census 2016, Statistics Canada

⁴ Canadian Journal of Public Health 2019, Mylène Riva et al: Relocating to a new or pre-existing social housing unit: significant health improvements for Inuit adults in Nunavik and Nunavut.

Our Igluliuqatigiilauqta Journey

Where we're going

At the Government of Nunavut (GN), housing is a priority. In 2012, we launched our *Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let's Build a Home Together* housing strategy.

As part of this strategy, our guiding vision for housing in the territory is to have homes for all.

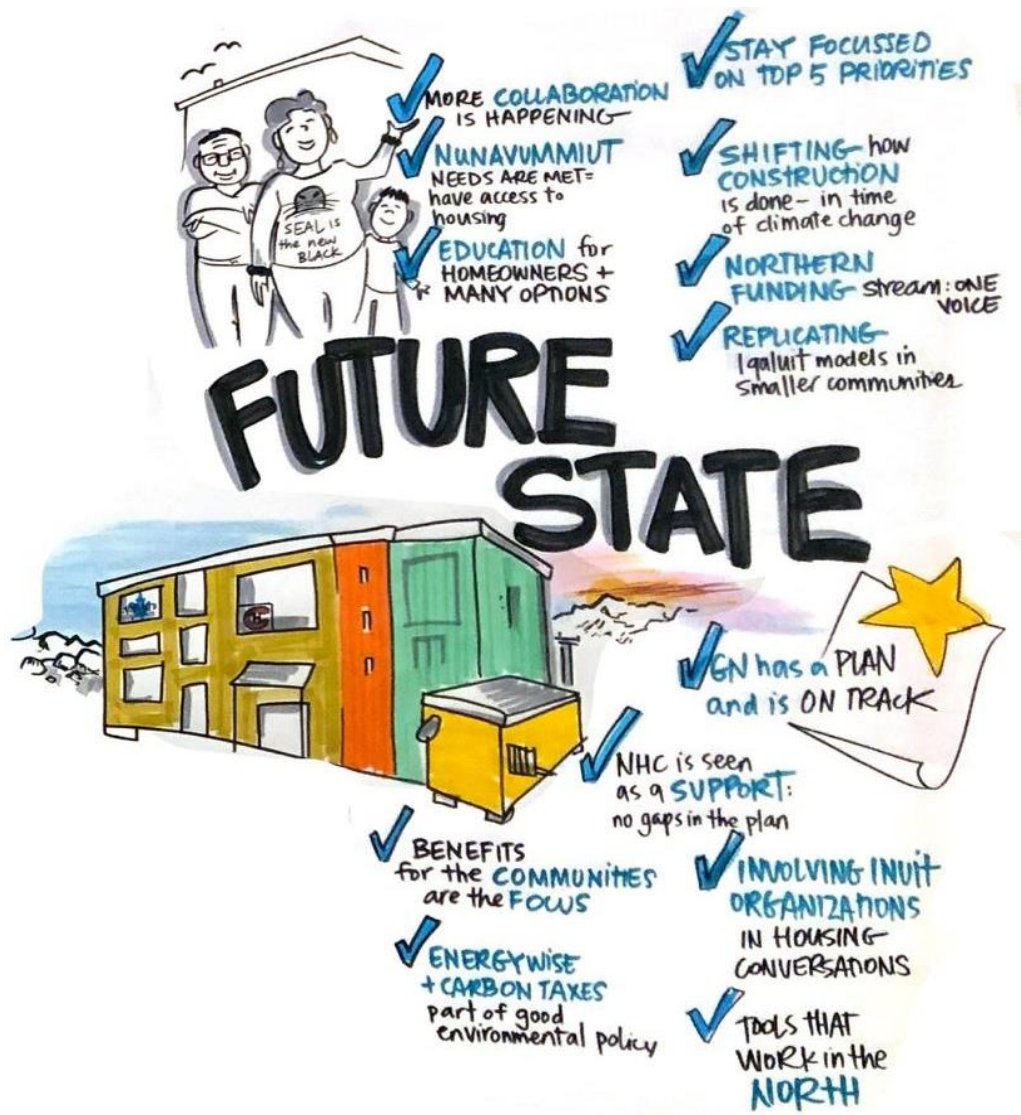
We want Nunavummiut to have access to housing options that suits their needs.

We want housing that supports you, your family, and your community to be healthy.

We want to design and build housing in a way that can bridge Inuit traditional knowledge with modern building techniques.

We want to co-develop housing solutions that work for the north.

We want to work with Nunavummiut, communities, Inuit organizations, businesses, and across levels of government to use our collective strengths and resources wisely.



We have a plan for housing in Nunavut.

Our *Igluliuatigiilauqta: Let's Build a Home Together* housing strategy was built on extensive conversations within government departments and with Inuit organizations and communities. Together, we developed the Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Framework (2012) and Strategy (2013).

This set the direction for a plan to implement the housing strategy, called the Blueprint for Action on Housing (2016). Here are the priorities and objectives of this housing plan:

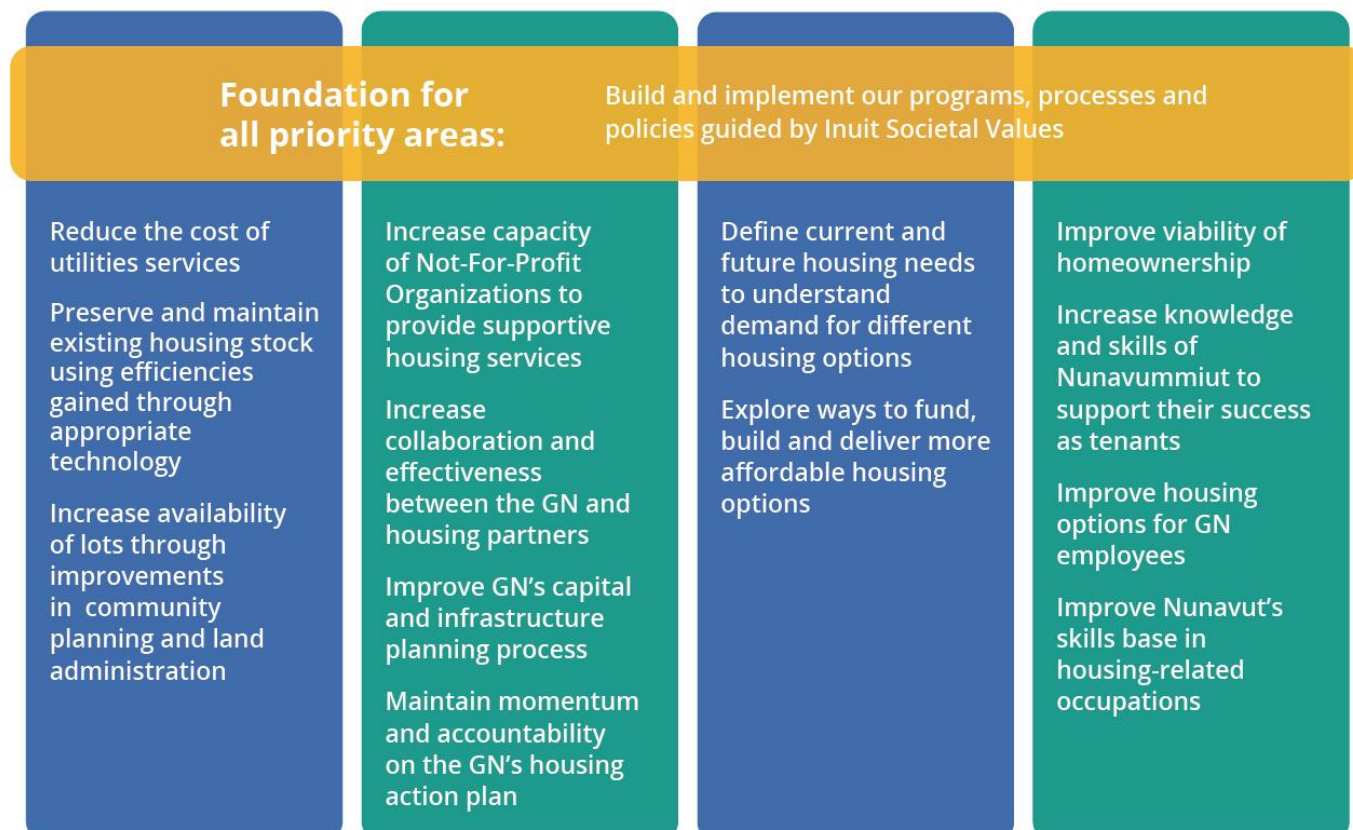
Nunavut's Housing Priorities

Strategic directions from the *Igluliuatigiilauqta: "Let's Build a Home Together"* Framework (2012)



Nunavut's Housing Action Plan

Objectives from The Blueprint for Action on Housing (2016)





Housing construction in Arctic Bay, 2019

Our Steps Forward and Challenges with Housing

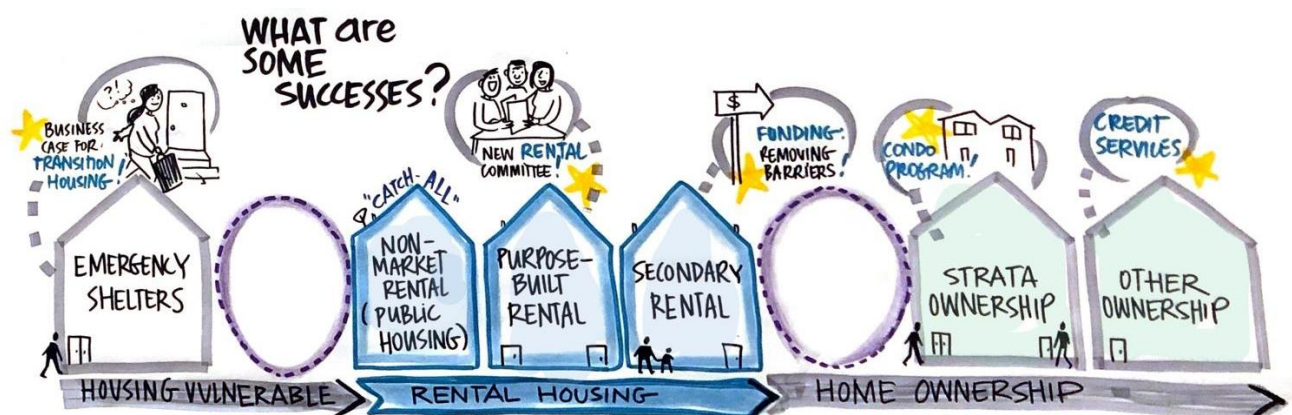
We have housing successes and progress to celebrate.

Working together, we have made progress on our housing priorities and actions as laid out in the Blueprint for Action on Housing. We have begun to create options for Nunavummiut along the housing continuum and will build on this work in the years ahead. We have also formed important partnerships to help us overcome our housing challenges.

WHAT IS THE HOUSING CONTINUUM?

It is the entire range of housing options depending on your needs, from housing vulnerable people to home ownership.

It is illustrated in the graphic below with some of our steps forward.



Success story: Building local capacity in housing construction



Trades students from the Nunavut Arctic College are using an uninhabitable housing unit as a training tool. The housing unit is located in Rankin Inlet and was given to Nunavut Arctic College by the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

As part of the project, trades students from the Kivalliq Campus will renovate the three-bedroom unit, gaining valuable hands-on experience. At the end of the process, the housing unit will meet building standards and be available for local residents to live.

The Department of Family Services and Nunavut Arctic College are funding the project and working closely with the Rankin Inlet Housing Association, which is providing construction materials. This initiative is helping build local capacity and construction skills to support housing in communities and illustrates Action 42 from the Blueprint for Action on Housing.



Our steps forward

This section shares our steps forward (in bold), with supporting details (in bullets), and their alignment with a specific action from our implementation plan, the Blueprint for Action on Housing (in parentheses).



Step forward: Improving housing supply

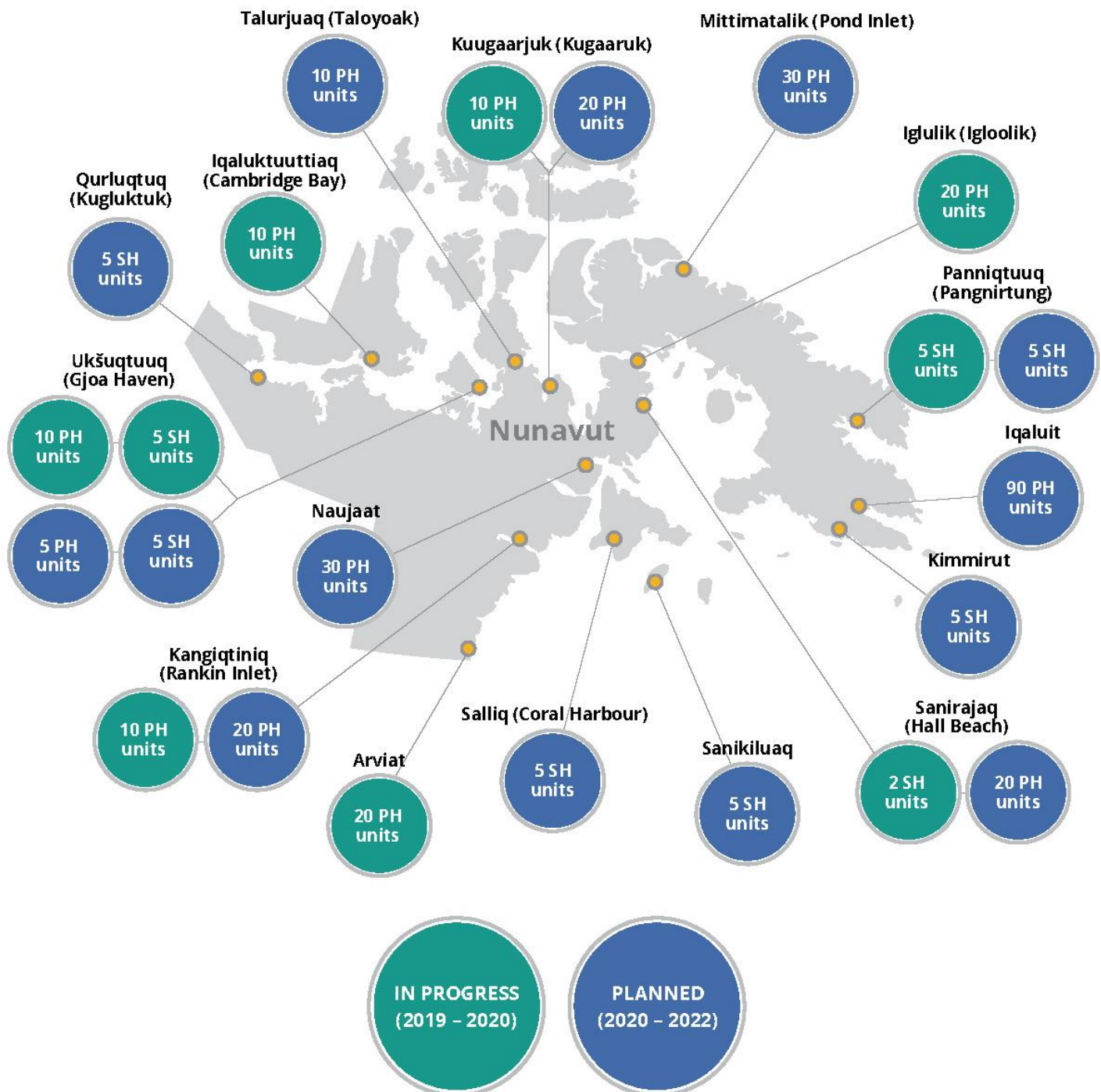
We are now managing 5,582 public housing units and 1,623 staff housing units. The timeline below shows our work on increasing housing supply over the last few years and years to come.





Step Forward: Building new housing across the territory

This map shows the public housing (PH) and staff housing (SH) units that are in progress (2019-2020) and planned for construction (2020 – 2022):





Step forward: Building more supportive housing

- Supported Uquutaq Society in **purchasing two buildings in Iqaluit (1077 and 1079) to be used as transitional housing**, set to open in March 2020 (Action 4).
- Adopted elements of universal design for **creating housing designs that are more elder and mobility friendly** (Action 9).
- Established a collaborative Purpose-Built Housing Working Group which brings together GN departments, housing and support services to **better meet the needs of homeless individuals and families, individuals with a history of or are fleeing violence, individuals that need to be repatriated to Nunavut** (Action 1, 8 and 40).
- **Advance planning and proposed business cases for transitional housing and two new shelters, the pilot shelter, and four new family violence shelters** (Action 56 and 57).



Step forward: Improving housing conditions

- Carried out **mold assessments in 271 units across the territory**. For workforce development, we then provided Local Housing Organizations with **mold remediation training**, allowing them to address mold locally whenever possible (Action 45).
- Researched the root causes of mold in Nunavut's public housing, which will better **prepare us going forward for mold prevention and repairing mold damage to units territory-wide** (Action 51 and 56).



Step Forward: Improving access to home ownership

- **Expanded community banking services** into Pangnirtung through the GN banking contract. This helps to build capacity and access to home ownership, such as increasing education and financial literacy, and building credit and saving for mortgages (Action 18).
- Completed a review of our homeownership programs to **find issues and make improvements to reduce homeownership process delays** (Action 16).
- Launched the **GN Staff Condo Program as a way to reduce barriers to home ownership**. It is an entry-level program with 60 condos offered for direct sale in Iqaluit at reduced prices (Action 20).



Step forward: Incorporating and promoting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

- Developed and adopted *Iviqtipalliajut: In the Process of Falling into Place*, a **framework that aims to strengthen the use of Inuit societal values in GN policies and programs**, and a tool to **build allies to bring Inuit closer to self-determination** (Action 59).
- Included the **knowledge of Inuit colleagues in our housing services, lot placement, and design**, like increased storage space and firearms lockers (Action 9).



Step forward: Leveraging new and available funding

- Developing a **Canada Housing Benefit** for households in crisis for \$1 million per year over 9 years (Action 57).
- Negotiated funding for public housing through the National Housing Strategy. The **new Canada-Nunavut Housing Agreement will provide nearly \$265 million over the next nine years**, resulting in about 700 new housing units across the territory (Action 57).
- Directed **\$1.2 million, provided through the Social Infrastructure Fund**, to do repairs and renovations to the Arviat and Iqaluit Elders' Centres and to the construction of new public housing reserved for seniors (Action 57).
- Streamlined the GN's Business Development Program funding to expand eligibility for housing projects (Action 38).
- Engaged economic development public corporations to support and facilitate larger housing-related projects (supporting Action 39).



Step forward: Updated policy for GN staff housing

- **Reviewed and updated the new GN Staff Housing Policy**, providing clarity and direction on housing for GN staff, and **established new committees for housing allocation and appeals** (Action 21, 22 and 23).
- **Collecting housing data for tracking vacant homes, homes in needs of repairs, and maintenance issues to make more informed choices** (Action 47 and 48).
- Created a new HR department in the GN to focus specifically on increasing human resource capacity and the Inuit Employment Strategy (Action 21 and 23).



Step forward: Building community capacity

- **Contributing to labour force development** by supporting apprenticeship programs like the Career Program Plan, the G.R.E.A.T. Program, working with Skills Canada, and summer students in trades programs (Action 43 and 44).
- **Enabling trade students to give back to their community** through their programs as they restore damaged housing units in their communities, thereby increasing housing availability and developing local skills (Action 43 and 44).



Step forward: Partnerships and collaboration

- **Established a whole-of-government approach and monitoring and evaluation framework** for GN departments to maintain progress on housing priorities (Action 60)
- **Explored opportunities with resource development partners** to collaborate on housing (Action 37).
- Hosted **two consultations with private sector stakeholders in the construction industry** to discuss barriers and opportunities for housing development in Nunavut (Action 39).



Step forward: More coordinated capital infrastructure planning

- **Reviewed and updated the GN's capital infrastructure planning process** through a whole-of-government engagement to establish a standardized, criteria-based ranking process for capital funding requests and to improve transparency (Action 30 and 31).
- **Partnered with municipalities to build their capacity** for long-term capital planning and land development (Action 28).



Step forward: Being more energy efficient

- **Launched the net metering program for residential customers allowing us to better use energy and save costs.** Net metering customers can receive an energy credit for surplus power delivered from their renewable energy generation systems to the grid (Action 49).
- **Launched the Energy Wise Nunavut public education campaign** on how to be energy efficient, save money, and help protect the environment (Action 52).



Step forward: Successful signing of the Devolution Agreement-in-Principle

- The GN will come to be responsible for Crown lands in Nunavut, and **we will be taking over the management of our land, water and resources from the federal government.**



Step forward: Strong financial accountability

- **Achieved two years of clean audits managed by NHC in partnership with our Local Housing Organizations (LHOs).** Our strong approach to managing funds, inventory, and capital provides access to steady funding for more housing.

Success story: Making Iqaluit's Damp Shelter pilot permanent

In 2018, Qikiqtani General Hospital experienced an influx of people after they were turned away from shelters for being intoxicated. Negative behaviours from some intoxicated individuals put the hospital at risk of losing their accreditation. To resolve the issue, the Department of Family Services partnered with the Inukshuk Society to establish a "Damp Shelter" in a nearby building that provided intoxicated individuals with a safe place to stay.

On average, the Damp Shelter accommodated at least 18 clients per day. While half of the clients were intoxicated, the other half were seeking safety from bullying, strained relationships, and domestic violence experienced in other shelters. The pilot was extended from three to six months, and the hospital was able to keep its accreditation. The RCMP valued the program, and said it helped keep people out of jail and freed up resources.

This pilot helped inform a model for partnership and supportive housing moving forward, aligning with Action 4 from the Blueprint for Action on Housing. GN has now formally partnered with the Uquutaq Society to run what we are now calling the Low Barrier Shelter permanently, which reopened in January 2020.

There have been challenges along the way.

A key barrier to our progress is doing a lot with little – we need to keep managing our resources, capacity, and funding so that we can allocate housing options in a fair way.

This graphic summarizes some of challenges we face.



Strengthening our Path

We recently brought our GN partners together to renew the *Blueprint for Action on Housing*, the government's roadmap and action plan for tackling housing issues in Nunavut.



Renewing our housing action plan

In November 2019, the Nunavut Housing Corporation hosted a two-day workshop called *Pathways Home* with senior executives of partner organizations within the GN.

With the creation of the federal government's *National Housing Strategy* and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's ten-year *Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy*, the timing was right to host the first in-person event since the launch of the Blueprint for Action on Housing. The Blueprint renewal, called *Pathways Home*, is the latest phase of the *Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let's Build a Home Together* initiative.

The workshop served as an opportunity for us to share successes and challenges, strengthen relationships and pave the way to achieve our shared vision of improving housing in Nunavut. We co-created meaningful ways to track, communicate and collaborate to achieve our housing priorities.

Success story: Breaking down government silos to build supportive housing

Supportive housing is a government-wide priority, so interdepartmental working groups are key to working across our silos.

Coming out of the Blueprint for Action on Housing, the Government of Nunavut has created a dedicated working group focusing on housing needs for men, women, families, youth, seniors, Elders, and Nunavummiut living with mental illness or disabilities.

This working group is looking at housing that offers supportive services, long-term stability, and increases the quality of life for those experiencing poverty. Particularly, the focus will be on supporting individuals who are homeless, who have a history of or are fleeing violence, and who need to be repatriated to Nunavut. This working group includes the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and the Departments of Family Services, Health and Justice.

Currently there are five long-term care facilities that provide 24/7 care to 44 residents (Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, Igloodik and Iqaluit).

This collaboration will ensure that we better understand diverse housing needs, develop policy and programs to meet those needs, establish partnerships to offer the appropriate support services, and reduce barriers for those in need. This effort aligns with Action 1 from the Blueprint for Action on Housing.

Success story: Saving energy costs with the Net Metering Program

Qulliq Energy Corporation (QEC) launched its Net Metering Program in April 2018, completing Action 9 of the Blueprint for Action on Housing.

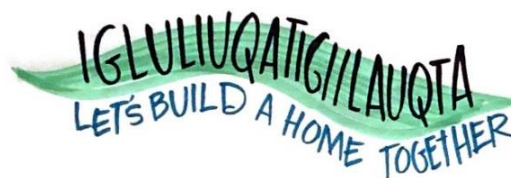
The program allows residential customers and one municipal account per community to generate their own energy and off-set their power consumption using small scale renewable energy systems. The new program reduces energy costs, decreases Nunavut's dependency on diesel fuel, and cuts carbon emissions.

Net metering customers receive energy credits to their QEC accounts for the excess power that they produce. That excess power feeds back into the power grid. For example, customers with solar installations produce excess energy in the summertime, which gives them energy credits that can be used during the winter months.

As of November 2019, QEC received 12 metering applications. Some are now already installed, approved and under review. QEC is developing policy for existing business and organizations who might want to install renewable energy systems.



Looking Ahead



In this crisis, we still have a long way to go for all Nunavummiut to have a home.

We have shared our renewed housing action plan and our steps forward and challenges. We also have a renewed approach in how we want to work together to implement our priorities.

Here are some of our next steps.

Tracking our progress

We are developing a new monitoring and evaluation framework for the Blueprint, aligning with Action 60 from the Blueprint for Action on Housing. This framework is a planning tool that can better tell the story of the GN's progress on housing.

This framework will be used to identify challenges and opportunities, to learn from our mistakes, to demonstrate impact, and to remain accountable in achieving the four housing priorities set out in *Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let's Build a Home Together*.

By having an action plan that is clear and meaningful, we can better track and share our progress on housing with you and our partners.

Sharing successes and updates on housing

We want to regularly share our progress with you—big and small—and to be transparent about our challenges.

This is the first bi-annual Status of Housing Report. During alternate years, we will provide a shorter update, called a Status of Housing Snapshot. We want these reports and updates to be meaningful and interesting. We are exploring different ways to share them with you, like social media, in-person events, radio, and newspapers.

Engaging with Nunavummiut

One of our priorities is to engage Nunavummiut more in our housing action plan:

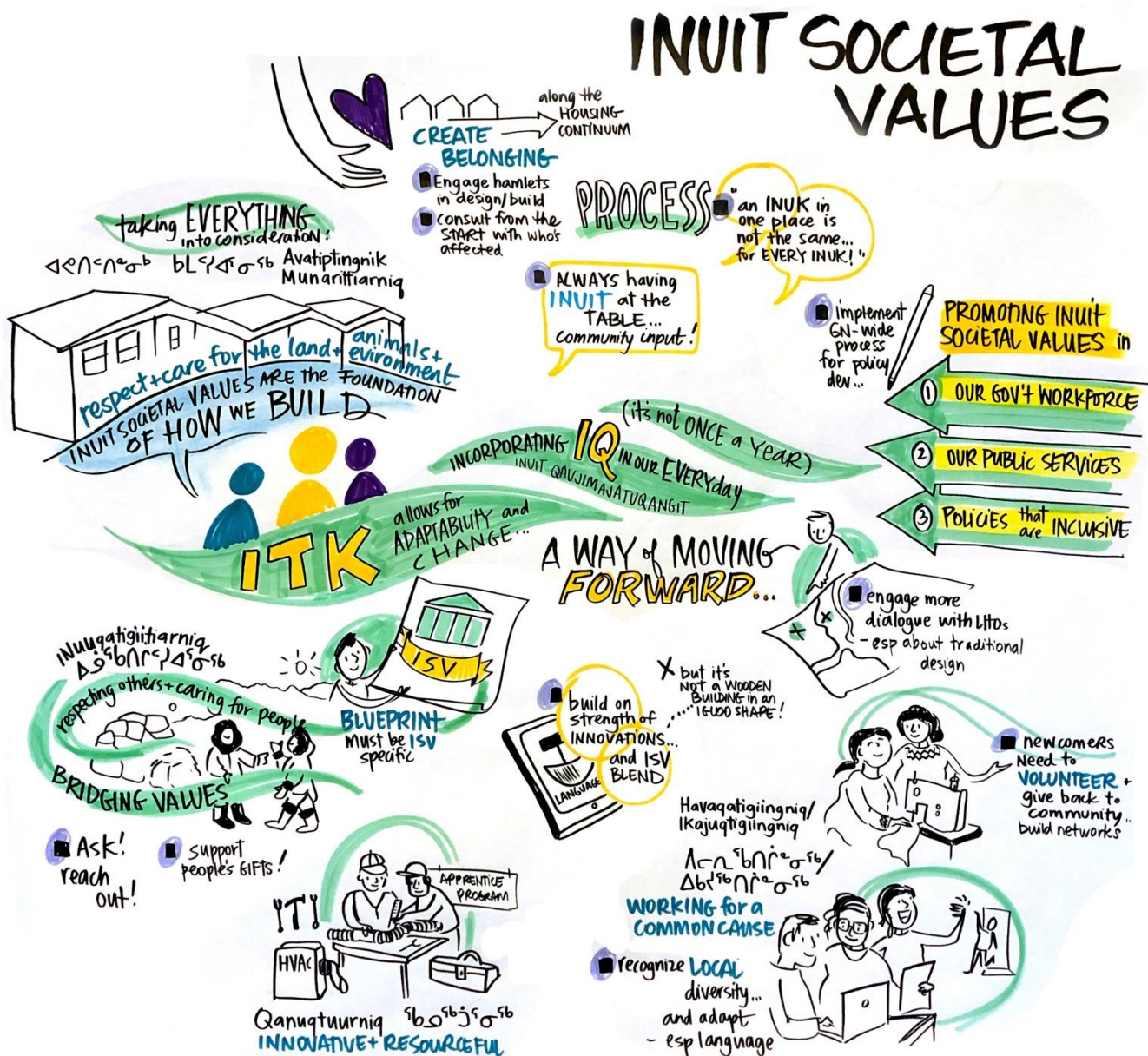
- We want to listen to Nunavummiut wisdom, experiences and stories **to help us develop and offer housing, services and programs** – from transitional housing to home ownership, from Elder care to public housing - that promote Inuit Societal Values and self-reliance.
- We want to gather information from you and your communities to **help us evaluate and assess housing conditions and availability** in the territory.
- We want to hear **how information and reporting on housing can be meaningful and useful for you**, and to provide opportunities for us to share status updates at community events.

Building our work with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

We want to continue working at incorporating and promoting Inuit Societal Values through the implementation of our housing action plan. This will build on the work of [*Iviqtippalliajut: In the Process of Falling Into Place \(2018-2023\)*](#), a framework for the GN to strengthen the use of Inuit Societal Values in policy and program development. This aligns with Action 59 from the Blueprint for Action on Housing.

We want to do this in ways that are meaningful. This includes engaging communities and government Inuit advisors (Tuttarviit Committee and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit coordinators), and incorporating Inuit traditional knowledge with modern practices.

The graphic below includes ideas shared by our GN partners on putting our Inuit Societal Values into practice:



Collaborating with internal and external partners

We know there is still a lot of work to be done and we know we can't do this alone. Our departments within the GN will continue to work together to advance our priorities.

We also want to continue to collaborate and partner with other organizations, including:

- Federal government
- Inuit organizations
- Local housing organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Municipal governments and hamlets
- Academic and education institutions
- The private sector and industry
- Organizations that impact or are impacted by housing (like those involved with tuberculosis, health, poverty reduction)



Success story: Equipping tenants with skills for success

The Nunavut Housing Corporation wants to support public housing residents to have successful tenancies, in support of Actions 17 and 52 from the Blueprint for Action on Housing.

Ilitaqsiniq – The Nunavut Literacy Council, Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), Canadian non-profit organization RentSmart and NHC are working together to develop a tenant education program tailored to the unique needs of Nunavut.

The objective of this program is to support people to maintain good housing and reduce common challenges and issues with renting. This project is in development so watch this space for future updates!



Housing units in Iqaluit, 2015

Staying Connected

**We know how important housing is for
Nunavummiut – for the health and wellbeing of families,
and communities**

**Follow us and stay updated on Igluliuqatigiilauqta:
Let's Build a Home Together and our progress on
housing:**

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NunavutHousing

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/nunavuthousing>

Instagram: [@nunavuthousing](https://www.instagram.com/nunavuthousing)

Website: www.nunavuthousing.ca

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was prepared by the Nunavut Housing Corporation on behalf of the Government of Nunavut, supported by Context: An Argyle Company and Drawing Change. Landscape photos of housing units were taken by Manny Noble.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) was created in 2000 through the Nunavut Legislature by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (Nunavut) Act. Our mandate as a public agency of the Government of Nunavut (GN) is to create, coordinate and administer housing programs so that we may provide fair access to a range of affordable housing options to families and individuals in Nunavut.

