

# PLANNING VANCOUVER TOGETHER: HOUSING PROFILES

JULY 2021



# PLANNING VANCOUVER TOGETHER: HOUSING PROFILES

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# PLANNING VANCOUVER TOGETHER: HOUSING PROFILES

## PART 1

# Introduction to Profiles

## Housing Profiles – Who Lives Here?



To build an inclusive, equitable housing system, we need to understand what you and your community need. These draft profiles are based on previous engagement and analysis done through other city strategies and plans, including Housing Vancouver, the Homeless Count, and the first phase of the Vancouver Plan. In taking an intersectional, equity-based approach, we want to better understand the needs and experiences of specific populations. This will allow us to work towards a better housing system that meets the needs of Vancouver's residents, both now and into the future.

These housing profiles are working documents intended to better highlight and explore housing needs, trends and questions for different population groups. We want to hear from you—*What did we get right? What did we get wrong? What are we missing?*

We know that every person has intersecting identities and no one profile will describe you. Please provide feedback on any and all profiles that relate to you. New profiles will be posted on a rolling basis as they are completed. Your feedback will help to develop key housing policy directions for the citywide Vancouver Plan.

### We want to hear from you.

What is the future you want in 2050?

What are your ideas for change to get us there?

### Gaps & Limitations

This document relies heavily on quantitative data. Quantitative data sources are important tools for building knowledge and understanding. However, they also leave a lot of information out. Particular considerations in using quantitative data include:

- People's identities are multi-dimensional, intersectional and subjective, but any method of quantifying identities at a population level must impose categories. Creating these categories is neither neutral nor value-free, and risk being reductive, essentializing, stigmatizing and exclusionary. For example, the census questionnaire only asks about sex, not gender, and it only provides the options of "male" or "female".
- There are a number of important topics not included in the census, such as ability, sexual orientation, cost of living, wealth, health or perceived well-being. While other surveys fill some of these gaps, they do not offer data as robust as the census and few offer local area-specific data.

## Introduction to Profiles: Housing Profiles – Who Lives Here?

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- Ensuring cultural appropriateness and safety in surveys is a work in progress. Although Statistics Canada ensures confidentiality of responses, the census still represents an agency of the federal government asking people detailed questions about their identities, housing arrangements, employment and more. In addition, census and survey topics and concepts often arise from colonial

systems and do not reflect Indigenous conceptions of identity, family, well-being and community.

Readers are encouraged to supplement this document with other data sources, and to value the knowledge of people whose identities and lived experiences can offer a more complete picture than a statistical understanding of the city.





# Housing Profile:

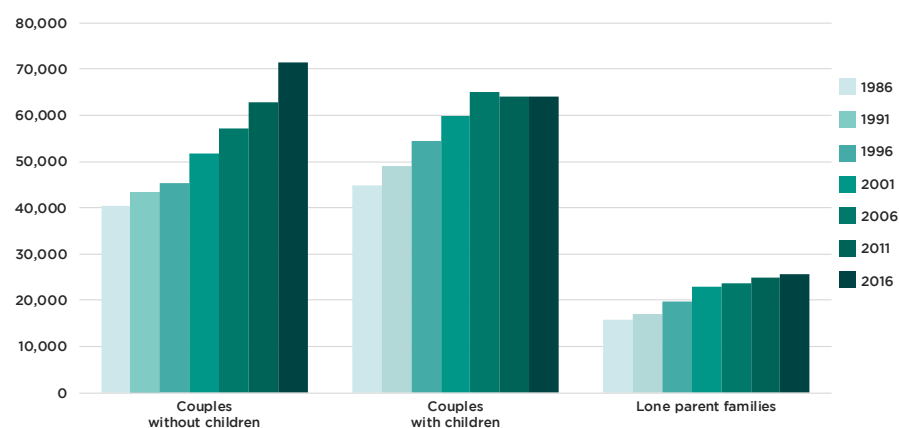
## Families with Children



Families with children under 19—including couple families, lone-parent families, intergenerational families, and multiple families living together—all contribute to a lively and diverse Vancouver. This group often have a greater variety of housing needs compared to other household types and even within each family unit, housing needs can change as families evolve.

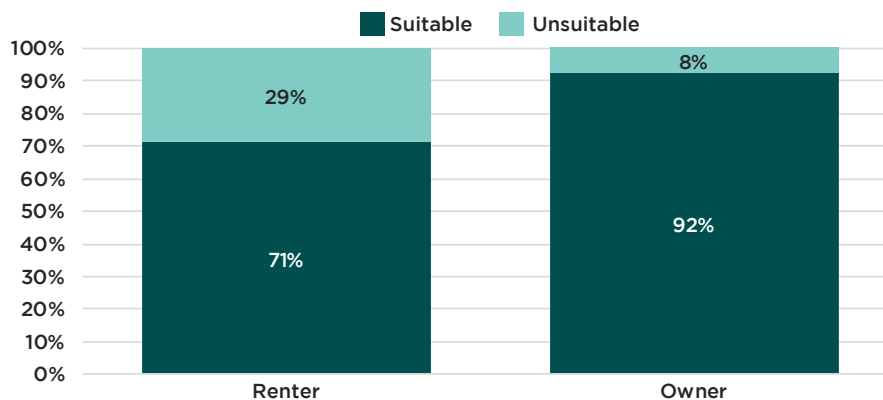
In 2016, approximately a fifth of all households in the city were families with children but this is declining, likely due to affordability pressures and a lack of diverse housing to support individual family needs.

### City of Vancouver: Families by Type, 1986–2016



### Housing Suitability for Family Households, 2016

Source: Statistics Canada 2016



\* Housing suitability is defined by the National Occupancy Standards

† This data only includes one Census families households without other non-Census family members due to data availability.

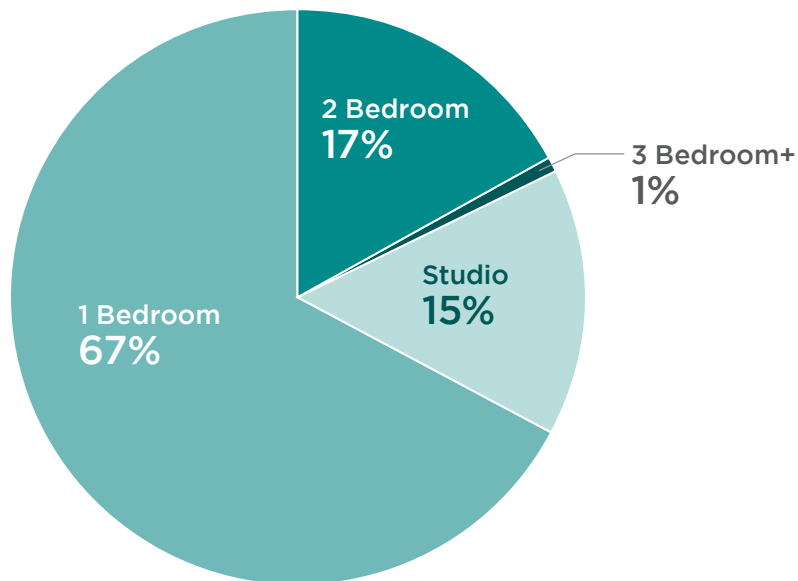
‡ This data includes all households with children, not just children under 19.

### Observations & Trends

- Since 2006, Vancouver has experienced a growing trend of families without children, along with a slow increase in the number of lone parent families. The number of families with children has plateaued.<sup>1</sup>
- 60% of lone-parent households rent housing, compared to 40% of all family households.<sup>2</sup>
- Many families are living in 'unsuitable' housing situations, typically meaning they have too few bedrooms to household members; this is particularly true for renter households. 29% of renter households are living in housing unsuitable for families compared to 8% in ownership households.<sup>3</sup>
- In Vancouver, there are very few rental apartments appropriately sized for families with children, especially three bedroom apartments.<sup>4</sup>
- Median income for families in the City of Vancouver is generally similar to Metro Vancouver overall, with the median for couples without children slightly higher in the city.

### Rental Apartments by Bedroom Type, 2019

Source: CMHC Rental Market Report 2019



### Median Total Family Income by Family Type, 2016

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population



<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver, Social Indicators Profile 2020, [vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-indicators-profile-city-of-vancouver.pdf](https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-indicators-profile-city-of-vancouver.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, Census 2016

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, Census 2016

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Rental Market Report 2019

### Housing Challenges: What We've Heard

- There is a lack of family-appropriate housing in Vancouver, including homes large enough for growing and intergenerational families
- Many families are forced to make significant trade-offs. This includes things like deciding not to have more children, living in a home with too few bedrooms, or leaving the city.
- There are many kinds of families in Vancouver, each with a different set of needs. The city needs a variety of housing to accommodate this diversity of family needs.

### What is the Future We Want?

- A city where families of all types and incomes are able to stay and grow into family-friendly and affordable housing. Housing that is located near schools, community spaces, and across all neighbourhoods.

#### What is the future you want?

#### What are your ideas for change?

To share your ideas for change, please visit:

[ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing](https://ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing)





# Housing Profile:

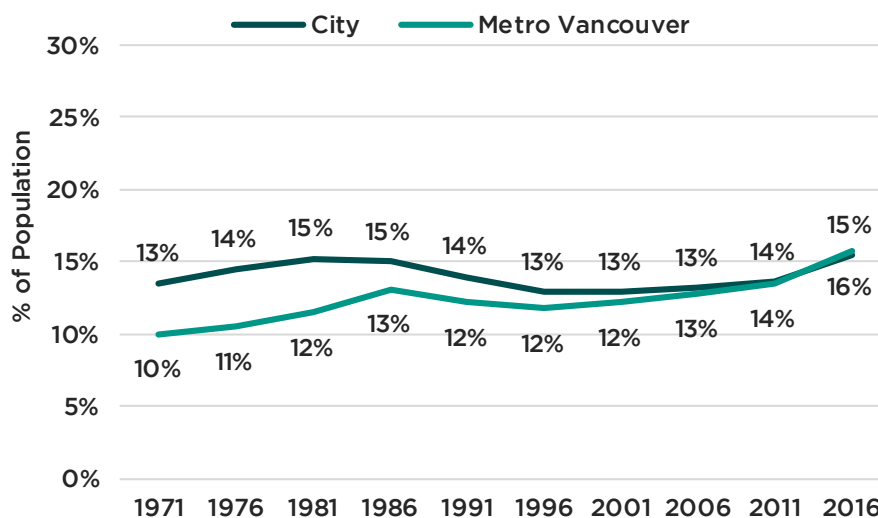
## Seniors



Seniors are a growing demographic with specific housing needs, related to varying housing types, social connections, accessibility, income and more. Seniors households over 55 years old make up 26% of renter households, and 57% of all subsidized renter households in the City of Vancouver. As of 2016, both the City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver have more seniors (aged 65 and over) than children (age 0 to 14). From 1996 to 2016 the absolute number of seniors in the city increased by 46%, double the rate of growth in the overall population. The seniors population will create an increasing need for accessible and affordable rental options into the future.

### Share of Population (65+ year old), 1971–2016

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population



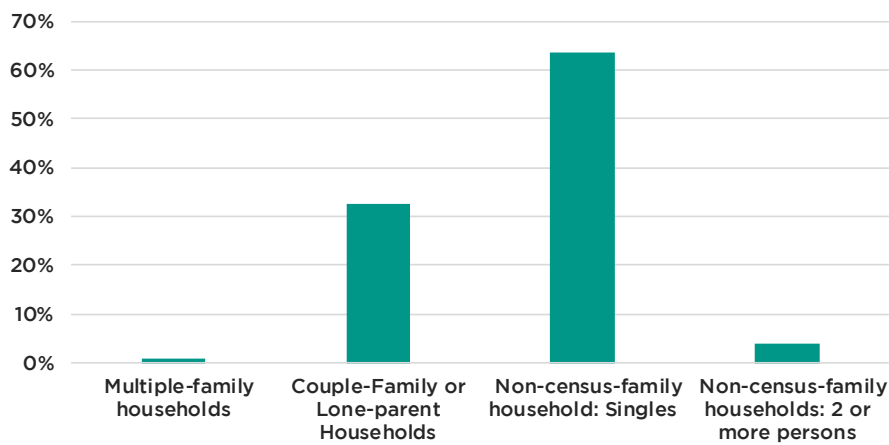
Observations & Trends

- Seniors in the City of Vancouver are more likely to live alone, compared to seniors in the overall region.<sup>5</sup> This is especially true for renter households; 65% of senior renter households are composed of a single person.
- Just over half of senior households live in rental apartments.
- The West End (13%), Downtown (9%), Renfrew-Collingwood (7%) are the top three neighbourhoods with the highest proportions of senior household renters.
- The Provincial Shelter Aid For Elderly Residents (SAFER) helps to make rents affordable for BC seniors with low to moderate incomes. Around a quarter of those they support live in Vancouver.
- Since 2010, the number of seniors in Vancouver receiving rent subsidies through SAFER has increased by 38%, to a total of 4,459.

Housing Challenges

- The median annual income of senior renter households aged between 55 and 65 years old is \$44,014; 12% less than the city-wide renter median income of \$50,250 per year. The median annual income of those aged 65+ and renting is even lower at \$27,713.
- According to BC Housing Income Limits, you must have a household income of below \$55,500 per year to qualify for a studio or 1-bedroom social housing unit. This means many seniors may qualify, adding to the high demand for non-market housing.
- Approximately 30% of renter households paying over half of their income on housing costs are senior households above the age of 55 years old.

Proportion of Renter Senior Households (55+ year old) by Household Type



<sup>5</sup> City of Vancouver, Social Indicators Profile 2020, [vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-indicators-profile-city-of-vancouver.pdf](https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-indicators-profile-city-of-vancouver.pdf)

### What We've Heard

- The pandemic has brought to light the crisis in our long-term care homes. We need to consider the needs and care of elderly seniors in our community more closely.
- Seniors want to stay within and connected to their communities as they age, but many fear housing insecurity due to renovictions and that rising unaffordability may push them out.
- Increasing the accessibility of our building design is important for seniors and people with mobility challenges or physical impairment.

- Social isolation is an issue for seniors, particularly for those who live alone.

### What is The Future We Want?

- A city with affordable, secure housing options for seniors, with access to amenities and services that help them stay connected to their communities.

#### What is the future you want?

#### What are your ideas for change?

To share your ideas for change, please visit:

[ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing](https://ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing)



# Housing Profile:

## New Immigrants and Migrants

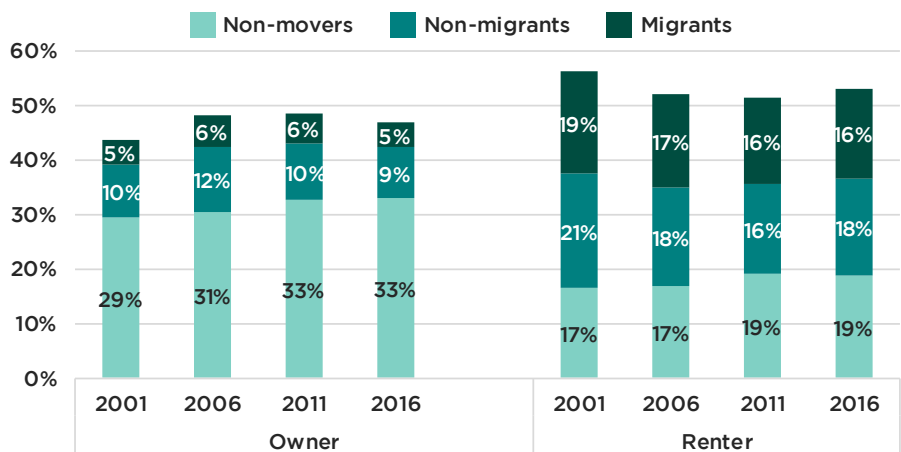


Vancouver is a multicultural city that attracts immigrants<sup>6</sup> from across the world. The City of Vancouver has a large population of immigrants but, in recent years, the growth of the immigrant population has been modest compared to other Metro Vancouver cities. With the exception of Indigenous Peoples, groups of all racial identities are in Vancouver because of immigration, whether in current or previous generations.

As of 2016, 42% of the population are immigrants—including both Canadian citizens and permanent residents—and another 5% are non-permanent residents, including foreign students, temporary workers or refugee claimants. New immigrant households tend to have lower-incomes and are more likely to be renters. When planning for the future, we need to consider the housing needs of people new to the city, alongside existing residents.

### Mobility Status of Migrant Groups by Tenure, 2001 – 2016

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2001-2016<sup>7</sup>



6 According to Statistics Canada, 'Immigrant' refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.

7 Non-mover – household did not move; Non-migrant – household moved within Vancouver CSD; Migrant – includes internal migrants and external migrants

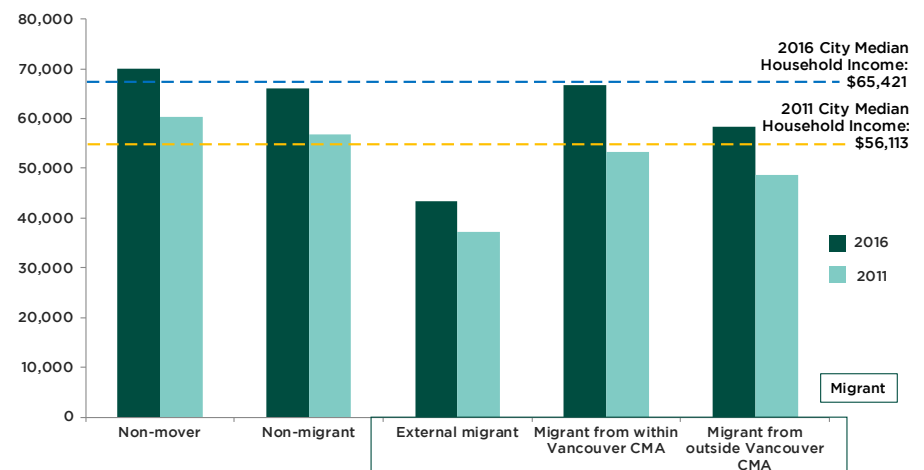


### Observations & Trends

- Though there is still growth in absolute numbers, the percentage of immigrants in the city has steadily decreased.
- Migrants to the city are more likely to be renters than owners.
- External migrants, i.e. households that moved to Vancouver from outside of Canada, tend to have lower incomes than internal migrants, i.e. households that moved to Vancouver from within Canada, and non-migrants.
- Newcomers have higher poverty rates than established immigrants or Canadian-born residents. Recent immigrants, who have moved to the region from 2011-2016 have a much higher prevalence of low-income households at 34% versus non-immigrants at 12%.<sup>9</sup>

### Median Income by Mobility Status of Migrant Groups, 2011 – 2016<sup>8</sup>

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2011 and 2016



### Housing Challenges: What We've Heard

- The majority of external migrants are renters who are in need of secured rental options when arriving to Vancouver. Low vacancy rates make finding housing even more challenging than it would otherwise be in a new city.
- The median income of external migrants is below \$45,000 per year, making finding housing that is affordable very difficult. Many of these households would likely qualify for below-market rental or social housing.
- Refugee groups have stated that it can be difficult to access housing support without resident status and that stronger housing outreach and support systems are needed for immigrant groups in general.
- Immigrants, along with women, young people and people of colour, have been disproportionately impacted by job loss as a result of the pandemic. These groups are also at higher risk of not being able to find housing or losing their housing as a result.

### What is the Future We Want?

To become a city where newcomers are able to find secure, affordable housing and access services to support their transition to a place they can call home.

### What is the future you want? What are your ideas for change?

To share your ideas for change, please visit:

[ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing](https://ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing)

<sup>8</sup> Non-mover – household did not move; Non-migrant – household moved within Vancouver CSD; External migrant – household moved to Vancouver CSD from outside of Canada

Migrant from within Vancouver CMA – household moved to Vancouver from another municipality within the Vancouver CMA

Migrant from outside of Vancouver CMA – household moved to Vancouver from outside of the Vancouver CMA but within Canada

<sup>9</sup> Census 2016, Statistics Canada



# Housing Profile:

## How We Live – Household Types and Housing Choice

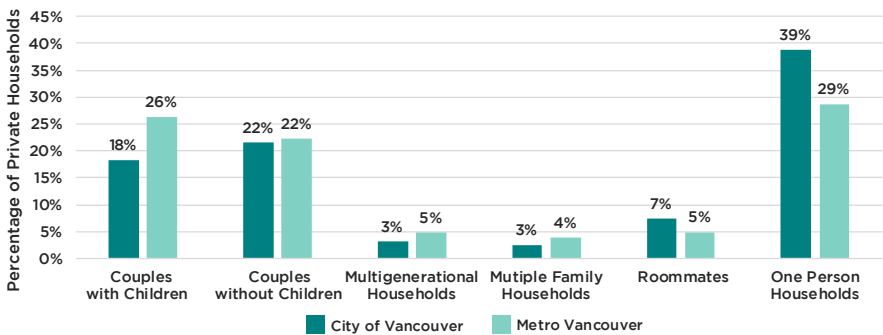


Housing costs in Vancouver have increased significantly over the last decade, and home ownership has moved rapidly out of reach for the majority of the city’s residents.

Many choose to or have to rent due to high ownership costs; 53% of the households in Vancouver are renters and 76% of the household increase between the 2011 and 2016 census periods are made up of renters. Some people also choose or have to live in less conventional or shared living arrangements with family, friends or roommates.

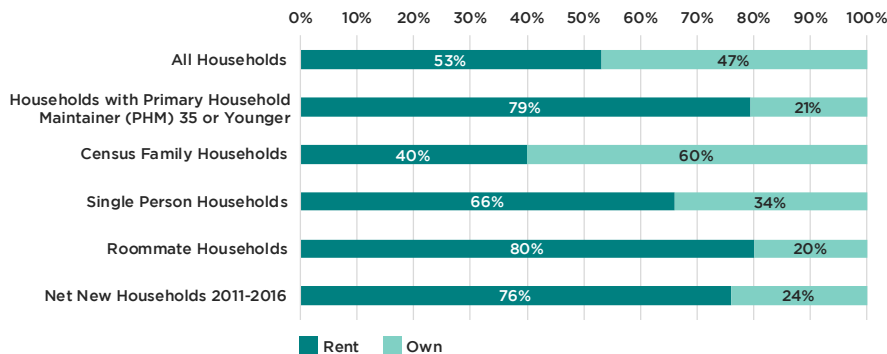
There has been an increasing trend of people in Vancouver and across Canada living alone, and household sizes are smaller than ever. However, in recent years there has been a rise in the proportion of multigenerational households and a significant number of young adults are living with their parents for longer. These changes may be due to changing social norms, demographics and ethnocultural diversity, as well as increasing affordability challenges. People are also choosing new ways of living that enhance their social relationships and connections to community, or that align with how they choose to travel to and around the city.

Households by Type in the City of Vancouver and the Region, 2016



### Observations & Trends

#### Households Types by Tenure in the City of Vancouver, 2016



- Compared to the Metro Vancouver region, Vancouver households are more likely to be single persons living alone (almost 40%) or unrelated persons living together as roommates (7%), and less likely to be families with children.
- Multigenerational and multiple family households each account for 3% of Vancouver households, slightly less than for households across the rest of the region, even though Vancouver has a much smaller proportion of ground-oriented dwellings than elsewhere in the region.
- The majority (53%) of Vancouver households are renters, compared to 36% across the rest of the region.
- Renting is more popular amongst newly formed households and those where the primary household maintainer is a young adult. The trend towards renting is evidenced strongly by the much higher rates of renting amongst newly formed households (76%) and those where the primary household maintainer is a young adult (79%). Rates of renting are also higher amongst single people living alone (66%) and roommate households (80%) in Vancouver.
- Almost a quarter (24%) of young adults (aged 20-34) in Vancouver are living at home with their parents or grandparents.

### Housing Challenges: What We've Heard

- Residents love living in Vancouver and are making trade-offs in order to stay; however, many remain uncertain about whether they will be able to continue to afford to live here in the future. Residents are looking for more affordable and diverse housing choices.
- Many are concerned that changing preferences and new ways of living aren't being matched by the types of housing that are available in Vancouver. Especially noted is the lack of "missing middle" housing choices, including low- and mid-rise apartments and townhouses. Many residents are also keenly interested in housing options that foster sociability and communal values such as co-ops, co-housing and collective housing.
- We've heard that geographic inequity in Vancouver's housing market is a significant concern and residents have pointed to an overabundance of single-family houses that are increasingly out of reach for the vast majority of people living in the city.

- We've heard that the availability and diversity of rental housing options is limited in many parts of the city, especially in low density areas where rental choice is almost exclusively limited to unsecure, secondary rental such as secondary suites, laneway houses and rented houses. In many areas purpose-built rental housing is limited to locations along busy arterial roads where noise and pollution levels are the highest.
- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted existing vulnerabilities, especially for those living in more precarious and unaffordable housing.

### What is the Future We Want?

To become a city that is adaptable, and can accommodate changing housing needs and living preferences through flexible zoning, secure housing options, and thoughtful design to enable sociability and meet the needs of all types of households.

#### What is the future you want?

#### What are your ideas for change?

To share your ideas for change, please visit:

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# PLANNING VANCOUVER TOGETHER: HOUSING PROFILES

## PART 2

# Housing Profile:

## The City's Workforce



Vancouver is a growing city with a thriving economy and low unemployment rate—yet many of Vancouver's residents and workers are struggling to make ends meet. Vancouver has a diverse workforce from all industries and sectors. In 2016, Vancouver had over 375,000 workers. About 44% of the city's workforce does not live in Vancouver; though some of these workers may prefer to live in the city if there were more affordable and suitable housing options. A key component of supporting our city's economy is to ensure that secure and affordable housing is available for our workforce. We know workers in Vancouver have various housing needs, based on their incomes, lifestyle, and household type.

### Observations & Trends

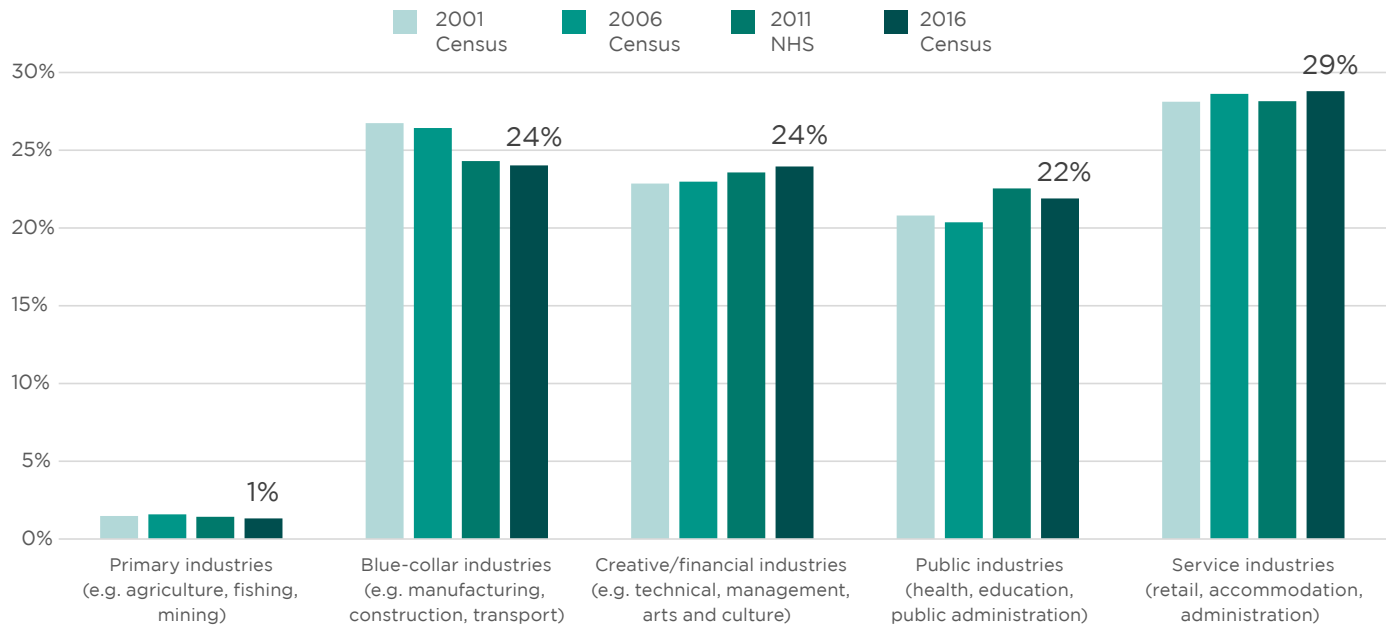
- Vancouver's economy includes many different types of jobs across many industries and sectors. The largest job sectors in the City of Vancouver are: professional, scientific and technical services; health care and social assistance; accommodation and food services; and retail. Together, these four sectors account for 185,710 jobs or 49% of all jobs in the City.
- Over 150,000 people who work in the City of Vancouver live elsewhere in the Metro Vancouver region. This accounts for 44% of Vancouver's work force.
- The City has a growing rate of workers in creative and financial industries and a decline in workers in blue-collar industries.
- There are significant differences in incomes for workers across each industry; accommodation and food services workers have a median income of less than \$30,000 per year, while workers in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction have a median income of more than \$106,000 per year.
- The maximum qualifying income for social housing, as set by BC Housing, is \$55,500 per household for a studio or one-bedroom. This means many workers in lower paying industries could qualify for social housing, especially if they are single person households.
- Access to full-time work is not equitably distributed across the population, with some populations more likely to experience precarious employment. Female workers, Indigenous and racialized workers, newcomers and people with fewer educational credentials are all more likely to work part-time or part-year work.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver, Social Indicators Profile 2020, [vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-indicators-profile-city-of-vancouver.pdf](https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-indicators-profile-city-of-vancouver.pdf)



### Metro Vancouver: Labour Force by Broad Industries, 2001-2016

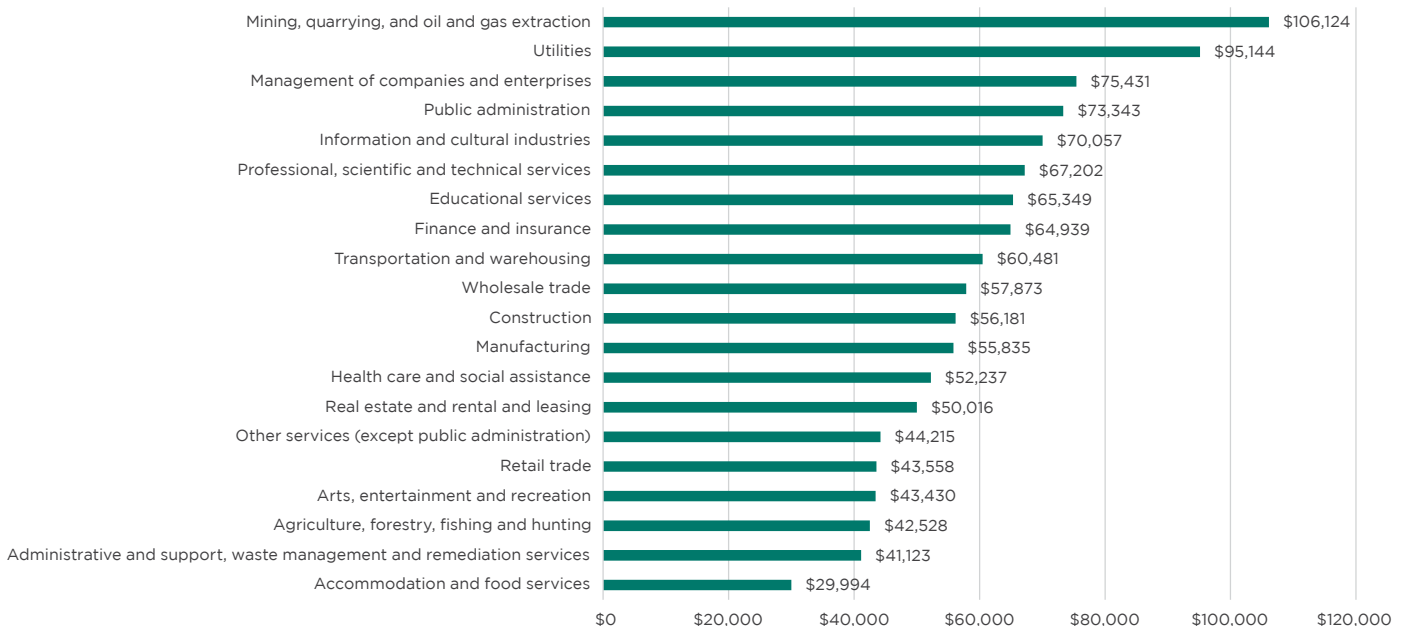
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population and 2011 National Household Survey



### Median Full-Time Individual Income by Industry in Metro Vancouver, 2015

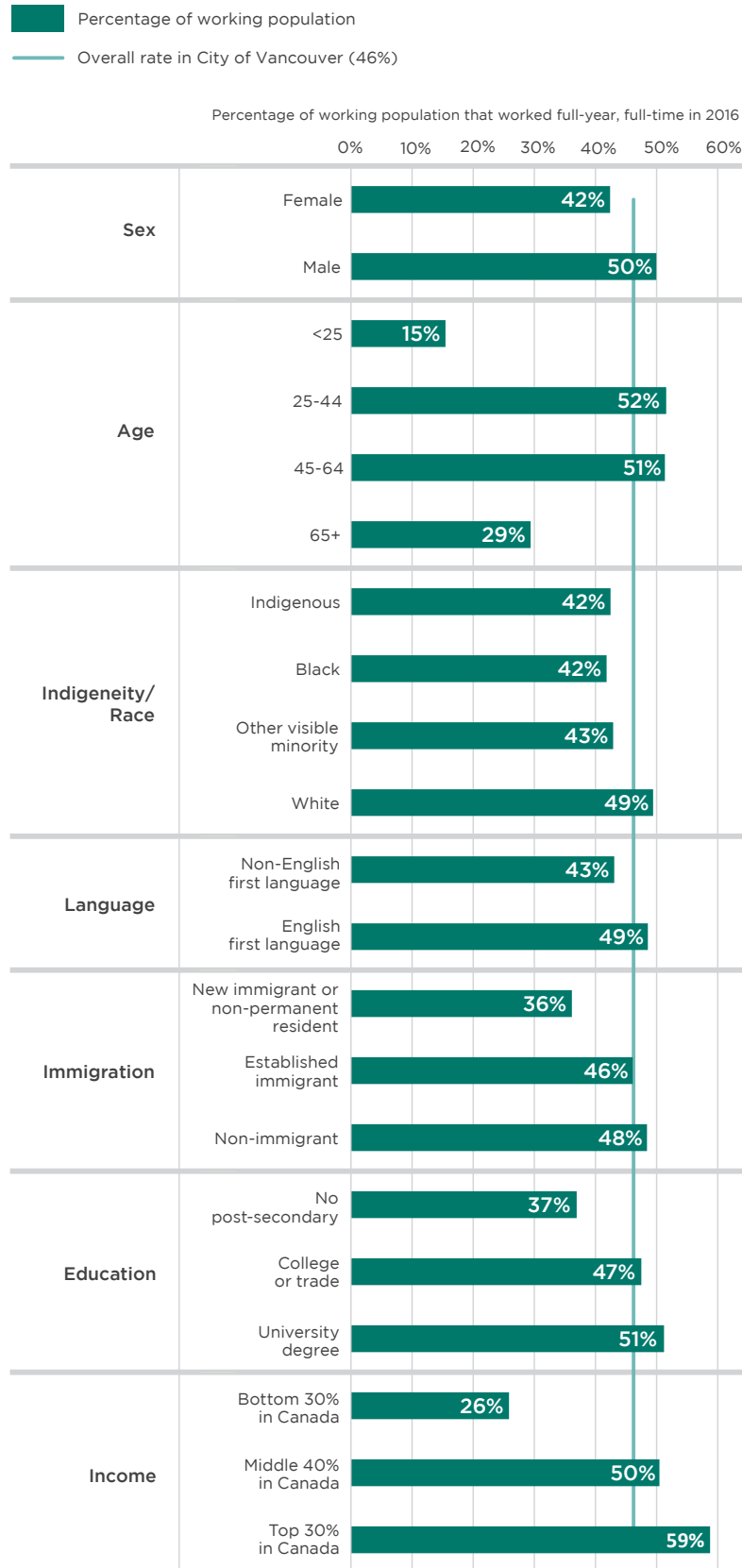
Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016

\*Median incomes are calculated only from individuals who worked full-time for the full 2015 year



### City of Vancouver: Rate of Full-Time Work by Demographics, 2016

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population and 2011 National Household Survey



### Housing Challenges: What We've Heard

- It is difficult to find affordable and suitable housing close to work. Many people who work in Vancouver feel forced to live outside of the city and commute in to work.
- Many workers feel their incomes are not enough to afford the cost of living and are overburdened by housing costs. This can be a significant challenge for workers employed in industries that typically have lower salaries or wages and for people with precarious employment.<sup>2</sup>
- In addition to housing, other factors such as the high cost and low availability of childcare spaces represent a significant barrier for many workers. This is especially true for women and newcomers seeking to enter or re-enter the paid workforce.<sup>3</sup>
- Businesses struggle to attract and retain employees, as secure and affordable housing

options in close proximity to their workplace is limited. This is particularly true for workers with children, who require larger two or more bedroom housing options.

- If businesses cannot retain workers due to housing challenges, certain sectors may be less likely to be able to operate in Vancouver over the long-term. This will create a less diversified local economy and take away from the City's economic resilience and ability to withstand external shocks.

### What is the Future We Want?

- A city where workers are able to access affordable and secure housing and other support services, within a short commute of their place of employment.

#### What is the future you want?

#### What are your ideas for change?

To share your ideas for change, please visit:

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<sup>2</sup> City of Vancouver (2019), Employment Lands & Economy Review Council Report, <https://council.vancouver.ca/20191127/documents/pspc3.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Vancouver Plan Community Navigators (March, 2021), Kiwassa and Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House Key Finding

# Housing Profile:

## Indigenous Housing and Wellness



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səɫilwətaɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. It is also home to substantial and diverse urban Indigenous populations who identify with Indigenous communities across North America and beyond. Vancouver is strengthened by Indigenous culture and values, lived and practiced by both on- and off-reserve Indigenous residents. Although urban Indigenous residents are diverse and represented across the entire income continuum, historic and current impacts of settler colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism have resulted in ongoing socio-economic inequities and housing challenges.

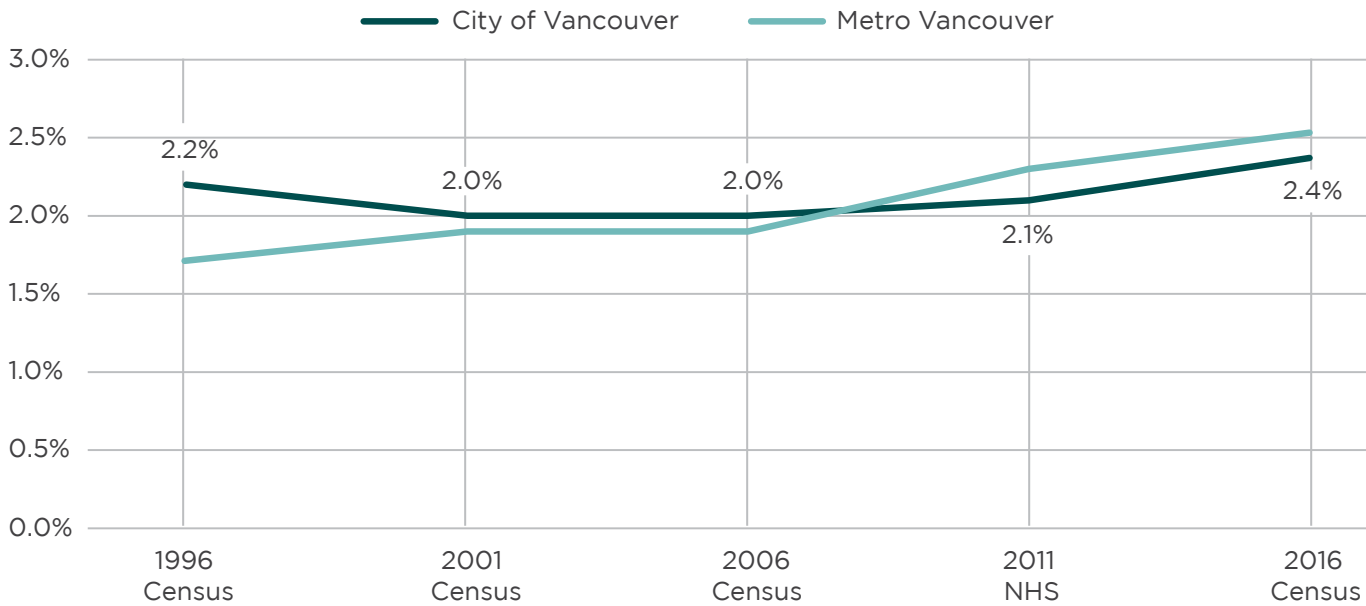
**Given the negative impacts of ongoing dispossession of Indigenous Peoples' lands, colonialism and the lasting impacts of Canada's Residential School system, the current data on Indigenous populations does not provide a complete picture. More work needs to be done to address data gaps and better plan for the housing and wellness needs of Indigenous residents. The Census and other governmental data sources need to be supplemented with other sources of knowledge within Indigenous communities to fully understand housing challenges and needs.**

- Based on the 2016 Census, about 15,000 people—2.4% of the population living in the City of Vancouver and Musqueam Reserve 2—are Indigenous, a slightly smaller rate than the region overall.
- The urban Indigenous population in the City of Vancouver decreased in absolute numbers from 1996 to 2001 but has grown in the most recent census periods. From 1996 to 2016, the absolute number of Vancouver residents with Indigenous identity had a net growth of 28% compared to 22% for the population with non-Indigenous identity.
- The Indigenous population in Vancouver is diverse, with a majority of people with First Nations, Métis, or Inuit ancestry also reporting other Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestries.<sup>4</sup>
- The Indigenous population living in Vancouver is younger than the City's overall population. Children and youth make up a greater share of the Indigenous population than the non-Indigenous population, and older adults make up a smaller share.

<sup>4</sup> City of Vancouver, Vancouver City Social Indicators Profile 2020, <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-indicators-profile-city-of-vancouver.pdf>

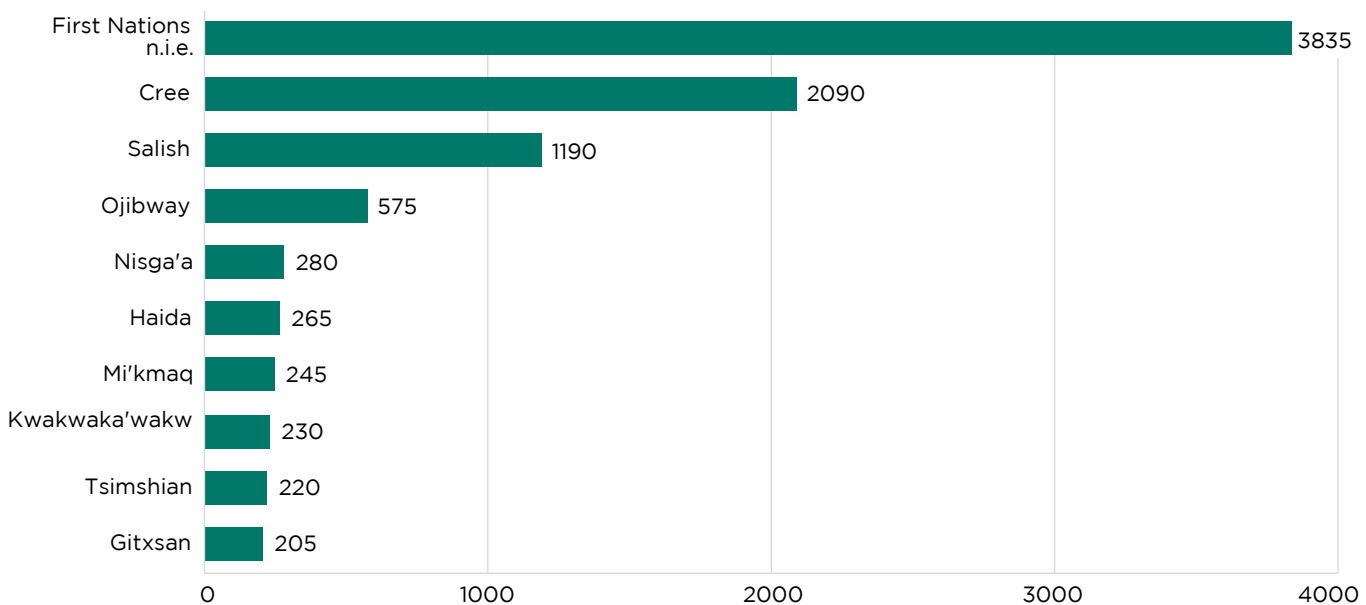
Population with Indigenous Identity, 1996-2016

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population and 2011 National Household Survey



City of Vancouver:  
Top Reported First Nations Ancestries, 2016

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population. Note: n.i.e. means "not indicated elsewhere"





- Indigenous residents are much more likely to experience poverty than other residents of Vancouver. One third of Indigenous households were experiencing core housing need as of the last Census.
- Indigenous residents are over-represented in the City's Homeless Count—39% of the population experiencing homelessness identified as Indigenous, compared to 2% of the general population in the City of Vancouver.

### Housing Challenges: What We've Heard

In 2015, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Committee (MVAEC) released Towards an Urban Aboriginal Housing and Wellness Strategy for Metro Vancouver<sup>5</sup>, which included key background information and recommendations:

- Reflecting national trends, Indigenous residents are struggling to find adequate, secure, and affordable housing.
- Urban Indigenous housing requires culturally relevant solutions that reflect local need and integrate other aspects of health and wellness.
- There is a need to increase access to diverse housing options by maintaining and improving existing housing stock and diversifying new housing stock.
- Housing leadership and capacity needs to be strengthened at all levels through improved agency collaboration, ensuring Indigenous representation at all levels of decision-making, refining and adapting municipal policies, exploring funding options, and other means.

In addition, we have heard:

- The right to adequate and affordable housing should be at the centre of discussions as the City of Vancouver advances Reconciliation.
- Greater funding and resourcing is needed to support the creation of Indigenous-led housing and wellness projects.

### Case Study: Lu'ma Aboriginal Children's Village



Lu'ma Aboriginal Children's Village is a unique 24-unit family project, featuring 10 large units which can house approximately 30 foster children, three youth-in-transition, and seven families. Units in the Children's Village are assigned to the foster child in order to ensure a sense of safety and stability. The project also includes Lu'ma's offices, amenity and programming space, as well as street level commercial units. There are several visible design elements that point to Indigenous culture and fosters a sense of belonging amongst the residents.

As part of the Village, Lu'ma offers Indigenous youth with mentorship and housing to support the transition from foster care to adulthood. The mission of the mentorship program is to end Indigenous youth homelessness and to provide knowledge of living in a holistic manner, taking care of their physical, emotional, spiritual and mental needs.

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<sup>5</sup> Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Committee (MVAEC), Towards an Urban Aboriginal Housing and Wellness Strategy for Metro Vancouver 2015-2020, <http://www.mvaec.ca/downloads/uahws-full-report.pdf>

# Housing Profile:

## Disproportionately Impacted Communities



### The Intersecting Crises



For many people in Vancouver, the crisis in housing affordability falls disproportionately on marginalized communities facing intersecting challenges and crises, including the toxic drug supply and mental health crisis; systemic racism, able-ism, and sexism, and ongoing violence against trans\*, gender-diverse and two-spirited people. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges.

### Housing Challenges

Limitations in the way data on race, disability status, gender and sexual orientation, and mental health is collected means that data and statistics provide an incomplete picture. However, the data we do have indicate that socioeconomic inequities and housing challenges fall disproportionately on certain communities in the city, resulting in a higher likelihood of affordability challenges, housing insecurity and homelessness. These impacts are intensified when accounting for the compounding impact of intersectionality. The data reported here is from the most recent 2016 Census, as well as additional sources like the City of Vancouver Homeless Count.

DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES	
<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>	<p>People who identify as Indigenous are more likely to experience core housing need and are over-represented in Vancouver's Homeless Count. 39% of people experiencing homelessness identified as Indigenous, while making up only 2% of the general population. More information on Indigenous housing and wellness is <a href="#">available here</a>.</p>
<b>Racialized people</b>	<p>People who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latin American, and West or Southeast Asian in Vancouver are more likely to be experiencing core housing need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the 2016 Census, 23% of Black households, 25% of West Asian households, and 24% of Southeast Asian households reported experiencing core housing need due to lacking affordable or suitable housing, compared to 13% of white households.</li> </ul> <p>People from racialized groups are over-represented in Vancouver's Homeless Count: Black people are 3.7 times more likely to experience homelessness compared to their presence in the general population; Arabs are 1.7 times more likely and Hispanics and Latin Americans are 1.4 times more likely.<sup>6</sup></p>
<b>LGBTQ, trans*, gender diverse and two-spirited people</b>	<p>Trans*, gender diverse and two-spirit individuals are more likely to experience harassment, low income, or be victims of assault. These communities also report barriers to accessing shelter, housing and accessing services in gender-designated housing.</p> <p>5% of Homeless Count respondents identified as having transgender experience; this is likely an undercount as some people may not feel comfortable or safe revealing this to count volunteers.</p>
<b>Seniors</b>	<p>The majority of seniors who rent their home are paying over 30% of income on rent. There has been a slight increase in the number of seniors experiencing homelessness in Vancouver over the last few years, with seniors representing 23% of individuals reporting they were experiencing homelessness in 2020.</p> <p>Higher rates of core housing need are observed among seniors identifying as Black, Latin American, and West Asian compared to younger households. More information on seniors housing is <a href="#">available here</a>.</p>
<b>People with disabilities, chronic health issues, and trauma</b>	<p>People with intellectual and physical disabilities, chronic health issues, and trauma report multiple barriers to accessing appropriate housing and services. We observe higher rates of poverty and housing need among people with disabilities and mental health issues, with additional challenges facing members of Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities. The latest Homeless Count found that over half of the respondents experiencing homelessness reported one or two health concerns, including physical disability, medical condition/illness, mental health issue, learning disability or cognitive impairment, and addiction.</p> <p>People with disabilities living on social assistance typically receive \$375 per month in shelter assistance to use for housing. Finding appropriate housing with that rate is a significant challenge in Vancouver. A limited supply of homes that are both accessible and affordable means that the social housing waitlist is very long.</p>
<b>Youth</b>	<p>Youth face unique housing challenges, with a high percentage of individuals in the 2020 Homeless Count (36%) reporting that they are or were in the care of the Ministry as a child or a youth. 48% of individuals in the Homeless Count reported that they first became homeless when they were 25 or younger. More information on students and young people is <a href="#">available here</a>.</p>
<b>Women fleeing domestic violence and single-parent households</b>	<p>Vancouver's housing crisis disproportionately affects women, particularly single-parent women-led households and women leaving intimate partner violence. Single-parent households are more likely to be living with lower incomes and paying over 30% of their income on rent. 21% of Homeless Count respondents identified as women, though women are believed to be undercounted as they may be living in unsafe situations where they are not encountered by Homeless Count volunteers. There is a limited supply of emergency or transitional housing for women fleeing domestic violence and affordable family housing.</p>

<sup>6</sup> City of Vancouver, 2020 Homeless Count, [vancouver.ca/people-programs/homeless-count.aspx](https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/homeless-count.aspx).



### Case Study: Ross House

The City purchased Ross House, a Single Room Occupancy building at 313 Alexander Street which will provide homes for Trans, Gender Diverse, and Two-Spirit (TGD2S) residents who are overrepresented among those experiencing



homelessness. Ross-Aoki House, which the City purchased using revenue from the Empty Homes Tax, will welcome tenants from the TGD2S community who often face barriers accessing safe, adequate, and culturally appropriate housing.

### What is The Future We Want?

An equitable city where disproportionately impacted communities are able to access safe, secure, and dignified affordable housing and support services.

**What is the future you want?**

**What are your ideas for change?**

To share your ideas for change, please visit:

[ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing](https://ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing)



# Housing Profile: People Experiencing Homelessness and Residing in Insecure Housing



In a City with rapidly rising housing costs, homelessness and housing insecurity are a serious concern. People experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity are more likely to experience serious health issues and a shortened life span. Homelessness and housing insecurity are also linked to trauma, mental health and addictions, and is more likely among people experiencing intersecting challenges due to disability, race, or gender.

As a last resort before homelessness, many Vancouver residents rely on private Single-Room Occupancy hotels—but this housing stock is rapidly being lost due to rising rents, and is often in need of repairs and maintenance.

Permanent housing with supports can be transformative for people experiencing homelessness, and is a critical component of a [Housing First approach](#).

## Observations & Trends

- The 2020 City of Vancouver Homeless Count took place on March 4, 2020 and identified 2,095 people as homeless (1,548 sheltered and 547 unsheltered). This is a slight decrease from 2019, but does not reflect the impacts of COVID-19.

- The COVID-19 pandemic response has decreased the number of available shelter beds and likely resulted in an increase in homelessness in Vancouver and the region.
- In a continuing trend, Indigenous Peoples are vastly overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness in Vancouver, making up 39% of those included in the latest Homeless Count and only 2% of the general population.
- People from racialized groups are over-represented in Vancouver's Homeless Count: Black people are 3.7 times more likely to experience homelessness compared to their presence in the general population; Arabs are 1.7 times more likely and Hispanics and Latin Americans are 1.4 times more likely.
- The number of seniors experiencing homelessness is growing; 23% of people experiencing homelessness in the 2020 count were seniors aged 55+, 9% were youth under the age of 25.



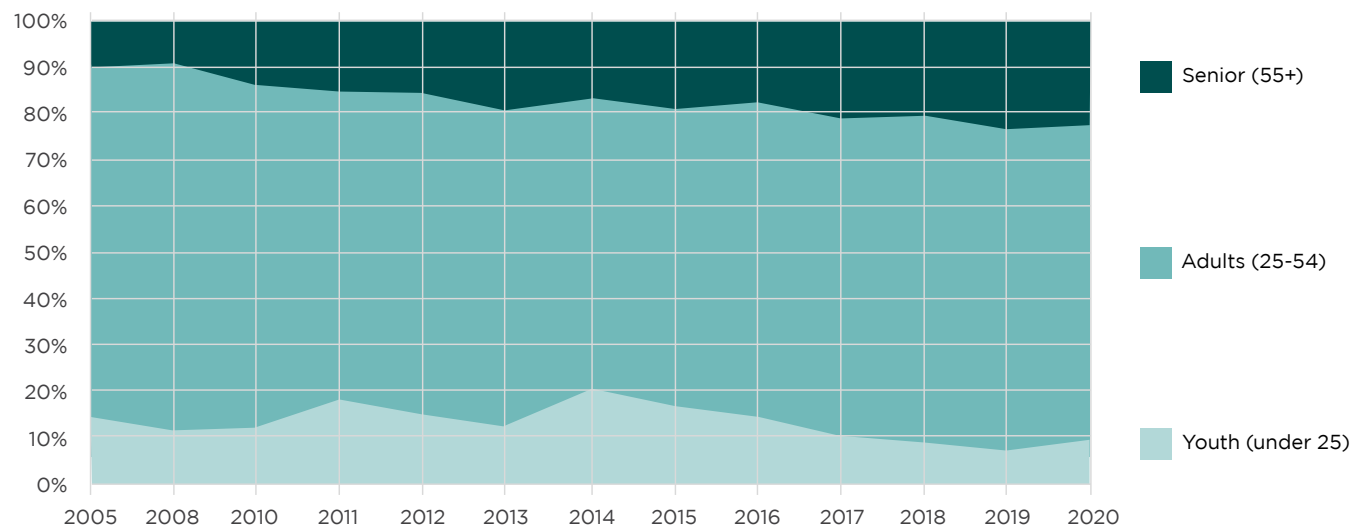
The Homeless Count is inherently an undercount and is considered to produce the minimum number of people experiencing homeless over a 24-hour period. It particularly under-states the level of homelessness among women, youth, and those experiencing hidden homelessness.

- There are links between homelessness, mental health and addiction—45% of people identified as homeless in 2020 reported a mental health issue, and 60% reported experience with addiction. People with disabilities are over-represented in the City’s homeless population,

- with 35% reporting a physical disability, 26% having a brain injury and 23% reporting a learning disability or cognitive impairment.
- The private Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) stock remains an important source of housing for Vancouver’s low-income residents, with over half of all private SRO building owners reporting that their primary renter population received some kind of social assistance.
  - Rents in private SRO rooms are increasing, and as of 2019 only 18% of private SRO rooms rented at \$375 per month, the Provincial Rate for Shelter Assistance.

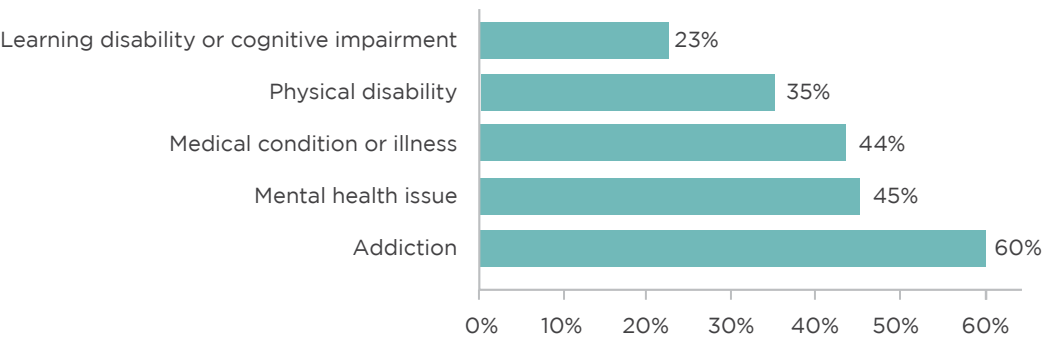
Age Trend: 2005-2020

The number of seniors 55+ experiencing homelessness is growing.



2020 Homeless Count Types of Health Conditions

People who are homeless consistently report a range of health issues.



### Housing Challenges: What We've Heard

Appropriate and integrated supports and services are needed to get and keep people housed, as navigating a high number of these services is distressing and exhausting for the person experiencing homelessness.

Housing conditions for those living in private SROs is often poor, and housing options are very limited for those living on income or disability assistance. The Shelter Rate of Income Assistance is inadequate.

Many people lack the skills or ability to advocate for themselves when in challenging situations with their landlords and it is difficult to find housing advocates to help.<sup>7</sup>

People have unique needs and their own communities that support each other; they want agency in determining and accessing appropriate housing and related-services and supports.<sup>8</sup>

### What is The Future We Want?

To become a city where every person has access to permanent, safe and secure housing at a rate they can afford, along with culturally appropriate, people-centred and trauma-informed support services.

#### What is the future you want?

#### What are your ideas for change?

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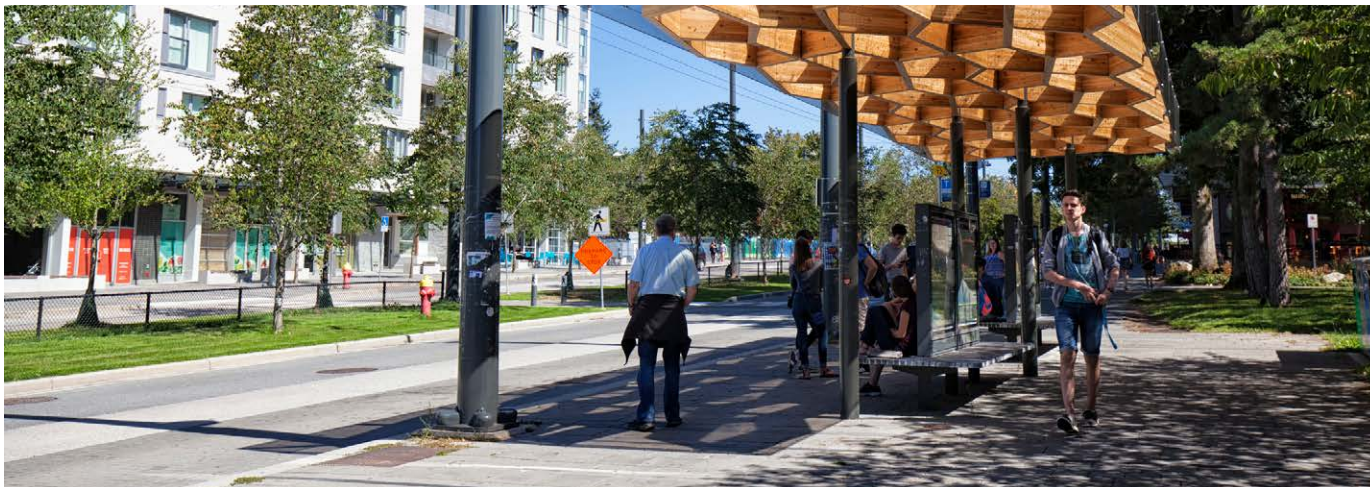
<sup>7</sup> Vancouver Plan Community Navigators (March, 2021), Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House Key Finding

<sup>8</sup> Vancouver Plan Community Navigators (March, 2021), Kiwassa Neighbourhood House Key Finding



# Housing Profile:

## Students and Young People



Vancouver's housing crises is affecting young people and post-secondary students who are often living in precarious housing situations. According to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, there were 105,000 registered full-time students in the Lower Mainland as of 2018<sup>9</sup> but only 15% of these students lived in on-campus residences. There are several post-secondary institutions within the City of Vancouver including the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University Vancouver Campus, Langara College, BCIT Downtown Campus, and others. There are also a number of English language schools, primarily located downtown. Students and young people contribute greatly to a socially and economically healthy city.

### Observations & Trends

The Canadian Census does not capture specific information about student households at a city level geography; however, we do have information about young household maintainers, who are more likely to be students.

According to the 2016 Census:

- Young people, households with primary household maintainers between 15-24 years of age, make up 7% of renter households.
- These households also earn the lowest income of renter households compared to older age groups, earning a median income of just under \$30,000 per year.
- These households also have the highest proportion of renter households amongst all age groups, with 85% of households renting.

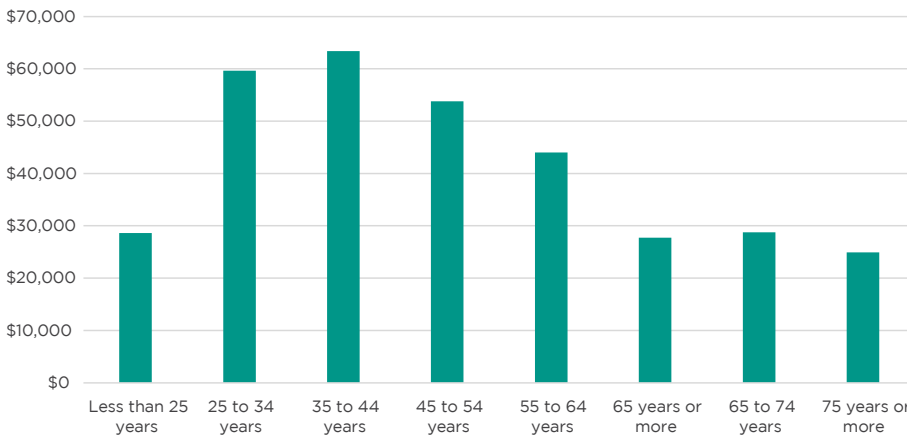
We also know that young people face unique housing challenges, with a high percentage of individuals in the 2020 Homeless Count (36%) reporting that they are or were in the care of the Ministry as a child or a youth. 48% of individuals in the Homeless Count reported that they first became homeless when they were 25 or younger.

The pandemic has also created additional challenges for students; many are struggling financially due to the loss of summer or part-time jobs/internships, while not qualifying for government assistance programs. In addition, many students and young people are struggling with their mental health, as school and social interactions move to an online environment.

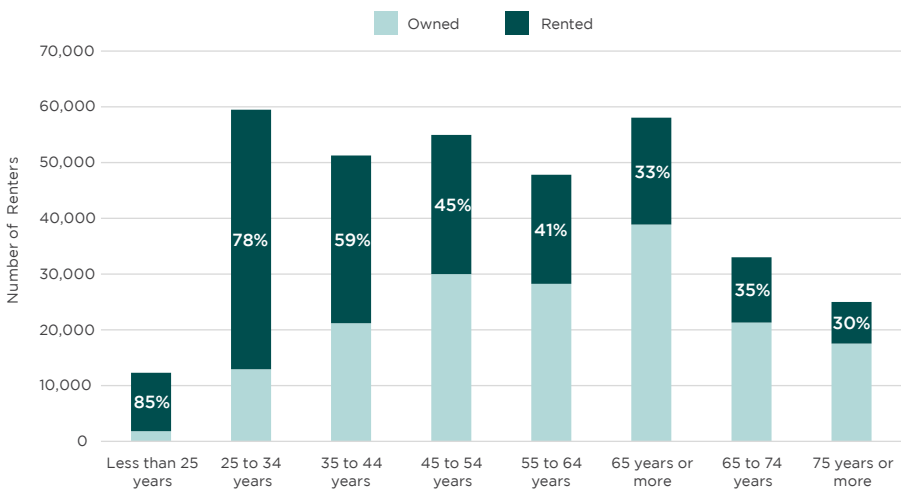
<sup>9</sup> Provincial Government of BC - Ministry of Advanced Education (2018) Student Full Time Equivalent Enrollment at BC Public Post Secondary Institutions, <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/full-time-equivalent-enrolments-at-b-c-public-post-secondary-institutions/resource/5ccc8108-855c-4802-b60d-cb9da4b96fbf>

<sup>10</sup> City of Vancouver, 2020 Homeless Count, <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/homeless-count.aspx>

Renter Median Income by Age of Household Maintainer



Percentage of Renter Households by Age Groups in Vancouver



Housing Challenges: What We’ve Heard

- Demand for on-campus housing is high; students are often forced to live further away from their post-secondary institutions, contributing to a decrease in overall quality of life due to longer commutes, reduced social experiences, and less time available for their studies.
- Young people need more below-market rental housing options due to their overrepresentation in retail and tourism industries, which are generally lower paying than other industries.
- Although Vancouver is an economic centre with many jobs, young people are getting pushed out of Vancouver due to affordability and housing challenges, which leads to longer commute times and less access to economic opportunities.

## Housing Profile: Students and Young People

- Students often have to rely on secondary rental suites (i.e. basements, rented houses or condos) that are both too expensive and often lack privacy or other basic needs.<sup>11</sup>
- High housing costs disproportionately affect students that do not have access to family resources or supports.<sup>12</sup>
- Students want sociable, livable housing options affordable to them within mixed-use buildings, with a variety of unit types to accommodate individuals and families. They also want sustainable buildings, with access to flexible gathering spaces, recreation/leisure opportunities, green spaces, and within a 30 minute or less transit commute to their post-secondary institution.<sup>12</sup>

The City needs to prioritize providing affordable subsidized rentals and housing in order to attract and keep young adults living in Vancouver. Too many young people are being paid the minimum wage while simultaneously trying to pay off student loans, and sustain a living in the city.<sup>13</sup>

### What is The Future We Want?

We want to ensure students and young people have affordable, livable and secure housing within a short commute of their post-secondary institution or work, and allow for building typologies that promote a more sociable environment.

**What is the future you want?**

**What are your ideas for change?**

To share your ideas for change, please visit:

[ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing](https://ShapeYourCity.ca/Vancouver-Plan-Housing)



<sup>11</sup> CityStudio (2018) Devasagayam C., Gillespie M., Scott Lenz J., Student Housing Guide: Advocating for student zoning in Vancouver

<sup>12</sup> Vancouver Plan Children and Youth Ideas Workshop (March 2021), Dunbar Community Centre Youth Council – 12-18 years of age

<sup>13</sup> Vancouver Plan Community Navigators (March, 2021), Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House Key Finding



# PLANNING VANCOUVER TOGETHER: HOUSING PROFILES



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