

Encouraging the development and mobilization of quality housing research

Translating Housing Research Into Housing Policy

In 2016, the Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern British Columbia received funding from BC Housing to undertake the **Northern BC Housing Study**. The research looked at 10 communities across northern BC. “The study was undertaken after we began hearing from local government councils, industry, and public sector employers that, in some communities, jobs were remaining vacant because potential employees could not find suitable housing in the community,” said Marleen Morris, Co-Director of the CDI and project lead. “The notion that northern BC communities were missing economic opportunities because of lack of housing motivated us to want to learn more.”

The following key findings emerged from the research:

The housing stock in northern BC is old; most was built before 1980. The stock is not energy efficient and is expensive to heat; does not have the amenities of newer homes, for example most have only one full bathroom for a three- or four-bedroom home; and is beginning to be in need of major repair.

There is a mis-match between the housing stock and the population. In all of the communities studied, the number of one- and two-person households far exceeded the number of one- and two-bedroom houses. At the same time, the number of three- and four-bedroom houses far exceeded the number of three- and four-person households. Much of the mis-match could be attributed to the growing number of ‘empty nesters’.

After reviewing the findings of the study and speaking with local government, industry, and community leaders, Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) spoke with the CDI to inform us that they were exploring the possibility of developing a new housing program to address some of the issues identified in the study. On April 3, 2019, NDIT announced three new housing funding programs:

- Housing Needs Assessment Program: up to \$10,000 available to conduct a housing needs assessment.
- Community Planning for Housing Program: up to \$40,000 to hire a planner for 12 months.
- Northern Housing Incentive: up to \$10,000 per unit in a multi-family dwelling to a maximum of \$200,000.

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The Pacific Housing Research Network facilitates multi-sectoral research focused on housing affordability and sustainability, and fosters dialogue and collaboration among housing stakeholders across B.C. to encourage the effective application of research results to housing solutions.

Message from Our Co-Chair

A Reflection on Responding to Local Research Needs

A key objective of PHRN is “to encourage networking, partnerships and the sharing of findings across researchers, knowledge users and stakeholders”. I witnessed this objective in action at the Research Dialogue session hosted by PHRN at Housing Central 2018. Researchers from post-secondary institutions, government and the private sector met face to face with community members with regional and specific research questions. In a matter of moments, there was a sharing of knowledge from diverse perspectives in response to community questions.

Rich dialogues and bridge building between researchers and community groups with housing challenges are vital. I look forward to strengthening the PHRN network and capacity to respond to local research needs, as we move collectively toward affordable and sustainable housing.

PHRN Co-Chair Dr. Bruce Wallace (UVic)



Who is PHRN?

Our Steering Committee:

Penny Gurstein (UBC), Co-Chair
Bruce Wallace (UVic), Co-Chair
Deborah Kraus (BC Housing)
Elizabeth Tang (CMHC)
Brian Clifford (BCNPHA)
Nolan Beise (MITACS)
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Carlos Teixeira (UBC Okanagan)
Nathan Lauster (UBC)
Marleen Morris (UNBC)
Tricia Roche (Network Coordinator)

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<https://phrnbc.com/subscribe-to-our-e-news/>

Partner News

BCNPHA

The Canadian **Rental Housing Index** (CRHI) is a comprehensive database of rental housing statistics, displaying information for more than 800 regions and municipalities across the country. The Index provides a data-driven foundation for policy-making decisions at all levels of government and the community housing sector.

According to BCNPHA, the Index can be used to track and compare average rental costs, how rental housing spending compares with income, and the rate of overcrowding in municipalities, regions and provinces. First released in 2015, the Index was developed by BCNPHA in partnership with Vancity credit union, housing associations, and municipal associations across Canada.

PHRN Objectives:

1. To encourage networking, partnerships and the **sharing of findings** across researchers, knowledge users, and stakeholders.
2. To **support each other** in developing and conducting research.
3. To **leverage capacity** to find funding solutions for housing research and dissemination.
4. To **encourage students** to consider housing as an area of choice for their career.

CMHC

National Housing Conference

Mark your calendars! The next National Housing Conference is in Ottawa, May 12 to 13, 2020. The conference gathers thinkers, innovators, housing providers and advocates, corporations investing in communities, developers and academics who share the goal of housing affordability for all.

PostDoctoral Awards

Postdoctoral Housing Research Scholarship Awards are an important opportunity for early career housing researchers. The awards focus on research projects that address housing related issues identified under the National Housing Strategy's priority areas:

- Housing for those in greatest need
- Community housing sustainability
- Indigenous housing
- Northern housing
- Sustainable housing and communities
- Balanced supply of housing

This exciting new housing research scholarship program application process occurs annually through the postdoctoral fellowship competitions of each of the federal granting agencies (SSHRC, CIHR, NSERC). Congratulations to the inaugural BC based recipients: Geoff Bardwell and Michael Lait. Bardwell, UBC, is examining housing-based overdose response interventions in Vancouver. Lait, UNBC, focuses on place-based housing policy for the ageing resource frontier: a study of seniors housing needs, housing options, and age-friendly assets in resource-based communities in Northwest BC.

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“The Community Development Institute housing research was integral to the development of the Trust’s policy on supporting housing development in Northern B.C., and the funding programs we ultimately created, said Joel McKay, Chief Executive Officer for NDIT. “It took the guess work out of the equation for a regional funding organization such as ours, and provided us with up to date data and themes specific to our communities that made it easy for us to take action with, develop policy and funding programs to address challenges in rural communities.”

“We were very pleased to know that our research had been the genesis of NDIT’s housing policy initiative”, said Marleen Morris. “It is rewarding to know that, because of our research, northern communities will benefit .”

Marleen Morris is Co-Director, Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia and adjunct Professor, Department of Geography

BC Housing



Housing Research & Education Highlights now online

Discover BC Housing's recent and upcoming research projects on a host of topics. Technical themes include; industry research, industry education & knowledge transfer, consumer protection and sustainability. Socio-economic themes covered are; addressing homelessness, distinct populations, social housing transformation, and housing affordability.

<https://wcsstg.bchousing.org/research-centre/research-themes>

2018 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C.

The 2018 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C. provides a broad picture of homelessness in British Columbia, with coverage of more than 85 percent of the province by population. It details important baseline information on the estimated number, key demographic, and service provision needs of people experiencing homelessness in B.C. communities.

<https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/housing-data/homeless-counts>

Social Return on Investment

These studies explore the Social Return on Investment (SROI) created by affordable and supportive housing in B.C. SROI analysis combines quantitative, qualitative, and participatory research techniques to demonstrate the value of outcomes from different stakeholder perspectives. The result is an SROI ratio that compares investment to the financial value of social and economic outcomes achieved, showing — in monetary terms — the financial benefit of social investments.

View the full reports and accompanying case studies:

<https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/tools-developing-social-housing>

Builder Insight Bulletin – BC Building Code Changes 2018

This Builder Insight bulletin provides the building industry with a detailed overview of the changes in Part 9 of the BC Building Code (BCBC 2018), effective December 2018. The changes to the BC Building Code are based on the 2015 National Building Code. Changes include updates to sound transmission requirements, seismic design and climatic data, and updates for stairs, handrails and guards.

<https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/builder-insight/builder-insight-17&sortType=sortByDate>

