



Indigenous Housing Needs in Surrey Quick Fact Sheet

SEPTEMBER 2025

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee (SUILC) has conducted extensive research and community engagements about urban Indigenous Housing Needs in Surrey.

The following is a quick fact sheet using information gathered from the following SUILC reports:

- [Indigenous Peoples in Surrey: Highlights from the Census. 2021 Census Fact Sheets](#) (November 2023)
- [SUILC Census Data Report: 2021 Profile of the Indigenous population in Surrey](#) (May 2023)
- [Finding Our Way Home: Indigenous Homelessness in Surrey](#) (October 2022)
- [Skookum Housing Solutions: Our Roadmap for Change](#) (2021)
- [Skookum Lab Housing Report: Understanding the Housing Experience of Indigenous Households in Surrey](#) (2020)



Statement of Recognition

Our work takes place on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish, including the Semiahmoo First Nation, the Kwantlen First Nation, the Katzie First Nation, the Kwikwetlem First Nation, the Qayqayt First Nation and the Tsawwassen First Nation. We recognize their connection to this land and acknowledge that we are newcomers to Surrey like everyone else.

Our group, the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee, does not represent these land-based First Nations, and we are careful not to speak on their behalf. Instead, we advocate for the urban Indigenous people that have moved here from all over BC and in fact, from all over Canada to make Surrey their home. Our focus is on making Surrey a great place for Indigenous people living in the city, regardless of where they come from, their legal status, or their particular cultural heritage. As we do this, we endeavour to live in a good way with the land-based First Nations that have called this land their home since time immemorial.

Why are Indigenous Housing Needs Unique?

Indigenous housing needs stem from the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism, intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, and discrimination.

Our Skookum Surrey engagements with Indigenous people living in Surrey found that many Indigenous people experiencing homelessness are also experiencing a profound disconnection from their land, community, family, and culture.

Addressing Indigenous homelessness and housing affordability challenges is not just about a physical shelter but about creating a sense of home for Indigenous people living in urban centres. This means culturally safe and appropriate services, family oriented and collectivist supports, including ceremony and spirituality.

**Overall,
our research shows that
Surrey needs at least
1,880 units of deeply
affordable rental housing
for Indigenous households,
and 772 deeply affordable
units for single parent
households.¹**

Indigenous Homelessness

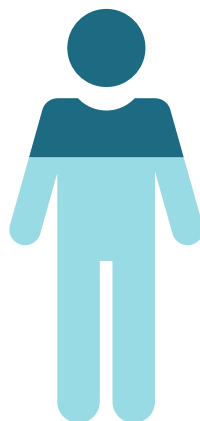
Indigenous people are dramatically overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in Surrey.

1 in 26

Indigenous individuals living in Surrey are estimated to have experienced homelessness, compared to

1 in 239

non-Indigenous people.



33%

of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey identified as Indigenous, in the 2020 Metro Vancouver Point-in-Time (PiT) count, while less than

3%

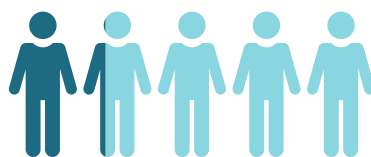
of Surrey's population is Indigenous.²

Indigenous people in Surrey experiencing homelessness are more likely to be unsheltered than non-Indigenous people who are homeless.



50%

of Indigenous, compared to



27%

of non-Indigenous people were unsheltered in the 2020 Metro Vancouver PiT count.³

¹ Skookum Housing Solutions: Our Roadmap for Change, 2021, p.4

² Finding Our Way Home: Indigenous Homelessness in Surrey Executive Summary, October 2022

³ Finding Our Way Home: Data Summary, October 2022, pp 3-4.

Indigenous Housing Sector in Surrey

Centering Indigenous values and practices in service delivery and reducing barriers to early access and supports have shown to be the best practice to meet Indigenous housing needs⁴.

Surrey faces chronic underinvestment in the Indigenous housing sector.



In 2021, there were 270 non-market housing units dedicated to Indigenous households in Surrey.



Vancouver, by comparison, has a similar size Indigenous population, but 1,471 units of non-market housing units dedicated to Indigenous households.⁵

Indigenous housing providers in Surrey are suffering from lack of funding and lack of capacity to keep up with the Indigenous housing needs.

The most common barriers for Indigenous organizations to support Indigenous people were the



lack of funding opportunities, high real estate costs, and attracting staff.⁶

Rental Housing for Indigenous Households

Deeply affordable housing designed for single-person and single-parent Indigenous households is needed.



Single-person and single parent Indigenous households in Surrey are more likely to live in unaffordable housing (defined as shelter costs exceeding 30% of before-tax household income).⁷

The majority of Indigenous households in Surrey rent their home, and renters are more likely to experience housing insecurity due to evictions, low vacancy rates, landlord-tenant issues, overcrowding and rising cost of rent.⁸

54%

of Indigenous households rent, as compared to

30%

of non-Indigenous households.⁹



A total of

39%

of Indigenous households (owners and renters) in Surrey live in housing that does not meet acceptability standards, meaning housing is unaffordable, requiring major repairs, or lacking enough bedrooms for the number of people living there.¹⁰

4 Finding Our Way Home: Part 1: Research Report on Indigenous Homelessness in Canada, October 2022, pp.14 - 18.

5 Skookum Housing Solutions: Our Roadmap for Change, 2021, p.5

6 Finding Our Way Home: What We Heard Report, October 2022, p.31

7 Indigenous Peoples in Surrey: Highlights from the Census. 2021 Census Fact Sheets, November 2023, p.9

8 Skookum Lab Housing Report 2020: Understanding the Experience of Indigenous Households in Surrey, p.5

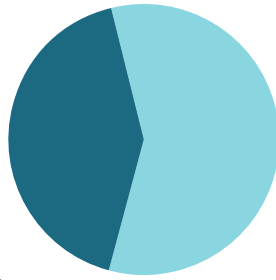
9 SUILC Census Data Report: 2021 Profile of the Indigenous Population in Surrey, May 8, 2023, p.40

10 Indigenous Peoples in Surrey: Highlights from the Census. 2021 Census Fact Sheets, November 2023, p.9

Rising housing costs in **Surrey** have disproportionately affected Indigenous renters, with a

42%

increase in median monthly rents between **2016 and 2021** – the highest increase when compared to



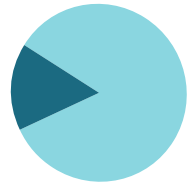
Vancouver 35%



BC 31%, and



Canada overall 16%



Over that same period, housing cost for Indigenous owners rose just 9%.¹¹

37% of Indigenous children in Surrey are living in poverty. That is more than 1,600 Indigenous children.¹² The existing deficit of affordable housing for Indigenous families coupled with Surrey's large Indigenous population means that we are condemning a generation of Indigenous children to grow up in poverty.

We need to take bold steps to prevent the problem growing bigger and worse.

For more information go to <https://surreyindigenousleadership.ca>

We gratefully acknowledge the CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund and our partnership with the City of Surrey that supported the creation of this Quick Fact Sheet.



Canada



¹¹ Indigenous Peoples in Surrey: Highlights from the Census. 2021 Census Fact Sheets, November 2023, p.9

¹² Skookum Housing Solutions: Our Roadmap for Change, 2021, p. 1